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# **The Impact of the Roman Empire on the Cult of Asclepius**

**By**

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A thesis submitted for the fulfilment of the requirements for the degree  
of Doctor of Philosophy in Classics and Ancient History

University of Warwick, Department of Classics and Ancient History

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## Abstract

Asclepius was worshipped in over 900 sanctuaries across the Graeco-Roman world. Although the cult had been disseminated across eastern Mediterranean from the 5<sup>th</sup> century onwards, it was only when the Romans took over the cult that it was dispersed all over the empire to become an empire-wide cult. This thesis looks at the impact of the Roman Empire on the cult, examining how Rome took over the existing cult, the ways in which Rome influenced it, and the relationship between the religion of Empire and local religion.

The key questions that this thesis aims to ask are: How did the Roman Empire impact upon the cult of Asclepius? How were global and regional cult identities articulated in response to each other as a result of this impact? How did increased connectivity between areas play an important part in the creation and stimulation of cultic identities? Did Asclepius' spheres of influence grow or adapt as a result of Roman benefactions? and What were provincial responses to Roman worship and dissemination of the cult?

The timeframe for this thesis will be from 27 BC until Severus Alexander's death in AD 235. Chapter One will introduce the scope of this thesis as well as the general theories which underpin this research. A survey of the cult before the Augustan period will be presented in Chapter Two. Further chapters will each examine a different aspect of the Roman impact on the cult, with the third focussing on imperial influences and the worship of the god by Roman and provincial elites; the fourth on how the Roman army influenced the cult; the fifth how multiple forms of the god were worshipped side-by-side in North Africa.

## List of Abbreviations

*Abbreviations of ancient authors and modern journals generally follow those used by the Oxford Classical Dictionary, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition (2003) and L'Année Philologique.*

AA	<i>Archäologischer Anzeiger</i> . Deutsches Archäologisches Institut. de Gruyter: Berlin.
ACD	<i>Acta classica Universitatis Scientiarum Debreceniensis</i> . Debreceni Egyetem: Debrecen.
AE	<i>L'Année épigraphique</i> (Paris 1888- )
Ael.	Aelian
Aeschin.	Aeschines <i>Orations</i>
AKB	<i>Archäologisches Korrespondenzblatt: Urgeschichte, Römerzeit, Frühmittelalter</i> . von Zabern: Mainz.
<i>Am. J. Med.</i>	<i>The American Journal of Medicine</i> . Excerpta Medica: Amsterdam.
Amm. Marc.	Ammianus Marcellinus
AMNG	<i>Die antiken Münzen Nord-Griechenlands</i> , F. Imhoof-Blumer ed. (Berlin, 1898 - 1913).
AMS	<i>Asia Minor Studien</i> . Habelt: Bonn.
ANRW	<i>Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt</i> . de Gruyter: Berlin, 1940-.
AncSoc	<i>Ancient Society</i> . Peeters: Leuven.
AntAfr	<i>Antiquités africaines</i> . CNRS Éd: Paris.
App. Bel. Civ	Appian <i>Bella Civilia</i>
App. Mith.	Appian <i>Mithridates</i>
App. Pun	Appian <i>Punica</i>
Apollod. Bibl.	Apollodorus <i>Library</i>
Apul. Flor	Apuleius <i>Florida</i>
Ar. Vesp.	Aristophanes <i>Wasps</i>
ARG	<i>Archiv für Religionsgeschichte</i> . de Gruyter: Berlin.
Aristid. Or.	Aristides <i>Orationes</i>
ASAA	<i>Annuario della Scuola Archeologica di Atene e delle Missioni Italiane in Oriente</i> . Atene: Scuola Archeologica Italiana di Atene; G. Bretschneider: Rome.
Aur. Vic. De Vir. Ill.	Aurelius Victor <i>De Viris Illustribus</i>
AW	<i>Antike Welt: Zeitschrift für Archäologie und Kulturgeschichte</i> . von Zabern: Mainz.
BCAR	<i>Bullettino della Commissione Archeologica Comunale di Roma</i> . L'Erma di Bretschneider: Rome.
BCH	<i>Bulletin de correspondance hellénique</i> . Athènes: École française d'Athènes. de Boccard: Paris.
BMC	<i>Catalogue of the Greek Coins in the British Museum</i> (London 1873-)
BMCR	<i>Bryn Mawr Classical Review</i> . Bryn Mawr College: Bryn Mawr (Pa.).
BMCRE	<i>Coins of the Roman Empire in the British Museum</i> , H. Mattingly ed. (London, British Museum Press).

<i>BMusImp</i>	<i>Bullettino del Museo dell' Impero Romano</i> . Tipi del Clvucci: Rome.
<i>Britannia</i>	<i>Britannia: a Journal of Romano-British and Kindred Studies</i> . Society for the Promotion of Roman Studies: London.
<i>Caes. BGall</i>	Caesar <i>Bellum Gallicum</i>
<i>Callim. Hymn</i>	Callimachus <i>Hymns</i>
<i>Cass. Dio</i>	Cassius Dio
<i>Celsus, Med</i>	Celsus <i>De Medicina</i>
<i>Chiron</i>	<i>Chiron: Mitteilungen der Kommission für Alte Geschichte und Epigraphik des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts</i> . Beck: Munich.
<i>Cicero Nat. D.</i>	Cicero <i>De natura deorum</i>
<i>Cic. Tusc</i>	Cicero <i>Tusculanae disputationes</i>
<i>Cic. Verr.</i>	Cicero <i>In Verrem</i>
<i>CIL</i>	<i>Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum</i> (Berlin, 1863 -)
<i>CIS</i>	<i>Corpus inscriptionum semiticarum</i> (Paris, 1881 -)
<i>CNG</i>	Classical Numismatic Group
<i>CQ</i>	<i>Classical Quarterly</i> . Oxford University Press: Oxford.
<i>CSIR</i>	<i>Corpus signorum imperii romani</i> . (Coimbra, 1990 -)
<i>CW</i>	<i>Classical World</i> . Duquesne University, Department of Classics, Classical Association of the Atlantic States: Pittsburgh (Pa.).
<i>Dacia</i>	<i>Dacia: revue d'archéologie et d'histoire ancienne</i> . de l'Académie roumaine: Bucarest Éd.
<i>Dam. Isid.</i>	Damascius <i>Vita Isidori</i>
<i>Dig.</i>	<i>Digesta</i>
<i>Dio Chrys. Or.</i>	Dio Chrysostomus <i>Orationes</i>
<i>Diod. Sic.</i>	Diodorus Siculus
<i>DOP</i>	<i>Dumbarton Oaks Papers</i> . Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection: Washington (D.C.).
<i>EDCS</i>	Epigraphik Datenbank Clauss/Slaby (Frankfurt) <a href="http://db.edcs.eu/epigr/epi_de.php">http://db.edcs.eu/epigr/epi_de.php</a>
<i>EE</i>	<i>Ephemeris Epigraphica</i> (Rome, 1872-1913)
<i>Eur. Bacch.</i>	Euripides <i>Bacchae</i>
<i>Euseb. Chron.</i>	Eusebius <i>Chronica</i>
<i>Festus Glos. Lat.</i>	W.M. Lindsay's 2 <sup>nd</sup> edition version of Festus in his <i>Glossaria Latina</i> , Vol. 4
<i>Fronto Ep.</i>	Fronto <i>Epistulae</i>
<i>Gnomon</i>	<i>Gnomon: kritische Zeitschrift für die gesamte klassische Altertumswissenschaft</i> . Beck: Munich.
<i>GRBS</i>	<i>Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies</i> . Duke University, Department of Classics: Durham (N.C.).
<i>Gymn. Agone</i>	<i>Zur Geschichte dergymnischen Agone an griechischen Festen</i> . T. Klee, Leipzig 1918.
<i>Hephaistos</i>	<i>Hephaistos: New Approaches in Classical Archaeology and Related Fields</i> . Camelion Verl: Kissing.
<i>Herod.</i>	Herodas <i>Mimiambos</i>
<i>Hes.</i>	Hesiod



<i>Hesperia</i>	<i>Hesperia: the Journal of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens.</i> American School of Classical Studies at Athens: Princeton (N.J.).
<i>Historia</i>	<i>Historia: Zeitschrift für Alte Geschichte.</i> Steiner: Stuttgart.
Hom. Hymn Asc.	<i>Homeric Hymn to Asclepius</i>
Hom. Il.	Homer <i>Iliad</i>
<i>Hom. Od.</i>	Homer <i>Odyssey</i>
<i>HSPh</i>	<i>Harvard Studies in Classical Philology.</i> Harvard University Press: Cambridge (Mass.).
<i>I.Cos</i>	<i>Iscrizioni di Cos</i> , M. Segre (Rome, 1993-2007).
<i>ICO</i>	<i>Le iscrizioni fenicie e puniche delle colonie in Occidente</i> , M.G. Guzzo Amadasi ed. (Rome, 1967).
<i>IDélos</i>	<i>Inscriptions de Délos</i> , F. Dürrbach ed. (Paris, 1923-37).
<i>IG</i>	<i>Inscriptiones Graecae</i> (Berlin, 1873 -).
<i>IGBulg</i>	<i>Inscriptiones Graecae in Bulgaria repertae</i> , G. Mihailov ed. (1958-70).
<i>IGLNovae</i>	<i>Inscriptions grecques et latines de Novae (Mésie inférieure)</i> . J. Kolendo and V. Božilova (eds.) (Bordeaux, 1997).
<i>IGUR</i>	<i>Inscriptiones Graecae Urbis Romae</i> L. Moretti ed. (Rome, 1968-90).
<i>IGR</i>	<i>Inscriptiones graecae ad res romanas pertinentes.</i> R. Cagnat et al. (Paris, 1906-27).
<i>IK Erythrai</i>	<i>Die Inschriften von Erythrai und Klazomenai</i> , H. Engelmann, R. Merkelbach eds., (Bonn, 1972-1973).
<i>ILAlg</i>	<i>Inscriptions latines de l'Algérie</i> 1, ed. S. Gsell (1922); 2 ed, H.-G. Pflaum (1957).
<i>ILAfr</i>	<i>Inscriptions latines d'Afrique (Tripolitanie, Tunisie, Maroc)</i> (Paris, 1923)
<i>ILNovae</i>	<i>Inscriptions latines de Novae</i> , J. Kolendo and V. Božilova eds., (Poznań, 1992).
<i>ILS</i>	<i>Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae</i> , H. Dessau, ed., (Berlin, 1892-1916)
<i>IRT</i>	<i>Inscriptions of Roman Tripolitania</i> , J. M. Reynolds and J.B. Ward-Perkins eds., (1952 - ).
<i>IvEph</i>	<i>Die Inschriften von Ephesos</i> , H. Wankel et al. (Bonn, 1979-84).
<i>IvP</i>	<i>Altertümer von Pergamon, VIII 1-2</i> , M. Fränkel (Berlin, 1890-1895).
<i>IvOL</i>	<i>Die Inschriften von Olympia</i> , W. Dittenberger and K. Purgold (Berlin, 1896).
<i>JEA</i>	<i>The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology.</i> Egypt Exploration Society: London.
<i>Jer. Chron.</i>	<i>Jerome Chronicle</i>
<i>JNG</i>	<i>Jahrbuch für Numismatik und Geldgeschichte.</i> Bayerische Numismatische Gesellschaft: Munich.
<i>Joseph. AJ</i>	<i>Josephus Antiquitates Judicae</i>

<i>JRA</i>	<i>Journal of Roman Archaeology: an International Journal.</i> Journal of Roman Archaeology: Portsmouth (R.I).
<i>JRS</i>	The Journal of Roman studies. Society for the Promotion of Roman Studies: London.
<i>KAI</i>	<i>Kanaanäische und aramäische Inschriften</i> , H. Donner and W. Rölling eds. (Wiesbaden, 1966-69).
<i>Kernos</i>	<i>Kernos: revue internationale et pluridisciplinaire de religion grecque antique.</i> Centre international d'étude de la religion grecque antique: Liège; Athens.
<i>Ktema</i>	<i>Ktema: civilisations de l'Orient, de la Grèce et de Rome antiques.</i> Université Marc Bloch, Centre de Recherches sur le Proche Orient et la Grèce antique: Strasbourg.
<i>Latomus</i>	<i>Latomus: revue d'études latines.</i> Latomus: Brussels.
<i>Libyca</i>	<i>Libyca. Archéologie, épigraphie: bulletin du Service des antiquités.</i> Le Service: Algiers.
<i>LIMC</i>	<i>Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae.</i> Artemis & Winkler Verlag: Zürich.
<i>Limes</i>	<i>Limes.</i> Centro de Estudios Clásicos de la Universidad Metropolitana de Ciencias de la Educación: Santiago (Chile).
<i>Livy Epi.</i>	<i>Livy Epitomae</i>
<i>Livy Per.</i>	<i>Livy Periochae</i>
<i>LSCG</i>	<i>Lois sacrées des cites grecques</i> , F. Sokolowski. de Boccard: Paris (1969).
<i>LTUR</i>	<i>Lexicon Topographicum Urbis Romae.</i> Edizioni Quasar: Rome. (1996 -).
<i>Lucian Alex.</i>	<i>Lucian Alexander</i>
<i>Lucian Hipp</i>	<i>Lucias Hippias</i>
<i>M. Aur. Med.</i>	<i>Marcus Aurelius Meditations</i>
<i>MAAR</i>	<i>Memoirs of the American Academy in Rome.</i> University of Michigan Press: Ann Arbor (Mich.).
<i>Mart. Spect.</i>	<i>Martial Spectacula</i>
<i>MediterrAnt</i>	<i>Mediterraneo antico: economie, società, culture.</i> Istituti Editoriali e Poligrafici Internazionali: Pisa.
<i>MedSec</i>	<i>Medicina nei secoli: arte e scienza.</i> Università degli Studi di Roma La Sapienza, Dipartimento di Medicina Sperimentale, Sezione di Storia della Medicina: Rome.
<i>MDAI(R)</i>	<i>Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts, Römische Abteilung = Bullettino dell'Istituto Archeologico Germanico, Sezione romana.</i> von Zabern: Mainz.
<i>NSER</i>	<i>Nuova silloge epigrafica di Rodi e Cos</i> , A. Maiuri. Le Monnier: Florence (1925).
<i>Numisma</i>	<i>Numisma.</i> Sociedad Ibero-Americana de estudios numismáticos: Madrid.
<i>NZ</i>	<i>Numismatische Zeitschrift.</i> Selbstverl. der Österreichischen Numismatischen Gesellschaft: Vienna.

<i>OAth</i>	<i>Opuscula Atheniensi</i> : Annual of the Swedish Institute at Athens. Åström: Sävedalen.
<i>OGIS</i>	<i>Orientalis Graeci Inscriptiones Selectae</i> , W. Dittenberger, ed., (Leipzig, 1903).
Oros.	Orosius
Ov. Fast.	Ovid <i>Fasti</i>
Ov. Met.	Ovid <i>Metamorphoses</i>
<i>Pallas</i>	<i>Pallas: revue d'études antiques</i> . Pr. Universitaires du Mirail: Toulouse.
Paus.	Pausanias
<i>PBSR</i>	<i>Papers of the British School at Rome</i> . British School at Rome: London.
<i>PH</i>	<i>The Inscriptions of Cos</i> , W.R. Paton and E.L. Hicks (1891).
<i>PHI/ERGA</i>	Packard Humanities Institute <i>Searchable Greek Inscriptions</i> <a href="http://noapplet.epigraphy.packhum.org/">http://noapplet.epigraphy.packhum.org/</a>
Philostrat. V.A.	Philostratus <i>Vita Apollonii</i>
<i>Phoenix</i>	<i>Phoenix: Journal of the Classical Association of Canada = revue de la Société canadienne des études classiques</i> . University of Toronto Press: Toronto (Ont.).
Pind. <i>Pyth.</i>	Pindar <i>Pythian Odes</i>
<i>PIR</i>	<i>Prosopographia Imperii Romani Saeculi I, II, III</i> , 1 <sup>st</sup> edition by E. Klebs and H. Dessau (1897-8), 2 <sup>nd</sup> edition by E. Groag, A. Stein et al. (1933 - ).
<i>PLRE</i>	<i>The Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire, Volume 1, AD 260-395</i> , A.H.M. Jones, J.R. Martindale and J. Morris (eds.) Cambridge University Press: Cambridge. (1971).
Pl. <i>Cri.</i>	Plato <i>Crito</i>
Pliny <i>HN</i>	Pliny <i>Natural History</i>
Plut. <i>De. Frat. Amor.</i>	Plutarch <i>De fraterno amore</i>
Plut. <i>Vit. Crass.</i>	Plutarch <i>Vita Crassi</i>
Plut. <i>Vit. Sull.</i>	Plutarch <i>Vita Sulli</i>
Plut. <i>Vit. Pomp.</i>	Plutarch <i>Vita Pompeii</i>
Polyb.	Polybius
Ptol. <i>Geog.</i>	Ptolemy <i>Geographia</i>
<i>RBN</i>	<i>Revue belge de numismatique et de sigillographie</i> . Société royale de numismatique de Belgique: Brussels.
<i>RH</i>	<i>Revue historique</i> . Pr. Universitaires de France: Paris.
<i>RIB</i>	<i>The Roman Inscriptions of Britain</i> , R.G. Collingwood, R. P. Wright et al. Clarendon Press: Oxford (1965 -).
<i>RIC</i>	<i>Roman Imperial Coinage</i> (London 1923-).
<i>SEG</i>	<i>Supplementum epigraphicum Graecum</i> (Leiden, 1933 - ).
SHA <i>Alex. Sev.</i>	Scriptores Historiae Augustae <i>Alexander Severus</i>
SHA <i>Ant. Pius</i>	Scriptores Historiae Augustae <i>Antonius Pius</i>
SHA <i>Hadr.</i>	Scriptores Historiae Augustae <i>Hadrian</i>
SHA <i>Marc.</i>	Scriptores Historiae Augustae <i>Marcus</i>
SHA <i>Verus</i>	Scriptores Historiae Augustae <i>Lucius Verus</i>

<i>SNG Cop.</i>	<i>Sylloge Nummorum Graeorum, Denmark, The Royal Collection of Coins and Medals, Danish National Museum (1942-1979).</i>
<i>SNG Levante</i>	<i>E. Levante Sylloge Nummorum Graeorum, Switzerland I. Levante-Cilicia (1986).</i>
<i>SNG von Aulock</i>	<i>Sylloge Nummorum Graeorum, Deutschland, Sammlung Hans Von Aulock (1957-1967).</i>
<i>Stat. Silv.</i>	<i>Stattus Silvae</i>
<i>Strabo</i>	<i>Strabo, Geography</i>
<i>Sue. Aug</i>	<i>Suetonius Divus Augustus</i>
<i>Sue. Claud</i>	<i>Suetonius Divus Claudius</i>
<i>Syll.<sup>3</sup></i>	<i>Sylloge Inscriptionum Graecarum 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, W. Dittenberger (1915-24).</i>
<i>Syria</i>	<i>Syria: revue d'art oriental et d'archéologie. Institut français d'archéologie du Proche-Orient: Beyrouth.</i>
<i>Tac. Ann.</i>	<i>Tacitus Annals</i>
<i>Tac. Germ</i>	<i>Tacitus Germania</i>
<i>Tac. Hist.</i>	<i>Tacitus Histories</i>
<i>TAPhA</i>	<i>Transactions of the American Philological Association. Johns Hopkins University Press: Baltimore (Md.).</i>
<i>Them. Or</i>	<i>Themistius Orations</i>
<i>Thuc.</i>	<i>Thucydides The History of the Peloponnesian War</i>
<i>Tit. Calymnii</i>	<i>Tituli Calymnii, M. Segre (Bergamo, 1904-44).</i>
<i>Tyche</i>	<i>Tyche: Beiträge zur Alten Geschichte, Papyrologie und Epigraphik. Holzhausen: Vienna.</i>
<i>World Archaeol.</i>	<i>World Archaeology. Routledge: London.</i>
<i>VA Phrygiens</i>	<i>Münzen und Städte Phrygiens, H. von Aulock, (Tübingen, 1987).</i>
<i>Val. Max.</i>	<i>Valerius Maximus</i>
<i>Xen. An.</i>	<i>Xenophon Anabasis</i>
<i>ZAC</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für antikes Christentum. de Gruyter: Berlin.</i>
<i>ZPE</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik. Habelt: Bonn.</i>

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# Chapter 1: Mobility and Connectivity in the Cult of Asclepius

## 1.0 Introduction

Originating in Greece in the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC, worship of Asclepius continued until the late 4th century AD by which time the god had been worshipped at over 900 cult sites across the Graeco-Roman world.<sup>1</sup> The cult was introduced to Rome in 293 BC and a temple was dedicated to Asclepius in 291 BC on Tiber Island.<sup>2</sup> Although the cult had been disseminated across the Mediterranean world by the Greeks, it was only when the Romans took over the cult that it was dispersed widely across the empire, with worship of Asclepius occurring to some extent in most of the provinces.<sup>3</sup> The cult was spread by various groups, including the Roman army, and this thesis will examine how this occurred and the reasons for this dissemination. Increased mobility during the Roman Empire played an important role in the spread of the cult. As put by Adams: ‘Travel and communication are dynamics which were central to the Roman Empire.’<sup>4</sup> The empire’s size and diversity demanded that there was an efficient communication system in place for government. This infrastructure was made safe by the *pax Romana*, making the dangerous days of travelling during the Classical and Hellenistic periods a thing of the past.<sup>5</sup> Travel by land was a lot slower than voyages by sea but had the benefit of being a far safer mode of

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<sup>1</sup> With data from Riethmüller (2005) Vol. 2. Not all of these sites enjoyed cult simultaneously.

<sup>2</sup> Livy *Per.* 11.

<sup>3</sup> Within this work, where the term Empire is used with a capital E it indicates the socio-political entity which was the Roman Empire. When empire is used with a small e this means the geographical entity. This is done to illustrate the difference between these two as the geographical empire was already being formed via Roman conquests prior to the creation of the principate.

<sup>4</sup> Adams (2001) 1.

<sup>5</sup> Adams (2001) 2.

transport.<sup>6</sup> Travel and communication permeated all levels of state bureaucracy, the fiscal sphere and military logistics and organisations and also facilitated the dissemination and changes of a cult.<sup>7</sup> This thesis aims to look at the impact of the Roman Empire on the cult, examining how Rome took over the Greek cult, and the ways in which Rome influenced it.<sup>8</sup> It will also look at the ways in which the cult varied in the city of Rome and the Roman provinces as the cult apparently had scope for strong regional tendencies within its worship. In order to establish this, the religion of empire versus the religion of the local will be researched, showing global and regional characteristics of the cult. The impact of the Roman Empire on the cult of Asclepius will be explored via a number of factors. These elements by which the cult adapted and changed as a result of the new reality of Empire have been singled out in this work and are: the emperors, courtiers, the creation of a professional army, and cross-provincial mobility and movements. The institution of emperor and a permanent army were created by the advent of Empire and the other factors also changed or became more prominent at this time, such as the court. By doing so, this work will address a shortcoming in Asclepieian scholarship, where great emphasis is placed upon the cult in the Classical and Hellenistic world but is overlooked by most in the Roman period as it was believed that there were few important changes which took place during this time.<sup>9</sup> This thesis will show that the cult in the Roman era had a rich and varied history and that it had to adapt to the new reality of Empire, as did the world around the cult. This thesis will explore how this took place, laying out a number of theories in this chapter and then examining how the cult of Asclepius adapted to the Roman Empire in subsequent chapters. Cult spaces are one of the best

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<sup>6</sup> Collar (2013) 49.

<sup>7</sup> Adams (2001) 4.

<sup>8</sup> Rüpke (2015) 335-6 states that Roman religion is both the religion of Rome and also the religion of the *Imperium Romanum* with its 50 million inhabitants.

<sup>9</sup> Edelstein and Edelstein (1998) 2.253-5. See section 1.1.9 for a literature review.

areas in which to perform such research, as they reflect the beliefs of the people around them and they did not just have religious meaning but also had socio-political connotations.<sup>10</sup> It is important to examine these matters on a site-to-site basis or via the differing elements which impacted upon a cult.

Why Asclepius is a suitable paradigm for such a study will first be examined here and this chapter will move on to explore the various theories argued by modern scholars which explain the phenomenon researched in this study.

### 1.1 Asclepius as Paradigm

Generally, the cult of Asclepius in the Roman period has been given less attention than that in the Classical and Hellenistic periods, leaving much scope for innovative study. There are a number of factors which set Asclepius apart from other gods and make him an excellent case-study for an examination into the impact of the Roman Empire on a cult and also into how global and regional cults interacted. Firstly, Asclepius' cult was open to people from all socio-economic backgrounds and genders, meaning that no group was excluded, and this study can include evidence from people from all standings. While this means that the poor worshipped Asclepius, which has long been pointed out as a notable feature of his worship, this has also sometimes been taken as an indication that the elites would not worship the god.<sup>11</sup> This is not the case as from early on Asclepius was worshipped by civic units such as the Boule in Athens and it will be explored in Chapter 3 how imperial and elite patronage of the cult boosted and adapted worship. Most people become ill at some point in their lives and Asclepius, therefore, would have been a universal god

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<sup>10</sup> Stek (2015) 1-2, 14.

<sup>11</sup> Herod. 4.1; Ael. *Fragment* 100; See for example Sigerist (1961) 2.73; Ferngren and Amundsen (1993) 2959-2960.

whom people would want to worship and supplicate. His cult, as case-study for the impact of empire, would, thus, offer a good cross-section of all members of society, from all socio-economic backgrounds and statuses. The cult was introduced in the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC and had continuous worship until the 4<sup>th</sup> century AD, providing a rich and long time period for this study. The cult did not diminish in popularity but actually grew during the Roman period with many new cult-sites being founded across the empire and at various stages, for example, in the Balkan and Danube regions and in North Africa (see Chapters 4 and 5). This thesis examines the cult in areas where it was already established before the advent of the Roman Empire and also in sites which were established in newly conquered provinces to understand how Rome impacted upon both of these and how the cult adapted to each individual circumstance. The wide geographical spread of the cult gives a good regional scope for research into the impact of empire as each province had distinctive characteristics which could have influenced the cult. The imperial period saw an increase in mobility due to better infrastructure and as a result the cult could spread further than ever before, especially when worship of the god was taken up by the Roman army who had a definite impact upon the cult as will be examined in Chapters 4 and 5. With this dissemination, it seems that Asclepius also actually grew in power and status as will be shown from a study of the god's epithets. A further point which sets Asclepius apart is the relative fluidity of his nature, since, once he had been introduced into a region, local people were free to pick and choose which elements of the cult they wished to observe there. It is also noteworthy that this flexibility took place for the most part without syncretism, though this does occur within the cult and which will be examined in Chapter 5. All of these features make Asclepius stand out from the other gods but he was a member of the Graeco-Roman religious world, with

sanctuaries or cults appearing in most locations, making him an appropriate study for cults and impact in general, as the factors singled out here to illustrate the impact of Empire (see below) can be applied to other cults. This also paves the way for future parallel studies.

### 1.1.1 Globalism and Regionalism in Antiquity

In order to detect the influence of Rome globally on the cult of Asclepius the local characteristics of the cult must also be studied as it is only when the regional is compared with the global, that it truly becomes distinct and *vice-versa*. Globalism allows scholars to move past outdated ideas about centre and periphery, past the opposites of Roman and native by seeing the Empire as a connected whole.<sup>12</sup> ‘Global’ as a term is relatively vague and can be taken to mean the whole world or the perception of a world, depending on the context in which it occurs. Here, the term will not be used to refer to the whole world as it is known in the modern world but means the whole of the Roman Empire and its provinces.<sup>13</sup> For Pitts and Versluys globalisation can be described as: ‘[...] processes by which localities and people become increasingly interconnected and interdependent’.<sup>14</sup> The term global is not as applicable to the Greek world as a result of the fragmented nature of the Greek

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<sup>12</sup> Pitts and Versluys (2015) 6.

<sup>13</sup> Hodos (2015) 240 notes that critics of the application of globalisation theories to the ancient world argue that this process did not span the entire globe and, therefore, does not refer so much to globalisation as it does to Westernisation. However, she negates this argument by stating that it is accepted that globalism was an uneven and unequal process which did not affect all peoples, communities, and individuals. She sees globalism as an indicator of increased connectivity which would make the term one which can be applied to the Graeco-Roman world: Hodos (2015) 241-2.

<sup>14</sup> Pitts and Versluys (2015) 11. They also state that denominators of globalisation are connectivity and de-territorialisation and that it is an uneven process, meaning that it does not happen the same in every place, and that the process reconfigures socio-political relations and institutions while fostering cultural diversity but also social inequalities: Pitts and Versluys (2015) 11, 14.

city states while the unity of empire facilitated global cults.<sup>15</sup> It is also important to state that while Romans might have perceived their world as global, globalism was not created by Rome, as the heart of the Empire, but Roman globalism was the product of both Rome and the provinces, something which resulted in different versions of something which can be called Roman globalism.<sup>16</sup> Something can be global but take on differing forms in various places. This results in a cross-provincial exchange of ideas, iconographies, and rites, some occurrences of which will be explored in this thesis (see sections 3.3.1, 4.4 and 5.3.2). As a result of this process, Rome itself was both globalising and globalised. In fact, Nederveen Pieterse argues that by being globalised, Rome was globalising.<sup>17</sup> The peripheries of Empire define the centre as much as the centre defines the peripheries. Even this was not static as when areas were newly conquered, and, thus, became new peripheries, Rome brought its culture but also that of other peripheral regions to the new periphery:<sup>18</sup>

[...] pericentric theory of empire, in which peripheries play a central, not just a marginal role, and multicentric and network understandings of empire. This generates multiple and layered understandings of the Roman world including the diversity, polyphony and dynamics of Romanness [...].<sup>19</sup>

The ways in which this cross-provincial connectivity happened within the cult of Asclepius will be shown in various contexts in this thesis. Like globalism, 'region' is

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<sup>15</sup> This is not to say that there was no connectivity in the Greek world, on the contrary. However, as Pitts and Versluys (2015) 17 point out, this connectivity was always present but there were certain time periods when there was a particular flare up of connectivity. The Roman Empire with its vast provinces and connecting infrastructure was one of these periods and this increased connectivity is expected to have impacted upon the religious world of the Empire, among which the cult of Asclepius.

<sup>16</sup> Pitts and Versluys (2015) 18; Laurence and Trifilò (2015) 101.

<sup>17</sup> Nederveen Pieterse (2015) 225.

<sup>18</sup> Nederveen Pieterse (2015) 233.

<sup>19</sup> Nederveen Pieterse (2015) 234. It is not just Nederveen Pieterse who stresses the important of viewing ritual transfer from a provincial perspective but this is also stated by Chaniotis (2009) 5 who examines ritual dynamics from the perspective of the provinces and not via that of Rome. He also argues that Rome was confronted with provincial rituals, both those of their allies and their enemies, from the beginning and, in turn, confronted the others with their own rituals.



a contested term. However, it is generally taken to mean a grouping of territorial units which are in close geographical proximity to each other and which constitute a spatially cohesive and connected area.<sup>20</sup> The term ‘regionalism’ is not just concerned with geographical space but also has political and administrative dimensions, as regions are socially constructed spatial concepts which follow notions of community and society. As such, they have a shared cultural identity which includes religion and language. These communal characteristics form and nurture a common socio-cultural understanding of an area.<sup>21</sup> Each region would, thus, be distinct and possess elements which were specific to that area. For the cult of Asclepius, this would mean that there were certain cultic elements such as rites and iconographies which were specific to one area or acquired new or different meanings in each region. In fact, this does seem to occur in the cult of Asclepius as there is evidence for regionalism from early on; there were many rites and rituals which were performed at only a single sanctuary. At Cos there was an annual ritual which was called the renewing of the staff which entailed a procession to the sacred grove of Asclepius.<sup>22</sup> These regional characteristics could also have been incorporated within wider global features. The need for purity within the cult was well known but took a different form in each sanctuary. Sacred laws informed supplicants how to achieve ritual purity in each specific sanctuary. Supplicants travelling to a sanctuary may not have been aware of the specific cultic regulations of that particular cult-site, but only of the global need for purity, and a law could have informed them of these prior to entry which would prevent pollution.<sup>23</sup> These locally individual rites were set within a larger macro-identity of purity within the cult.

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<sup>20</sup> Goltermann, Lohaus, Spielau and Striebringer (2013) 3.

<sup>21</sup> Goltermann, Lohaus, Spielau and Striebringer (2013) 4.

<sup>22</sup> Sherwin-White (1978) 339.

<sup>23</sup> See a comparison between *SEG* 20. 759 (2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> century AD) and *IL Afr* 225 (AD 113-138).

There were also rites which occurred globally and the larger macro-identity of the cult manifested itself as rites were shared across the board such as incubation which seemingly occurred in many sanctuaries and the formula ‘on account of a dream’ was often inscribed on votive dedications.<sup>24</sup> There were also strong iconographic and dedicatory similarities across the Graeco-Roman world such as anatomical *ex-votos* which were commonly dedicated to Asclepius, indicating that the material culture of the cult showed uniform tendencies. These *ex-votos* stopped being commonly dedicated from the late 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC onwards and do not factor much into the discussion here.<sup>25</sup> The main focus will be on literary, epigraphic, and numismatic material which provides clearer evidence for the impact of Empire. The main body of evidence for this examination into the impact of the Roman Empire on the cult of Asclepius will be epigraphic. This material is rich and varied but does present certain problems in its use. Many inscriptions are fragmented in nature and, therefore, various and differing readings of the same inscription are often possible. This can lead to multiple interpretations of the inscription’s meaning. Even when the text is clear and undamaged the inscription’s meaning can still be vague or open to numerous interpretations. A further point of caution in the use of inscriptions is the way in which they are accessed. Inscriptions from certain regions are better published than others or done so in more accessible ways. Online corpora such as the *PHI/ERGA* and the *EDCS* databases greatly facilitate and ease the use of inscriptions, with useful search options which allow for a broad overview of the available inscriptions containing a keyword or from a region.<sup>26</sup> This allows for easy

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<sup>24</sup> *IG* IV<sup>2</sup> 1.470; Ferngren and Amundsen (1993) 2959 note that incubation, the ritual where a supplicant spent the night in a sanctuary, hoping that the god would appear to him in a dream, was the most common form of divine healing in antiquity and that it was a part of many cults, among them many oriental ones, and not just the cult of Asclepius.

<sup>25</sup> Glinister (2006) 30 see note 84.

<sup>26</sup> *PHI/ERGA*: (<http://epigraphy.packhum.org/inscriptions/>). *EDCS*:

comparative parallel study. However, these online corpora often only list the text itself and offer no interpretation. The *PHI/ERGA* database also often provides a date for the text where possible but the *EDCS* does not do that. For a comprehensive understanding of the inscription's context, hardcopy corpora such as *IG*, *CIL*, *AE*, and *SEG* must be consulted. Yet, even these are not without their issues as many do not comment on the physical appearance of the inscription and often do not provide plates or photos of the reliefs which are present on the stone, if these are mentioned at all in corpora which focus exclusively on inscriptions.<sup>27</sup> Knowledge of the layout of the inscription, its relief, and how these two worked together is vital for understanding the possible meaning of an inscription (see section 4.4). To properly study an inscription from the various corpora, it is important to access all of the available sources for the fullest understanding.

Apart from the theories which will be discussed below, Stek has edited a volume examining how Rome impacted upon cult in Italy, especially after its conquest, and the 'Impact of Empire' research network has been prolific in examining how Rome affected various parts of the Graeco-Roman world, for example political, religious, and economic.<sup>28</sup> However, no conclusive study has been

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([http://db.edcs.eu/epigr/epi\\_de.php](http://db.edcs.eu/epigr/epi_de.php)).

<sup>27</sup> The *IGBulg* corpora are one of the notable earlier exceptions to this as the editors aimed to add as many accompanying photo plates for each inscription as possible. Online versions of corpora such as *RIB* <http://romaninscriptionsofbritain.org/> and *Inscriptions of Roman Tripolitania* <http://inslib.kcl.ac.uk/irt2009/> are addressing this issue.

<sup>28</sup> The results of this work have been published in both proceedings of the annual workshops and also in a series of monographs or collections of essays. The proceedings are: L. de Blois (ed.) (2001) *Administration, Prosopography and Appointment Policies in the Roman Empire*. L. de Blois and J. Rich (eds.) (2002) *The Transformation of Economic Life under the Roman Empire*. L. de Blois, P. Erdkamp, O. Hekster, G. de Kleijn and S. Mols (eds.) (2003) *The Representation and Perception of Roman Imperial Power*. L. de Ligt, E.A. Hemelrijk and H.W. Singor (eds.) (2004) *Roman Rule and Civic Life: Local and Regional Perspectives*. L. de Blois, P. Funke and J. Hahn (eds.) (2006) *The Impact of Imperial Rome on Religions, Ritual and Religious Life in the Roman Empire*. L. de Blois and E. Lo Cascio (eds.) (2007) *The Impact of the Roman Army (200 BC-AD 476): Economic, Social, Political, Religious and Cultural Aspects*. O.J. Hekster, G. de Kleijn and D. Slootjes (eds.) (2007) *Crises and the Roman Empire*. O.J. Hekster, S. Schmidt-Hofner and C. Witschel (eds.)

undertaken on a single cult in the Roman Imperial period, something which this thesis aims to rectify. Stek has singled out certain factors which need to be considered for the study of this impact and also stresses the importance of moving away from the abstract concept of Rome and looking instead at the individual actors in these situations.<sup>29</sup> This thesis aims to present a study of the impact of the Roman Empire on religion in the ancient world via the case-study of Asclepius, filling in the gap in current scholarship. It does so by isolating various factors by which the Empire changed the cult, namely the emperors, courtiers, the army, and cross-provincial mobility and movements. The pre-Augustan cult will be considered in more detail in the second chapter and other chapters will show the effects of the Roman Empire on the cult by focussing on specific factors and examining to what extent this caused global or regional characteristics in the cult of Asclepius. This thesis aims to explore how the increased mobility and connectivity of the Roman Empire actually increased choice within a cult: local people came into contact with more options and picked which were suited for them. As a cult spread further, it came into contact with more people and locals. New cultic elements were introduced

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(2009) *Ritual Dynamics and Religious Change in the Roman Empire*. O. J. Hekster and T. Kaizer (eds.) (2011) *Frontiers in the Roman World*. G. de Kleijn and S. Benoist (eds.) (2013) *Integration in Rome and in the Roman World*. The monographs and collections of essays are: F. Santangelo (2007) *Sulla, the Elites and the Empire. A Study of Roman Policies in Italy and the Greek East*. C. H. Lange (2009) *Res Publica Constituta. Actium, Apollo and the Accomplishment of the Triumviral Assignment*. A.J. Turner, J.H. Kim, O. Chong-Gossard, F.J. Vervaeke (eds.) (2010) *Private and Public Lies. The Discourse of Despotism and Deceit in the Graeco-Roman World*. I. Mennen (2011) *Power and Status in the Roman Empire, 193 - 284 AD*. A. Lichtenberger (2011) *Severus Pius Augustus. Studien zur sakralen Repräsentation und Rezeption der Herrschaft des Septimius Severus und seiner Familie (193-211 n. Chr.)*. E. Manders (2012) *Coining Images of Power. Patterns in the Representation of Roman Emperors on Imperial Coinage, A.D. 193-284*. S. Benoist (ed.) (2012) *Rome, a City and Its Empire in Perspective: The Impact of the Roman World through Fergus Millar's Research*. J.M. Madsen and R. Rees (2014) *Roman Rule in Greek and Latin Writing. Double Vision*. L.L. Brice, D. Slootjes (eds.) (2014) *Aspects of Ancient Institutions and Geography. Studies in honor of Richard J.A. Talbert*. W. Liebeschuetz (2015) *East and West in Late Antiquity. Invasion, Settlement, Ethnogenesis and Conflicts of Religion*. All works have been published by Brill in Leiden. See <http://www.ru.nl/impactofempire/> for the project website.

<sup>29</sup> Stek (2015) 11; see also Collar (2013) 19 who states that ideas adopted by these individual actors were done so due to either vulnerability, which is a part of the individual's identity if he was quick and early to adapt to new influences, or connectedness, where he had the ability to transmit this new information to more individuals. It is near impossible to state whether an individual took on an innovation as a result of either connectedness or vulnerability.

as a result of this expansion and older elements, which were perhaps only relevant to a certain local, were discarded. Supplicants determined which parts of the cult were relevant to their needs and which were extraneous. The diffusion of elements of a cult through the provinces and to Rome and back, made possible by an improved infrastructure, meant that the cult became more global but at the same also more regional. By coming into contact with the global cult and by meeting other cultures, their own cult became more defined (see Whitmarsh, section 1.1.2).

### 1.1.2 Identity and Regionalism

This thesis will then examine the regional and global features of the cults of Asclepius. This work is underpinned by other current research as scholars have been addressing these issues in the classical world. A variety of theories have been offered but none of these by itself seemingly offers an all-inclusive explanation for the cult's regional and global characteristics. It is only when all of these elements are combined that a cohesive image of the nature of the cult of Asclepius is created. The first of these theories is offered by Whitmarsh who argues that the idea of the local is created by a global perception of the world. People do not view themselves as local until they come into contact with the wider world, and globalism, therefore, causes an intensified view of regionalism.<sup>30</sup> This realisation leads to an adaptation of one's identity as self-awareness and a consciousness of other identities are at the core of regional identity, which is not static but is in constant dialogue with global identities.<sup>31</sup> This local distinctiveness, in fact, needed another identity, a panhellenic,

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<sup>30</sup> Whitmarsh (2010) 2.

<sup>31</sup> Goldhill (2010) 49; Whitmarsh (2010) 3; Broodbank (2013) 506.

national, imperial, or cosmopolitan one, to define itself against.<sup>32</sup> For the cult of Asclepius this would mean that regional characteristics would gain prominence when confronted with the advent of Empire. Thus, a strong provincial or civic cult identity could in theory be expected, at least at the larger cult-sites. The awareness of local and trans-regional distinctiveness was already present in antiquity as is illustrated by comparing two authors, namely Aelius Aristides, who celebrated the unified culture of the Roman empire and implied that all conquered people were happy to give up their local culture for Rome, and Pausanias, whose travel accounts celebrated local culture and indicated how varied and diverse it was.<sup>33</sup> However, the differences between these two authors are perhaps not as clear-cut as just this. As Whitmarsh states:

Clearly, local culture - particularly cult, art, architecture and inscription – is at the heart of Pausanias’ construction of Greekness. But for all its dependence on localism, Greekness is for Pausanias not reducible to it: Greece is the *panta*, the ‘all things’, the translocal umbrella that unites the different locales.<sup>34</sup>

Pausanias seems to have a dual perspective where he examines the local and translocal at the same time.<sup>35</sup> Both of these authors offer particular evidence for the cult of Asclepius and it is notable that they are the ones Whitmarsh uses as paradigms. These authors are emblematic of the multi-faceted worship of Asclepius as they offer examples of both regional versions of the cult and of the global cult. Whitmarsh argues that there was a general trend towards a pan-imperial culture, especially with the expansion of citizenship, but this did not mean that regional identity vanished. In fact, centralisation actually strengthened regional diversity and

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<sup>32</sup> Goldhill (2010) 48.

<sup>33</sup> Aristid. *Or.* 42.4; Paus. 3.22.9.

<sup>34</sup> Whitmarsh (2010) 14.

<sup>35</sup> Whitmarsh (2010) 14.

would have caused an inter-reliance of Pausanian regionalism and Aristidean global unity.<sup>36</sup> Regional Asclepieian micro-identities would have been buried within Asclepieian global macro-identities, with a high degree of interconnection.<sup>37</sup>

### 1.1.3 Competition and Connectivity

A second explanation for regionalism in the cult of Asclepius lies in civic competition, which was especially rife among the *poleis* of Asia Minor. An example of this is on *homonoia* coins minted by these cities, many featuring Asclepius as the *polis*-deity of Pergamum, are visible testimonies to the constant competition to be the first city in Asia as well as the high level of connectivity between these *poleis* (see section 3.4.5).<sup>38</sup> Rüpke has undertaken extensive research on connectivity in ancient religion. He understands religious and cultic actions as communication where spatial and temporal limitations are overcome by the act of reporting actions via inscriptions and dedications.<sup>39</sup> When religion is interpreted as a communicative system, it creates a framework in which dedications and inscriptions can be analysed.<sup>40</sup> Most religious actions are regional actions which become obsolete over time unless specifically recorded. Inscriptions and dedications are tangible reminders of a successful communication between god and human placed in surroundings where such communication constantly takes place.<sup>41</sup> The Imperial period stands out for Rüpke as it was then that a grid of regional networks, in the form of dedications

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<sup>36</sup> Whitmarsh (2010) 8, 10.

<sup>37</sup> Woolf (2010) 200.

<sup>38</sup> Kampmann (1998) 375-6; Dio Chrys. *Or.* 34. Aristid. *Or.* 23 provides the historical background to this conflict.

<sup>39</sup> Rüpke (2011) 22-3; Rüpke (2015) 340: dedications monumentalised religious communication.

<sup>40</sup> Rüpke (2009) 31.

<sup>41</sup> Rüpke (2001) 73-4.

and inscriptions, developed, of which there is only fragmentary evidence now.<sup>42</sup> This religious infrastructure is integral to Graeco-Roman religion.<sup>43</sup> This development of regional networks underlines the Roman Imperial era as a vital period in the study of the cult of Asclepius as only then can a cohesive picture of the cult be created. Rüpke stresses, like Chaniotis (see section 1.1.4), that the defining characteristic of these networks was not that there was a global uniformity but that active competition between local cities existed which created regional interpretations of cults. He states ‘Competition among communities not only caused emulation, and consequently dissemination of rituals; it also caused differentiation, that is, the development of a particular local profile of a cult.’ It will be shown that this also happened within the cult of Asclepius, especially in Asia Minor (see section 3.4.5).<sup>44</sup> This is in contrast but also complementary to what Whitmarsh has argued (see above). Civic competition should therefore be seen as a second explanation for regionalism, corresponding to the theory that people only viewed themselves as local when confronted with another, global, identity. This regional context does not leave much room for an empire-wide religion but this did exist in the form of *pro salute* dedications on behalf of the emperor which are found throughout the empire and perhaps also in the form of emperor worship.<sup>45</sup> Rüpke’s work is very influential for this thesis as he stresses that in order to establish whether or not there was a regional variant of a cult, one must analyse the extent to which certain cultic forms managed to take hold in an area.<sup>46</sup> The factors listed above show the various ways in which the cults of Asclepius adapted to the reality of the Roman Empire. Rüpke argues that

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<sup>42</sup> Rüpke (2011) 23; Rüpke (2015) 333 states that the Empire allowed for a diffusion of ideas and media.

<sup>43</sup> Rüpke (2009) 34-5.

<sup>44</sup> Chaniotis (2009) 27.

<sup>45</sup> Rüpke (2011) 25.

<sup>46</sup> Rüpke (2011) 26.



study of provincial religions allows a scholar to connect a geographically regional perspective of a cult with the global one of the empire as a whole. It is then possible to examine the religions of groups such as the army but also the expansion of certain cultic elements and organisations which are not limited by region, as well as those which are bound to a specific place.<sup>47</sup> He also stresses the role of provincial elites in the importation and adaptation of new cults (see section 3.1) and notes the pivotal phase which preceded the actual conquest, namely the period of trading between Romans and locals.<sup>48</sup>

#### 1.1.4 Conquest and Regionalism

These theories offer a framework for innovative study of the cult of Asclepius and also new perspectives on antiquity. Chaniotis stresses the importance of non-Classical theories for Classical scholarship. He states that:

It is usually expected that classicists import interpretative approaches and theoretical models from other disciplines – the social sciences, literary theory, religious theory etc. Such imports have indeed been fruitful, as long as those who apply them do not forget that the foundation of classical studies is the sources and as long as they are aware of the limitations of theory transfer.<sup>49</sup>

The Imperial period forms an interesting starting point for research on the cult of Asclepius and can show the adaptation of a cult to a new world at the centre of which was the emperor. This is underlined by Chaniotis in a second article where he argues that the establishment of the principate meant that new ritual forms of communication between emperor and subjects were introduced which affected

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<sup>47</sup> Rüpke (2011) 31.

<sup>48</sup> Rüpke (2001) 71, 79.

<sup>49</sup> Chaniotis (2012) 319.

religion. An example of this is the celebration of the emperor's advent to a city (see section 3.4.4).<sup>50</sup>

Roman conquest and the formation of Roman provinces furthermore meant that the nature of religious authority changed. Before the coming of Rome, the governance of rituals was an internal affair. After the conquest, Romans first took up the role of arbitrators in such affairs and later became the ultimate authority over what kind of ritual was appropriate.<sup>51</sup> In the Greek cult it was enough to simply erect a votive but in the Roman worship of Asclepius, public thanks-giving was an important part of the cult as is demonstrated by a 3<sup>rd</sup>-century AD inscription from Rome:

[...]Λουκίῳ πλευρειτικῷ καὶ ἀφηλπισμένῳ ὑπὸ παντὸς ἀνθρώπου ἐχρησμάτισεν ὁ θεὸς ἐλθεῖν καὶ ἐκ τοῦ τριβώμου ἄραι τέφραν καὶ μετ' οἴνου ἀναφυρᾶσαι καὶ ἐπιθεῖναι ἐπὶ τὸ πλευρόν· καὶ ἐσώθη καὶ δημοσίᾳ ἠὲ χαρίστησεν τῷ θεῷ καὶ ὁ δῆμος συνεχάρη αὐτῷ.<sup>52</sup>

Yet, even when a new god was introduced into an area of Roman rule, this did not mean that a new ritual was also introduced. People could worship a new god, or an old god with a new epithet, in old ways.<sup>53</sup> A third explanation for supra-regionalism and regionalism in the cult of Asclepius is that in some cases, cities resisted the homogenisation of religion by reviving ancient local rites and traditions (see section 5.4.5).<sup>54</sup> Ritual transfer did take place and this was heavily influenced by local competition between cities. This competition caused the emulation and diffusion of

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<sup>50</sup> Chaniotis (2009) 6.

<sup>51</sup> Chaniotis (2009) 7.

<sup>52</sup> *IGUR* I 148.6-10: 'Lucius suffered from pleurisy and everyone was without hope for the man. The god came and said to him that he should put ashes onto the triangular altar and mix them with wine and he should put this on his side. And he was saved and gave public thanks to the god and the people rejoiced for him.' All translations are the author's own. This inscription is possibly dated to between AD 212 and 217.

<sup>53</sup> Chaniotis (2009) 20.

<sup>54</sup> Chaniotis (2009) 28; Stek (2015) 9 notes that these ancient rites could either have been real or invented at that time and this harking back is a phenomenon that still occurs in the present age.

rituals but also very importantly it effected differentiation in rites.<sup>55</sup> Thus, it is to be expected that if the emperor or other influential officials showed a strong preference for a particular god or rite, neighbouring cities would seek to raise their own status by also laying claim to this god or rite as seemingly happened when Caracalla patronised the cult of Asclepius at Pergamum (see Chapter 3), but also that they would seek to develop their own cultic version in order to compete with and triumph over their neighbours.

#### 1.1.5 Connectivity and the Mediterranean

Communication is one of the key elements of connectivity. Horden and Purcell examine the central role of the sea in antiquity and how it influenced and shaped the Mediterranean world via its communicatory function.<sup>56</sup> The sea signals the place from where a new region starts: it is a clear and distinct geographical marker which defined the world.<sup>57</sup> This demarcation goes hand in hand with the notion that the sea creates a single entity.<sup>58</sup> Broodbank notes that the centrality of the Mediterranean was already observed in antiquity, as can be seen from ancient maps.<sup>59</sup>

Fragmentation and connectivity were the characteristics of the Mediterranean.<sup>60</sup> Horden and Purcell argue that the sea was a vital tool for communication and that Rome especially depended on the sea for nautical

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<sup>55</sup> Chaniotis (2009) 24-28.

<sup>56</sup> See Broodbank (2013) 18-19 for a section on connectivity scholarship pre-Corrupting Sea.

<sup>57</sup> Horden and Purcell (2000) 22, 445.

<sup>58</sup> Horden and Purcell (2000) 10.

<sup>59</sup> Broodbank (2013) 20. See also Broodbank (2013) Fig. 1.3.

<sup>60</sup> Woolf (2010) 189.

communication with all the far corners of the empire.<sup>61</sup> They note that past scholars already observed that antiquity was continuously ruled by a series of Thalassocracies: whoever governed the sea, controlled communication, and in doing so ruled the Mediterranean.<sup>62</sup> Shaw, who reviewed the work, notes that the authors never explain how and why the sea both isolates and links. He argues that it is probably because the sea allows for more extensive communication but that this would only be available to a few and not to the majority of people.<sup>63</sup> This communication and mobility also affects religious patterns and behaviour as locality is determined by exchanges between people and a mutable group of environmental conditions. Sanctuaries form foci in this system of exchanges and their density and connections give a basic concept of religious geography.<sup>64</sup> The sea once again plays a vital part in this as it is the medium of religious differentiation and the vehicle for divine transformation.<sup>65</sup> However, while the sea can facilitate horizontal transmission of these changes, it can also form a barrier against them.<sup>66</sup> The sea as a blockade then actually promotes cultural differences and works against a Pan-Mediterranean unity.

Voyages and communication played an important role in ancient religion. Travel linked the various sanctuaries and the flexible nature of sacred journeys played a big part in this (see section 3.2.2). These sacred travels involved a discontinuation of normal social life and every journey could turn into a religious one, even if it did not start out that way.<sup>67</sup> In the same fashion, any and every place could turn into a place of contact with the divine.<sup>68</sup> Religious travel played an

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<sup>61</sup> Horden and Purcell (2000) 23.

<sup>62</sup> Horden and Purcell (2000) 24.

<sup>63</sup> Shaw (2001) 423.

<sup>64</sup> Horden and Purcell (2000) 404.

<sup>65</sup> Horden and Purcell (2000) 407.

<sup>66</sup> Horden and Purcell (2000) 408.

<sup>67</sup> Horden and Purcell (2000) 446.

<sup>68</sup> Horden and Purcell (2000) 444.

important part in most cults but was present especially in healing cults and oracles, which often went hand-in-hand.<sup>69</sup> Travel was a common part in the cult of Asclepius, with supplicants journeying great distances to be healed in a particular shrine and individuals importing the cult from far-away mother-sanctuaries. *En masse* group travel is largely unknown, with the exception of the army, and supplicants were largely motivated by their personal concerns.<sup>70</sup> As Asclepius was mainly concerned with the health of the individual, this would have made him especially suited as a god to whom worshippers travelled to supplicate. However, he was also remarkable as the army was one of the main factors in his later dissemination across the Roman provinces. Travel and movement will be key themes of this thesis with every factor for the impact of Empire relying heavily on mobility and connectivity.

Malkin furthers Horden and Purcell's idea of a Mediterranean connectedness. He argues that the Greeks spread across the Mediterranean, founding colonies whose links with their mother-cities reduced the metaphysical distances between these *poleis* and turned the Mediterranean into a 'Small World'.<sup>71</sup> The sea plays a key role in the creation of a small world. It is the factor which allows these connections and migration to take place as it was this seaborne and coastal existence which allowed for the creation of lateral connections.<sup>72</sup> Geographical distance worked the same as temporal distance and awakened the desire to affirm a sameness or *koine*.<sup>73</sup> Through colonisation, the 'Greeks' became aware of their shared culture but also of what their regional idiosyncrasies were. Malkin's theory echoes Whitmarsh's ideas of how the regional is created by the global and that people do not view themselves as being

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<sup>69</sup> Dillon (1997) xiv, 73.

<sup>70</sup> Dillon (1997) xviii.

<sup>71</sup> Malkin (2011) 5.

<sup>72</sup> Malkin (2011) 13.

<sup>73</sup> Malkin (2009) 392.

local until they come into contact with the wider world.<sup>74</sup> Globalism causes an intensified view of localism. These identities were not static and local identity would not have been the same for an individual living at the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> century BC as it would have been for someone living two centuries earlier.<sup>75</sup> The issues of static versus dynamic identities will be addressed in the third chapter, where the influence of imperial patronage on the cult, and the effects this had on individual sanctuaries will be shown.

#### 1.1.6 Impact of Empire

Thus, there are seemingly three factors which could have facilitated regional characteristics in the cult of Asclepius. This thesis aims to examine how these Asclepieian identities were formed by examining the cult in various regions, where the god was worshipped by various groups of people or individuals and seeing how the cult was altered by contact with the Empire in these regions. Only when this is clear will the interconnectedness between these cults become clear. The timeframe for this thesis will extend from 27 BC until Severus Alexander's death in AD 235. The Empire has also been chosen as a time period as during this period many of the factors which may have influenced the cult were created or evolved further, notably emperors and a professional army. It is possible that when the cult of Asclepius came into contact with the Roman Empire, it was transformed in certain ways. Each sanctuary could show distinct rites which were specific to that one locality alone. It also seems imaginable that increased mobility in this period resulted in a global cult

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<sup>74</sup> Whitmarsh (2010) 2.

<sup>75</sup> Wallace-Hadrill (2012) 375.

which would have facilitated transference and dissemination of the cult.<sup>76</sup> Mobility and movement will be the key themes for this thesis as the factors analysed here relied on mobility to reach other areas. This will be shown predominantly via travelling emperors and by the movements of the army. Both of these influenced the cult in the areas they reached but in different ways. Emperors visited and altered existing sanctuaries whereas the army brought the god with them and facilitated the creation of new cult places. Mobility facilitated the creation of cultic choice.

The language of dedication constantly changed during antiquity: for example during the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC dedications started to be called ‘thank-offerings’, signalling a closer relationship with the god. An interesting development occurred during the Empire as there is evidence that during the Imperial period, gods became more heedful of their dedicators’ offerings but that they also became more demanding by sending instructions via dreams and oracles, which was shown in inscribed dedications by the term ‘hearing/ἐπηκόω’.<sup>77</sup> This term also occurred in many Asclepieian inscriptions such as this 2<sup>nd</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup>-century BC dedication from Attica:

Ἀθηνόδωρος  
Ἀσκληπιῶ ἐπη –  
κόω εὐχὴν ἀ-  
νέθηκε.<sup>78</sup>

This indicates that there is scope for research into the impact of the Roman Empire on the cult of Asclepius. This period, furthermore, has been chosen, as the cult in the Roman era, especially in the provinces, has been overlooked by most research of the cult of Asclepius. Emblematic of this are Jurgen Riethmüller who focuses mainly on

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<sup>76</sup> Chaniotis (2009) 20.

<sup>77</sup> Bodel (2009) 21; Rüpke (2009) 34.

<sup>78</sup> *IG II<sup>2</sup> 4527*: ‘Athenodorus dedicated this votive to Asclepius the Listener’ (2<sup>nd</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> century BC).

the sanctuaries of mainland Greece in the Classical and Hellenistic eras and Milena Melfi whose excellent work does examine the cult in the Roman era but focuses on the mainland and Greek islands.<sup>79</sup>

### 1.1.7 Dissemination

It is, therefore, clear that an awareness of a cult's dissemination is vital for understanding how regional and global elements functioned and in what ways they were connected. Davies offers an excellent case-study in his work on the spread of the Apollonian cult titles *Pythios* and *Pythion* of why understanding dissemination matters. These were originally locational epithets and it was unusual for these to spread beyond their sanctuary.<sup>80</sup> As they did do so, there must be an explanation for this, one understood in terms of geography, human need, and cult transferral.<sup>81</sup> Although, Davies did not find a reason for the dispersal of these epithets, he makes several valuable observations about dissemination of cults in general. Davies sets out methods of cultic movement which are shown in column one in the table below. The second column shows how they relate to the cult of Asclepius.<sup>82</sup>

	Davies	Asclepius
1	Top-Down Spread	Yes – Emperors and elites worshipped Asclepius and boosted the cult
2	The building up of local divinities as symbols of domestic identity	Yes – The Thessalian hero Asclepius evolved into the god Asclepius
3	The cult centre which disseminates itself and its deity	Yes – Epidaurus
4	A divine command, such as an oracle, orders the establishment of the cult	Yes – the Roman cult was established on the recommendation of the Sibylline

<sup>79</sup> Riethmüller (2005) Vols. 1 and 2; Melfi (2007a and b).

<sup>80</sup> Davies (2005) 57.

<sup>81</sup> Davies (2005) 57.

<sup>82</sup> First column from Davies (2005) 61-2.



		Books
5	An individual has a divine epiphany and the community later formally recognises the cult	Yes – Telemachus in Athens
6	The individual takes the initiative but the cult remains private	No
7	Native deities were set up abroad by slaves, mercenaries, <i>metics</i> and freedmen	Yes - Soldiers transported local version of the god – CIL 6.2799
8	Cultic practices which originate from an unexpected event such as a lightning strike or plague	Yes – the cults at both Athens and Rome were founded after a plague

Table 1: Reasons for the dissemination of a cult and its application to the cult of Asclepius with data from Davies (2005).

The cult of Asclepius was disseminated in seven out of the eight stated methods, demonstrating the diversity of reasons behind the cult's spread. Davies states that these approaches show the commonest factors behind a community's decision to import a cult and bind a god's powers.<sup>83</sup> The spread of the cult is very important for this thesis as its purpose is to show the influence of Rome on the cult through its global and regional characteristics. These can only be fully understood if the connections between these sanctuaries can be traced and related to one another. The cult has a further reason for being a good case-study for this as it promoted both kinds of religious travel. Individuals travelled great distances to worship the god in a specific place but group travel, in the only form in which it really took place namely the army, also took place and was especially influential in the cult's spread in the Roman era. Davies' research into Apollonian epithets, a god closely related to Asclepius, therefore, offers vital insights into parallels for the dissemination of divine cults in antiquity.

### 1.1.8 Religious Change in the Provinces

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<sup>83</sup> Davies (2005) 62.

Having examined various methodologies which will be adopted in this thesis, this section will look at the impact of Rome on a number of non-Asclepieian religions and cult. This is done in order to place Asclepius within his proper religious context and to illustrate parallel effects in other, non-Asclepieian, cults, which indicates the further scope on the impact of the Roman Empire on cults. Most studies concerned with associations between native gods and Romans focus on *interpretatio Romana*. This is mainly taken to mean that similar ideas of the deities involved showed links between Roman and native deities and that the Romans introduced these connections (see Chapter 5).<sup>84</sup> However, the development of religion should be seen as being ruled by an intricate negotiation between external and internal devices and desires, i.e. via contact between the goals and wishes of Imperial government and those of the native population with their regional variations.<sup>85</sup> Derks cautions against the use of the term *interpretatio Romana* as it implies that the Roman and native deity are identical and implies that the native gods have the same capabilities as those of the Roman gods.<sup>86</sup> However, as a tool for understanding the impact of Rome on cults it is of vital importance and also a good descriptive term. It is also important to understand the difference in Roman attitudes towards the east and the west. Their ‘ethic of civilisation’ meant that in the Greek world Rome claimed to restore discipline after the conquest whereas in the barbarian west Rome created order.<sup>87</sup>

The cult of Jupiter Dolichenus is a good example of the impact of empire on a cult. Nothing is known about the cult’s theology; it is only identified from about

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<sup>84</sup> Derks (1991) 236.

<sup>85</sup> Alcock (1997) 105 also notes the great differences in the development of the provinces which resulted in greatly varied landscapes in each individual province.

<sup>86</sup> Derks (1991) 249.

<sup>87</sup> Whittaker (1997) 144.

430 dedications which reveal the cult's distribution pattern.<sup>88</sup> Dolichenus was a Hittite deity assimilated with Jupiter, but nothing is reported about the god from between the late Hittite period and 64 BC when Rome annexed Syria.<sup>89</sup> Religious syncretism is especially noteworthy as it concerns an essential aspect of cultic change.<sup>90</sup> The cult boomed in popularity between AD 125 and 230 particularly among the northern frontiers and was especially popular with the army but was also worshipped by civilians.<sup>91</sup> In Rome itself there were three probable cult sites: a civilian cult on the Aventine; a mixed civilian and military cult on the Esquiline; and probably a cult for cavalymen on the Caelian.<sup>92</sup> The god also does not seem to have been particularly worshipped by Syrian units but was worshipped by soldiers from all over the empire.<sup>93</sup> Depictions of the god were fairly homogeneous which, together with a relatively short period of transmission, Collar takes to mean that the cult travelled in a coherent and unified form through established social networks.<sup>94</sup> She argues that people who worshipped this god were already in place and formed an open system of communication, namely Roman army officers.<sup>95</sup> This was because people's social ties would facilitate the spread of ideas.<sup>96</sup> The officers would have had close ties with comrades-in-arms and the spread of the cult would have been facilitated by the frequent movement of officers between legions and across the

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<sup>88</sup> Collar (2011) 217.

<sup>89</sup> Speidel (1978) 1.

<sup>90</sup> Haynes (1993) 141.

<sup>91</sup> Collar (2013) 79. Collar (2013) 93-4 connects the cult especially with the army as she states that of the 430 known inscriptions fifty-nine are uninscribed but of the rest 121 can be linked with the military. She also adds that a further forty-eight inscriptions can be connected with the army through geographical proximity to army sites. This would mean that 257 dedications are not connected to the military in any way (i.e. the majority). For a similar discussion for military involvement in the early spread of the cult of Mithras see section 4.1.1.

<sup>92</sup> Speidel (1978) 12.

<sup>93</sup> Haynes (1993) 149.

<sup>94</sup> He is generally depicted in the west wearing military dress consisting of a leather kilt, cloak, breastplate, greaves and sword which was a common representation for eastern deities. The god was also usually accompanied by a bull: Collar (2013) 88-9, see Collar p.88, Fig. 3.2.

<sup>95</sup> Collar (2011) 226.

<sup>96</sup> Collar (2013) 3.

empire. There would then have been a trickle-down effect which is indicated by a larger number of officer than soldier dedications.<sup>97</sup> These religious innovations would have moved through receptive social space.<sup>98</sup> Evidence also suggests that people worshipped the god as he came and supplemented their dedications as they were accustomed to.<sup>99</sup> A local interpretation of a cult is, thus, shown by the case-study of Jupiter Dolichenus.

In this case, the regional version was taken up by the army and spread across the Roman Empire. Worship of this god was introduced by the army to the civilian population, who then took up this worship. It is possible that Asclepius too was transported into various regions of the empire via the army and was introduced to local populations, most notably to the Balkan and Danube provinces (see Chapter 4), in a way which may have been similar to that of Jupiter Dolichenus. The soldiers, for whom Asclepius was a natural god to worship on account of his healing powers, may have imported the god and introduced his worship to locals.

Woolf's article on 'The Religion of the Roman Diaspora' also raises a number of interesting points. He notes the phenomenon of religious change when a cult is introduced into a new territory. Some cultic elements were less portable than others, some less important or more, and sometimes substitution or syncretism took place.<sup>100</sup> He notes that many of the Roman priesthoods, such as the *flamen dialis*, are not found anywhere other than Rome and are, thus, an example of cultic elements which did not travel well and were bound to a single place. For the cult of Asclepius, this means that scholars should expect a high degree of regionalism in each cultic

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<sup>97</sup> Collar (2011) 227. Collar (2013) 113 states that there was an increase in dedications to the god after AD 160 which could be explained by the epigraphic habit but she sees this as an information cascade which was the result of the activation of an *a priori* established military network.

<sup>98</sup> Collar (2011) 236.

<sup>99</sup> Collar (2011) 220.

<sup>100</sup> Woolf (2009) 245.

centre. Woolf also notes that soldiers freed from the restraints of the city were free to take with them whichever cultic elements they wished, facilitating the creation of a regional cult.<sup>101</sup> As will be argued in Chapters 4 and 5, soldiers played an important role in the Roman dissemination of the cult of Asclepius and as a result it is perhaps possible to expect a cult which was tailored to military needs.

This chapter has shown why the cult of Asclepius is such an excellent case-study for showing the impact of Empire and has also examined various theories in religious scholarship. When people and sanctuaries became cognisant of their place within the Empire, they also gained an interest in their regional version of the cult. This increased interest in a regional character of the cult could have one of three reasons behind it: firstly that for the local cult to exist, it needed to have a global cult to define itself against; secondly, that there existed an active competition between cities and cults in which the regional characteristics were stressed in order to make one particular cult appear supreme; thirdly, that cities actually resisted homogenisation and globalism by reviving ancient local rites and traditions in order to preserve their regional character. There was, thus, interreliance between regional and global cultic identities. When examining cultic aspects in the various sanctuaries, it will be interesting to note which aspects of the god these shrines chose to incorporate. The avoidance of unsuitable rites or the incorporation of new, specifically regional, elements will be a determining factor in showing to what extent there was a regional cult of Asclepius and also the impact of Rome on the cult.

This thesis, then, will offer new insight into the cult of Asclepius as scholarship has generally mainly focussed on either the cult in the Classical period or examined the cult in specific sanctuaries without looking at how a shrine fitted into

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<sup>101</sup> Woolf (2009) 251.

the global net of Asclepieia. This work aims to research the impact of the Roman Empire on the cult of Asclepius by looking at the global and regional cult in the Roman provinces. The advent of the Empire may have augmented the global nature of Asclepieian cults and this thesis aims to explore this and the ways in which regionalism in the cult also changed and increased under the principate. Sanctuaries would have perceived themselves as being interconnected to some extent due to the competition which seemingly existed between them, where they were all vying to be the number one Asclepieion in the Mediterranean.

Based on the various theories offered by scholars above, it would, therefore, be possible to expect that the Roman cult of Asclepius had both a global and a regional character in each cult site and that it should be possible to show the impact of Empire on the nature of Asclepieian cults. The creation of distinct characters should be more vivid in this period than in the previous Classical and Hellenistic eras. This thesis aims to bring new depth into studies on Asclepius by addressing the issue of the effect of Rome on the cult, especially in the Roman provinces. The geographical scope for this work will be North Africa, Egypt, Asia Minor, Italy, Greece, and the Balkan and Danube regions.

#### 1.1.9 Asclepieian Scholarship

Riethmüller has compiled a list of bibliographic references to 2002 which is when his PhD thesis was submitted.<sup>102</sup> However, Renberg (2009) points out that this is by no means complete and makes several important omissions such as L. R. LiDonnici (1995) *The Epidaurian Miracle Inscriptions: Text, Translation and*

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<sup>102</sup> Riethmüller (2005) 1.22-30.

*Commentary*. Scholars Press: Atlanta.<sup>103</sup> The most important works of scholars working in the Asclepieian field will be listed here, grouped together by subject matter. This is not a comprehensive overview but has as its goal to cover the works which have had the greatest impact, covered in the period since 2002:

The first group is concerned with studies pertaining to a certain geographical area:

Wickkiser, B. L. (2010) 'Asklepios in Greek and Roman Corinth.' In S.J. Friessen and S.A. James (eds.) *Corinth in context: Studies in Antiquity*. Brill: Leiden, 37-66.

Petsalis-Diomidis, A. (2010) *Truly Beyond Wonders: Aelius Aristides and the Cult of Asklepios*. Oxford University Press: Oxford.

Benseddik, N. (2010a) *Esculape et Hygie en Afrique*. De Boccard: Paris.

Wesch-Klein, G. (2009) 'Gesundheit spendende Gottheiten des römischen Heeres.' in C. Wolff and Y. Le Bohec (eds) *L'armée romaine et la religion: actes du quatrième Congrès de Lyon (26-28 octobre 2006)*. De Boccard: Paris, 99-120.

Wickkiser, B. L. (2008) *Asklepios, Medicine, and the Politics of Healing in fifth-century Greece: Between Craft and Cult*. Johns Hopkins University Press: Baltimore.

Mitchell-Boyask, R. (2008) *Plague and the Athenian Imagination: Drama, History, and the Cult of Asclepius*. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge.

Benseddik, N. (2007) 'Esculape, l'Afrique et la Grèce.' *Ktema* 32, 193-206.

Melfi, M. (2007a) *I santuari di Asclepio in Grecia. I*. L'Erma di Bretschneider: Roma.

Melfi, M. (2007b) *Il santuario di Asclepio a Lebena*. Scuola Archeologica Italiana di Atene: Roma.

Mitchell-Boyask, R. (2007) 'The Athenian Asklepieion and the End of the « Philoctetes ».' *TAPhA* 137 (1), 85-114.

Bouzek, J. (2006) 'Die Ursprünge des Thrakischen Reiters' in: S. Conrad and

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<sup>103</sup> Renberg (2009). See Chapter 2 for LiDonnici.

M. Oppermann (eds.) *Pontos Euxeinos, Beiträge zur Archäologie und Geschichte des antiken Schwarzmeer- und Balkanraumes*. Beier and Beran: Langenweißbach, 221-227. Renberg, G. H. (2006/7) 'Public and Private Places of Worship in the Cult of Asclepius at Rome.' *MAAR* 51, 87-172. Sineux, P. (2006) 'Le sanctuaire d'Asklépios à Lébèna: l'ombre de Gortyne.' *RH* 130 (3), 589-608. Benseddik, N. (2005) 'Esculape et Hygie: les cultes guérisseurs en Afrique.' *Pallas* 68: 271-288. Aston, E. (2004) 'Asclepius and the Legacy of Thessaly.' *CQ* 54 (1), 18-32. Kranz, P. (2004) *Pergameus Deus: archäologische und numismatische Studien zu den Darstellungen des Asklepios in Pergamon während Hellenismus und Kaiserzeit*. Bibliopolis: Möhnesee.

The second group examines or revises evidence for the cult, for example, numismatic and epigraphic:

Prignitz, S. (2014) *Bauurkunden und Bauprogramm von Epidauros (400-350): Asklepiostempel, Tholos, Kultbild, Brunnenhaus*. Vestigia Bd 67. Verlag C. H. Beck: Munich. Solin, H. (2013) 'Inchriftliche Wunderheilungsberichte aus Epidauros.' *ZAC* 17 (1), 7-50. Ahearne-Kroll, S. P. (2013) 'The Afterlife of a Dream and the Ritual System of the Epidaurian Asklepieion.' *ARG* 15, 35-51. Salta, M. (2012) 'Gliederweihungen in attischen Heiligtümern: die Weihung des Praxias im Athener Asklepieion' *Hephaistos* 29, 87-120. Sioumpara, E. P. (2011) *Der Asklepios-Tempel von Messene auf der Peloponnes: Untersuchungen zur hellenistischen Tempelarchitektur*. Hirmer: Munich. Wickkiser, B. L. (2011) 'IG II<sup>2</sup> 4963 and the Priesthood of Asklepios in Athens.' *ZPE* 179, 123-125. Haymann, F. (2010) 'Caracalla in Aigeai: ein neues Tetradrachmon und weitere numismatische Belege.' *JNG* 60, 145-165. Wickkiser, B. L. (2009) 'A chariot for Asklepios:



SEG 25.226.' *ZPE* 168, 199-201. Nunziata, L. (2008) '« Aesculapius in insula »: nuovo frammento epigrafico in lingua latina dall'isola Tiberina.' *BCAR* 109, 57-60. Bosnakis, D. and K. Hallof (2005) 'Alte und neue Inschriften aus Kos. 2.' *Chiron* 35, 219-272.

The third group is focussed on the medical aspects of the cult of Asclepius:

Nissen, C. (2007) 'Asclépios et les médecins d'après les inscriptions grecques: des relations culturelles.' *MedSec* 19 (3), 721-744. Turfa, J. M. (2006) 'Was There Room for Healing in the Healing Sanctuaries?' *ARG* 8, 63-80. Wickkiser, B. L. (2006) 'Chronicles of chronic cases and tools of the trade at Asklepieia.' *ARG* 8, 25-40. Künzl, E. (2005) 'Aesculapius im « valetudinarium ».' *AKB* 35 (1), 55-64

## 1.2 Impact of Rome on Asclepius

This thesis aims to examine the impact of Rome on the cult of Asclepius. Even though the cult had flourished in the classical and Hellenistic eras, a secondary dissemination took place during the Roman Empire when the cult moved into the Roman provinces via, among others, the army. The Roman Imperial era has often been overlooked by Asclepieian scholars who prefer to focus on the Classical Greek cult. However, Asclepieian worship became more multifaceted over time and the Empire is a highly important period for understanding the nature of the cult. It is only when the global and regional aspects of the cult are examined that it will be possible to show whether Rome did have an impact on the cult, changing it in various ways and expanding worship. As a result of increased mobility in this period the creation of a global cult would have been more possible than before and this

movement would have also facilitated transference and dissemination of the cult. Various factors have been isolated as vital for research into the impact of Rome on the cult and they will be discussed in the following chapters.

The second chapter will examine the cult of Asclepius prior to the Roman era as it is only possible to understand the impact of the Roman Empire and the effects and changes it brought with it when the history and nature of the cult in the preceding period are known. A survey of major cult-sites before 27 BC will be presented as well as a case-study on the occurrence of epithets within the cult. Statue iconography will also be discussed here which is the main art form relevant to uncovering the impact of Empire on the cult as anatomical ex-votives ceased to be dedicated after the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC.

The third chapter of this thesis will focus specifically on Roman imperial worship of the cult. Emperors in general had a resounding impact on the cults of the empire and their influence on the cult of Asclepius will also be shown. Not all emperors worshipped Asclepius to the same extent: Hadrian and Caracalla especially patronised the cult, whereas others such as Vespasian and Titus interacted with the cult on a lesser scale. However, Asclepius as guarantor of the empire's wellbeing and the health of the emperor made him an attractive deity for them to worship. A sub-theme of connection and competition between sanctuaries will also be addressed here. This theme, and that of mobility, will also occur in other chapters.

The fourth chapter will examine the Roman army and how it worshipped the god. The influence of the army on other cults in the empire will also be explored. Asclepius in his role as a healing deity was a logical choice for soldiers to worship due to the perilous nature of their profession. This chapter focuses specifically on the cult in the Balkan and Danube provinces and examines issues of mobility and

dedicatory identity within the cult there. It will examine the effects of army movements around the empire and how this facilitated multi-directional religious transfer between Rome and the provinces.

The fifth chapter looks at syncretism in the cult especially in Roman North Africa. It will first examine what is precisely understood by the term syncretism and then how this occurs within the cult of Asclepius. The worship of the syncretic god Eshmun-Asclepius will then be compared with that of the regular god Asclepius and it will be shown how it was possible to have multiple versions of the same god in one area and how these different gods were supplicated by and appropriate for different groups of worshippers. Mobility and increased choice through mobility will be key themes for this chapter. The army was especially influential in the dissemination of the cult in Roman North Africa and it will be possible to examine how the cult flourished in military circumstances.

The key questions that this thesis aims to ask are: How did the Roman Empire impact upon the cult of Asclepius? By which factors did this impact take place? How are global and regional cult identities articulated in response to each other as a result of this impact? How did increased connectivity between areas play an important part in the creation and stimulation of cultic identities? Did Asclepius' spheres of influence grow or adapt as a result of Roman benefactions? How did increased mobility influence the impact of Empire? and What were the provincial responses to Roman worship and dissemination of the cult?

## Chapter 2: Asclepius before the Roman Imperial Period

### 2.0 Introduction: The Pre-Imperial Cult

The cult of the god Asclepius is believed to have originated in either Tricca in Thessaly or in Epidaurus at some time during the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC. Worship of Asclepius continued and flourished throughout antiquity; by the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> century AD the cult of Asclepius had been disseminated all over the ancient Graeco-Roman world. The god was known in different guises before the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC and the physician Asclepius is mentioned a number of times in Homer.<sup>104</sup> Myth relates that Apollo, who was also worshipped as a healing deity, was believed to be Asclepius' father.<sup>105</sup> In many locations, such as Corinth, the cult of Asclepius was introduced to a sanctuary previously dedicated to Apollo. Over time, Asclepius' worship eclipsed that of his father as a healing god and worship of Apollo became secondary to that of Asclepius, something which happened, for example, at Epidaurus.<sup>106</sup> At some point the Delphic oracle ratified the cult of Asclepius, which had numerous important effects on the cult such as recommending the founding of a number of Asclepieia; legitimising him as the son of Apollo and Coronis; confirming Epidaurus as the god's birth-place; and also sanctioning his position as a healer.<sup>107</sup> This approval mattered greatly for the spread of the cult, with sanctuaries being established in most Greek cities, including Delphi, where a sacred precinct was granted to Asclepius at the end of the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC, something which furthered

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<sup>104</sup> Hom. *Il.* 2.729-33, 4.193; Hom. Hymn Asc.

<sup>105</sup> Apollod *Bibl.* 3.10.3; Paus. 2.26.4ff.

<sup>106</sup> Tomlinson (1983) 22-23. See also Chapter 4 on Eshmun-Asclepius.

<sup>107</sup> Paus. 2.26.7; Nutton (2013) 105.

connections with Apollo.<sup>108</sup> Delphi ratified a number of Asclepieia and played an important role in the early history of the cult (see below). However, under the Roman Empire the role of Delphi changed and the oracle stopped playing a significant part in the cult. The early emperors did not consult the oracle as much as Hellenic kings and cities had.<sup>109</sup> The number of dedications declined and while there was a level of interest from some of the emperors in Delphi, over time the sanctuary changed from an important consultation data-hub to a tourist attraction which engaged with memory and history (see also section 3.3).<sup>110</sup>

This chapter will examine Asclepieian cults in the Classical and Hellenistic eras up to the age of Augustus. As the Roman Imperial era from 27 BC to the death of Severus Alexander is the time-period for this thesis, it is necessary first to provide an overview of the cult up to that point in order to be able to explore how matters within the cult changed during the Roman Empire. This chapter will, therefore, explore the dissemination of the cult and the methods by which this happened within the pre-Augustan cult. Regional and more generic characteristics of the cult will be examined and also how external factors, such as the patronage of Hellenistic kings, influenced the cult. This chapter will start by examining the earliest available source on Asclepius, namely Homer, and the view he presented of the god and the later ramifications of this. The general dissemination of the cult will then be discussed and the four main cult-sites of Asclepius, namely Epidaurus, Athens, Cos, and Pergamum, and the sanctuaries in Italy will also be examined in more detail. These cult-sites will each be discussed further for the Roman period in the subsequent

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<sup>108</sup> Edelstein and Edelstein (1998) 2.121. Delphi's ratification of a cult did not affect the sovereignty of a *polis* but should rather be seen as another way of adding prestige to a cult.

<sup>109</sup> Scott (2014) 204.

<sup>110</sup> Scott (2014) 219.

chapters. A general discussion on epithets and their use within the cult will follow this and the chapter will conclude with a survey of Asclepieian iconography.

## 2.1 Homeric Origins

Homer is the earliest source who mentions Asclepius but he does so only very briefly:

οἱ δ' εἶχον Τρίκκην καὶ Ἴθώμην κλωμακόεσσαν,  
οἳ τ' ἔχον Οἰχαλίην πόλιν Εὐρύτου Οἰχαλιῆος,  
τῶν αὖθ' ἠγείσθην Ἀσκληπιόο δύο παῖδε, ἱητῆρ'  
ἀγαθῶ, Ποδαλείριος ἠδὲ Μαχάων.<sup>111</sup>

This passage is very important as it lies at the core of a long-standing debate in Asclepieian scholarship as to the birth-place of the god. Epidaurus claimed that Asclepius was born on Mount Kynortion which overlooked the sanctuary. The sanctuary had the Delphic oracle pronounce it to be the true birthplace over rival claims.<sup>112</sup> However, the earlier Homeric passages, and also those in Hesiod and Pindar, led to some debate already in antiquity about whether or not Asclepius originated in Tricca in Thessaly.<sup>113</sup> The earliest Asclepieian material from Epidaurus dates to the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC although there is some earlier material from the site which was originally dedicated to Apollo Maleatas.<sup>114</sup> The sanctuary at Tricca has not yet been found or excavated, making it impossible to state with certainty which

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<sup>111</sup> Hom. *Il.* 2.729-33: 'And they held Tricca and rocky Ithome, and Oechalia, the city of Oechalian Eurytus, and these were led by the two sons of Asclepius, good physicians, Podaleirus and Machaon. Willcock uses *όο* and not *ου* which is in the MSS as he notes that this does not scan correctly as the second syllable is short. He believes that at some point there was a genitive of the *-ος* declension in *-οο*, intermediate between *-οιο* and *-ου*. See Willcock (2004) 207, n.518.

<sup>112</sup> Paus. 2.26.7.

<sup>113</sup> Hes. *Frag.* 53a, b; Pind. *Pyth.* 3.5-6; Edelstein and Edelstein (1998) 2.71.

<sup>114</sup> Tomlinson (1983) 12.

of the two was the older shrine. Riethmüller notes that all of the major cities in Thessaly, such as Larisa and Pharsalus, had Asclepieia. He states that there are twenty-one sanctuaries which can be definitely be ascribed to Asclepius and four to six which are possible sites of the god.<sup>115</sup> There is a clear concentration of Asclepieia in the east of the region, Pelasgiotis, the area where Asclepius is said to have originated. None of the excavated sanctuaries can be dated before the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC.

The Homeric Hymn to Asclepius adds to the Thessalian connection as it claims that the god was born on the Dotian plain.<sup>116</sup> This version of events is taken up by later authors such as Ovid who states that Asclepius' mother, Coronis, was the most beautiful girl in all of Thessaly, and Strabo who calls the god 'the Triccan Asclepius', stating that Tricca was the god's first sanctuary.<sup>117</sup> Aston comments on the fact that for Homer, Asclepius is nothing but a mortal healer and that he makes no reference to any Asclepieian hero-cult. She argues that Homer in general shows little awareness of the cult-aspect of heroes as for him they are just superhumanly good fighters. However, if by Homer's time Tricca was an important sanctuary of the god, it would make sense for the poet to make reference to it in order to acknowledge its pre-eminent status.<sup>118</sup> Homer generally eschewed magical elements and no reference was made to any later cult of other heroes such as Achilles or Menelaus.<sup>119</sup> The absence of any mention of an Asclepieian cult in Homer could,

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<sup>115</sup> Riethmüller (2005) 1.78.

<sup>116</sup> Hom. Hymn Asc; Strabo 9.5.22 states that the plain is located in the centre of Thessaly and is surrounded by hills. It is located near the Perrhaebia, Ossa, and Lake Boebeis.

<sup>117</sup> Ov. *Met.* 2.542-632; Strabo 9.5.17.

<sup>118</sup> Aston (2004) 25; Edelstein and Edelstein (1998) 2.17 state that in historical times Tricca was a renowned town in Thessaly.

<sup>119</sup> Griffin (2001) 44-5: Griffin points out how Homer focuses on the death of a hero and his subsequent descent to the gloom and dark of Hades. In this scenario there was no posthumous light or blessing for the hero in Homer. The notable exception to this is the episode of Achilles' horses see *Iliad* 19.392ff. The cult of Achilles at the tumulus at Troy is mainly known from literary sources and drew worshippers such as Alexander the Great and Caracalla but the cult was found in a number of places across the ancient world: Hedreen (1991) 313-4; Strabo 13.1.32. Menelaus was worshipped

therefore, be more a reflection on Homer's attitude towards gods, heroes, and men than on the cult of Asclepius at the time of composition. By the time the cult of Asclepius gained importance in the Greek world in the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC, it was not of a hero but of a god. If Asclepius was a hero for Homer, the transition between hero and god had to have happened before the 5<sup>th</sup> century. Another reference to Asclepius makes clear that Homer viewed Asclepius as a hero as he is called the 'ἀμόμνος ἰητήρως/blameless physician' (see sections 3.1 and 4.2 for Asclepius' relations with doctors).<sup>120</sup> Other Homeric kings healed wounds but none was ever designated as a physician; only heroes received this epithet.<sup>121</sup> This appellation makes clear that Asclepius was not just a mortal king but was, in some form or other, suprahuman. Asclepius' son Machaon is elevated above all other heroes with regards to healing as it is he whom Agamemnon summoned to heal Menelaus when he was grievously wounded in battle.<sup>122</sup> Only a hero would have been capable of this feat of healing in Homer.<sup>123</sup>

## 2.2 Dissemination

Despite his presence in Homer, the cult of the god only spread throughout Greece in the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC and the first datable mention of an Asclepieion is that on Aegina as Aristophanes' *Wasps*, staged in 422 BC, mentions this shrine.<sup>124</sup> The cult was introduced at Athens in 420 BC (see below). Asclepius reached Olympia at this time, as Pausanias comments on a couple of statues dedicated to him and Hygeia

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near Sparta: see the Menelaion shrine which is located east of Sparta in the plain of the Eurotas: see Catling (1975) for an excavation report on the site.

<sup>120</sup> Hom. *Il.* 4.194.

<sup>121</sup> Edelstein and Edelstein (1998) 2.3.

<sup>122</sup> Hom. *Il.* 4.192-219.

<sup>123</sup> Edelstein and Edelstein (1998) 2.7.

<sup>124</sup> Ar. *Vesp.* 121-3.



by a Micythus of Rhegium, and also Corinth, where he was housed in a sanctuary of Apollo.<sup>125</sup> He was housed here until the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC when the whole sanctuary was rebuilt in his name.<sup>126</sup> Other sanctuaries such as at Mantinea, Sicyon, and Cyllene were also founded in the 5<sup>th</sup> century, indicating that the Peloponnese was quickly becoming a focal point for Asclepieia, as is shown by Riethmüller who states that there were twenty-three sanctuaries in total there.<sup>127</sup> The other listed sanctuaries show that Asclepius was spreading quickly to most other areas of the Greek world. During the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC more than 200 Asclepieia were founded. In the Peloponnese the cult spread to such *poleis* as Troezen, Halieis, and Gortys.<sup>128</sup> Messene, which grew to be an important centre for healing with its own version of the Asclepieian origin-myth, was also founded in the 4<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>129</sup> Sanctuaries were also founded in Euboea, Lebena, Locris, Naupactus, and even Epirus.<sup>130</sup> The cult also spread to Greek colonies such as Balagrae in North Africa, which was an Epidaurian offshoot, Tarentum in Southern Italy, and Akragras in Sicily (see below).<sup>131</sup> Other important sanctuaries which were founded at this time were Cos and Pergamum, both at around 350 BC, and Rome in 293 BC (see below).<sup>132</sup>

The sites mentioned here show that Asclepius did not reach all areas of Greece, with Boeotia not having any sanctuaries at this time. In his catalogue, Riethmüller lists only five sanctuaries in this area, indicating that the cult never

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<sup>125</sup> Paus. 5.26.2 states that this Micythus is the same as the one mentioned in Herodotus 7.170 who was the slave of Anaxilas, tyrant of Rhegium who reigned in the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC; Lang (1977) 3-4.

<sup>126</sup> Lang (1977) 9.

<sup>127</sup> Wickkiser (2008) 36; Paus. 8.9.1; Strabo 8.3.4; Riethmüller (2005) 1.78.

<sup>128</sup> Edelstein and Edelstein (1998) 2.246-7; Troezen: Paus. 2.32.4; Halieis: *IG IV*<sup>2</sup> 1.121.33; Gortys: Paus. 8.28.1, 8.47.1.

<sup>129</sup> Paus. 2.26.7.

<sup>130</sup> Edelstein and Edelstein (1998) 2.247; Wickkiser (2008) 37; Euboea: *IG XII.9.194*; Lebena: Philostrat. V. A. 4.34; Locris: Paus. 10.38.13; Naupactus: Paus. 10.28.13; Epirus: Polyb. 21.27.2.

<sup>131</sup> Wickkiser (2008) 37.

<sup>132</sup> Cos: Herzog and Schazmann (1932) 75; Pergamum: Paus. 2.26.8; Rome: Livy *Per.* 11.

became very popular here.<sup>133</sup> This was perhaps because the Boeotians had no need for Asclepius at this time as they had their own healing divinity, Trophonius, and Amphiaraus was also close at hand.<sup>134</sup> The cult spread to the Cycladic Islands such as Delos, where the connection between Asclepius and Apollo is once again shown. The Delian Asclepieion is especially interesting as, like Athens, it inscribed a number of temple inventories which indicate the types of items which were dedicated to the god here.<sup>135</sup>

### 2.2.1 Epidaurus

Origin myths name Epidaurus as the god's birthplace, something which was confirmed by the Delphic oracle, thus making it the principal sanctuary to the god in the Graeco-Roman world.<sup>136</sup> The sanctuary is located southwest of the *polis* of Epidaurus and the cult of Asclepius was established here in the 5<sup>th</sup> century and was added to the sanctuary of Apollo Maleatas whose cult had existed from the 8<sup>th</sup> century onwards.<sup>137</sup> The cult's development was slow in its early days as Epidaurus-town suffered from political rivalries with other *poleis* and was not in a position to flourish.<sup>138</sup>

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<sup>133</sup> Riethmüller (2005) 1.79. He also notes that only Roman statuettes were found in Plataea, Sorosberg, and in Tanagra which could also have been dedicated to Amphiaraus.

<sup>134</sup> Amphiaraus was located in Oropus and Trophonius' cult centre was at Lebadeia in Boeotia; Paus. 1.34; Edelstein and Edelstein (1998) 2.248.

<sup>135</sup> The sanctuary was built here at the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC. See *IDelos* 223.B39 and *IDelos* 226.B7 for early mentions of the cult. *IDelos* 1417B102 for the Inventories dated to 155 BC. See also Scott (2011) 244-45 who comments that the sheer size of these inventories makes reading them very difficult and <http://www.brynmawr.edu/classics/Delian/minor%20Delian%20treasures/Asklepieion.pdf> for text and commentary on the Inventories.

<sup>136</sup> Paus. 2.26.4-5.

<sup>137</sup> LiDonnici (1995) 5; Melfi (2007a) 24 fig. 4; Tomlinson (1983) 22. One of the earliest dedications is an inscribed *patera* from the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC which states: Μικύλος dedicated this to Asclepius/τῷ Αἰσκλαπιῶ ἀνέθεκε Μικύλος; *IG* IV<sup>2</sup> 1.136. This was written in an early form of the Argive Greek script.

<sup>138</sup> Tomlinson (1983) 23.

Tomlinson argues that it was the Athenian plague which advanced the god's worship. The town was attacked during the Peloponnesian war by Athenian soldiers who could have carried the plague with them.<sup>139</sup> The Epidaurians would have sought healing but it would also have been an opportunity for the Athenians to come into contact with this healing deity. The sanctuary attained international status in the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC as is attested by a grand rebuilding programme. Many *theoriai* were sent out to other *poleis* in order to seek affirmation of the new position which Epidaurus held.<sup>140</sup> Epidaurus' new status is also shown in the fact that many people travelled great distances to attend the festival and that many *poleis* also sent embassies to attend these rites.

There is evidence that Epidaurus was the mother-sanctuary of many other foundations. The Athenian Asclepieion is arguably the most important daughter-sanctuary (see section 2.2.2), but Pergamum was also connected to Epidaurus in this way. Pausanias reports that the Asclepieion at Balagrae was also an Epidaurian offshoot, as was the sanctuary at Cyrene, which in turn spawned the sanctuary at Lebena.<sup>141</sup> This passage from Pausanias indicates how connected the Mediterranean Asclepieia were with Epidaurus and how this cult was at the centre of the web of sanctuaries.

From the 3<sup>rd</sup> century onwards Epidaurus depended on the support of Hellenistic kings, which it received, in turn erecting statues to honour kings such as Antigonos Doseon and Philip V.<sup>142</sup> Fewer inscriptions and dedications were erected during the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC as the political situation between the Achaean League and Rome degenerated, although there was some contact between Epidaurus and Rome

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<sup>139</sup> Tomlinson (1983) 24; Thuc. 2.47ff.

<sup>140</sup> For example: *IG IV*<sup>2</sup> 1.68; Tomlinson (1983) 25.

<sup>141</sup> Pausanias 2.26.9.

<sup>142</sup> Tomlinson (1983) 30. An inscription was dedicated at Epidaurus honouring Philip V's victories over Sparta and Aetolia in 218 BC: *IG IV*<sup>2</sup> 1.590 ; Polyb. VII.11.8 ; Walbank (1984) 481.

evidenced by the transportation of the cult from one city to the other. Even so, this did not seem to profit the sanctuary as its treasures were confiscated by Sulla and some physical damage occurred to the sanctuary during the Roman civil wars.<sup>143</sup>

The miracle healings inscribed in the *iamata* are one of the best sources of evidence for how the cult functioned at this time. They show that supplicants travelled to the sanctuary, made preliminary purifications and sacrifices, and then incubated in the sanctuary, waiting for the god to appear to them in a dream.<sup>144</sup> If they were pure, then they would be cured and in return would then make a thank-offering which varied according to the supplicant's socioeconomic status.<sup>145</sup> Even though the experiences and healing which these testimonies describe were personal events, they became public via the act of inscribing them on stone.<sup>146</sup> The *iamata* aptly show Asclepius' double nature; on the one hand he performs surgery and other medical practices; on the other they show his divine/magical cures which indicated to the viewer that there was no limit to the god's power.<sup>147</sup>

### 2.2.2 Athens

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<sup>143</sup> Diod. Sic. 38.7; Plut. *Vit. Sull.* 12, *Vit. Pomp.* 24; Paus. 9.7.5; Tomlinson (1983) 31.

<sup>144</sup> For example: *IG IV*<sup>2</sup> 1.121.2-7. The fragments of stelai A, B, and D were found near the *abaton* where they had been broken up and reused in the walls of a medieval house which had been built there: LiDonnici (1995) 15. Stele C was found during the excavations of 1900 in a chapel of St John. The inscriptions were written in stoichedon form, with the letters aligned horizontally as well as vertically and the Doric dialect, with Attic influence, is used here: LiDonnici (1995) 16-17.

<sup>145</sup> *IG IV*<sup>2</sup> 1.121.

<sup>146</sup> LiDonnici (1995) 1.

<sup>147</sup> Versnel (2011) 416. For Epidaurus in the Roman period see section 3.3.2.

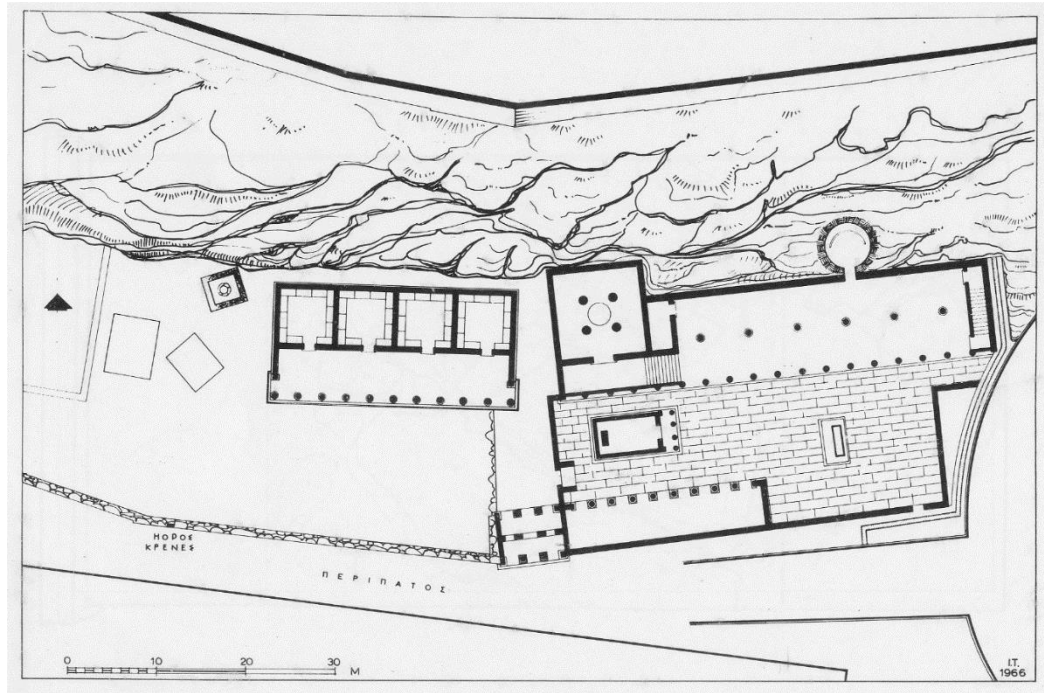


Fig. 1: Plan of the Athenian Asclepieion.

The Athenian Asclepieion (Fig. 1) is one of the best known excavated sanctuaries of the god despite probably only ever being of local importance. Asclepius' advent in Athens is recorded in the so-called Telemachus monument (Fig. 2) which records that the cult was founded in 419/8 BC.<sup>148</sup> The incredibly detailed inscription gives an account of the god's arrival in the Zea in 420 BC. He was housed in the city Eleusinion whilst his sanctuary on the south slope of the Acropolis was constructed.<sup>149</sup> Although the monument is very fragmentary it has been restored as a tablet carved with reliefs on both sides, which was supported by an inscribed pillar with reliefs on four sides.<sup>150</sup> The monument is dated to 400 BC on basis of its

<sup>148</sup> *SEG* 25.226/*IG* II<sup>2</sup> 4960, 4960b; Riethmüller (2005) 1.79: The city Asclepieion is one of nine certain and four probable sanctuaries for the god located in Attica. See Aleshire (1992) 87-90 for analysis of the Athenian dedicators. For the reconstruction of the monument see Beschi (1967/8) 381-436.

<sup>149</sup> Wickkiser (2008) 62: Asclepius was also initiated into the Eleusinian mysteries while staying here, the first of many connections between these gods.

<sup>150</sup> Stafford (2005) 124.

letterforms and is named after the private individual who transported the cult to Athens from Epidaurus.<sup>151</sup>

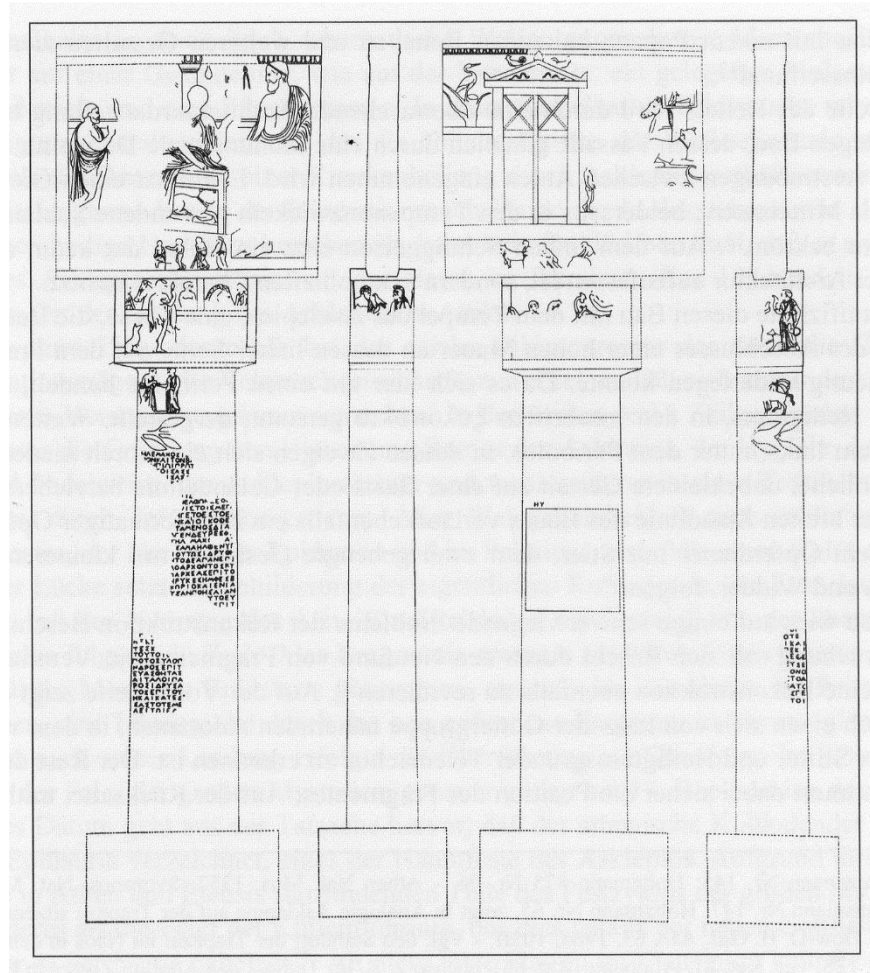


Fig. 2: Reconstructed Drawing of the Telemachus Monument.

[Τ]ηλέμαχος ιδ[ρύσατο τὸ ἱ]-  
 [ε]ρὸν καὶ τὸν βω[μὸν τῷ Ἀσ]-  
 [σκληπιῷ] πρῶτ[ος καὶ Ὑγι]-  
 [εῖαι], τοῖς Ἀσσ[κληπιάδαι]-  
 [ς καὶ τ]αῖς Ἀσσ[κληπιῶ] θυγ]-  
 [ατράσιν] κα[ὶ — — — —]

[. . . . . ὁ ἐν Ἐ]πιδ[αύρῳ]ι [Ἀσ]-  
 [κληπιὸς ἀ]νελθὼν Ζεῶθ[ε]-  
 [ν Μυστηρί]οις τοῖς μεγ[ά]-

<sup>151</sup> Wickkiser (2008) 67. A *terminus post quem* is also provided by dating the last archon mentioned in the monument, namely Kallias in 412/11 BC as dating on basis of letter forms is notoriously unreliable.

[λοις κατ]ήγετο ἐς τὸ Ἐ[λ]- \
 [ευσίνιο]ν καὶ οἴκοθε[ν] \
 [μεταπεμ]ψάμενος δ<ρ>ά[κ]- \
 [οντα ἡγ]αγεν δεῦρε ἐφ' [ἄ]- \
 [ρματος] Τηλέμαχο[ς κ]α[τ]- \
 [ἀ χρησμός]ς· ἅμα ἦλθεν Ἵγ- \
 [εία καὶ] οὕτως ἰδρύθη \
 [τὸ ἱερὸ]ν τόδε ἅπαν ἐπὶ \
 [Ἀστυφί]λο ἄρχοντος Κυ- \
 [δαντίδ]ο. Ἀρχέας· ἐπὶ το- \
 [ῦτο οἱ Κ]ήρυκες ἡμφεσβ- \
 [ήτον τὸ] χωρίο καὶ ἔνια \
 [ἐπεκώλ]υσαν ποῆσαι. Ἀν- \
 [τιφῶν . . . ἐπὶ το]ῦτο εὐ- \
 [τύχησαν. Εὐφημος]· ἐπὶ τ- \
 [οῦτο . . . . .14. . . . .] \
 desunt vss. tres \
 .ε. . . . .16. . . . . \
 ν ἔκτ[ισε καὶ . . 6. . . κα]- \
 τεσκ[εῦασε. Χαρίας· ἐπὶ] \
 τούτο τὸν [περίβολον ἀ]- \
 πὸ τῶ ξυλοπυ[λίῳ. Τείσα]- \
 νδρος· ἐπὶ το[ῦτο ἐπεσκ]- \
 ευάσθη τὰ ξ[υλοπύλια κ]- \
 αὶ τὰ λοιπὰ [τῶν ἱερῶν π]- \
 ροσιδρύσατ[ο. Κλεόκρι]- \
 τος· ἐπὶ τού[το ἐφυτεύθ]- \
 η καὶ κατέστ[ησε κοσμή]- \
 σας τὸ τέμεν[ος ἅπαν τέ]- \
 λει τῶι ἑαυ[τῷ. Καλλίας] \
 [Σκαμβωνίδης· ἐπὶ τούτ]- \
 [ο — — — — — — — — — — ]<sup>152</sup>

The god's arrival stands out as it is one of the earliest disseminations of the cult and it is also one of the best documented.<sup>153</sup> The connections between Athens and

<sup>152</sup> SEG 25.226a: 'Telemachus set up the sanctuary and the altar to Asclepius and Hygeia first, and to the Asclepiadai and the daughters of Asclepius and ..... Asclepius at Epidaurus came from the Zea during the Great Mysteries and was led to the Eleusinion and Telemachus having sent for a snake from the god's house, led the god here on a chariot following an oracle. Hygeia came at the same time and this whole sanctuary was founded in the archonship of Astyphilus of Cudantidae. When Archeas was archon the Ceryces disputed the land and caused some disturbances. When Antiphon was archon.....prospered. When Euphemus was archon.....he paid in full.....and he fully equipped. When Charias was archon a peribolos was built away from the wooden gateway. When Teisandrus was archon the wooden gateway was rebuilt and the rest of the sanctuary was also set up. When Cleocritus was archon he planted a sacred grove and set down and decorated the whole sanctuary at his own expense. When Callias of Skambonidai was archon....'Astyphilus was archon in 420/19, Archeas in 419/18, Antiphon in 418/17, Euphemos in 417/16, Arimnestos in 416/15, Charias in 415/14, Teisandros in 414/13, Kleokritos in 413/12 and Kallias of Skambonidae in 412/11: Beschi (1967/8) 412-13.

Epidaurus were shown in various ways; for example one of the two festivals of the Athenian Asclepius was called the Epidauria and the other the Asclepieia.<sup>154</sup> A red-figure plate dated to 420-400 BC by the Meidias painter is one of the most striking expressions of the connections between Epidaurus and Athens. The Meidias painter was active in Athens between c.420-400 BC. The plate is believed to be one of the first representations of the god in Athens and shows the child Asclepius in the arms of the personified Epidaurus (Fig. 3).<sup>155</sup> These identifications are confirmed by inscriptions painted on the plate which has [Ἐπι]δαυρος above the woman holding the child and Ἀσσο[κλήπιος] to right of the child. Ἐυδαμονία is written above the seated woman.<sup>156</sup> The tripod depicted and wreath suggest that the plate should be connected with a dithyrambic victory, the subject of which was the birth of the god and his childhood at Epidaurus, as well as commemorating and celebrating Asclepius' arrival in Athens.<sup>157</sup>

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<sup>153</sup> Wickkiser (2008) 62.

<sup>154</sup> Epidauria: Paus. 2.26.8. Asclepieia: Aeschin. 3.67.

<sup>155</sup> Burn (1987) 8, 11; Aleshire (1989) 11; Leuven University 1000; Antwerp Private G36; Beazley 4615.

<sup>156</sup> <http://www.beazley.ox.ac.uk/record/96EFA24D-D411-4625-A691-839580EA7F98>. The double sigma in the god's name, though rarer, does also occur in inscriptions, see for example *IG* II<sup>2</sup> 4966 and *IG* IV<sup>2</sup> 1.457.

<sup>157</sup> Burn (1987) 71. Burn notes that Aphrodite was Meidias' favourite deity to depict but that others were also depicted such as Asclepius, Eleusinian deities, Apollo, Artemis, Dionysus, and possibly Chryse.





Fig. 3: 5<sup>th</sup> century Athenian plate showing the child Asclepius seated on the personified Epidauria.

No reason was given in antiquity for the cult's importation but there are several possibilities. The most likely is the plague which ravaged Athens in 430-26 BC.<sup>158</sup> Concern for healing would have been at the forefront of the citizens' minds, but it should also be noted that it took six years for Asclepius to arrive in Athens after the end of the plague.<sup>159</sup> Most disasters in antiquity were not occasional but were regular events such as food shortages and these generally only had a local impact. However, they could also be taken as divine disagreement with human political actions. Such events showed that the gods were not on the side of the people, generally temporarily, and this could shake belief in the gods.<sup>160</sup> It was generally up to local people themselves to deal with the aftermath of such events and in the aftermath of disasters there was a social expectation that the rich would help the poor in such

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<sup>158</sup> Thuc. 2.47-54.

<sup>159</sup> Wickkiser (2008) 64.

<sup>160</sup> Toner (2013) 76-7.

times.<sup>161</sup> The Peloponnesian war would have made it harder for Athens to import the cult from Epidaurus but other sanctuaries, such as at Aegina, were closer at hand if the Athenians wished to import the god.<sup>162</sup> The Athenians chose to import the Epidaurian god presumably because they did not rate the Aeginetan god highly enough due to the long lasting rivalry and tension between the two *poleis*.<sup>163</sup> Aegina was in constant challenge with Athens during the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC and was seen as a considerable threat. The island was progressively marginalised and later suppressed by the Athenians who deported the Aeginetans, who were almost completely wiped out at the battle of Thyrea in 424 BC.<sup>164</sup> By waiting for the right time, the Athenians made a deliberate choice to import the Epidaurian Asclepius, and, it should be noted, not the Thessalian one.

There is no evidence for the *boule* or *demos* having been involved in the cult's importation but the cult did come under state control at some time between c.360 and 340 BC.<sup>165</sup> This cult was only ever a local cult and attracted supplicants from Athens and Attica and never reached importance beyond the Athenian 'empire'.<sup>166</sup>

The Asclepieian Inventories list the dedications given to the sanctuary from 350 BC to the late 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC.<sup>167</sup> The inventories list 1,347 dedications with most of the dedications falling into one of three categories, namely: anatomical *ex-votos*, coins, or *typoi*.<sup>168</sup> The *ex-votos* rarely show signs of disease, which was more

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<sup>161</sup> Toner (2013) 47, 50.

<sup>162</sup> Wickkiser (2008) 64.

<sup>163</sup> Athanassaki (2010) 257.

<sup>164</sup> Fearn (2010) 2, 5; Thuc. 2.27, 4.56-57.

<sup>165</sup> Aleshire (1989) 14. Aleshire (1989) 14, n.5 stresses that it is necessary to define what is meant by state-cult and she outlines this as a cult where *demos* or *boule*, directly or indirectly, supervised the presence and character of the votives dedicated within a sanctuary. She argues for these dates as the annual rotations of priesthoods first suggest state-influence at this time; Melfi (2007a) 331.

<sup>166</sup> Riethmüller (2005) 1.241.

<sup>167</sup> See Aleshire (1989) for a full overview, translation, and analysis of these inventories.

<sup>168</sup> Aleshire (1989) 39.

common in later Roman votives.<sup>169</sup> One of the more remarkable things which was noted from the study of these lists was the preponderance of eyes in the anatomical *ex-votos*, with over 150 listed, which has led scholars to argue that there was a specialisation at Athens for the healing of ocular illnesses.<sup>170</sup> However, there is no direct evidence for this and Aleshire has clearly shown the biases in the available evidence.<sup>171</sup> The majority of the eye-dedications come from Inventory V, one of the best preserved, listing 127 of these votives. These are more than double the number of the next most common votives which are bodies, of which there are sixty-five listed. Unless ocular diseases were suddenly very common in 250 BC, another explanation should be sought and a lack of votives listed in the other inventories should be taken into account.<sup>172</sup> The rest of the *ex-votos* show that healing was sought for all types of body-parts at Athens. Noteworthy in the Athenian Asclepieion is the higher proportion of female dedicants than males.<sup>173</sup> Women dedicated anatomical *ex-votos* more commonly than men, while men offered coins more frequently.<sup>174</sup> There is a number of objects dedicated which are stated to belong specifically to women but jewellery was also commonly offered, the majority of which would have been dedicated by women. A number of physician's instruments were also dedicated at the Athenian Asclepieion which indicate continuing relations between the god and doctors here as at Cos and Epidaurus (see sections 2.2.3-2.2.4).

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<sup>169</sup> Van Straten (1981) 110.

<sup>170</sup> Van Straten (1981) 149: he does say that this is unlikely but for Roebuck (1951) 114 there is strong evidence for this argument.

<sup>171</sup> Aleshire (1989) 38: Some of the Inventories are better preserved than others and some are more loquacious than other inventories, reducing the number of dedications which could be listed. It is only for the years 349/39 and 399/8 BC that something resembling a complete list of all dedications can be presented, as Inventory IV lists all of the dedications located on half of the roof, the side walls, and one end wall of the temple. Yet, so much of the inscription is missing that even this presents a distorted image of the dedicatory habits of the supplicants. The evidence from the inventories is heavily biased towards the 3<sup>rd</sup> century as nearly eighty percent of the dedications listed are dated to this period.

<sup>172</sup> Aleshire (1989) 42.

<sup>173</sup> Aleshire (1989) 45. There were also a number of specifically female items dedicated.

<sup>174</sup> As analysis of the inventories shows: Aleshire (1989) 46.

The inventories show that a wide variety of objects were dedicated, from various materials, including gold and silver.

### 2.2.3 Cos

The exact foundation date of the Coan sanctuary is not known as there are no foundation myths or any other evidence which would suggest an individual transporting the cult to Cos. However, the cult is not attested in inscriptions before the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC nor on coins before the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC.<sup>175</sup> It was during this period that the cult rose to prominence on the island and became one of the most important centres for healing in the Mediterranean, causing it to be named as one of the three main Asclepieia by Strabo.<sup>176</sup> The site's excavators dated the sanctuary to around 350 BC on basis of the architecture but Sherwin-White argues for the late quarter of the 4<sup>th</sup> century and Guarducci believes it was introduced in the second half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>177</sup> However, Interdonato argues that there is evidence for a prior cult on the site of the later Hellenistic temple complex, which can be dated to the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC. Her main evidence for this is are two inscriptions, one dedication to Paian and one sacred law, can be dated to this period.<sup>178</sup> Interdonato notes that *Paian* is an epithet found with both Apollo and Asclepius.<sup>179</sup> However, it is more commonly found in the former cult than in the latter which makes using this inscription to prove that there was an early cult of Asclepius on site here impossible. The sacred law mentions a *temenos* which according to her signals a cult organisation. She also refers to two testimonies in Pliny and Strabo who claim that Hippocrates used

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<sup>175</sup> Herzog and Schazmann (1932) x.

<sup>176</sup> Strabo 8.6.15.

<sup>177</sup> Herzog and Schazmann (1932) 73; Sherwin-White (1978) 74; Guarducci (1978) 146.

<sup>178</sup> Interdonato (2013) 108; Herzog (1928) 33 no. 2; *IG* 12.4.1.

<sup>179</sup> Interdonato (2013) 108.

*iamata* inscriptions to learn his art.<sup>180</sup> However, no clear foundation date can be provided at this point. Later evidence offers some clues as to how people believed Asclepius came to Cos. A 2<sup>nd</sup>- or 3<sup>rd</sup>-century AD mosaic was found in a Coan house depicting the god's arrival (Fig. 4).



Fig. 4: Coan Mosaic showing Asclepius' advent.

The seated man on the left is thought to be Hippocrates, indicating the connections between the god and doctors which flourished on Cos.<sup>181</sup> The Hippocratic School thrived side-by-side with the cult and physicians claimed that they were descended from Asclepius, calling themselves Asclepiads. This mosaic shows Asclepius in his human guise, whereas Pausanias states that Asclepius in snake-form escaped from the ship that was transporting him from Epidaurus and went ashore here. The people, thus, took that as a sign that this is where the god wished his sanctuary to be located.<sup>182</sup> Pausanias recounts that the god arrived in snake-form, just as he did in

<sup>180</sup> Plin. *HN* 29.2; Strabo 14.2.19; Interdonato (2013) 108.

<sup>181</sup> Hippocrates was believed to have been born on Cos in the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC.

<sup>182</sup> Paus. 3.23.7.

Rome later on. He also believes that Cos was a daughter-sanctuary of Epidaurus. Yet, Herodas in his Fourth Mimiambic obfuscates matters by referring to the god's Triccan origins, implying that the Coan cult may have been a Thessalian offshoot:

Χαίροις, ἄναξ Παίηον, ὅς μέδεις Τρίκκης  
καὶ Κῶν γλυκεῖαν κήπιδαυρον ὄκηκας  
σὺν Κορωνίς ἢ σ' ἔτικτε κόπολλων  
χαίροτεν [...]<sup>183</sup>

Even in antiquity then, the Coan cult's origins were unclear. The archaeological remains indicate that the sanctuary was built as a unified whole as part of a wider building programme in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC, which was ratified by the Delphic oracle before construction began.<sup>184</sup>

The sanctuary prospered throughout the Hellenistic era as the island pursued a policy of neutrality where possible and often switched sides between the various Hellenistic monarchs fighting for supremacy in the Aegean.<sup>185</sup> Cos stands out from the other Asclepieia as it was granted the right of *asylia* in 242 BC, and the Coans sent *theoroi* to the Greek *poleis* and Macedonian courts asking them to recognize this right for their festival.<sup>186</sup> Panhellenic festivals enjoyed this right and by asking for recognition of the festival's right of *asylia*, the Coans were asking for recognition of

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<sup>183</sup> Herod. 4.95. 'Greetings Lord Paion, who rules over Tricca and lives in pleasant Cos and Epidaurus. Greetings to Coronis who gave birth to you, and to Apollo.' The manuscript containing the eight mimiambics and fragments of a ninth dates to the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD. Almost nothing is known about Herodas himself, even the definite spelling of his name is uncertain. The Doric form Herodas would fit in with the few locations known from the texts which are mainly on the island of Cos: Zanker (2009) 1. He states that the location of the fourth Mimiambic should be taken as the Coan Asclepieion and the setting is Temple B on the second terrace of the sanctuary (see below). Herodas appeared to have lived during the reign of Ptolemy Philadelphos (285-247 BC) and the fourth poem can be dated to between 285 and 265 BC: Zanker (2009) 105. The fourth poem describes the experiences of two women, Coccale and Cynno, and Cynno's slave Cydilla, who visit the sanctuary of Asclepius and offer a sacrifice (lines 88-95).

<sup>184</sup> Sherwin-White (1978) 341-2.

<sup>185</sup> Höghammar (1993) 23.

<sup>186</sup> Rigsby (1996) 106-7: *Asylia* meant that all travellers to and from the festival were free from violence.

the Panhellenic status of their right.<sup>187</sup> Out of the *circa* fifty letters concerning the recognition of *asylia*, there are six inscribed letters from royal courts ratifying this request which were found in the Coan Asclepieion (see also section 3.1).<sup>188</sup> The sanctuary enjoyed good relations with most of the Hellenistic dynasties, with one king, Eumenes II, being honoured in an inscription located in the Asclepieion.<sup>189</sup> A festival called the Attaleia was held in Cos-town, celebrating another of the Hellenistic kings.<sup>190</sup> One of the site excavators, Schazmann, suggests that both Ptolemy VI and Eumenes II donated money towards the rebuilding of the sanctuary especially the new temple, stoas on the upper levels and monumental staircase.<sup>191</sup> Royal relations with the cult were, thus, thriving and influenced the running of the sanctuary. Elite involvement in the cult at Cos will be examined in further detail in section 3.1 and it will be shown how there was a degree of continuity in the practice with the emperors, but that this took a different form in that the Kings here seemed to deal more directly with the island through the Coan ambassadors, whereas later this happened through the mediation of important figures at court such as Xenophon, Claudius' court physician. The Coans sent embassies to Hellenistic Kings to ask for their support but later on, with Xenophon being established at court, the Coans seemed to prefer acting through him or those related to him, as a more direct and, more than likely, swift and efficient way of achieving their goals.

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<sup>187</sup> Rigsby (1996) 106.

<sup>188</sup> Rigsby (2004) 9; Buraselis (2004) 15: one of these is probably from either the Attalids or Antigonids, and one from the Ptolemies. Rigsby *Asylia* 8/SEG 12.369 to Ptolemy III?; Rigsby *Asylia* 9 to Seleucus II; Rigsby *Asylia* 10 to an unknown king; Rigsby *Asylia* 11 to Ziaalas of Bithynia; Rigsby *Asylia* 12/SEG 12.370 to a Spartocid king?; Rigsby *Asylia* 13/SEG 12.368 to a Ptolemaic king?.

<sup>189</sup> Patriarca (1932) no. 25; Höghammar (1993) 24, see p.175 cat. no. 65 for text and translation. The inscription was found in the Asclepieion and is dated to between 190-160 BC. It was found *in situ* in 1986 on Terrace II in front of the priests' house.

<sup>190</sup> Höghammar (1993) 24.

<sup>191</sup> Herzog and Schazmann (1932) 72-74.

#### 2.2.4 Pergamum

The cult of the Pergamene Asclepius was of only local importance up to and during the Roman Republican era.<sup>192</sup> It was not yet the globally popular sanctuary it would later become (see section 3.4.4) and Athena was the main civic deity at this time.<sup>193</sup> The Pergamene sanctuary of Asclepius was founded in the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC by Archias son of Aristaichmos. Pausanias informs us that whilst hunting, Archias had sprained his foot and went to the Epidaurian Asclepieion in order to be healed. Then, in order to thank and honour Asclepius, Archias brought the cult to Pergamum.<sup>194</sup> *IG* IV 1<sup>2</sup> 60 confirms Archias as the founder of the Pergamene cult: it states that a priest called Archias had been sent by Eumenes II as a *theoros* and that he was granted *proxenia* and other honours as his ancestors had introduced the cult to Pergamum from Epidaurus. The cult, thus, began as a private cult which was taken over by the *polis* in the middle of the third century, during the reign of Attalus I, mirroring the foundation of the Athenian Asclepieion.<sup>195</sup> A temple was built and a cult-statue erected to the god at this point.<sup>196</sup> Coins with images of this cult-statue and ones of a seated Asclepius with the legend ΑΣΚΛΕΠΙΟΥ ΣΩΤΗΡΟΣ appear from c.240 BC (For example, see Fig. 44).<sup>197</sup> The cult is not mentioned in any sources for a few centuries after its foundation yet there seems to have been an instant royal interest as from the first inception of the state cult, a member of the royal household served as a priest.<sup>198</sup>

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<sup>192</sup> Habicht (1969) 4.

<sup>193</sup> Rigsby (1996) 362.

<sup>194</sup> Paus. 2.26.8. There was also a settlement of Epidaurian colonists at Pergamum: Aristid. *Or.* 1.520.

<sup>195</sup> The Athenian Asclepieion was also founded by an individual and then taken over by the *polis* at a later point; Habicht (1969) 2.

<sup>196</sup> Habicht (1969) 2.

<sup>197</sup> See Hansen (1971) 476-477, 480 for a list of these coins; Habicht (1969) 2.

<sup>198</sup> Habicht (1969) 2.



The city and all of its territories came under Roman rule in 133 BC, when the last Attalid king, Attalus III, bequeathed the city to Rome in his will but the sanctuary fell into disfavour at the end of the Republican era when Mithridates ordered the death of all Roman inhabitants of Asia and the Pergamenes were all too keen to obey, killing the Romans who had fled to the Asclepieion for sanctuary.<sup>199</sup> After Sulla defeated Mithridates, Pergamum had to pay for its transgressions and lost its right of *asylia*, one of nine *poleis* in Asia Minor to do so.<sup>200</sup> A further desecration of the sanctuary occurred in 85 BC when the Roman general Gaius Flavius Fimbra was murdered by his own slave, who then committed suicide in the Asclepieion.<sup>201</sup> These events caused a decline in worship at the Asclepieion which continued into the Imperial period and the city and sanctuary had a marginal and precarious role in the empire until the right of *asylia* was restored by Caesar in 47 BC after the proconsul Publius Servilius Isauricus had petitioned him for it.<sup>202</sup>

Not many Hellenistic votives are extant although this could partially be the result of Prusias' sack in 156 BC and also of an earthquake which hit the city between AD 253 and 260.<sup>203</sup> Unlike at Epidaurus, no miracle healings were recorded at Pergamum and the healings which are recorded have their basis in daily treatments of fasting and bathing and not in supernatural miracles.

### 2.2.5 The Italian Sanctuaries

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<sup>199</sup> *IGR* IV 289; Dignas (2002) 114; App. *Mith.* 23.1.

<sup>200</sup> Dignas (2002) 118: This right of inviolability had been specifically given to the Asclepieion after 182 BC but before 88 BC. The exact date is unknown: Rigsby (1996) 362.

<sup>201</sup> App. *Mith.* 12.60.1.

<sup>202</sup> Hoffman (1998) 42; Habicht (1969) 5-6.

<sup>203</sup> Jackson (1988) 167.

The cult of Asclepius is poorly attested in Hellenistic Italy.<sup>204</sup> The god was transported to Rome in 293 BC and Livy states that the people sent an embassy to Epidaurus in order to bring Asclepius to the city on account of a plague.<sup>205</sup> The god was transported via a ship in snake form but he escaped and went ashore at Tiber Island, which was taken as a sign that the god wished his temple to be founded there.<sup>206</sup> The god's arrival was commemorated with a relief still extant on the island (Fig. 5). The sanctuary was located *extra-pomerium* at the time of foundation. Little is known about the temple here as little is extant; for example, it is not known if there was an *abaton* on site. Many of the Epidaurian daughter-sanctuaries imported the god in snake form, just as it happened here.<sup>207</sup>



Fig. 5: Wall relief from the Tiber Island Asclepieion.

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<sup>204</sup> Glinister (2006) 22.

<sup>205</sup> Livy *Per.* 11.

<sup>206</sup> Ov. *Fast.* 1.290-4. It is noteworthy that the sanctuary was located *extra pomerium*: Degrassi (1986) 146.

<sup>207</sup> Degrassi (1986) 145. Inscriptions conclusively linked to the Tiber Island Asclepieion: *CIL* 6.30842, 30843, 30845, 30846, 12; *IGUR* 1.148.

A few sources comment on the god's arrival into the city but remain quiet on the subject after this until the age of Augustus.<sup>208</sup> A festival to Asclepius is recorded in the *Fasti Praenestini* on the Kalends of January, which is a noteworthy date as other festivals celebrated around this time were concerned with the well-being of the state, implying that Asclepius also had a protective and healing function in Roman society.<sup>209</sup> It is not explicitly stated that the Tiber Island sanctuary founded other sanctuaries, but by the end of Asclepieian worship there were four probable temples to Asclepius in Rome; it is likely that there was another sanctuary to Asclepius near the Baths on Trajan on the Esquiline (see Figs. 6-7).<sup>210</sup> Further epigraphic evidence indicates that there might have been another cult site outside the Porta Flaminia and maybe another in the northern suburbs of Rome, past the Pons Milvius.<sup>211</sup> An inscription was also found in which the *schola* of a funerary association was dedicated to Asclepius and Hygeia.<sup>212</sup> Cult also occurred in sanctuaries of other gods and also in various commercial complexes and military sites (see section 4.2.1).<sup>213</sup>

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<sup>208</sup> See Festus *Gloss. Lat.* 110 M; Livy 2.5.4; Livy *Epi.* 10.47.6-7; Livy *Per.* 11; Ov. *Met.* 15.622-744; Val. Max. 1.8.2; Aur. Vic. *De vir. Ill.* 22.1-3.

<sup>209</sup> Degrassi (1963) 111: *Fasti Praenestini* January: [A *k(alendae) Ian(uariae) f(astus). Aescu]lpio, Vediovi in Insula [...].*

<sup>210</sup> Renberg (2006/7) 90. See also Maiuri (1912) 244-45 for why the temple identified by the *Mirabilia Romae* as being at the Baths of Diocletian should in fact be near the Baths of Trajan. Also *IGUR* 1.104; Degrassi (1993) 22-23; De Spirito (1993) 23.

<sup>211</sup> *CIL* 6.19, 6.10234; Renberg (2006/7) 91.

<sup>212</sup> This was found between Monte Testaccio and the Aventine.

<sup>213</sup> Renberg (2006/7) 114-115.

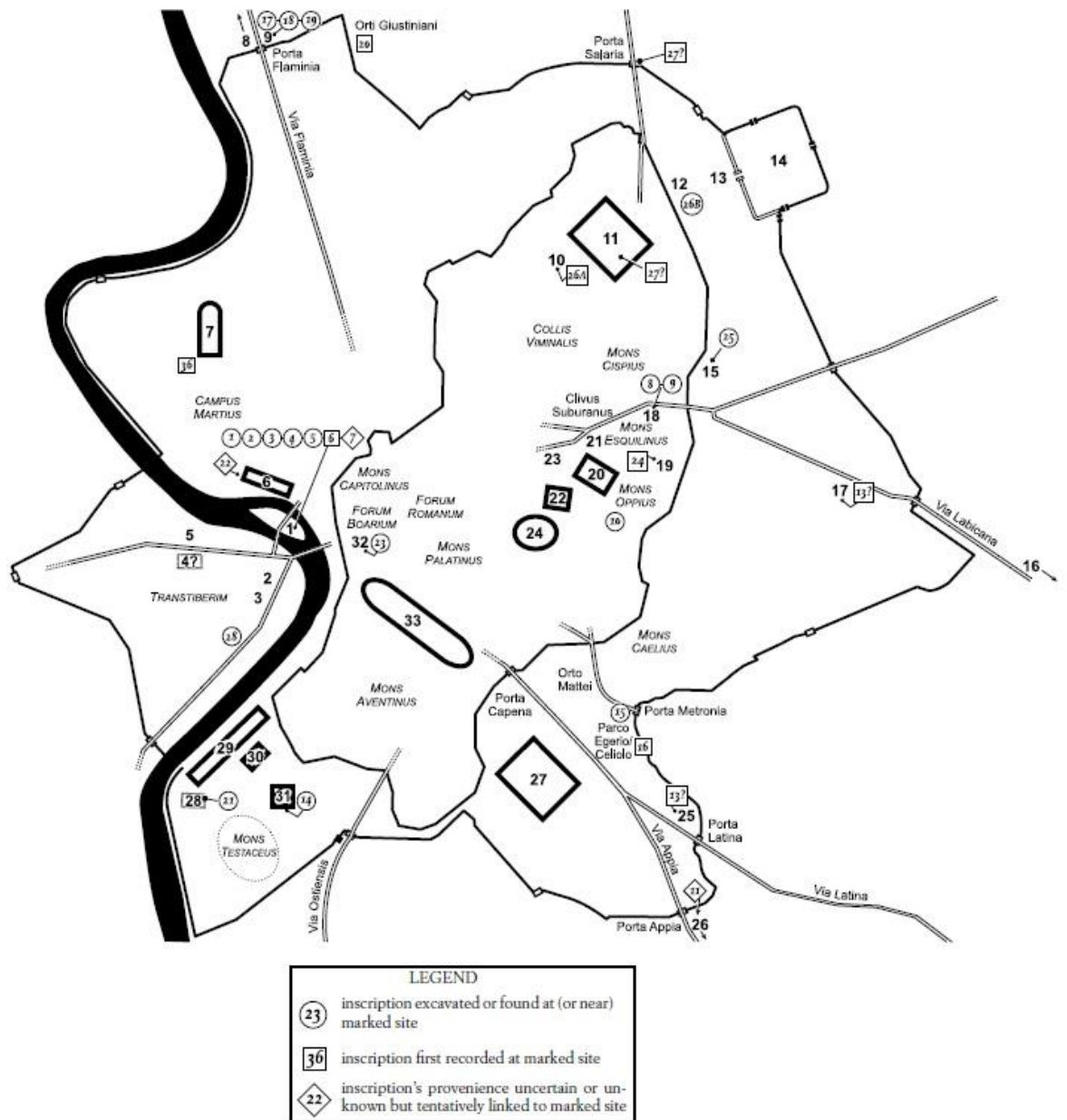


Fig. 6: Sites connected with the cult of Asclepius in Rome.

LIST OF BUILDINGS AND SITES (shown in boldface)	LIST OF CATALOGUED INSCRIPTIONS AND ASSOCIATED CULT SITES
<b>1</b> Tiber Island <i>Asklepieion</i> /S. Bartolomeo all'Isola	Tiber Island <i>Asklepieion</i> and Adjacent Sites
<b>2</b> S. Cecilia in Trastevere	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
<b>3</b> S. Maria dell' Orto	Unknown Provenience, probably Tiber Island <i>Asklepieion</i>
<b>4</b> Castra Ravennatium?	6, 7
<b>5</b> S. Crisogono	Esquiline <i>Asklepieion</i>
<b>6</b> Circus Flaminius	8, 9
<b>7</b> Stadium of Domitian	Esquiline <i>Asklepieion</i> ?
<b>8</b> Direction of the Via Cassia (find spot of <b>cat. no. 29</b> )	10
<b>9</b> Shrine at "fons aquae perennis Hygiae"	Area of the Via Appia and Via Latina
<b>10</b> S. Vitale	11, 12 (not shown on map), 13(?)
<b>11</b> Baths of Diocletian	<i>Scbola</i> at Praedia Galbana (Testaccio area)
<b>12</b> Unidentified temple and shrine off the Via Goito	14
<b>13</b> Campus Cohortium Praetoriarum	"Caeliolus"
<b>14</b> Castra Praetoria	15, 16
<b>15</b> Late antique walls in which Praetorian dedications were reused	Shrine at "fons aquae perennis Hygiae"
<b>16</b> Direction of Tor Pignattara (site associated with the <i>equites singulares</i> )	17, 18, 19
<b>17</b> S. Giovanni in Laterano	Area of Via Flaminia?
<b>18</b> S. Martino ai Monti (approximate location of Esquiline <i>Asklepieion</i> )	20
<b>19</b> Possible location of the Horti Maecenatis	<i>Horrea Seiana</i> (Emporium District)
<b>20</b> Baths of Trajan	21
<b>21</b> Approximate site of the Curia Athletarum	Unknown Shrine of Silvanus (in Circus Flaminius?)
<b>22</b> Baths of Titus	22
<b>23</b> S. Pietro in Vincoli	<i>Scbola</i> of the Collegium fabrum tignariorum (Forum Boarium)
<b>24</b> Flavian Amphitheater	23
<b>25</b> S. Giovanni a Porta Latina	Castra Praetoria and Campus Cohortium Praetoriarum
<b>26</b> Sites located along Via Appia south of Rome: vineyard near Domine Quo Vadis? (find spot of <b>cat. no. 12</b> ); shrine at the "Villa dei Quintilii"; Catacombs of Praetextatus; Catacombs of Domitilla	24(?), 25, 26 (frag. A), 26 (frag. B)
<b>27</b> Baths of Caracalla	Castra Praetoria and Campus Cohortium Praetoriarum?
<b>28</b> <i>Horrea Seiana</i>	27
<b>29</b> Porticus Aemilia	Castra Ravennatium or unidentified military installation (Trastevere)
<b>30</b> <i>Horrea Galbana</i>	28
<b>31</b> <i>Scbola</i> of the Praedia Galbana <i>collegium salutare</i>	Via Cassia, northwest of Rome
<b>32</b> <i>Scbola</i> of the Collegium fabrum tignariorum	29 (not shown on map)
<b>33</b> Circus Maximus	Unknown Provenience
	30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36 (see map), 37, 38, 39
	Roman Origin Uncertain
	40, 41
	Possible Forgery
	42

Fig. 7: Key to Fig. 6.

In Latium itself there were only the Asclepieia in Rome, Ostia, Antium, and Fregellae.<sup>214</sup> It is possible that the god was not popular in Etruria as native deities already fulfilled his role as healer, just as in Boeotia.<sup>215</sup> Fregellae was a Latin colony founded probably in 328 BC and destroyed by the Romans in 125 BC after the town

<sup>214</sup> Glinister (2006) 22.

<sup>215</sup> Glinister (2006) 22.

revolted against them. No origin myths are given for the temple at Fregellae but it is possible that this was a Roman foundation as its foundation is dated to the second half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC and a *terminus ante quem* is given for the foundation date on the basis of the letters of an inscription found on site (Fig. 8):<sup>216</sup>



Fig. 8: Inscription from Fregellae showing dedication to Asclepius.

The original excavators argued that Lucius Mummius could have been the possible founder of the cult and reasoned that the cult could have followed the model of the Coan cult.<sup>217</sup> Over 4000 dedications were found at Fregellae with a great many of these being terracotta anatomical *ex-votos*, dated to the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> centuries BC.<sup>218</sup> There is an unusually large preponderance of large votive heads deposited at this site but there is also a uniformity of material on site very similar to other votive deposits in Latium, Mid-Etruria, and Campania.<sup>219</sup> At the Campetti deposit at Veii, sexual organs were more commonly found dedicated to an unknown healing god but in Fregellae they only make up four per cent of the total number of anatomical votives.

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<sup>216</sup> *AE* 1986 120a; Coarelli (1986b) 43: [...]*f Aisc[o]lap[io]* – the use of the diphthong *AI* instead of *AE* suggests a Republic origin as does the fact that the sanctuary was destroyed in 125 BC and subsequently abandoned.

<sup>217</sup> Känel (2015) 68; Coarelli (1986a) 9; Coarelli (1987) 31.

<sup>218</sup> Ferrae and Pinna (1986) 89; Ferrae (1986) 92. These dedications were found in or around the sanctuary of Asclepius.

<sup>219</sup> Ferrae (1986) 91-2.

Potter's research has indicated that the division of *ex-votos* at Fregellae had more in common with the sanctuary at Ponte di Nona on the Via Praenestina (Table 2):<sup>220</sup>

	Fregellae	Ponte di Nona
Feet	38%	38.7%
Hands	6.7%	9.79%
Heads	16.73%	22.1%
Limbs	21.72%	15.73%
Sexual Organs	4%	2.59%

Table 2: Percentage of *ex-votos* from Fregellae and Ponte di Nona with data from Potter (1988).

There were also a few cults of Asclepius in Sicily. Of these, the sanctuary at Agrigento is the best preserved extant structure (Fig. 9) and lies in the valley below the acropolis on which the three main temples were built. The temple was probably built in the second half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC. No foundation myths are known and there are no dedicatory inscriptions and only a few *ex-votos* extant which might shed light on the sanctuary's history.<sup>221</sup>

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<sup>220</sup> Potter (1988) 210.

<sup>221</sup> De Miro (2003) 73, 77.





Fig. 9: Temple of Asclepius in Agrigento.

There was also a cult at Syracuse; although no cult buildings have been identified, a number of statues are extant (Figs. 10-11):



Fig. 10: Monumental Statue Head of Asclepius from Syracuse, 1<sup>st</sup> century BC.



Fig. 11: Monumental Torso of Asclepius from Syracuse.

The monumental torso is made of luna marble and forms part of a colossal statue of Asclepius. Its dimensions are 154x90x37 cm and it was probably a copy of a late 2<sup>nd</sup>-century BC original. It was found in Ortygia during excavations to build the



foundations of Spanish fortifications. It was inscribed with a celebratory text in Spanish during the 19<sup>th</sup> century across the torso.<sup>222</sup> The statue is noteworthy as it includes a dog next to the god, a very Epidaurian element (see section 2.4). The only real mention of the cult in any literary source is in Cicero's *Verrines* where he accuses Verres, the governor of Sicily, of stealing a statue of Apollo from the temple of Asclepius in Syracuse.<sup>223</sup>

It is important to understand from and to where the cult spread as this forms the base of research into the later global character of the cult. Only by tracing the connections between sanctuaries, starting with their foundations, is it possible to make sense of similarities between various sanctuaries. It is logical to assume that if two sanctuaries shared the same place of origin, they then would also have rites and rituals in common. It is by exploring this communality that regionalism and globalism in the cult becomes clear. The Edelsteins believed that the Hellenistic era was the most important period when the cult of Asclepius grew in importance and became universally recognised.<sup>224</sup> This belief is shared by Riethmüller who believes that the cult spread to three-quarters of the Greek world in the Classical and Hellenistic eras.<sup>225</sup> By comparing the cult in the pre-Imperial and the Imperial eras, this aims to show what the influence of Rome on the cult of Asclepius was and that, during the Roman era, the cult of Asclepius was disseminated even further and grew in popularity. Even though special attention will be paid in this thesis to the *Asclepieia* in the Roman provinces, it has been necessary to examine firstly the four

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<sup>222</sup> Gallo, Milanese, Sangregorio, Stanco, Tanasi and Trupia (2010) 93. See article for full Spanish text.

<sup>223</sup> Cic. Verr. 4.127: *Quid? signum Paeanis ex aede Aesculapii praeclare factum, sacrum ac religiosum, non sustulisti?* See also Cic. Verr. 4.43.93.

<sup>224</sup> Edelstein and Edelstein (1998) 2.251.

<sup>225</sup> Riethmüller (2008) 1.90.

best-known and influential sanctuaries of Asclepius, namely Epidaurus, Athens, Cos, and Pergamum. The latter three are all daughter-sanctuaries of the former, indicating the focal nature of Epidaurus in the Mediterranean Asclepieia and also the highly connected nature of these sanctuaries.<sup>226</sup>

### 2.3 Epithets

Each major Asclepieion, thus, had a unique history and it will be shown in subsequent chapters how this continued in the Roman period. It is important to understand the pre-Roman history of these sanctuaries as only then can the impact of the Roman Empire on these cult places be properly understood. However, there are also two other factors in which the impact of Empire is clearly shown, namely epithets and in the iconographical representations of the god. Both of these elements seem to have been fairly homogeneous and static in the pre-imperial period and greatly increased in variety and diversity under the Roman Empire. Therefore, both epithets and iconography in the pre-Roman period will now be examined so that the changes under the Empire can be fully appreciated.

When Greeks and Romans spoke of a god, they often added an epithet to the god's name.<sup>227</sup> These epithets described various powers and functions of the god in question.<sup>228</sup> Almost anything could be used as an epithet. Divine epithets were already present in the time of Homer and they existed in Graeco-Roman religion right down to Late Antiquity.<sup>229</sup> The Greeks and Romans believed in a polytheistic

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<sup>226</sup> Although Cos could also have been a Thessalian off-shoot (see above).

<sup>227</sup> Parker (2003) 173.

<sup>228</sup> Parker (2003) 176.

<sup>229</sup> Parker (2003) 173.

world and the main problem with this plurality was choice.<sup>230</sup> As Versnel points out, people dislike doubt and uncertainties which is why it was so important for them to make sure that they were addressing the right god.<sup>231</sup> One needed to know the god's correct name in order to be able to pray to him. This section will look at the reasons behind the giving of epithets to Greek and Roman gods and the implication this has for the Graeco-Roman cult of Asclepius. As it appears that Asclepius had no epithets in the Classical period (see below), and that the practice only became habitual in the Roman period, this can be seen as an articulation of both the increased global and regional nature of the cult at this point. Coming into contact with the global cult of Asclepius, local sanctuaries and people wished to differentiate themselves, or the god they were praying to, by ascribing an epithet to this god. This follows the theory espoused by Chaniotis where cities resisted the homogenisation of religion by reviving ancient local rites and traditions (see section 1.1.4). Here, it could be possible that homogenisation was resisted by focusing on specific elements of the god's worship or topographical significance and, thereby, setting that version of the god apart from the global Asclepius found everywhere. Epithets will be discussed further in subsequent chapters, namely sections 4.4 and 5.1.3.

Two very different approaches to ancient polytheism were taken by Vernant and Burkert. For Vernant and the other French Structuralists, the polytheistic system was created to classify divine capacities and powers. The pantheon was then a method to impose structure on the divinities.<sup>232</sup> For Burkert, the polytheistic world was one of potential chaos.<sup>233</sup> Even though their arguments seem diametrically opposed, they both agreed on one thing: it is impossible to define one god separately

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<sup>230</sup> Versnel (2011) 25.

<sup>231</sup> Versnel (2011) 25.

<sup>232</sup> Vernant (1990) 94-5.

<sup>233</sup> Burkert (1985) 119.

from the others. Vernant believed that no god could exist without the others and Burkert argued that each god was made up out of a number of characteristics, which were defined by their relationship with the other gods. Versnel calls it the difference between *kosmos* and *chaos*.<sup>234</sup> Epithets could be used as a way to either organise the pantheon or to express the chaos that existed in the guise of a single deity bearing multiple names.

### 2.3.1 Function

For a supplicant, knowing a god's name was essential for addressing him, as without this knowledge a god could ignore the supplicant's prayers.<sup>235</sup> A worshipper needed to address the aspect of the god which was active in the sphere of influence in which he needed help. The cult epithet functioned as a focussing device, picking out the relevant function of the god.<sup>236</sup> The various functions of the god could operate separately from each other. Even though one aspect of the god was pleased with a supplicant's actions, another aspect could be displeased and Xenophon's failure to sacrifice to *Zeus Meilichios* even though he had offered to *Zeus Basileus* is often quoted as evidence supporting this.<sup>237</sup> The divine epithets seem almost to indicate here not just two aspects of the same god but two different gods. Each Zeus was perceived to be a different Zeus, much in the same way as modern saints are believed to be different in various places, which is important for the discussion of syncretism in Chapter 5.<sup>238</sup> Versnel argues that Graeco-Roman gods bearing the same name but different epithets may, but need not, have been perceived as one and

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<sup>234</sup> Versnel (2011) 33.

<sup>235</sup> Pulleyn (1997) 97.

<sup>236</sup> Parker (2003) 175.

<sup>237</sup> *Xen. An.* 7.8.3-4.

<sup>238</sup> Versnel (2011) 67.

the same deity, depending on the supplicant's perceptions.<sup>239</sup> The most important function of the epithet, then, was differentiation.<sup>240</sup> Topographical and functional epithets both isolate specific elements of the god. In Hellenistic times, topographical epithets were also used as a way to express competition between cities, especially in Asia Minor.<sup>241</sup> By attaching the city's name to that of the god, the city claimed ownership of the god.

An epithet could be used by only one god or by multiple gods, either independently of each other or as a way to indicate a connection between the deities in question. Parker calls the former 'Trans-god' epithets and states that these were often the vaguer epithets such as *soter* and *hegemon* whose use often became more frequent in Hellenistic times.<sup>242</sup> In fact, the use of epithets in inscriptions and literary sources seems to have become more common in the historical era and continued to flourish well into the Roman period.<sup>243</sup> Stallsmith argues that in Greek religion, divine epithets had a tendency to increase over time and it also seems that the number of epithets held by a god was seen as an indication of his importance as:<sup>244</sup>

δός μοι παρθενίην αἰώνιον, ἄπα, φυλάσσειν, καὶ πολωνυμίην, ἵνα μή μοι Φοῖβος ἐρίζη [...].<sup>245</sup>

In Callimachus' *Hymn to Artemis*, Artemis asks Zeus to give her many names. In doing so she is, in fact, asking to be powerful in multiple areas.<sup>246</sup> Minor gods and heroes were often only ever called by their name and the more epithets a deity had,

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<sup>239</sup> Versnel (2011) 82.

<sup>240</sup> Parker (2003) 177.

<sup>241</sup> Versnel (2011) 69.

<sup>242</sup> Parker (2003) 174.

<sup>243</sup> Parker (2003) 174.

<sup>244</sup> Stallsmith (2008) 116.

<sup>245</sup> Callim. *Hymn* 3.7. 'Give me to hold eternal virginity, Father, and give many names, so that Phoebus cannot fight with me [...]'.

<sup>246</sup> Parker (2003) 175.

the more powerful he was perceived to be. Aphrodite is thought to have had over 350 epithets. These divine epithets could refer to specific functions, qualities, rituals, genealogy, places of origin and residence.<sup>247</sup> By listing the various epithets of a deity one would ward off his anger at being wrongly addressed but also honour him by showing how powerful he was thought to be.<sup>248</sup>

Even though some epithets were only used locally, they still reflected aspects of the god in question. As Parker states:

Gods are like honey, or water: like them, they are in a sense the same everywhere, but in another noticeably different in every place.<sup>249</sup>

The most common and the earliest epithets were toponymic, as cult centres were visible testimonies of the god's power. When a supplicant called a god by such an epithet, he honoured the god as well as indicating his power.<sup>250</sup> Brulé highlights some important features of epithets, namely that there was an uneven spread of epithets among gods. Not all gods had the same number of epithets as, for example, Artemis had many and Ares almost none. Various factors were in play for this, including a paucity of cult. Epithets were an expression of a god's success. Shared spheres of influence between gods were expressed by a communal epithet. However, there was no homogeneous spread of epithets.<sup>251</sup> Pausanias distinguishes in his work between cultic and poetic epithets but also between local and Panhellenic ones:

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<sup>247</sup> Versnel (2011) 61.

<sup>248</sup> Pulleyn (1997) 111. Pulleyn also noted that the idea that names were powerful was a 'phenomenon of post-classical syncretism'.

<sup>249</sup> Parker (2003) 177.

<sup>250</sup> Parker (2003) 176; Versnel (2011) 54.

<sup>251</sup> Brulé (1998) 30-31.

Ποσειδῶνι δὲ παρέξ ἢ ὅποσα ὀνόματα ποιηταῖς πεποιημένα ἐστὶν ἐς ἐπῶν κόσμον καὶ ἴδια σφίσιν ἐπιχώρια ὄντα ἕκαστοι τίθενται, τῶσάιδε ἐς ἅπαντας γεγόνασιν ἐπικλήσεις αὐτῷ, Πελαγαῖος καὶ Ἀσφάλιός τε καὶ Ἴππιος.<sup>252</sup>

Thus, already in antiquity people paid close attention to the function of epithets and also differentiated their functions.

Supplicants had a choice when addressing a god. They could either call him just by his divine name, just by his epithet or by a combination of the two. In everyday speech the former would probably be used but in more formal oaths an epithet would more often be added to the god's name.<sup>253</sup> All three forms occurred on dedications.

### 2.3.2 Asclepius

Parker states that:

[...] the respectable list of epithets that can be assembled for Asclepius is an indication of how far he grew from the hero as which he began.<sup>254</sup>

The numerous epithets ascribed later on to Asclepius were, thus, a statement of his power. Yet, perhaps with the early cult of Asclepius there was less need for a differentiation between the god's various functions: he was above all a healing god and active in that sphere. His activities were limited to this in the Classical era, although his spheres of action grew in the Hellenistic and Roman eras. While it was important for a mortal to correctly identify a god when he appeared to him, in the

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<sup>252</sup> Paus. 7.21.7: 'And besides the many names given to Poseidon by the poets to fashion their works and those given to him of each place, all people give these epithets to him: Pelasgios and Asphaleios (Securer) and also Hippos.'

<sup>253</sup> Parker (2003) 180.

<sup>254</sup> Parker (2003) 175.

case of Asclepius this was probably not as difficult as in other cases.<sup>255</sup> He usually appeared in a dream while the supplicant was incubating in the sanctuary, making worshippers predisposed to expect Asclepius.

The cult of Asclepius grew more powerful in the Hellenistic period and it is from this time that the number of epithets ascribed to the god increased but even so the vast majority is dated to the Roman Imperial era.<sup>256</sup> Most early inscriptions are simply to ‘Asklepios’.<sup>257</sup>

ὑπὲρ τῆς γυναικὸς  
εὐξάμενος  
Πραξίας Ἀσκληπιῶι.<sup>258</sup>

During the Roman Empire, the number of epithets which occurred within the cult dramatically increased. The above discussion shows that the more epithets a god had, the more areas he was involved in and, thus, the more powerful he was. Therefore, the increase in the number of epithets during the Roman era shows that Asclepius grew in power at this time and that his worship became more multifaceted. This was in contrast to other cults such as those of Aphrodite and Zeus, who enjoyed a large number of epithets from early periods of worship onwards.

In the Hellenistic and Roman periods *soter* became one of the more common epithets given to Asclepius:

[Ἀσκλη]πιῶ σωτήρι καὶ Ὑγείᾳ

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<sup>255</sup> See, for example, Odysseus identifying Nausicaa as Artemis at first: Hom. *Od.* 6.149-153.

<sup>256</sup> Versnel (2011) 412-3.

<sup>257</sup> See, for example, *IG II<sup>2</sup>* 3187

<sup>258</sup> *IG II<sup>2</sup>* 4372: ‘Praxias, praying, on behalf of his wife. To Asclepius’.



ε[ὐ]χῆν ν Τερτιανὸς ὑπὲρ τοῦ  
υἱοῦ Κορνούτου.<sup>259</sup>

This was part of a common trend where the epithet was given to many gods at this time but also indicates an increase in Asclepius' power as the *soteria* which was sought from the god was not eternal salvation but was salvation from a specific situation.<sup>260</sup> It mainly indicated bodily salvation which included physical and psychological healing, but also safety, protection and deliverance.<sup>261</sup> It could also be used for salvation from the sea but did not have any theological implications.<sup>262</sup> The fact that the Pergamene Asclepius (see Chapter 3) was called *Soter* is an indication of the increase of his powers. He was no longer believed just to provide healing but could also save individuals in other spheres of action.<sup>263</sup> Chapter 5 will discuss some of the epithets which occur in the cults in North Africa.

One aspect which is also interesting is the way in which epithets spread into new regions where Graeco-Roman gods had not traditionally been worshipped. The interaction between these gods and the native ones produced numerous new titles.<sup>264</sup> In the case of Asclepius this appears to have happened in Egypt, where Egyptian aversion to change forced the cult to adapt and caused the syncretic god Asclepius-Imhotep to be created. Another important syncretism happened with Asclepius Zimidrenus or Sindrinus who appears to have been a local Thracian god. Another case of possible syncretism may have been Asclepius Culcuisenus who also appeared in the Eastern part of the empire (see section 4.4).<sup>265</sup> Epithets are a way of

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<sup>259</sup> *IG* II<sup>2</sup> 4501: 'To Asclepius Soter and Hygeia, Tertianus on behalf of his son Kornoutos, a votive'.

<sup>260</sup> Moralee (2004) 1. Moralee (2004) 17 states that there are a variety of meanings and translations for this term but he uses salvation as a translation throughout his work for consistency's sake.

<sup>261</sup> Moralee (2004) 17.

<sup>262</sup> Moralee (2004) 19.

<sup>263</sup> See, for example, inscriptions where Asclepius has saved sailors: *IvP* VIII 3.63.

<sup>264</sup> Parker (2003) 174.

<sup>265</sup> See, for example, *IGBulg* 3 1.1229, 1230.

showing new regional characteristics of a cult and also the elements which a region believed were important about that version of the god, or elements which tied that cult to a specific locality. The Zimidrenus discussion will also aim to show the dedicators' notions of identity and the way they perceived themselves to be a part of the Empire. Epithets used in Roman North Africa will also show the regional nature of the cult of Asclepius there, especially in contrast to other versions of the cult of the god in the same geographical area.

#### 2.4 Iconography

As well as epithets, iconography is a way of showing the global and regional nature of the god Asclepius as there were both generic and very local representations of the god, both of which will be discussed in this thesis. *LIMC* lists seventeen different generic statue-types of Asclepius which could be found across the Graeco-Roman world. For the most part these are variations on a generic Classical representation of the god, making him easily recognisable such as with the Chiaramonti type (Fig. 12).<sup>266</sup> There is a complete lack of a narrative in Asclepius' representations as none of his early mythology is present in his representations and he is rarely depicted undertaking any form of action.<sup>267</sup> The god is generally depicted standing, bearded and wearing a chiton which is draped across his torso leaving one shoulder bare. He holds a staff in one hand around which a snake, a symbol of revitalisation and healing, is coiled.

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<sup>266</sup> *LIMC Asklepios* nos 115-392.

<sup>267</sup> For example his death at Zeus' hands: Holtzmann (1981) 865.



Fig. 12: Asclepius depicted in the Chiaramonti Type, 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD, Rome.

The other statue types are all listed in *LIMC* as variations of the Chiaramonti type. Three of these other types are the Campana and Este types. In the Campana statue type Asclepius has an athletic, muscular, look and leans on his right leg which makes his hip jut out. He holds his snake-staff in his right hand while his chiton leaves his chest bare to his stomach, which is covered by drapery.<sup>268</sup> In the Este type the hip bone is more accentuated and Asclepius' body leans on his staff which is fixed underneath his armpit. The drapery is distinctive by lying diagonally across his chest and there is a triangular fold on his thigh.<sup>269</sup> In the Giustiani Type, Asclepius' right leg is flexed and his staff is placed under his armpit while his left fist lies on his hip. His mantel covers his entire body except his torso and his right shoulder. The edge of this mantel forms a bulge starting at his right armpit, runs down his torso to his

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<sup>268</sup> Holtzmann (1981) 884.

<sup>269</sup> Holtzmann (1981) 886.

left elbow.<sup>270</sup> While these statues are visibly recognisable as Asclepius, they differ in details such as the drapery or positioning of the body from the Chiaramonti type.

The most notable exception to the standing cult statue type is the cult-statue at Epidaurus, sculpted by Thrasymedes, depicts the god seated and a dog sits next to the chair. The statue is no longer extant, but is known to us from coins and possibly one Antonine copy.<sup>271</sup> The god rarely appears on ceramics, most notably on the Attic plate discussed above (Fig. 3) and also rarely occurs in paintings.<sup>272</sup> Asclepius does appear on a number of reliefs in Athens but these seem to have been made only for a brief period at the end of the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC and have an irregular iconography.<sup>273</sup>

However, there are some variations to the standard representation of Asclepius. He is depicted as a baby on the plate discussed above and is also represented as a young man without a beard, which occurs on a Hadrianic medallion and also one dating to the reign of Marcus Aurelius.<sup>274</sup> Most statues of this type are dated to the Roman imperial period. Further variations on the standard statue-type all seem to date to the Roman imperial period and will be discussed in other chapters; a statue-type particular to Pergamum, the Asclepius-Amelung, will be discussed in Chapter 3 and the cult iconography in Africa will be examined in Chapter 5. A representation of Asclepius, unique to Thrace, where Asclepius was depicted on horseback will also be discussed in Chapter 4. Each of the types explored will show the impact of the Roman Empire on the cult in these places and will show that there were some further variations to the stock type.

## 2.5 Conclusion

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<sup>270</sup> Holtzmann (1981) 879.

<sup>271</sup> Prignitz (2014) 214-5: LIMC *Asklepios* no 84.

<sup>272</sup> Paus. 4.31.12.

<sup>273</sup> Holtzmann (1981) 866.

<sup>274</sup> LIMC *Asklepios* 9, 10. See nos 9-40 for catalogue of this type.

This chapter has aimed to highlight some key points of the pre-Augustan cult of Asclepius. The early dissemination of the cult is vital for understanding the later patterns and nature of the cult. This thesis aims to examine the regional and global nature of the cult of Asclepius and it is only by understanding how the various sanctuaries were connected that it is possible to gain an idea of local cults. It has been shown how Epidaurus was at the centre of the Mediterranean Asclepieia, being the mother-sanctuary of many of the other important cult-sites, which in turn spawned other sanctuaries which were then connected to Epidaurus. The global Asclepieian culture was probably, therefore, predominantly an Epidaurian one, despite other claims that the cult originated in Tricca. It is, of course, always possible that the cult was transported from Tricca to Epidaurus but as the sanctuary has not been excavated, it is not possible to state how much of the Epidaurian cult was Triccan. Each individual cult could use the flexible nature of the cult's core to adapt it to suit local wishes and needs, picking and choosing which cultic characteristics and rites they wished to incorporate into their particular cult. It was seemingly felt to be important to stress the Epidaurian connections, as happened at Athens, presumably because it was thought to be more prestigious if one's sanctuary came directly from Epidaurus, the birth-place of the god, than from some other shrine. This was possibly also the case with the cult of Asclepius in Roman North Africa which will be explored in Chapter 5. Even though Tricca might have been the original sanctuary, for the dissemination of the cult, Epidaurus was the sanctuary that really mattered as it was commonly perceived to be the god's place of origin.

The individual cults examined in more detail also highlight some interesting points. Not all of the Epidaurian daughter-sanctuaries gained the same level of status

as others but local cults could become pan-Hellenic ones and *vice-versa* depending on external circumstances such as the patronage of kings or political happenings of the *polis*. Asclepieian cults and their nature were, then, not set in stone but flexible and open to change. It is possible that this trend continued under the Roman Empire, with imperial patronage being vital for the success of a sanctuary.

Furthermore, it seems that if there was no need for Asclepius, like in Boeotia due to the prior presence of Trophonius, then the cult would not be imported, no matter how important it became in the rest of the Mediterranean. This choice would have been undertaken on a regional or a *polis*-level so it is possible to expect that some areas are more heavily populated with Asclepieia than others. The dissemination of the cult was a regional choice and preference. Another element which will be shown in the following chapters to be distinctive to the Roman cult, is the role of external agents who impacted upon the cult, such as physicians and army officers.

## Chapter 3: Friends in High Places: Imperial Relations with

### Asclepius

#### 3.0 Introduction

Already in antiquity it was reported that Asclepius was open to worship from all people, regardless of gender or socio-economic status. The Athenian Inventories are often used as an example to illustrate this openness and also the variety of people who worshipped the god.<sup>275</sup> The lists show that women outnumbered men in supplications to Asclepius here and also that professionals, priests, families, and the *demos* worshipped the god. The composition of dedicants to Asclepius was, thus, wide and multifaceted. This material has been used in the past to stress the accessibility of the god to the poorer people in ancient society.<sup>276</sup> While this is undoubtedly true, it has then sometimes been taken that it was either predominantly or even exclusively the poor who worshipped the god.<sup>277</sup> This was not the case, though, since Asclepius was also worshipped by the elites and cities. The Athenian *demos* supplicated the god for the wellbeing of the city, something which also occurred in Rome, where the god was imported as the result of a plague.<sup>278</sup> In both cities, Asclepius' festivals were held in between other civic festivals which were concerned with civic wellbeing and health. Municipal elites worshipped the god and

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<sup>275</sup> Inventory 1: *IG II<sup>2</sup> 1532 fr.b.* Inventory 2: *IG II<sup>2</sup> 1532 fr. A.* Inventory 3: *IG II<sup>2</sup> 1533.* Inventory 5: *IG II<sup>2</sup> 1534A.* Inventory 1: *IG II<sup>2</sup> 1534B+1535.* Inventory 6: *IG II<sup>2</sup> 1537+1538+Hesperia 11 (1942) 244-6.* Inventory 7: *IG II<sup>2</sup> 1539.* Inventory 6: *IG II<sup>2</sup> 1536.* Inventory 7: *IG II<sup>2</sup> 1019.* See Aleshire (1989) for commentary and translation.

<sup>276</sup> Aleshire (1989) 45.

<sup>277</sup> Herod. 4; Ael. *Fragment* 100; See for example Sigerist (1961) 2.73; Ferngren and Amundsen (1993) 2959-2960.

<sup>278</sup> Livy *Per.* 11.

with all of these diverse groups supplicating Asclepius, it is unsurprising that Roman emperors were also attested worshipping the god.

The aim of this chapter is to examine the impact of Roman emperors on the cult of Asclepius and also to research the provincial response to these supplications and actions undertaken by emperors. Emperors worshipped and honoured the god in different ways and with various levels of intensity, with Claudius, Hadrian, and Caracalla being the most influential whilst others seemingly did not patronise the god at all. The ways in which emperors supplicated Asclepius were also varied. Augustus is only connected to the god via his personal physician, Antonius Musa, of whom Augustus erected a statue next to that of Asclepius, presumably in the Tiber Island sanctuary in Rome, in honour and thanks for Musa saving his life in 23 BC:

Medico Antonio Musae, cuius opera ex ancipiti morbo convaluerat, statuam aere conlato iuxta signum Aesculapii statuerunt.<sup>279</sup>

Musa had served as Augustus' physician from the time of Actium onwards but it is not known how long he served Augustus after 23 BC.<sup>280</sup> The emperor had suffered ill health from birth but this reached its nadir at this time. Musa prescribed dietary remedies and cold baths for the emperor in order to heal him from his illness.<sup>281</sup> These cures saved Augustus' life and he extended the honours given to doctors by his adoptive father Julius Caesar who had given Roman citizenship to all physicians, and granted *immunitas* to all doctors practising in Rome in AD 10.<sup>282</sup>

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<sup>279</sup> Sue. *Aug.* 59.1; Michler (1993) 764: 'For the doctor Antonius Musa, through whose work he was able to recover from an illness, money was raised and a statue of him was placed next to a statue of Asclepius.' Wardle (2014) 396 notes that Musa (*PIR*<sup>2</sup> A853) and his brother had either been slaves of Marcus Antonius or his family and had been freed or that they had been members of distinguished families from the east who had been given citizenship by Antonius.

<sup>280</sup> Wardle (2014) 396.

<sup>281</sup> Michler (1993) 764-6; Sue. *Aug.* 81; Cass. Dio 53.30.3-4. Wardle (2014) 396 notes that Dio's attitude towards Musa is generally hostile.

<sup>282</sup> Michler (1993) 783.



Tiberius was represented as worshipping the syncretic deity Imhotep-Asclepius on a relief on Ptolemy II's gate on the temple island of Philae even though Tiberius never visited Egypt and is not known to have worshipped Asclepius anywhere else.<sup>283</sup> This illustrates regional perceptions of the emperor and the standing of the cult there. People took an imperial supplication to a god and used it as a way of promoting and aggrandising a city or sanctuary. The imperial interactions with Asclepius, thus, took place across a wide geographical space. How these emperors worshipped Asclepius and which rights they gave to specific sanctuaries will be examined but also the wider effects of an imperial visit which could lead, for example, to building programmes or to a change within the regional dynamics by boosting the status of a particular city through a sanctuary. In certain cases the direct actions undertaken by the emperor are clear but in many instances it was the regional response to this visit which is the more striking. This chapter will examine the ways in which this was done and how provincial responses to an imperial visit might alter an Asclepieion.

This chapter will examine three themes in relation to imperial worship of Asclepius and will focus in particular on three emperors, namely Claudius, Hadrian, and Caracalla. The first theme examined here will be the impact of influential people at court. Emperors did not always have an innate urge to worship Asclepius but their giving of honours to the god or a sanctuary could have been prompted by a member of their court or household who had strong ties to the cult. This is particularly clear in the case of Claudius' grants to the Coan Asclepieion which were the result of the

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<sup>283</sup> Hurry (1928) 84: the emperor offers incense to the god and is wearing the pharaoh's white crown.

influence of his personal physician, Gaius Stertinius Xenophon.<sup>284</sup> Xenophon was a Coan who had studied medicine there. As an Asclepiad, he had strong ties with the cult and he used his imperial connections to increase the cult and the island in prominence. Xenophon's self-representation on Cos, and the language utilised in his dedications there, emphasised his Roman past and this relationship will be examined in depth here.

The second theme of this chapter will be that of the impact of imperial visits and travel. This fits in well with general research both into sacred travel, which was especially important and prominent within the cult of Asclepius, and into regionalism. An imperial visit would greatly boost the standing and economy of a city or sanctuary but only a few emperors travelled and only some visited Asia Minor, most notably, Hadrian and Caracalla who worshipped Asclepius at Pergamum.<sup>285</sup> It was precisely these travelling emperors who patronised Asclepius and it is interesting that their greatest impact was not upon the sanctuaries at Rome but on those located within the Roman provinces. When a ruler sacrificed at a sanctuary, he created a bond between himself and the local gods; the emperor would give benefactions to the god and the city would bestow honours upon him in return. The sanctuaries at Epidaurus, Pergamum, and the other shrines in Asia Minor linked to the Pergamene temple via civic competition will provide the main body of evidence for this discussion.

The last theme here is that of imperial rights and honours granted and how these factored into civic and cultic competition. This theme will not be discussed separately but features in the discussions of the other themes. New rights given to a sanctuary changed civic dynamics and relationships between rival cities. Both Cos

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<sup>284</sup> *PIR*<sup>2</sup> VII 337-8, no.913.

<sup>285</sup> Dignas (2002) 134.

and Pergamum gained the right of *asylia* and Caracalla granted a third *neocorate* to the Pergamene sanctuary after his visit to the city.<sup>286</sup> A *neocorate* was the title used by *poleis* in Asia Minor to indicate that the city had been granted the right to host a provincial temple to a specific emperor. It originally meant temple warden and often emperors shared their temple with a *polis* deity.<sup>287</sup> These honours had been granted before, though only in Asia Minor, but Pergamum was the first *polis* to be granted this right three times. This kind of right, thus, had both regional and also directly local meaning. These rights changed the cultic and civic dynamics between a group of sanctuaries or *poleis* and led to competition or emulation of events in other sanctuaries. A study of Macrinus' actions in Pergamum after Caracalla's death will also show how these rites could be tied to a specific emperor in popular perception and how later emperors reacted to the granting of these honours, such as the *neocorate*.

The main questions this chapter aims to examine then are: How did emperors influence and have an impact on the cults of Asclepius? How did people with close imperial ties cause benefactions to be made to the god? How did imperial (sacred) travel affect the cult of Asclepius? What were the provincial responses to imperial benefactions and how did these influence local dynamics? Pergamum will be the main focus of this chapter but the sanctuaries at Cos, Epidaurus, and Egypt will also provide evidence, forming a cohesive overview of imperial actions within the cult of Asclepius and both provincial and imperial responses to this.<sup>288</sup>

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<sup>286</sup> Caracalla is unique as he is reported to have visited the Pergamene sanctuary with the explicit purpose of seeking healing from the god: Cass. Dio 78.15. This was unlike Hadrian who visited the sanctuary as part of his travels or other emperors who gave honours from afar.

<sup>287</sup> Burrell (2004) 1.

<sup>288</sup> The main excavation reports on the Asclepieion in Pergamon are from the *Altertümer von Pergamon* series, namely E. Fabricus (1890-95) *Inschriften von Pergamon (Vol. 8)*; O. Ziegenhaus (1968) *Das Asklepieion. Teil 1, Der südliche Temenosbezirk in hellenistischer und frühromischer Zeit (Vol. 11.1)*; C. Habicht (1969) *Die Inschriften des Asklepieions. VIII, 3 (Vol. 8.3)*; O. Ziegenhaus (1975) *Das Asklepieion. Teil 2, Der nördliche Temenosbezirk und angrenzende Anlagen in*

This chapter aims to bring a new dimension to Asclepieian scholarship: when imperial influence upon the cults has been researched in the past, this has mainly been done for either one emperor or one specific sanctuary. This research will take a novel approach to the subject by examining imperial impact not by individual emperor or sanctuary but by studying the topic thematically, which will show both the similarities of imperial Asclepieian cultic benefactions, although for some themes there will be more evidence for the actions of certain emperors than for others. This, in turn, will allow for the overall impact of emperors on the cult and how imperial benefactions and regional responses to these changed a cult to be shown and also how these alterations would have affected other sanctuaries, which were all connected to a great degree. Each change would have caused emulation and competition within a region; imperial benefactions modified the cultic dynamics and the predominance of certain sanctuaries. This study will then also show the ways in which there was an imperial influence on the global and regional versions of a cult, acknowledging that there may have been both a universal cultic nature, which could also adapt as a result of imperial influence, and also a strictly regional version of each cult, upon which emperors visits and the provincials' responses to these had a definite impact.

### 3.1 The Impact of Courtiers on the Cults of Asclepius

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*hellenistischer und frühromischer Zeit (Vol. 11.2); O. Ziegenhaus (1981) Das Asklepieion. Teil 3, Die Kultbauten aus römischer Zeit an der Ostseite des heiligen Bezirks (Vol. 11.3); G. De Luca (1984) Das Asklepieion. Teil 4, Via Tecta und Hallenstraße. Die Funde (Vol. 11.4); A. Hoffman (2011) Das Asklepieion. Teil 5, Die Platzhallen und die zugehörigen Annexbauten in römischer Zeit (Vol 11.5).*

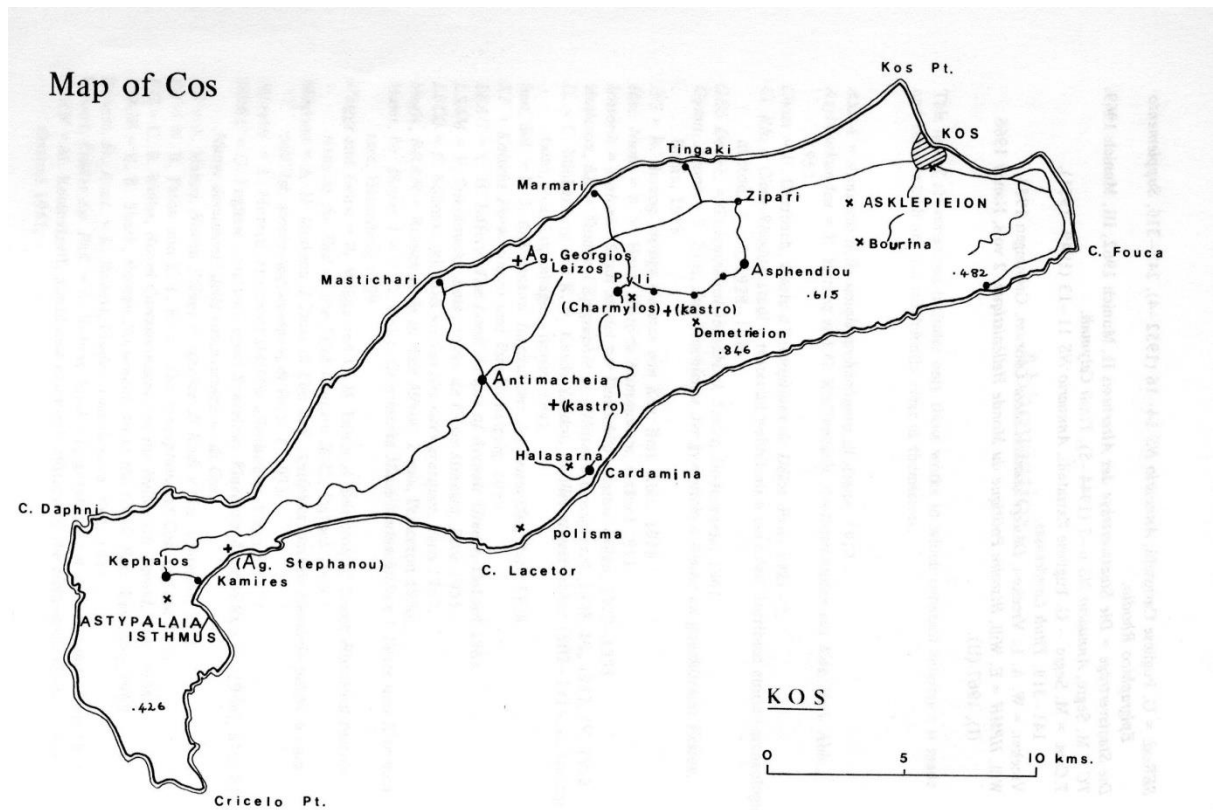


Fig. 13: Map of Cos Showing the Location of the Asclepieion.

### 3.1.1. Introduction

This section aims to explore the impact which influential people at court and elites had on the cult of Asclepius. These individuals were connected with both the emperor and a cult of Asclepius in some form and used their influence with the former to boost the standing of the latter. The person who had the greatest impact upon the cult as a result of his imperial connections was a doctor called Gaius Stertinius Xenophon. He was born on the island of Cos (See Fig. 13) around 10 BC and studied medicine there, making him consider himself an Asclepiad, indicating his close connections with Asclepius, something which is echoed in Tacitus who also

has Claudius mention Xenophon's connection.<sup>289</sup> This section aims to research imperial impact on the Coan cult and to what extent elites such as Xenophon influenced this. First, the early imperial history of the island will briefly be examined as it will be shown that Claudius' benefactions were part of a long-term development, culminating in the grant of *immunitas*. Then, Xenophon's influence on Claudius will be researched and it will be shown how his presence at court prompted Claudius to bestow honours on the Coan Asclepieion (see Fig. 14). Study of inscriptions relating to Xenophon, either set up by the physician himself, or by people close to him and the demos, will show how Xenophon continuously referred to his Roman past and used it as a basis for continuing his privileged position on Cos.

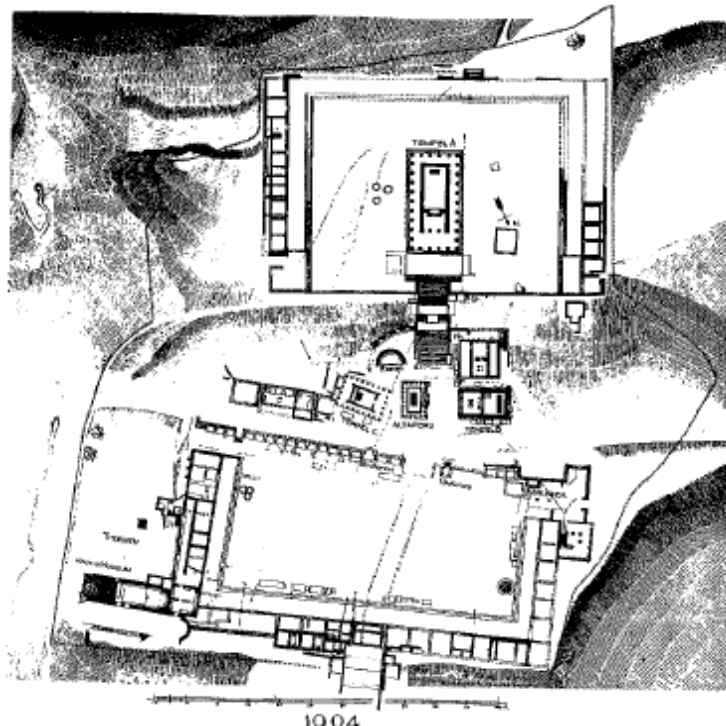


Fig. 14: Plan of the Coan Asclepieion.

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<sup>289</sup> Tac. *Ann.* 12.61 (see below for text); Bosnakis and Hallof (2008) 205. He was likely named after his maternal grandfather and there was another doctor Xenophon, a student of Praxagoras, who practised medicine in the 4<sup>th</sup>/3<sup>rd</sup> centuries BC: Buraselis (2000) 76.

### 3.1.2 The Coan Cult

As was mentioned in section 2.2.3, no foundation myths are known for the Coan sanctuary but the cult was founded there some time before the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC as it is from this point on that the sanctuary rose to prominence.<sup>290</sup> The cult grew to be the most important one on the island partially as a result of its connection with the Hippocratic School and it was the presence of this school which set the sanctuary apart from other Asclepieia in the Mediterranean. Before the advent of Roman rule over the island, both the island and the sanctuary enjoyed the patronage of various Hellenistic kings, as is indicated by the various grants of *asylia* to Cos, which included the right of inviolability for the Asclepieion. Rigsby argues that *asylia* should predominantly be seen as a religious gesture, one honouring a god. Buraselis agrees, as he states that most of the rulers ratifying the right would be too far away to be of any practical use if the island was threatened.<sup>291</sup> However, Cos also experienced the drawbacks of becoming embroiled in Mediterranean politics.<sup>292</sup> For example, in 88 BC they enthusiastically welcomed Mithridates into Cos and allowed him to take from them the son of Ptolemy IX, Alexander I, who had been entrusted to the Coans by his mother Cleopatra III in 102 BC, together with Jewish treasures which had been given into their safekeeping.<sup>293</sup>

This precariousness continued during the last years of the Republic as together with most of the Aegean islands, Cos sided with Pompey against Caesar.

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<sup>290</sup> Herzog and Schazmann (1932) x. Excavations led by Herzog and his German team took place in 1902, 1903, and 1904, during which the Asclepieion was discovered. More excavations took place in the 1920s, this time undertaken by Italian scholars.

<sup>291</sup> Rigsby (1996) 14; Buraselis (2004) 16.

<sup>292</sup> Rigsby (1996) 106ff; Joseph. *AJ* 14.112.

<sup>293</sup> Joseph. *AJ* 14.112.

However, after Caesar's victory over Pompey the island quickly transferred its allegiance. A Coan, Theopompus of Cnidos, had to intercede on the island's behalf with Caesar, with whom he was befriended.<sup>294</sup> The island was firmly under Roman control by 30 BC as is shown by events which took place in the Coan Asclepieion.<sup>295</sup> Cos was allied with Marcus Antonius during the civil wars but this did not work in its favour.<sup>296</sup> Turullius, one of Antonius' generals, required timber to build ships in preparation for the battle at Actium. Even though the Asclepieian sacred grove had been protected by sacred laws since the late 4<sup>th</sup> century BC, he cut down part of the grove to provide shipbuilding materials. After Actium, Augustus handed Turullius over to the Coans who executed him in the grove as ancient laws demanded that he 'suffer the same penalty as the uprooted grove'.<sup>297</sup> This incident shows Augustus' willingness to adhere to ancient sacred laws and also appease the god and the Coans.<sup>298</sup> However, Dio states that Augustus punished the cities allied with Antonius by levying money and taking away the authority of their assemblies.<sup>299</sup> Therefore, Cos had lost its *libertas* and also its *immunitas* at the start of Augustus' reign.<sup>300</sup> This loss of freedom continued until well into the Julio-Claudian period but did not compromise the inviolability of the sanctuary of Asclepius which had been sought

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<sup>294</sup> Höghammer (1993) 31: two statue bases were found in the Asclepieion which honoured this Theopompus. One was erected by a private individual and the other by the Coan Demos: Patriarcha 1932 no. 13/ Höghammer cat. No. 49, this inscription was found in the Asclepieion. PH 134/ Höghammer cat. No. 50, possibly found in the Asclepieion.

<sup>295</sup> Sherwin-White (1978) 140-141.

<sup>296</sup> Höghammer (1993) 32.

<sup>297</sup> Val. Max. 1.1.19; Cass. Dio 51.8.3; Sherwin-White (1978) 141; *LSCG* 150A (4<sup>th</sup> century BC), 150B (3<sup>rd</sup> century BC).

<sup>298</sup> Of course, this was also a good way to get rid of a troublesome enemy general and take revenge on Turullius as he was one of Caesar's assassins. Augustus' wish to placate Asclepius only went so far, however, as he took the painting of Aphrodite Anadyomene from the sanctuary as part of the fines which had been levied and dedicated it to the deified Caesar in Rome: Strabo 14.2.19.

<sup>299</sup> Strabo 14.2.19 mentions that the Coans had to pay a fine of one hundred talents, although this was remitted in repayment for the painting of Aphrodite.

<sup>300</sup> Höghammer (1993) 31.



by the Coans in 242 BC.<sup>301</sup> The Coans were compelled to pay tribute to Rome until the time of Claudius and the general prosperity of the area diminished greatly from the Augustan age onwards as a result of this taxation and also the great frequency of earthquakes which plagued the island.<sup>302</sup> However, even though the island continued in a diminished state, there was a relative state of stability under the early Julio-Claudians for Cos. The island flourished under Claudius as a result of Gaius Stertinius Xenophon's position at court. This case-study will demonstrate the impact upon a sanctuary which could be achieved by mediations performed by a Greek of high born status and influence.<sup>303</sup>

Matters for both the Asclepieion and the island of Cos started to change from about AD 23 and Xenophon played an important role in this. Xenophon was born in Cos and he is the first known doctor and priest, and is also the only known patron of the Coan Asclepieion.<sup>304</sup> He became strongly connected to the imperial court and was personal physician to Claudius, *archiatros*, and *monarchos*, which was a type of Coan magistracy.<sup>305</sup> During his time in Rome, he also assumed a lifelong priesthood in Cos of the cult of the Sebastos, which was likely Claudius in this case, the Sebastoi, and also the triad of Asclepius, Hygeia, and Epione.<sup>306</sup> Xenophon went to Rome in AD 23, heading an embassy, in order to petition the emperor Tiberius so that he would reconfirm the right of *asylia* for the Asclepieion:

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<sup>301</sup> Rigsby (1996) 106, 110. At this time the Coans had the Hellenistic kings ratify their declaration of *asylia* for the cult of Asclepius and also had them sanction that the Games held in his honour were Panhellenic and that his temple was inviolable.

<sup>302</sup> '*In insula Coe terrae motu plurima conciderunt*': Euseb. *Chron.* 2.145i; Buraselis (2000) 147, n.120; Pausanias 8.43.4; SHA *Ant. Pius* 9.1; Höghammer (1993) 33; *IvOL* 5.53.6, 5.53.13 is an inscription from Olympia which mentions the Coan earthquakes.

<sup>303</sup> Buraselis (2000) 137.

<sup>304</sup> Sherwin-White (1978) 352.

<sup>305</sup> Buraselis (2000) 95-96; *I.Cos* EV51[bis] 6-7. It was his medical career that formed the basis for his other roles. Xenophon was Claudius' personal physician but other doctors were available to treat members of the imperial household such as Scribonius Largus, see the *Compositiones*.

<sup>306</sup> Buraselis (2000) 97. Epione was Asclepius' wife.

Is quoque annus legationes Graecarum civitatum habuit, Samiis Iunonis, Cois Aesculapii delubro vetustum asyli ius ut firmaretur petentibus. Samii decreto Amphictyonum nitebantur, quis praecipuum fuit rerum omnium iudicium, qua tempestate Graeci conditis per Asiam urbibus ora maris potiebantur. Neque dispar apud Coos antiquitas, et accedebat meritum ex loco: nam civis Romanos templo Aesculapii induxerant, cum iussu regis Mithridatis apud cunctas Asiae insulas et urbes trucidarentur.<sup>307</sup>

Tiberius did endorse this right and Tacitus claims that it was the antiquity of the cult which prompted him to do so. Before this embassy, Xenophon did not seem to have enjoyed an exceptionally high status in Cos and it seems that he remained in Rome and practised medicine there after the embassy.<sup>308</sup> It was likely in AD 23 that Xenophon gained his Roman citizenship as one of the consul for this year was Gaius Stertinius Maximus who would have dealt with the embassy.<sup>309</sup> Xenophon was the only member of his family to bear the *nomen* Stertinius and all of his relatives who gained citizenship were called Tiberii Claudii.<sup>310</sup> It is possible that he served as the personal physician of Tiberius, whom he would have met as ambassador, and Caligula, but there is no evidence for this.<sup>311</sup> However, it is certain that he did serve Claudius in this capacity. Claudian times called for a degree of conservatism and traditionalism in religion but Claudius also showed a great deal of toleration for foreign cults; for example he legitimised the cult of Attis in Rome, mixing religious

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<sup>307</sup> Tac. *Ann.* 4.14.1-2; Martin and Woodman (1989) 44: 'In this year, there were embassies from Greek communities, the Samians and the Coans who petitioned for a reaffirmation of the ancient right of *asylia* for the sanctuaries of Juno and Asclepius. The Samians drew support from an Amphictyonic decree, which was the main body concerning all matters which at the time when the Greeks founded colonies in Asia and mastered the sea. The Coans had similar antiquity and approached their merit from this place, that they had sheltered Roman citizens in the temple of Asclepius when, by order of king Mithridates, these were being massacred in every island and town of Asia'. App. *B. Civ.* 12.31.1; Hoffman (1998) 42. Martin and Woodman (1989) 137 note that *templo* was used here in the dative instead of the more common formula of *in* + the accusative and that *apud* should be taken here to mean 'in'.

<sup>308</sup> Millar (1992) 86; Buraselis (2000) 76.

<sup>309</sup> Buraselis (2000) 77.

<sup>310</sup> His brother was called Tiberius Claudius Cleonymus: *ICos EV233*, his uncle Tiberius Claudius Xenophon son of Philinos: *PH* 46.6.-7, and his cousin Tiberius Claudius Tiberius son of Xenophon: *BMusImp* 3 (1932) 18.

<sup>311</sup> Bosnakis and Hallof (2008) 206.

conservatism and innovation.<sup>312</sup> Claudius suffered constantly from a variety of illnesses.<sup>313</sup> It is interesting, however, that no dedications by Claudius to Asclepius are known, other than his regulations concerning Tiber Island, and Asclepius also does not seem to appear on any Claudian coins. Suetonius states that it had become the norm for Romans to bring their sick slaves to the Tiber Island sanctuary in Claudian times, and leave them there to die. Claudius decreed that when this took place, the slaves were to be freed and that if they regained their health they did not have to return to their former masters.<sup>314</sup>

Tacitus relates that Claudius, probably before he became emperor, asked Xenophon to serve as his physician but Xenophon refused as he earned more as a private doctor than he would as imperial physician. When Claudius increased his offer, Xenophon relented. It is possible that Claudius' pursuit and Xenophon's refusal could be evidence that Xenophon had not been an imperial physician; it was not a given that he would become Claudius' doctor. In other words, that Claudius had not inherited him from his predecessors. He then accompanied Claudius on his British campaigns, for which the Coan received many honours, some of which were listed above.<sup>315</sup> Importantly, Xenophon used his influence at court to prompt Claudius to petition the senate to grant *immunitas* to Cos, an event which the Coans had been working towards for some time, as:

Rettulit dein de immunitate Cois tribuenda, multaque super antiquitate eorum memoravit: Argivos vel C<sup>o</sup>um Latonae parentem vetustissimos insulae cultores; mox adventu Aesculapii artem medendi inlatam maximeque inter posteros eius celebrem fuisse, nomina singulorum referens et quibus quisque aetatibus viguissent. quin etiam dixit Xenophontem, cuius scientia ipse uteretur, eadem familia ortum,

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<sup>312</sup> Sue. *Claud.* 22; Huzar (1984) 648-9. Tac. *Ann.* 11.14 also mentions that Claudius proposed the establishment of a Board of Soothsayers to the senate, following ancient Etruscan traditions.

<sup>313</sup> See, for example, Sue. *Claud.* 2.1, 3.1, 31.

<sup>314</sup> Sue. *Claud.* 25.2.

<sup>315</sup> Plin. *HN* 29.5.

precibusque eius dandum, ut omni tributo vacui in posterum Coi sacram et tantum dei ministram insulam colerent. neque dubium habetur multa eorundem in populum Romanum merita sociasque victorias potuisse tradi: set Claudius facilitate solita quod uni concesserat nullis extrinsecus adiumentis velavit.<sup>316</sup>

It was Xenophon's influence with Claudius which caused him to bestow this right upon Cos and it was his close connections with the cult of Asclepius, as physician and priest, which encouraged Claudius to recognise the importance of the cult of Asclepius here, the benefits of which he had personally reaped through Xenophon. Xenophon would have probably generally acted as an intermediary between the Coans and Claudius; if the Coans had a problem, they would approach Xenophon to petition the emperor.<sup>317</sup> The personal nature of the physician's relationship with the monarch must have made him an ideal messenger and advisor. If the emperor could trust him with his body and life then he could trust him with his political affairs.<sup>318</sup> Benario has argued that there is a dichotomy to Tacitus' representation of Claudius in Books eleven and twelve of the *Annals*. The emperor is presented on the one hand as a fool who is not suited for his position and is controlled by his wife and advisors as a result. If viewed in this light, Claudius' grants to Cos could have been part of a grander theme of important people at court taking advantage of a weak emperor. Nevertheless, Tacitus also shows that Claudius was more than this and was a first-

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<sup>316</sup> Tac. *Ann.* 12.61; Benario (1983) 213: 'Then he proposed to give freedom from taxation to the Coans and he spoke of their great antiquity: 'The Argives or Coeus, the father of Latona, were the most ancient inhabitants of the island. Soon with the arrival of Asclepius, the medical arts were introduced and performed with much fame by his descendants. Calling them all by name and with age when they flourished. Then he also said that as Xenophon, whose skills he himself had utilised, came from the same family, he ought to grant this request, that from now on the Coans would live free from all tribute on their sacred island, which would allow them to care for their god. Without doubt, the many kindnesses they did for the population of Rome and joint victories could have been recounted. But Claudius, with accustomed readiness, did not cover up by means of external aids, a grant which he made for an individual.' Koestermann (1967) 215 states that, as a senator, Tacitus was offended that personal affairs such as this Coan one, would have been given so much attention in the senate.

<sup>317</sup> Buraselis (2004) 141.

<sup>318</sup> Though this was not always the case as, in fact, Tac. *Ann.* 12.67 accuses Xenophon of conspiring with Agrippina in order to poison Claudius. While it is not certain that Xenophon had played any part in this affair, the physician was the easiest person to blame in such cases.

class administrator.<sup>319</sup> For a sickly man, Asclepius was the most natural god to worship so the benefits of honouring the god would probably have seemed clear to Claudius. It would have been Xenophon's influence which drew Claudius' attention to Cos particularly. Claudius' closeness with Xenophon is shown in three letters which the emperor wrote to Cos. These letters were concerned solely with Coan internal affairs and Claudius calls Xenophon his doctor and friend, a man of endless piety in the first letter and also states that Xenophon saved him.<sup>320</sup> Cos and the Coan Asclepieion then slowly regained the rights they had lost at the end of the Republic through imperial grants, which were connected to the Coan cult of Asclepius. It was Xenophon's influence with Claudius that caused him to grant *immunitas* to the island, an honour which Cos had sought for a long time. As a Coan physician, Xenophon was strongly linked to the cult here. It was because of these connections that Xenophon was able to gain his position at court, which in turn allowed him to wield influence on Claudius which, then, furthered both Cos and the Asclepieion.

### 3.1.3 Claudius' Death

After Claudius' death, Xenophon returned to Cos and assumed several local priesthoods. The events surrounding Claudius' death are unclear and ambiguous. He died quite suddenly and under suspicious circumstances, leading most ancient authors to argue that he was murdered by Agrippina so that her son Nero might become emperor.<sup>321</sup> The emperor's death was announced on 13<sup>th</sup> October AD 54 and was claimed to be the result of an illness, as it had been an unhealthy year with

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<sup>319</sup> Benario (2012) 112.

<sup>320</sup> Bosnakis and Hallof (2008) 214. The first letter is dated to AD 47-8 and the second and third both to AD 48.

<sup>321</sup> Tac. *Ann.* 12.67; Sue. *Claud.* 44.2; Cass. Dio 61.34.1-4; Aveline (2004) 453.

plague occurring in the city.<sup>322</sup> However, later historians claimed that the emperor had been poisoned with mushrooms. Poisoning was always a danger in the imperial court, as is attested by epitaphs of imperial food-tasters.<sup>323</sup> However, in Tacitus' version of Claudius' death, Xenophon is said to have played an active role in the emperor's death by poisoning him for a second time with a feather after Agrippina had poisoned him the first time with mushrooms.<sup>324</sup> The sources are quite clear that poison was thought to be the cause for Claudius' death.<sup>325</sup> However, it is not clear if this was an accidental ingestion, something which might occur, or if the mushroom was deliberately given to the emperor. If the latter case was so then Xenophon could have played an active part in the emperor's death and would have been Agrippina's accomplice as Barrett believes, following Tacitus.<sup>326</sup> Dio's version of Claudius' death had Agrippina feed Claudius poisonous mushrooms while eating good ones herself.<sup>327</sup> Mushrooms were considered a delicacy by the Romans but they were also aware that eating these fungi could be very dangerous.<sup>328</sup> Pliny reports that entire households could die from accidentally ingesting the wrong mushroom.<sup>329</sup> These deaths could only be connected with the mushrooms because the people became very sick soon after eating the fungi. The ancient sources concerning Claudius' death relate that the whole process was drawn-out and that while he did not take a long time to die, it was not immediate either.

#### 3.1.4 Xenophon Back in Cos

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<sup>322</sup> Cass. Dio 61.34.3; Osgood (2011) 242.

<sup>323</sup> *ILS* 1567, 1796, 9504.

<sup>324</sup> Tac. *Ann.* 12.67.

<sup>325</sup> Sue. *Claud.* 44.2.

<sup>326</sup> Barrett (1996) 145.

<sup>327</sup> Cass. Dio 61.34.3.

<sup>328</sup> Grimm-Samuel (1991) 180.

<sup>329</sup> Plin. *HN* 22.47.

After Claudius' death, Xenophon returned to Cos where he dedicated a second temple to Asclepius in the Asclepieion and made other improvements to the sanctuary such as installing a piped water course for the wells located in the lower levels of the Asclepieion and he also built a library.<sup>330</sup> Xenophon is also depicted on a coin-type (Fig. 15) struck by the Coan mint with Hygeia on the reverse and another one with Asclepius' snake-staff, clearly indicating deep connections between the physician and the cult on Cos:<sup>331</sup>



Fig. 15: *BMC* (Caria) 18.215.211 and 214.

These coins are also remarkable as the only other individual, other than the Roman emperors, to appear on the obverse on Coan coins was a Nikias who ruled Cos during the late Republic, making Xenophon's appearance on these coins even more striking.<sup>332</sup>

<sup>330</sup> Sherwin-White (1978) 283-4; Herzog (1903) 193-4.

<sup>331</sup> American Numismatic Society 1944.100.48522 and 1953.171.859; *BMC Caria* 18.214.211 and 214.

<sup>332</sup> Nikias was a well-known *grammaticus* in Rome where he had arrived around 60 BC. He was friends with, amongst others, Cicero, Brutus, Cassius, and Dolabella and gained his Roman citizenship at some point between 48 and 44 BC from Caesar through the agency of Curtius Postumus. Nikias was a client and friend of Dolabella and it was in this capacity that he returned to Cos. He ruled the island for about eight years, probably with Antonius' approval and Höghammer (1993) 31 believes that he must have died before Actium, after which his grave was desecrated.

Buraselis has argued that in his dedications Xenophon emphasised his Coan associations while downplaying his Roman connections as a result of his involvement in Claudius' death:

In both texts [*PH* 92 and *BMusImp* 3 (1932) 22.19, see below], Xenophon has silenced his Roman career. In the shorter self-presentation he is simply the benefactor of his home city and priest of Asklepios Caesar Agathos Theos. In the longer one a closely similar priesthood and his quality as *euergetes* appear again respectively as the introduction and the end of a larger group of titles [...].<sup>333</sup>

However, it will be shown here that Xenophon did not downplay his Roman past at all but that he constantly displayed it as an indicator of continued influence at the imperial court. Other interpretations have also been given to Xenophon's titulature, with Sherwin-White stating that his titles reflect the dynastic character of his position as most of these epithets were given to the rulers of client kingdoms. She concludes that their use indicates that Xenophon was virtually a king of Cos.<sup>334</sup> Combinations of imperial titles, as are listed in *BMusImp* 3 (1932) 22.19, elsewhere tend to be attested for client kingdoms and kings and this combined with Xenophon's wealth and influence in Rome would lend him a status similar to that of a client king of Rome.<sup>335</sup> Sherwin-White notes that other important members of the Coan elites had acquired the title *philokaisar* but that no other individual had received the group of titles which Xenophon had, which all indicated his close connection with the imperial household and indicate the regard in which Xenophon was held in Cos.<sup>336</sup>

Sherwin-White makes another interesting point which fits in with the themes discussed here of relations with Rome and the representation thereof. She mentions

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<sup>333</sup> Buraselis (2000) 94.

<sup>334</sup> Sherwin-White (1978) 152.

<sup>335</sup> For example see Agrippas I and II of Judea who were called *philokaisar*, *philoromaios*, and *eusebius*: *OGIS* 419-20.

<sup>336</sup> Sherwin-White (1978) 152.



that *medicus* was the title given in Rome for imperial physicians and the title *iatros* was not used for people fulfilling this role. Xenophon was called *medicus Augusti* in Rome.<sup>337</sup> However, in a Greek dedication set up for Xenophon from the deme in Calymna, presumably erected during Claudius lifetime, he is called *archiatros*.<sup>338</sup> Another decree dated to Nero's reign calls Xenophon *archiatros*, a title used by the physicians of Hellenistic kings.<sup>339</sup> The earliest occurrence of this title comes from Ptolemaic Egypt.<sup>340</sup> This title then could have been used by the Coans to signal Xenophon's privileged position as an private physician to Claudius.<sup>341</sup> This too shows the interplay between Roman and Greek perceptions of Xenophon's position. The title only appears twice in Coan inscriptions honouring Xenophon and his family.<sup>342</sup> On one of these, *philoneron* is inscribed over an erased *philoclaudius* signalling that the latter title may have first been granted to Xenophon in Claudius' reign but the emperor died before the inscription was completed, making the inscriber alter the inscription half way through.<sup>343</sup> This would be even more interesting than if the title was first given under Claudius, as Xenophon was no longer an imperial physician during Nero's reign and the new use of this title then would be a way in which to stress his Roman connections, a theme which will be explored further in this section. The use of this title soon became popular and was

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<sup>337</sup> *CIL* VI 8905.

<sup>338</sup> *Tit. Calymnii* 146. Calymna was under Coan control and regulated by the Coan demos.

<sup>339</sup> *I.Cos* EV 219 (Claudian). See also *I.Cos* EV 241 (Claudian); *PH* 345 (Claudian); Maiuri *NS* 475 (44-54 AD).

<sup>340</sup> Nutton (1977) 194-5 says that it is possible that this was a Greek version of the Egyptian title *wr sinw* meaning chief doctor, a title which was used all the way through the Pharaonic period.

<sup>341</sup> Sherwin-White (1978) 283.

<sup>342</sup> *PH* 345; *I.Cos* EV 241, *I.Cos* EV 245; It is not clear if Xenophon or Claudius favoured this title as both had antiquarian interests: Nutton (1977) 195.

<sup>343</sup> *PH* 345; Nutton (1977) 196.

commonly found on inscriptions at the end of the second century.<sup>344</sup> The title was also used to signal civic physicians.<sup>345</sup>

The following inscriptions will be examined in a roughly chronological order, starting from a letter written by Claudius while Xenophon was still at court and then inscriptions erected by Xenophon after Claudius' death, during the reign of Nero, when he had returned to Cos. By examining the inscriptions in this order, this will show the shifts in the representations of the relationship between Rome, the emperor, Cos, and Xenophon.

Emperors did not always directly interfere with provincial affairs and left most of the daily decisions to the governors, if for no other reason than the purely practical one that depending on where a city was located in the empire, the journey to Rome could be thousands of miles away and could take weeks or even months.<sup>346</sup> However, emperors could act if they so wished and when matters were brought to their attention. This usually needed an intermediary, someone close to the emperor, a role which Xenophon obviously fulfilled for Cos. Claudius was also aware of the benefits of ensuring the loyalty of his servants and provincials and in a letter written by Claudius (Fig. 16), Xenophon is hailed as his physician and friend:<sup>347</sup>

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<sup>344</sup> Nutton (1977) 196.

<sup>345</sup> Nutton (1977) 198. Nutton lists a total of ninety-nine inscriptions in which the physician was called *archiatros*. Most of these are for civic and not regal physicians, namely eighty-eight to eleven.

<sup>346</sup> Millar (1992) 364. He does point that out that such journeys, though hazardous, were commonplace in antiquity. He states that travel and especially travel to Rome was a 'fundamental feature of ancient society'.

<sup>347</sup> 'Tiberius Claudius [Caesar Sebastos Germa]nicus, pontifex maximus, trib. pot. [VIII,] cos. IV, [imp.] XVI, pater [patriae, censor,] to the leaders, *boule* and people of Cos greetings [.....] I write to you [.....] always your prayers [.....] having been appealed to [.....] because of Stertinus Xenophon, my physician and friend and always a friend of the fatherland [.....] never fear [.....] now indeed discord flourishes in [your city [.....]] and it is the reason for a greater evil [.....] looking away from all [.....].' See Bosnakis and Hallof (2008) 213 for text, see 207-212 for images. This is the third of a series of three inscribed together on the back of a stele of white marble currently held in the Ephorie Inv. E376. The stone is badly damaged, affecting mainly the first and third letters.

ΝΘ -----  
 55 ΤΕΙ -----  
 ΜΟΝ -----  
 ΕΠΠΣ -----  
 βουλο -----  
 ΤΑΝΤΑ -----  
 60 ας και τα -----  
 κομένων -----  
 γείνεσθαι -----  
 χειων τούς -----  
 λομένου τη -----  
 65 τας δικαιοτάτας ----- μη]  
 άλλως η ούτως -----  
 Τιβέριος Κλαύδιο[ς Καίσαρ Σεβαστός Γερμα]-  
 νικός, ἀρχιερέυς, δη[μαρχιαῖς ἐξουσίας τὸ δγδο]-  
 70 ον, ὕπατος τὸ τέταρ[τον, αὐτοκράτωρ τὸ ἐκ]-  
 καιδέκατον, πατήρ [πατρίδος, τεμητήης, Κώι]-  
 ων ἄρχουσι βουλή[ι δῆμ]αι χαίρειν -----  
 λον ἡμῖν ἔγραψα διὰ -----  
 ας ἡμῶν ἄρας ἀεὶ νευ -----  
 ηγ παρακληθεῖς ἐπ[ι ----- ὑπὸ Στερ]-  
 75 τινίου Ξενοφώντος [τοῦ ἱατροῦ μου καὶ φι]-  
 λου αἰεὶ φιλοπάτριδος ----- ]  
 δείσαντος μήποτ[ε ----- ἢ νῦν μάλιστα ἀ]-  
 κμάζουσα στάσις ἐν [τῇ πόλει ἡμῶν -----]  
 μεῖζονος κακοῦ αἰτ[ία γένηται, -----]  
 80 ἀπόρων πάντα Ο -----

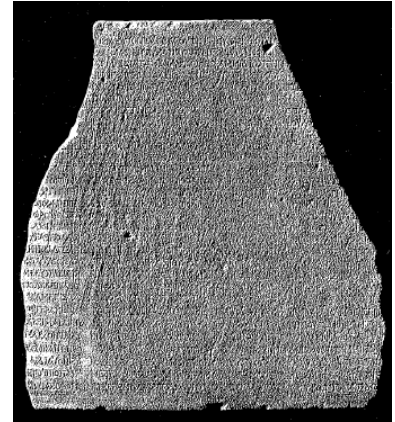


Fig. 16: Inscription Containing Claudius' Letters.

It is clear that Xenophon had some degree of influence with the emperor which he then used to bring Coan matters to his attention as Xenophon would still have been in Rome at Claudius' court when this letter was sent. The letter mentions *stasis* which was taking place in Cos at that time. Bosnakis and Hallof mention that this was a disagreement within the city itself which jeopardises the peace of the city which is why they called upon Xenophon's *philopatria*, which resulted in an imperial intervention. The forms which this took and also the nature of the *stasis* remain unclear, though it may have had economic motivations.<sup>348</sup> A parallel for this is an inscription which was found in the sanctuary of the Great Gods in Samothrace even though it concerns purely Maroneian local affairs and there is no indication that this inscription was meant to be read by foreigners at all.<sup>349</sup> The document is

<sup>348</sup> This is due to the mention of ἄποροι. Bosnakis and Hallof (2008) 217.

<sup>349</sup> Clinton (2003) 379. See Clinton (2003) 381-382 for full text (text A); Inv. No. 88.594.

concerned with a successful embassy to Claudius in which the Maroneians sought to regain rights which they had lost before.<sup>350</sup> The document tells us that the city of Maroneia was completely destroyed, probably as a result of its allegiance to Rome during the Mithridatic Wars. This inscription refers to purely Maroneian affairs and the relations between Rome and Maroneia. The emperor here is addressed in order to regain lost rights and there was also some form of crisis in the past. Thus, it offers a useful parallel for the Coan inscription as it is concerned with similar matters: internal affairs and some kind of strife. A second inscription from Maroneia takes great care to outline to the ambassadors how they should behave in the emperor's presence.<sup>351</sup> The second part of the first decree is concerned with sending an embassy off to Rome as quickly as possible without spending too much time having to debate in the *boule* who to send and having them approved.<sup>352</sup>

The Coans utilised Xenophon's position in the imperial court to bring purely local Coan problems to the attention of the emperor. His close position was also used to bring Coan matters to the emperor's attention as quickly as possible. With him there, there was no need to go through the time-consuming process of appointing ambassadors, which the Maroneians also sought to curtail. Xenophon is also called *philopatris* here, a quality which the emperor seemed to think important to stress as it bridged the distance between imperial centre and periphery.<sup>353</sup> The emperor utilised the term to indicate Xenophon's *patria*, by which he means Cos. In Xenophon's dedications, erected when he was back in Cos, Xenophon is also called *philopatris*.<sup>354</sup> However, it seems that he meant it to indicate his loyalty and love for Rome, whereas it is possible that when Claudius utilised the term in his letter to the

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<sup>350</sup> Clinton (2003) 384. See lines A.16-17.

<sup>351</sup> Clinton (2003) Text C.

<sup>352</sup> Clinton (2003) 390, A lines 37-54.

<sup>353</sup> Bosnakis and Hallof (2008) col. 3.75; Buraselis (2000) 109.

<sup>354</sup> See, for example, *I.Cos* EV 124.

Coans, he used it to mean Xenophon's love and loyalty for Cos. Xenophon's actions brought about the greatest improvement in both the standing of Cos and the Asclepieion, and the grant of *immunitas* must have been vital for his being able to represent himself in this fashion.

Xenophon is hailed as *philoromaios*, *philoneron*, *philokaisar*, and *philosebastos* in an inscription from Cos dated to the reign of Nero, all of which emphasise his service to the emperor.<sup>355</sup>

Ἀσκληπιῶι Καίσαρι Σεβαστῶι καὶ Ὑγίαι  
καὶ Ἠπιόνη<ι> ὁ ἱερεὺς αὐτῶν διὰ βίου  
[Γ]αῖος Στερτίνιος Ἡρακλείτου  
υἱός, Κορνηλία<ι> Ξενοφῶν φιλο-  
[ρ]ώμαιος [[φιλονέρων] φιλό-  
καισαρ, φιλοσέβαστος φιλό-  
πατρις, δάμου υἱός, εὐσεβής,  
εὐεργέτας τᾶς πατρίδος, ἥρωος  
ἀνέθηκεν.<sup>356</sup>

The use of these precise titles is very interesting and actually draws attention to Xenophon's Roman connections. However, Buraselis has argued that Xenophon actually downplayed mentions of his Roman career (see above).<sup>357</sup> It will be shown here that this was not the case and that he actually actively referred to it and brought it to the forefront. The use of all four titles together is quite rare (See Table 3):

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<sup>355</sup> For another example see *I.Cos* EV 241 etc.

<sup>356</sup> *BMusImp* 3 (1932) 22.19: 'To Asclepius Kaisar Sebastos and Hygeia / And Epione, their priest for life / Gaius Stertinius Xenophon / member of the Cornelian voting tribe, son of Herakleitos, philoromaios, / philoneron, philokaisar, / philosebastos, philopatris, son of this land, pious man / benefactor of the fatherland, hero, set this up'.

<sup>357</sup> Buraselis (2000) 94.

Title	Total Frequency of Occurrence across the Empire
Philoromaios	184
Philoneron	5
Philokaisar	326
Philosebastos	189
Philopatris	658

Table 3: Data from the *PHI* database showing the frequency of occurrence of the titles utilised in *BMusImp* 3 (1932) 22.19.

Unsurprisingly, from the data from the *PHI* database in Table 3, the more generic titles are the most common ones in the Empire, whereas *philoneron* only occurs five times.<sup>358</sup> In the Coan inscription, *philoneron* was erased with *damnatio memoriae* performed on Nero's name. This signals an awareness of events taking place in Rome, although, of course, it is not possible to state when precisely this act was undertaken as the inscription itself is dated to the reign of Nero.<sup>359</sup> The titles listed in the inscription above are most commonly used in either the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, or 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD, with no extant inscriptions mentioning these titles from the 4<sup>th</sup> century AD, though there is a re-occurrence of these titles in the 5<sup>th</sup> century AD.<sup>360</sup> *Philoneron* occurs on Cos four times, and once on Calymna. The title *philokaisar* occurs fifty-six times on Cos in the reign of Claudius alone. There seems to be a very Coan, regional, element to the use of the titles. Another inscription erected by Xenophon mentions the fact that he was *philoclaudius*, showing that the physician was making the most of his imperial connections.<sup>361</sup> The inscription erected on Calymna also contains a variety of titles, namely *philokaisar*, *philoneron*, *philoclaudius*, *philosebastos*, *philoromaios*, and *philopatris*.<sup>362</sup>

<sup>358</sup> *PHI* = Packard Humanities Institute. *Damnatio memoriae* should be taken into account here.

<sup>359</sup> For a parallel on a grander scale see also the erasure of the monumental inscription to Nero on the Parthenon; see Carroll (1982) 30-43.

<sup>360</sup> From surveying the *PHI* database for these keywords.

<sup>361</sup> *I.Cos* EV 219 (Claudian).

<sup>362</sup> Calymna is an island off the coast of Caria situated between Leros and Cos and was likely the main island of the Claydnae group. A 3<sup>rd</sup>-century BC decree from Cos requires both Coan and

[ὁ δᾶμο]ς ὁ Καλυμνίων κα[ὶ]  
 τοὶ κατοικεῦντες καὶ ἐνε-  
 κτημένοι πάντες ἀνε-  
 στησαν τὸν βωμὸν εὐχό-  
 μενοι τῷ θεῷ Ἀπόλλωνι  
 ὑπὲρ τᾶς ὑγείας καὶ σωτηρί-  
 ας τοῦ κοινᾶ τᾶς πατρίδος  
 καὶ καθ' ἓνα ἑκάστου εὐερ-  
 γέτα Γαῖου Στερτινίου  
 Ἡρακλείτου υἱοῦ Ξενοφῶντος  
 φιλοκαίσαρος, φιλονέρω-  
 νος, φιλοκλαυδίου, φιλοσε-  
 βαστοῦ, φιλορωμαίου, φιλο-  
 πάτριδος, δάμου υἱοῦ, εὐσε-  
 [β]οῦς, ἥρωος, εὐεργέτα τᾶς  
 [πα]τρίδος, διὰ τοῦ ἐν ἀρχᾷ  
 [δαμάρχου — — — —]ιος τ[οῦ]  
 [δεῖνος — — — — — — — —]³⁶³

Here too attention is drawn to Xenophon's Roman past though in a slightly different way. No mention is made of the voting tribe to which the physician belonged (see below), but more emphasis is placed upon his connections with specific emperors as he is called both *philoneron* and *philoclaudius*. Nero, being the living emperor, is mentioned before Claudius and also, interestingly, no erasure of Nero's name took place here, unlike at Cos. Xenophon is also again called hero. In fact Xenophon's titlature here strongly echoes the language used in the Coan inscription. The *PHI* database lists fifty-three occurrences of this *philoclaudius*, fifty-two of which occur

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Calymnian citizens to swear an oath to abide by the democracy and ancestral institutions of Cos. This makes clear that Calymna formed part of the Coan state as the Calymnians have to swear to follow the Coan *patrioi nomoi*: *Tit.Calymmii* 9; Thompson (1971) 618.

<sup>363</sup> *Tit.Calymmii* 111. 'The people of Calymna and / those who settled / and all who had property / erected this altar, / praying to the god Apollo / for the health and safety / of the koine of the fatherland / and for each man individually / benefactor Gaius Stertinius / Xenophon, son of Heracleitus, / philokaisar, philoneron, / philoclaudius, philosebastos, / philoromaioi, philopatris, / son of the fatherland, pious man, / hero, benefactor of the fatherland, by agency of the damarchos in office, [...]ios / aforementioned [.....]'.

on Cos and only one from Calymna, which is the inscription mentioned above.<sup>364</sup> Many of these are dedications by Xenophon, and *philoclaudius* occurs within lists of other titles, as also occurs here. These inscriptions are dated to the reign of Claudius. It is possible, then, that as the dedication to Asclepius was erected during the reign of Nero the demos was interested in showing Xenophon's continuing connections with the imperial court and emperor rather than showing his past relationship with Claudius. In other words, it was desirable for Xenophon to be presented as having continued imperial influence, which was the basis of Xenophon's power on Cos and the reason for his being granted many honours and priesthoods.

*Philokaisar* and *philosebastos* were common titles, with *philokaisar* being a very early use of such a title which indicated people who were in some way connected to the emperor. Buraselis argued that this title signalled devotion to the emperor as a person and less to the emperor as an institution as people who gained this title early on seemed generally to play a part in the cult of the emperor.<sup>365</sup> *Kaisar* was the standard Greek way of referring to an emperor, whereas *Sebastos* was more commonly used to indicate the founder of the principate, namely Augustus or the emperor as a living institution.<sup>366</sup> He also notes that *philosebastos* was more commonly used by larger bodies, such as the *demos*, rather than an individual.<sup>367</sup> Its usage here by Xenophon is, thus, noteworthy though not exceptional. It does seem that Xenophon was covering all of his bases and was expressing his devotion to and connections with the imperial court and emperor in all the forms available to him. A further point of note is that *philoromaios* is placed before *philopatria*, showing that loyalty to Rome is placed before loyalty to the fatherland. The dedication was set up

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<sup>364</sup> Accessed 22/2/2014.

<sup>365</sup> Buraselis (2000) 102-3.

<sup>366</sup> Buraselis (2000) 103.

<sup>367</sup> Buraselis (2000) 104.



by the Calymnians who wanted to stress Xenophon's Coan background which is why they used *philopatria*. Of all of the above, this was the most common epithet and was used in a variety of ways. Here it is especially remarkable as generally this title was placed first in inscriptions, above those indicating loyalty to one's family. However here it occurs last and Xenophon has already stated that he was *philoromaïos* so its use here could once again show that Xenophon wished to add as many epithets as possible and stress above all his connections with Rome. It is possible that the Calymnians sought to stress Xenophon's Roman connections over his Coan ones as they were the source of his power and prestige in Cos. A balance had to be found in this inscription between Xenophon's Roman and Coan identities. In this way it fits in with the other titles used here, as they all sought to emphasize Xenophon's Roman connections and past but did not seek to downplay these associations at all, yet they also did not downplay his Coan links.

Xenophon drew further attention to his Roman past and also his present connections by including 'Κορνηλία<ι>' in the dedication. As he was on Cos, there was no reason for him to draw attention to the fact that he was a member of a Roman voting-tribe, other than to emphasize and remind people of his Roman citizenship. Roman voting-tribes are mentioned in seven inscriptions on Cos, including the one mentioned above. Six of these were written in Greek and one in Latin. The Latin inscription mentions the Esquiline tribe, whereas the Greek inscriptions refer to the Palatina (two), Fabia, Falerna, and Quirina tribes. These inscriptions are generally dated to the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> centuries AD.<sup>368</sup> One inscription is noteworthy as it was erected by Claudia Phoebe, Tiberius Claudius Cleonymus' wife, who was

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<sup>368</sup> Latin: *I.Cos* EV 276 (1<sup>st</sup> century AD). Greek: *I.Cos* EV 233 (1<sup>st</sup> century AD), *I.Cos* EV 219 (Claudian), *I.Cos* EV 147 (2<sup>nd</sup> century AD), *I.Cos* (Fun.) EF 53 (1<sup>st</sup> century BC).

Xenophon's brother, and it also mentions the Roman voting-tribe to which he belonged, namely the Quirina (see Fig. 17):

Τιβέριον Κλαύδιον Ἡρακλείτου  
 υἱὸν Κυρ(είνα) Κλεώνυμον, τὸν ἀ-  
 δελφὸν Γαίου Στερτινίου  
 Ξενοφῶντος, χειλιαρχή-  
 σαντα ἐν Γερμανίαι λεγιῶ-  
 νος κβ Πριμιγενίας δῖς, μο-  
 ναρχήσαντα καὶ πρεσβεύ-  
 σαντα πολλάκις ὑπὲρ τῆς  
 πατρίδος πρὸς τοὺς Σεβασ-  
 τοὺς — Κλαυδία Φοίβη  
 τὸν ἑαυτῆς ἄνδρα καὶ εὐεργέ-  
 την ἀρετῆς ἕνεκα καὶ εὐνοίας.<sup>369</sup>

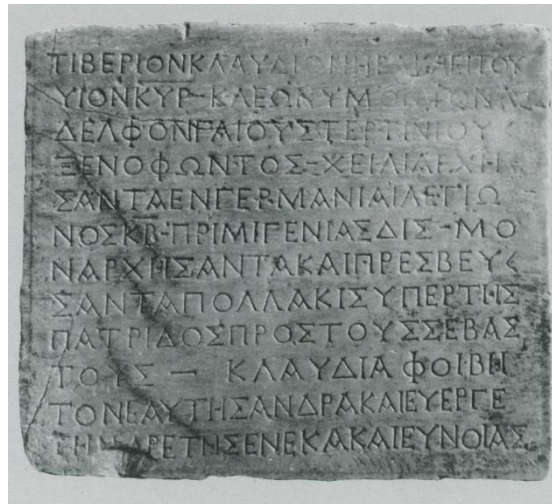


Fig. 17: *I.Cos* EV 23.

Cleonymus held a number of local Coan positions, was the tribune of the twenty-third legion Primigenia, and is also recorded to have been a part of many imperial

<sup>369</sup> *I.Cos* EV 233. ‘Tiberius Claudius Cleonymus, son of Heracleitus, member of the Quirina voting-tribe, brother of Gaius Stertinius Xenophon, tribune in the twenty-third legion Primigenia in Germania, having been monarchos twice and ambassador often on behalf of the fatherland to the emperors, Claudia Phoebe set up this, her husband, benefactor of the fatherland on account of arête and goodwill’ This inscription is dated to the 1st century AD. Segre notes that Paton was wrong in his version of the text as it should be λεγιῶνος and not λεγεῶνος, as is clearly legible on the stone (line 5). A *monarchos* was a type of Coan magistrate: *SIG* 1012.13. *I.Cos* EV 233 re-edited the inscription to connect δῖς with the tribunate rather than with his *monarchia* as Paton and Hicks had preferred before. This was based upon Segre’s inspection of the stone. However, Buraselis too examined the inscription and found the dash in question to be of a decorative nature. He, therefore, argued that Cleonymus was not tribune twice, which would have been slightly odd, but had been a *monarchos* twice instead: Buraselis (2000) 75n45.

embassies on behalf of the Coans. The Coans, then, were keen to exploit the intimate relationship between Xenophon and Cos, and sending Xenophon's brother would be an easy way to ensure that their concerns would be put to the emperor.<sup>370</sup> By referring to Cleonymus' brother Xenophon, Claudia Phoebe probably refers to the source of his status, namely his more famous brother and, by mentioning his Roman tribe here, Claudia did the same as Xenophon in the previous inscription and explicitly mentioned the Roman connections which were the source of Cleonymus' prestige and power in Cos. Thus, contrary to Buraselis' argument, Xenophon's Roman career was not silenced at all but equal importance was given to his Roman past and his Coan connections.

### 3.1.5 Xenophon and the Roman Court

The inscriptions analysed here and the titles utilised in them illustrate the close relationship between emperor and members of his court. The Roman court was undefined in its nature and membership was determined by close relationships with the emperor and not socio-economic factors or birth.<sup>371</sup> The primary function of the court was to provide access to the emperor and it was this contact which formed the basis for a courtier's power. An ancient court can be visualised as a series of concentric circles with an individual's power lessening the further he moved away from the emperor.<sup>372</sup> Cut off from the emperor, the courtier was powerless and without standing in society.<sup>373</sup> As a result, the bestowal or withholding of favours

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<sup>370</sup> *Syll.*<sup>3</sup> 805; Millar (1992) 86.

<sup>371</sup> Wallace-Hadrill (1996) 285.

<sup>372</sup> Levick (1993) 53.

<sup>373</sup> See the Apelles incident in the court of Philip V of Macedon: Polyb. 4.76ff; Wallace-Hadrill (1996) 288.

was a way for the emperor to divide and control his upper classes.<sup>374</sup> An emperor could never completely be assured of the loyalty of his subjects and had only two methods of control at his disposal: repression or reward.<sup>375</sup> In the case of the Coans, Claudius chose reward and this is probably why he granted the rights to the Asclepieion in AD 54 when Xenophon petitioned him for them. By granting favours to Cos, Claudius increased Xenophon's prestige in his home town and hoped to be assured of his physician's loyalty. Gift giving was a normal way of stimulating loyalty by emperors as it was a way of creating obligations on the recipient's part.<sup>376</sup> Roman courts were influenced by the Hellenistic ones but there were also significant differences in both and it was imperial favour that was key in a courtier's position at court.<sup>377</sup> This is perhaps why Xenophon, and also Cleonymus, put such emphasis on their Roman connections. Xenophon was no longer at court and did not have access to either the living or the dead emperor. As a courtier's power derived from his access to the emperor and the favours the ruler could bestow upon him, when separated from the emperor, the courtier was without power. Xenophon was no longer at court so he did not have access to imperial power any more. The inscription from Calymna shows that Xenophon was perceived to be close to both Claudius and Nero even though he departed for Cos not long into Nero's reign. The fact that the title *philoneron* is also used on the Coan inscription and that he placed such emphasis on his Roman titles and his closeness with the imperial household both past and present, show that Xenophon was trying to preserve the illusion of the continuity of this privileged position so that he would not lose any power in Cos itself.

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<sup>374</sup> Wallace-Hadrill (1996) 296.

<sup>375</sup> Paterson (2007) 137.

<sup>376</sup> Paterson (2007) 150.

<sup>377</sup> Ma (2011) 531.



[τ]οῦ Λεριανοῦ δάμου υἱοῦ,  
 φιλοκαίσαρος, ἱερέως Ἀσκλη-  
 πιοῦ Καίσαρος· Λεύκιος Κοσ-  
 σίνιος Γνώριμος φιλοκαί-  
 σαρ τὰν ἑαυτοῦ θρέψασαν  
 μνάμας καὶ εὐχαριστίας  
 τᾶς ἐς αὐτάν.<sup>382</sup>

It was through the prompting of Xenophon, connected by his birth and profession to Asclepius, that the Coan sanctuary gained honours and increased its standing in the network of Asclepieia. After Claudius' grant, Asclepius was associated with the emperor through titulature which indicates his enhanced status after Claudius' grant. This is also reflected in the title of Asclepius' festival on Cos: in the Hellenistic period this festival was called the *Asklapieia megala* but by Claudius' reign this had been changed to *sebasta Asklapieia megala*.<sup>383</sup> The former title, which would have taken place every five years, is attested in victory lists, *asylia* decrees and also foreign decrees mentioning the festival.<sup>384</sup> The establishment of this festival formed part of the Coans' desire to gain the right of *asylia* for their sanctuary. The festival was recognised as Panhellenic in 242 BC and there are about fifty recognitions of this right from various kings and *poleis* which were erected in the sanctuary.<sup>385</sup> Coan *theoroi* were sent out every four years to announce the coming festival at the Hellenistic courts, whose kings would then send their own ambassadors in turn to attend.<sup>386</sup> The additional title *sebasta*, which was commonly given to festivals in the imperial period, is attested in a decree erected on Cos probably shortly after

<sup>382</sup> *I.Cos* EV 206. It was built into the outer wall of a house. '[.....] The mother of Lucius Cossinius Bassus, son of Lucius, of the deme of Lerianus, son of the fatherland, philokaisar, priest of Asclepius Kaisar, Lucius Cossinius Gnorimos, erected this out of the memory of her raising him and thanks for her.' 'δάμου υἱοῦ' is an honorific title.

<sup>383</sup> Sherwin-White (1978) 358; *Asklapieia Megala: ICos EV* 218 (1<sup>st</sup> century BC). *Sebasta Asklapieia Megala: NS* 462.12-13 (Claudian or Neronian – after AD 54).

<sup>384</sup> *Gymn. Agone* I D.23, II B.70, II C 5.73, II B 4.37; *SEG* 12.369, *SEG* 12.373; Sherwin-White (1978) 357.

<sup>385</sup> Sherwin-White (1978) 357; Rigsby (2004) 9.

<sup>386</sup> Rigsby (2004) 9.

Claudius' death.<sup>387</sup> The decree is an honorific decree set up by the demos of Cos for Lucius Nonius Aristocles, son of Aristocles, member of the Cornelian voting-tribe, and he is also called *philokaisar*.<sup>388</sup> Nonius participated in numerous embassies to Cos during the reigns of Tiberius and Claudius, and Maiuri argues that he also participated in those embassies seeking the affirmation of the right of *asylia* and the embassy seeking to gain the right of *immunitas* for Cos. He also states that Nonius probably accompanied Cleonymus on the other embassies. He would, thus, have been familiar with both brothers and also the emperor himself.<sup>389</sup> It is the timing of when this title was added to the festival which is interesting as it signals that there might have been a connection between the cult of the emperor, namely Claudius, and Asclepius.<sup>390</sup>

### 3.1.6 Conclusion

Without Xenophon's services to him, Claudius may not have been so willing to grant *immunitas* to Cos or to order the Coans to dedicate themselves to the service of Asclepius. Claudius was also the source of Xenophon's power and position, both in Cos and Rome, and the physician carefully referred to his past imperial connections by constantly referring to both the emperor and also other Roman elements such as his voting tribe. Through his agency, the cult of Asclepius and the emperor became more and more entwined as with Asclepius' panhellenic festival the *Sebasta Megala Asklepieia*. Patronage of Asclepius could be seen as a bridge in the relationship between emperor and courtier. Asclepius was used as a vehicle for the

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<sup>387</sup> For a parallel see the *Megala Sebasta Heraia* at Samos: *IG XII.6.312*.

<sup>388</sup> *NSER* 462: the inscription is on a large honorific base made of white marble.

<sup>389</sup> Maiuri (1925) 167.

<sup>390</sup> Sherwin-White (1978) 358.

articulation of imperial favour and was suited for this purpose both by his role as patron god of the island and also as Claudius had granted special honours to this god. Thus, political changes at Rome, specifically the development of the imperial court under Claudius and his succession to the imperial throne, had lasting effects upon Cos and the Coan Asclepieion and resulted in direct Roman interference in Coan affairs and those of the Asclepieion. However, this was not a mono-directional change in affairs; it has also been shown here how local elites in Cos responded to Rome in their cultic interventions. Local responses to Rome within cults of Asclepius will be examined further in the next section, which looks at Hadrianic and Caracallan Asclepieian sacred travel.

## 3.2 The Impact of Imperial Sacred Travel on the Cult of Asclepius

### 3.2.1 Introduction

While Claudius never visited the Coan Asclepieion in person, he did have a definite impact on the cult of Asclepius there. However, travel played an important role in imperial patronage of the god as Xenophon originally travelled to Rome as part of an embassy to petition Tiberius, which put him in a position to increase his reputation in Rome and gain his place at Claudius' court. In this section, the impact of imperial sacred travel on the cult will be examined. An imperial visit to a sanctuary would have boosted the standing and economy of a city or sanctuary and Hadrian and Caracalla are known to have toured extensively through their empires. It was precisely these emperors who had lasting effects on the cult of Asclepius, especially in the Panhellenic sanctuaries of Epidaurus and Pergamum, although not



directly on any of the Italic ones. There is no iconography relating to the Tiber Island sanctuary found on their coinage; this is in contrast to Pergamene iconography, which this chapter will show to have been prevalent not just on provincial Caracallan coinage but also to have occurred in Rome itself.<sup>391</sup> This section will first explore sacred travel in general, after which Hadrianic impact on Asclepius will be examined. Lastly, Caracalla's interactions with the cult will be researched. With both of these emperors, their greatest direct impact was on the Pergamene cult, but Hadrian also visited Epidauros and revived ancient rites there. The provincial response to these dedications, of equal importance in terms of impact, will also be explored here. Caracalla's visit to Pergamum had lasting effects on other cults of Asclepius in Asia Minor with other cities following the Pergamene example and breathing new life into cults of Asclepius in order to honour both the emperor and a god he favoured.

### 3.2.2 Sacred Travel

Festivals were one of the main reasons for sacred travel in antiquity but there were many other motives why an individual could choose to travel, for example to consult an oracle, to participate in a mystery cult or in order to seek healing.<sup>392</sup> Medical sacred travel was especially well attested from the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC onwards and particularly during the Hellenistic period.<sup>393</sup> In Greek there were two terms used to describe sacred travellers: *theoros* and *hikestes* with the latter being the scarcer

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<sup>391</sup> Antoninus Pius did issue a medallion showing Asclepius' arrival in Rome: Gnechi (1912) Vol. 2, p.9, nos. 1-3; Baldwin's Auctions Ltd, New York Sale XXV, lot 185.

<sup>392</sup> Dillon (1997) xiii-xiv.

<sup>393</sup> Elsner and Rutherford (2005) 17.

term.<sup>394</sup> The term *theoros* is not used in the context of a healing sanctuary. The term used in this context to indicate a supplicant was *hiketes*, signalling an awareness that healing travel differed from sacred travel to other sanctuaries.<sup>395</sup> Ancient sacred journeys emphasised ritual travel to sacred centres often far away from where the supplicant lived.<sup>396</sup> This travel and the act of supplicating a god created social cohesion; the worshippers at a sanctuary formed a sacrificial group with shared experiences and goals.<sup>397</sup> Supplicants were mainly motivated by individual concerns, which is part of the reason why sacred travel was so predominant in the cult of Asclepius, as he was known to be a deity particularly interested in healing and helping individuals. However, the most conspicuous form of ancient sacred travel were the sacred embassies, *theoria*, where cities would send out ambassadors to other *poleis* in order to announce an upcoming festival. These cities generally would send their own ambassadors to attend these rites in their name.<sup>398</sup> A number of letters collected by Rigsby show how *theoria* also occurred in the cult of Asclepius, for example at Cos, where the sanctuary had been granted the right of *asylia* in 242 BC. These letters attest that Coan ambassadors were sent to various *poleis* and Hellenistic courts in order to invite them to attend the quadrennial festival of Asclepius in Cos and also to acknowledge and guarantee the right of *asylia*.<sup>399</sup> Other sanctuaries also sent out similar embassies, inviting cities to send their own ambassadors to attend the various Asclepiadic festivals.

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<sup>394</sup> Naiden (2005) 73. There was no exact term which could relate to our modern understanding of travel for religious purposes, such as ‘pilgrimage’.

<sup>395</sup> Rutherford (2000) 133.

<sup>396</sup> Coleman and Elsner (1995) 29.

<sup>397</sup> Galli (2005) 263.

<sup>398</sup> Elsner and Rutherford (2005) 12-13.

<sup>399</sup> Rigsby (1996) 109; for the letters see 112ff, Rigsby nos 8-13.

In the ancient world there was no clear demarcation between the sacred and secular, and sacred activities pervaded daily life in many ways.<sup>400</sup> Greek does nevertheless have two distinctive terms separating the two, namely sacred, *hieros*, and profane, *hosia*.<sup>401</sup> This distinction in terminology is reflected by the physical layout of a sanctuary as the temple and altar were often situated within a *temenos* whereas stadia and theatres could be situated outside the demarcated sacred area.<sup>402</sup> Despite these demarcations, any trip could turn into a sacred journey at any point simply by the supplication of a deity. Connor argues that the terms *hieros* and *hosia* do not relate precisely to our modern terms of sacred and profane but actually express the relationship between the two which is parallel to and co-ordinated with each other; sacred and secular go hand-in-hand.<sup>403</sup> However, sacred travel for the purpose of healing seems distinct from this. Any journey could transform into sacred travel but a certain level of predetermination can be presumed for those travelling for the purpose of healing. Epigraphic evidence such as the Epidaurian *Iamata* (see below) indicate that people set out with the intention of being healed, and that this was not a secondary purpose of their voyage or even something which they had decided while travelling.<sup>404</sup> Supplications were more commonly made for current illnesses rather than future illness, though this did also occur. In this way sacred travel in the cult of Asclepius differs from other kinds of sacred travel.

For the Greeks it was possible to acknowledge the pre-eminence of a panhellenic healing cult while not feeling that their local shrine was lesser in terms of healing.<sup>405</sup> A later 4<sup>th</sup>-century AD source articulated this:

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<sup>400</sup> Coleman and Elsner (1995) 12.

<sup>401</sup> Scullion (2005) 113.

<sup>402</sup> Scullion (2005) 115.

<sup>403</sup> Connor (1988) 164.

<sup>404</sup> *IG IV<sup>2</sup>* 1.121 (c.350-300 BC).

<sup>405</sup> Scullion (2005) 128.

If we had bodily ailments and needed the help of the god [Asclepius], and he were present here in his temple on the acropolis and revealed himself to the sick, as they say he does, would we have to go to Tricca or sail to Epidaurus because of its ancient renown, or could we be relieved of our ailment merely by taking a short walk [to your acropolis]?<sup>406</sup>

Epigraphic evidence, in the form of many dedications found in virtually all of the Asclepieia, indicates that a need for sacred healing travel was still felt in Roman times and remained popular and Roman patterns of this travel were based upon the Greek and Hellenistic ones.<sup>407</sup> The creation of the Roman Empire facilitated travel in part due to the new infrastructure but also as a result of the *pax romana* and the systematic removal of pirates and brigands.<sup>408</sup> Travel and communication were very important for the governing of the Roman army, whose vast geographical diffusion and cultural diversity demanded that an efficient infrastructure be in place for this.<sup>409</sup>

Many towns had local Asclepieia but the Panhellenic sanctuaries of Cos, Pergamum, and Epidaurus were also very popular with Greeks and Romans. Previous scholars have argued that supplicants chose to travel to a specific sanctuary on account of specialised healing which took place there.<sup>410</sup> In Athens, a great many eye *ex-votos* were found, which was used to corroborate this claim. Evidence from Corinth was also used to support this, as many arms and hands were found there. The largest caches of votive deposits were excavated at these two sanctuaries and they

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<sup>406</sup> Them. *Or* 27.333c, trans. Penella (2000) 166; Scullion (2005) 130. Themistius was a non-Christian who had been educated in 'traditional Hellenistic *paideia*' yet he still gained imperial favour following a speech given to Constantine in AD 350. The emperor first gave Themistius an official teaching post in Constantinople and then a place in the Senate in AD 355. Themistius remained in favour with the emperor up to his death and was also patronised by the emperors Jovian, Valens, and Theodosius: Heather and Moncur (2001) ix. The oration sees Themistius addressing a young man, using both religious and literary examples to illustrate that he should honour local places and objects as well as those from other places as they are not any lesser for being close to home. Eloquence was honoured everywhere (335) and the young man should apply this principle to all things.

<sup>407</sup> Coleman and Elsner (1995) 22.

<sup>408</sup> Adams (2001) 2.

<sup>409</sup> Adams (2001) 1.

<sup>410</sup> Dillon (1997) 75; Van Straten (1981) 149-50; Ferguson (1989) 101.

provided the greatest number of *ex-votos* in the Greek world. However, later excavations at Corinth also found body parts of every description, indicating that there was no specialisation here.<sup>411</sup> The *ex-votos* from Fregellae were also very diverse (see Chapter 2), showing that there is no reason to suspect specialisation in the Italian healing sanctuaries either. The Epidaurian *Iamata* list a wide variety of cures and healings, both medical and miraculous.<sup>412</sup> Further claims were made that there was a difference in the cures effected in Epidaurus and those in Cos and Pergamum, the former being more divine and supernatural and the latter being more medical.<sup>413</sup> However, this was probably not the case. The basis for the claim that the Coan Asclepieion had more medical grounding than the other shrines was based upon the excavation of medical instruments at this site. However, the find-spots have never been recorded for these and the equipment could have been found elsewhere.<sup>414</sup> Supernatural cures were also found at other sanctuaries, among them Rome, so this division between medical and divine need not be the reason behind the choice of sanctuary.<sup>415</sup> If there was no specialisation, then this would mean that people could seek healing at their local shrine but also if they felt that the need strongly enough, they could travel to a larger sanctuary.<sup>416</sup> It was the supplicant's own choice then, no doubt influenced by wealth and ability to travel, which determined the selection of sanctuary.<sup>417</sup> Sacred travel was distinct from travel for economic purposes, as there is evidence that people did travel considerable distances in search of employment.<sup>418</sup> Travel for the purpose of gathering knowledge, which

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<sup>411</sup> Dillon (1997) 75; Van Straten (1981) 149-50.

<sup>412</sup> *IG IV<sup>2</sup>* 1.121.2-7, 98-102.

<sup>413</sup> Talbot (2002) 153.

<sup>414</sup> Van Straten (1981) 130. This was also the case with *ex-votos*.

<sup>415</sup> *IGUR* 1.148. This inscription is dated to the 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD, possibly AD 212-217.

<sup>416</sup> Dillon (1997) 76.

<sup>417</sup> Dillon (1997) 80. Because of the cost of travel, it is possible that Panhellenic sanctuaries attracted people from the higher socio-economic groups.

<sup>418</sup> Lawrence (2001) 169.

was an elite habit especially during the so-called Second Sophistic, should also be treated as different from sacred travel, though healing supplicatory travel touched upon elements which were central to the ‘Second Sophistic’, namely broader themes of travel, tourism, and supplication, and should not wholly be seen as a fringe activity.<sup>419</sup> Most ancient Asclepieian testimonies indicate that the supplicants came of their own volition but others state that the god ordered them to come to the sanctuary, something which is also claimed by Aelius Aristides, who, on one occasion states: ‘When the god sent me to the Aesepus [...]’.<sup>420</sup> Aristides was, of course, a unique supplicant and goes further than most to indicate his personal relationship with the god.<sup>421</sup> This is also shown by a 2<sup>nd</sup>-century AD dedicatory inscription from Epidaurus in which the dedicant states that:

I, Marcus Iulius Appeles, from Idrias [a suburb of Mylasa], was summoned by the god, for I was often falling into illnesses and suffering from indigestion. During my journey by boat he told me, in Aegina, not to be so irritable all the time.<sup>422</sup>

The close and individual relationship with the god was, thus, felt by another supplicant, dating to roughly the same period, and occurring during the ‘Second Sophistic’. These sources aptly indicate the individual nature of a supplicant’s relationship with the god, something also likely felt by the emperors.

### 3.3 The Impact of Imperial Sacred Travel on the Cult of Asclepius: Hadrian

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<sup>419</sup> Elsner and Rutherford (2005) 25-6; Petsalis-Diomidis (2010) 116, 121; Galli (2005) 254-5: The Second Sophistic was a period obsessed with memory in that it forms one of the significant communicatory functions of social life.

<sup>420</sup> Aristid. *Or.* 50.6; Dillon (1997) 77. The Aesepus was a river in Mysia, now called the Gönen çayı.

<sup>421</sup> Aristides was born some time at the beginning of Hadrian’s reign in Hadrianoi in Asia Minor and lived into the reign of Commodus: Jones (1998) 64. He spent most of his life in Smyrna where he taught rhetoric but spent about two years healing at the Pergamene Asclepieion: Jones (1998) 64-5. The orator felt that he had a special and privileged relationship with Asclepius who for him was the god: Jones (1998) 75.

<sup>422</sup> *IG* IV.955; trans. Galli (2005) 279.

Of all the emperors, Hadrian is best known as a travelling emperor. He had what could be called a tourist's interest in viewing all of the spectacles of his empire. This section will first examine Hadrian's travels in general, then will look at his visit to the Pergamene and the Epidaurian sanctuaries and then the impact his benefactions had on the cult there. Special attention will be given to the so-called Asclepius Amelung type (see below) which grew in importance in Pergamum and was assigned to the new syncretic god Zeus-Asclepius. This became associated with Hadrian and the position of emperor. A statue from Eleusis will be discussed lastly, before moving on to Caracalla, who became connected with the Amelung statue-type and who worshipped extensively at Pergamum.

Hadrian spent more than half of his reign away from Rome, travelling around the provinces.<sup>423</sup> Before him, emperors had mainly travelled either with the goal of expanding their empire, to keep their existing provinces under control, such as Augustus or Trajan. While these reasons also played a part in Hadrian's travels, he may also have been motivated by hellenophilia and a love of travel.<sup>424</sup> Being physically present in the provinces and, thus, accessible to provincials was a highly successful way of consolidating the empire: travel served as a unifying method.<sup>425</sup> Hadrian wished for the equalisation and unification of all of the provinces.<sup>426</sup> This unity of empire allowed Hadrian to be in a stronger position to deal with the provincials.<sup>427</sup> The *Historia Augusta* and Dio remark that no other emperor travelled more than Hadrian did.<sup>428</sup> His presence is documented in over thirty provinces and

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<sup>423</sup> Speller (2003) 2.

<sup>424</sup> Speller (2003) 63-4 she calls him a 'roving diplomat'; SHA *Hadr.* 1.5.

<sup>425</sup> Boatwright (2008) 167; Speller (2003) 68.

<sup>426</sup> Thornton (1975) 433.

<sup>427</sup> Mols (2003) 458.

<sup>428</sup> SHA *Hadr.* 13; Cass. Dio 69.9ff.

even in those where it is uncertain that he visited, it is likely that he did actually travel there, with the notable exception of Sardinia-Corsica.<sup>429</sup> Hadrian travelled relatively quickly and managed to visit all of the western parts of his empire in the first five years of his reign, during which he visited all of the Northern provinces and then went to Spain via Gaul.<sup>430</sup> His main interest lay in the east and it was in this area that most of Hadrian's numerous rebuilding projects took place, something which is not explicitly mentioned in any ancient source, which simply state that he built in every city and everywhere, giving the impression that vast rebuilding also took place in the west.<sup>431</sup> The *Historia Augusta* presents Hadrian as having a great disdain for foreign religion and a great love for traditional Roman rites but while the emperor used religion as a way to portray himself as a traditional emperor, he was also a religious innovator and rebuilders.<sup>432</sup> He restored and built numerous temples and added many amenities to sanctuaries such as at Tarraco, Athens, Cyzicus, Nicomedia, and Antiocheia.<sup>433</sup> He also made many dedications and established new rites and regulations in many sanctuaries or revived forgotten ancient ones, among them Epidauros.<sup>434</sup> On coinage, provincial aspects were stressed which were thought

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Dio came from Nicaea in Bithynia and was probably born sometime around AD 163/4: Millar (1964) 5, 13. He came to Rome around AD 180, although he was not a member of the senate at that point. He received many honours under Pertinax and was appointed to be praetor in the following year. When Septimius Severus came to Rome, he wrote a pamphlet containing divine auspices for Severus' accession and, thus, curried favour with the emperor, holding onto his position: Millar (1964) 14, 16. Millar states that Dio started his work shortly after Commodus' death and his Roman History took him almost thirty years to complete, but Sidebottom (2007) 74 mentions that it was also possible that Dio did not start collating his evidence until Septimius Severus' death. The Roman History spanned the period from the foundation of Rome to the reign of Severus Alexander, at which point Dio died. Dio held important positions at court and was an *amicus* to both Severus, whom he treats with respect, and Caracalla, who is treated with open hostility in the History: Millar (1964) 17-18.

<sup>429</sup> Birley (2000) 1.

<sup>430</sup> Fraser (2006) 2; Birley (2000) 142; SHA *Hadr.* 12.1-3.

<sup>431</sup> SHA *Hadr.* 19.2, 19.9; Cass. Dio 69.10; Fraser (2006) 1. Boatwright (2003) 5 notes that Hadrian was celebrated by ancient authors, especially Dio, for his building projects as they were the most tangible but also one of the most lasting forms of imperial patronage to a city.

<sup>432</sup> SHA *Hadr.* 6.1: Trajanic emperor worship; SHA *Hadr.* 12.2: Erected a temple of Plotina; SHA *Hadr.* 12.3: Restoration of the temple of Augustus; Thornton (1975) 443.

<sup>433</sup> SHA *Hadr.* 13.6; Halfmann (1986) 42.

<sup>434</sup> See below; Halfmann (1986) 42.



to be of the greatest importance to the empire.<sup>435</sup> Hadrian acted as a traditional emperor in order to secure and legitimise his rule but also made significant religious innovations such as the introduction of the cult of Venus and Roma to Rome.<sup>436</sup> In this instance, Hadrian seemed to wish to create a deity who was universally acceptable and could be seen as a unifying force for all the provincials.<sup>437</sup> The temple was constructed on land which had formerly been part of Nero's *domus aurea*, making it very visible and also virtually making it a counterpoint to the temple of Jupiter Capitolinus which stood at the other end of the *Forum Romanum*.<sup>438</sup> This was the first temple dedicated to Roma in the city of Rome itself and can, therefore, be seen as a considerable religious innovation.<sup>439</sup> By choosing to employ a Greek visual language for the depiction of Roma and also her temple, Hadrian was creating a Roman counterpoint to Athena Parthenos in Athens. Both of these goddesses were developed as a way of unifying the empire, and allowing them to be goddesses for the whole empire.<sup>440</sup> It is possible that Hadrian fostered the development and creation of the god Zeus-Asclepius in the same way, fashioning a universal deity whose worship would be open for and acceptable to all people in the provinces (see below).

Hadrian's travels were generally well documented and the seminal modern work on imperial travel is Helmut Halfmann's work '*Itinera Principum*' in which he compiles lists of the places, dates, and available evidence for the travelling emperors.<sup>441</sup> Cassius Dio and the *Historia Augusta* both comment upon Hadrian's

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<sup>435</sup> Thornton (1975) 449.

<sup>436</sup> Cassatella (1999) 121-3.

<sup>437</sup> Thornton (1975) 444.

<sup>438</sup> Mols (2003) 459. The temple was constructed mainly following Greek architectural forms but with Roman elements, such as a division in two *cellae*: Mols (2003) 461.

<sup>439</sup> Mols (2003) 462. The Hadrian iconography of the goddess differed greatly from that of the Flavians or Julio-Claudians.

<sup>440</sup> Mols (2003) 463-4.

<sup>441</sup> See Halfmann (1986).

travels, yet the latter source which is already notably unreliable is especially poor when it comes to documenting Hadrian's travels from the west to the east. All the source says is that Hadrian negotiated with the Parthians on the banks of the Euphrates but does not give any indication of how Hadrian reached that area.<sup>442</sup> Birley states that these negotiations were a matter of some urgency, but that this still does not mean that a direct route through Syria would have been necessary; the emperor could have gone through Africa or Cyrenaica.<sup>443</sup> From Cyrene he could have gone to Crete and then on to Bithynia, from where he went into Asia, where his presence was well-documented in AD 124, from Cyzicus to Ephesus. Polemo, a contemporary of Hadrian, states that Hadrian went to Thrace before going into Asia.<sup>444</sup> He travelled through Asia visiting all of the main cities and giving benefactions to these. After spending the summer in Asia, Hadrian travelled from Ephesus to Rhodes in September or October 124 and then further to the Greek mainland.<sup>445</sup> In October he was in Eleusis and then he spent the winter of 124/5 in Athens. At some point, possibly at the end of AD 124, although it is not precisely clear when, Hadrian travelled through the Peloponnese. He likely visited Megara, Corinth, Epidaurus, Troizen, Argolis, Mantinea, and Sparta, although no exact dates can be provided.<sup>446</sup> The emperor travelled further through Greece, possibly through the mainland in the spring of AD 125 before he returned to Rome in the summer,

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<sup>442</sup> SHA *Hadr.* 13.8.

<sup>443</sup> Birley (2000) 151-2.

<sup>444</sup> For the passage in translation from the Arabic see Swain (2007) 163 and for commentary on the passage see p.164. The text is only preserved in the Leiden Arabic ch. 1 A12. See Hoyland (2007) 362-3 in the same volume for the Arabic text and English translation. Birley (2000) 152-159: Marcus Antonius Polemo was Hadrian's junior by about ten years and originally came from Laodicea. He kept strong connections with this city but was linked above all to the city of Smyrna. He joined Hadrian on his travels in the eastern Pontus, an area which his ancestors had once ruled over.

<sup>445</sup> *IvEph* 5.1487, 5.1488; Halfmann (1986) 191.

<sup>446</sup> Halfmann (1986) 191-2: Megara: Pausanias 1.42.5, 1.44.10; Corinth: Pausanias 2.3.5, 8.22.3; Epidaurus: *IG IV*<sup>2</sup> 1.606, dedication by the city of Epidaurus to Hadrian; Troizen: *IG IV* 759; Argolis: Pausanias 6.16.4; Mantinea: Pausanias 8.1.8, 8.8.12; 8.10.2; Sparta: *IG V* i.486; *IG V*.32A.

passing through Sicily. Importantly, Hadrian visited Pergamum before he went to Epidaurus, the effects of which will be examined below.

### 3.3.1 Hadrian and Pergamum

Hoffman states that it is likely Hadrian visited Pergamum in AD 123, favouring the city and upgrading its status from *polis* to *megalopolis*.<sup>447</sup> There is no definitive evidence that Hadrian actually visited the sanctuary. It is very likely that he did so, however, given the antiquity of the *polis*, the fact that there were plenty of religious sites to draw the emperor's attention and his presence in the general area.<sup>448</sup> Hadrian was given the title *Hadrian Soter Olympios, Epiphanestatos Neos Asklepios* in Pergamum, which fits in with titlature granted to Hadrian by other cities after an imperial visit, as a thanks in return for his benefactions (Fig. 18):

[Ἀδριανῶι σ]ωτήρι Ὀλυμπίωι.  
[πάντων ἀνθρώπ(?)ων δεσπότης, βασιλεὺς  
τῶν τῆς γῆς χωρ(?)ῶν, ἐπιφανέστατος  
[νέ]ος Ἀσκληπιός.<sup>449</sup>

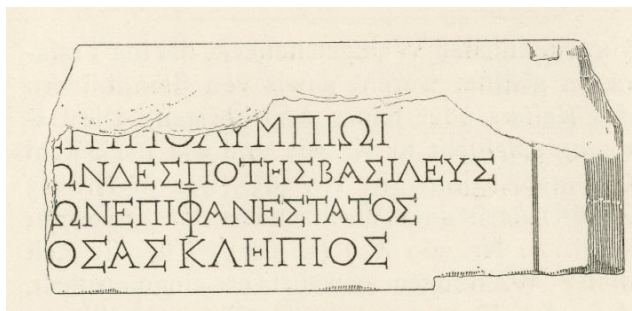


Fig. 18: *IvP* 2.365.

<sup>447</sup> Hoffman (1998) 43.

<sup>448</sup> Birley (2000) 166.

<sup>449</sup> *IvP* 2.365: The inscription is dated to between AD 129 and 138. 'To Hadrian Olympios the saviour, Lord of all men, king of the regions of the earth, the most manifest New Asclepius'.

This inscription is quite rare as there is a shift from the dative to the nominative. *Neos* is used to describe the manifestation of Hadrian in the guise of a deity. The term is used various times in a Hadrianic context, connecting him with Zeus, Dionysus, and Helios.<sup>450</sup> The use of the term *epiphanestatos* makes Hadrian's presence in Pergamum very likely.<sup>451</sup> Epidaurus, which Hadrian visited in the autumn of AD 124, also calls the emperor its saviour and benefactor.<sup>452</sup>

There was a remodelling of the Pergamene sanctuary in Hadrianic times, which was the result of a boom in the cult's popularity at that time.<sup>453</sup> The rebuilding (Fig. 19) was more a redesign of current structures than an enlargement of the sanctuary, although a temple to the new god Zeus-Asclepius as well as a monumental courtyard, theatre, library, propylon, forecourt, and the rotunda were built then in a Roman style.

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<sup>450</sup> Zeus: for example, *SEG* 39.528, 43.343; Dioynsus: *IG* XIV 1054; Helios: *IK Erythrai* 513.

<sup>451</sup> Birley (2000) 167.

<sup>452</sup> *IG* IV<sup>2</sup> 1.606.

<sup>453</sup> Hoffman (1998) 41: this can be shown by an increase in the number of dedications made at this time and the pre-eminence of the Pergamene version of the god Asclepius is also shown by Martial 9.16.2 who calls him *Pergameus deus*.

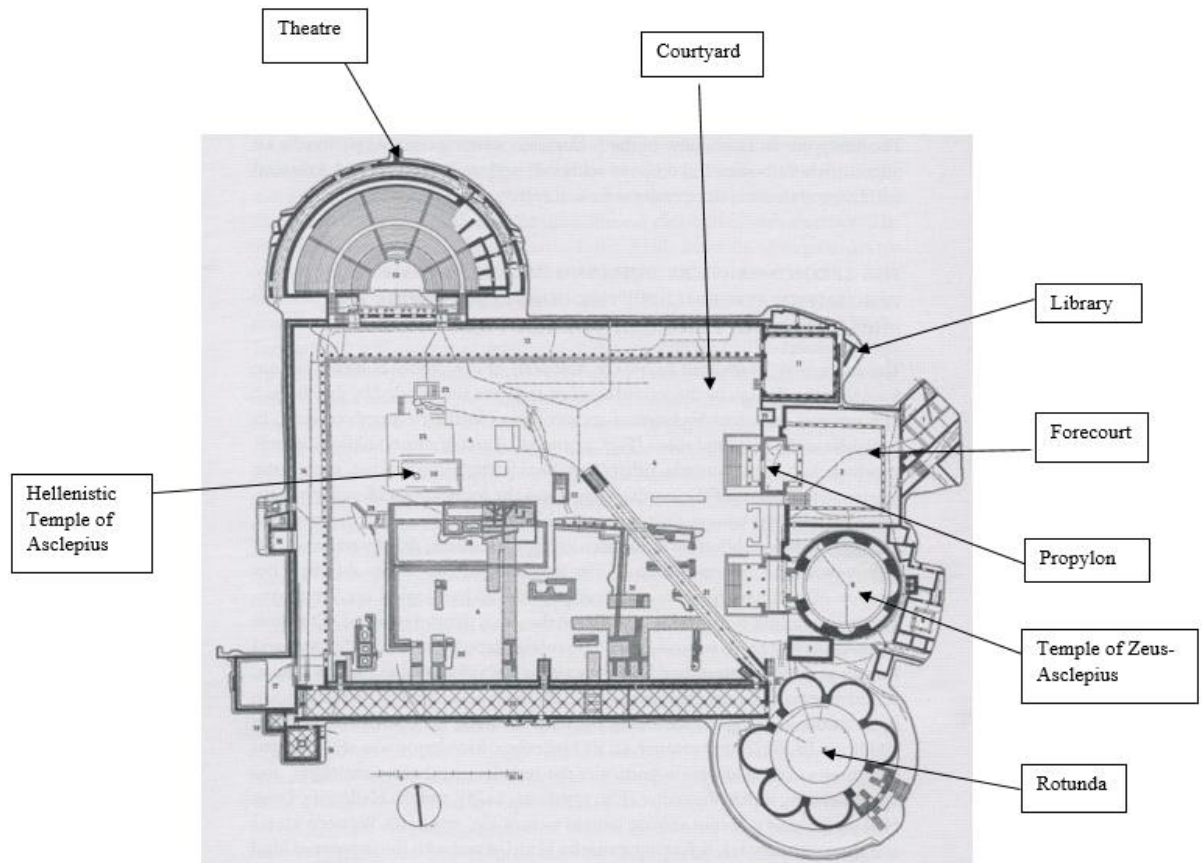


Fig. 19: Plan of the Pergamene Asclepieion, 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD.

The rebuilding programme amalgamated the cultural and architectural traditions of the Hellenistic and Roman age, preserving a feeling of continuity but also updating the sanctuary as a whole.<sup>454</sup> Hoffman suggested that the plans for this rebuilding had perhaps first been made at the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD, following a boom in the popularity of the Asclepieion from Domitianic times onwards.<sup>455</sup> It has been pointed out that Antoninus Pius followed the example of Hadrian in his benefactions and that both emperors were responding to the pre-eminence of Asclepius during the Roman

<sup>454</sup> Petsalis-Diomidis (2010) 167-9.

<sup>455</sup> Hoffman (1998) 41. Domitian's favourite, a eunuch called Earinus, came from Pergamum and is known to have been an adherent of Asclepius. He dedicated a lock of hair to the god and may have prompted Domitian to re-grant the right of *asylia*: Stat. *Silv.* 3.4; Mart. *Spect.* 9.16. Asclepius appeared on Pergamene coins for the first time in over 100 years.

era.<sup>456</sup> From the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> century onwards there was also an increase in the number of dedications to Asclepius on site.<sup>457</sup>

The inclusion of the new secular buildings, such as the theatre and library, meant that the Pergamene Asclepieion became a centre of learning along the lines of Hadrian's library in Athens. There are further architectural connections with Rome in the courtyard, which shared the design of its *exedrae* with the colonnades in the *Forum Transitorium*.<sup>458</sup> The cult of Zeus-Asclepius seems to have been an elite invention, on account of Aelius Aristides' *Sacred Tales* and also an inscription, the expense of which suggests that it may have been set up by those of greater socio-economic status.<sup>459</sup> Only two dedications to Zeus-Asclepius are known, with the rest all being dedicated to Asclepius Soter, which could indicate that the cult did not achieve popularity among the worshippers of Asclepius at Pergamum.<sup>460</sup>

A nude statue of Hadrian was erected in a niche in the library (see Fig. 20).

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<sup>456</sup> Le Glay (1976) 349.

<sup>457</sup> Hoffman (1998) 42, who also suggests that if Hadrian was responsible for the rebuilding then he was merely following a trend.

<sup>458</sup> Hoffman (1998) 54.

<sup>459</sup> *IvP* 3.63: Διὶ Σωτήρι Ἀσκληπιῶ / Αἰμ(ίλιοι) Σαβεῖνος καὶ Ἐ- / ρεννιανὸς ἀπὸ τῆς / ἔξω θαλάσσης καὶ / τῶν ἐκεῖ βαρβάρων / σωθέντες ὑπ' αὐτοῦ. 'To Zeus Soter Asklepios, Aimilius Sabeinus and Aimilius Herennianus, having been saved by him from the outer sea and the barbarians there' trans. Petsalis-Diomidis (2010) 202. See also Petsalis-Diomidis (2010) Fig. 53 for an image of the inscriptions. The inscription was erected in marble and was 34.3x57.5x4.7 cm in size; Jones (1998) 69.

<sup>460</sup> *IvP* VIII 3.13-14, 63.



Fig. 20: Nude Statue of Hadrian.

This statue was linked to emperor worship here on account of the divine nudity and inscription to *theos Hadrianos*.<sup>461</sup> The Pergamenes had petitioned Hadrian to set up a new cult to the emperor which was dedicated to him but he declined and only allowed them to erect a statue of himself in Trajan's temple.<sup>462</sup> Hadrian's response to this petition is set out in a letter from him to the Pergamenes which Helmut Müller has reconstructed from twenty-seven fragments found around the temple of Trajan and Zeus Philios on the Acropolis, dating the letter to after AD 135 and likely to the beginning of AD 136.<sup>463</sup> Hadrian praises the Pergamenes in his letter but states that the temples already in situ meet Pergamene needs and, therefore, he consents instead to the placement of his statue in the temple of his adoptive father Trajan.<sup>464</sup>

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<sup>461</sup> Petsalis-Diomidis (2010) 171; *IvP* VIII 3.6: Θεῶν Ἀδριανῶν, Φλ. Μελίνη. Hadrian is called *Theos* in numerous other inscriptions from around the empire, for example see *ILS* 2.28802a. Hallett (2005) 237 argues that nudity does not have divine connotations by itself as deified emperors are mostly depicted togate. Here, the combination of the nudity and the inscription which refers to *theos Hadrianos* should be taken as an indication of divinity, although the military attributes also indicate the emperor's military and political prowess: Petsalis-Diomidis (2010) 213.

<sup>462</sup> Burrell (2004) 27; see Müller (2009).

<sup>463</sup> Müller (2009) 371.

<sup>464</sup> Müller (2009) 369-70 for full reconstruction.

It would seem that Hadrian had a definite impact upon the Pergamene sanctuary and this is best articulated in the creation of a new god here, the syncretic universal deity Zeus-Asclepius to whom a temple was built on site. This new god was supposed to be an ideological counterpart to traditional deities such as Asclepius Soter. The temple plan was based upon the Pantheon in Rome which had just finished being restored by Hadrian.<sup>465</sup> As Petsalis-Diomidis explains:

The internal diameter of the temple of Zeus-Asklepios was just over half the size of the Pantheon (24 meters compared to 42 meters). The architectural choice may be understood as an articulation of a general Pergamene desire for a close relationship with the emperor and Roman metropolis [...].<sup>466</sup>

As with the pantheon, here there was the innovative combination of *cella* with a *pronaos*.<sup>467</sup> Petsalis-Diomidis points out that while the Pantheon combined traditional religious associations with ‘radical aesthetic originality’, the traditional element was missing from the temple of Zeus-Asclepius in Pergamum as here a cult statue of the new syncretic deity Zeus Asclepius was housed.<sup>468</sup> As Petsalis-Diomidis points out, there were many buildings connected to the emperor and imperial family in Rome but in Pergamum this was highly unusual. The temple should be seen as being explicitly connected to Hadrian and his visit to the city, which was reinforced by the presence of Hadrian’s statue in the library.<sup>469</sup> Hoffman states, the only conceivable intermediary for this could have been the emperor himself as the pantheon was closely linked to the imperial family and because of Hadrian’s visit to Pergamum and the presence of his statue in the library.<sup>470</sup> As the temple of Zeus-Asclepius was based upon the Pantheon plan, ideological

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<sup>465</sup> Petsalis-Diomidis (2010) 194.

<sup>466</sup> Petsalis-Diomidis (2010) 194.

<sup>467</sup> Petsalis-Diomidis (2010) 196.

<sup>468</sup> Petsalis-Diomidis (2010) 196-7.

<sup>469</sup> Petsalis-Diomidis (2010) 197-8.

<sup>470</sup> Hoffman (1998) 50; Petsalis-Diomidis (2010) 198.



connections can be made between the two buildings. The Pantheon was imbued with ideals of universality and perfection, and Petsalis-Diomidis has suggested that this meant that Zeus-Asclepius here was a syncretic deity in whom the universal god of healing and the god of the universe were combined and fused.<sup>471</sup> Asclepius would have been chosen as he was one of the main gods in Pergamum and was also a god who appealed to virtually everyone as a result of the open nature of his worship. Asclepius ensured the emperor's good health and that of the empire and Zeus was a universal god who sanctioned the emperor as ruler of the *oikoumene*.<sup>472</sup> Hadrian was, of course, especially connected with Olympian Zeus in Athens but also elsewhere as the above inscription, *IvP* 2.365, shows.<sup>473</sup> Patron deities belonged to a *polis* and as a result they were both local and universal; Zeus-Asclepius embodied this ideal in more ways than a regular *polis* deity.<sup>474</sup> This idea of universality in the cult of Zeus-Asclepius is also found in Aelius Aristides' orations where he states that the temple here had many cult-statues, which was befitting of it as a mini-Pantheon:

[...] ἐν <τῷ> χωρίῳ μὲν ἐδόκουν εἶναι οὐ̃περ ἐτράφην, παρῆναι δὲ Ῥουφῖνον, οὐ̃ τὰ μεγάλα ἀναθήματα καὶ <ὁ> νεῶς ὁ πολυειδής [...]<sup>475</sup>

In another oration he describes the god as the supreme deity of the universe, as Zeus was, and also connects the two gods through a mythical genealogy.<sup>476</sup> This universality comes forth again in the fourth *Sacred Tale* where Aristides does not identify the god by name but connects him to the 'soul of the universe/τοῦ παντὸς

<sup>471</sup> Petsalis-Diomidis (2010) 199. For further discussion of syncretism see Chapter 5.

<sup>472</sup> Palmer-Bonz (1998) 252.

<sup>473</sup> Le Glay (1976) 353.

<sup>474</sup> Versnel (2011) 100.

<sup>475</sup> Aristid. *Or.* 50.28: 'I dreamed that I was at the estate where I was raised. Rufinus was also present, to whose generosity are due the great offerings at Pergamum and the Temple with th many cult statues.' Trans. Behr (1981) 323.

<sup>476</sup> Aristid. *Or.* 42.4: Asclepius possesses all the powers of one who guides and directs the universe.

ψυχῆν'.<sup>477</sup> The introduction of this new universal syncretic deity had lasting effects on the cult, and his presence in Pergamum and also in the empire was furthered by Caracalla (see below). In fact:

The cosmic universalism and epiphanic transformation articulated in the architectural design of the temple can be connected with the encyclopaedic, all-inclusive aspect of the Asklepieion as it collected, reordered, and transformed the whole range of pilgrim bodies.<sup>478</sup>

Asclepius, here, had become a universal god who would, in theory, appeal to all. This could then fit in with other religious events during the Hadrianic period, where there seemed to be a trend towards creating universal deities which would be pleasing to all peoples.

However, the fact that elites introduced a new cult to a site did not always mean that an older cult would be supplanted by it. Despite the new cult of Zeus-Asclepius being established here, the old cult of Asclepius Soter seems to have continued to be the more popular cult. A similar event happened within the cult of Asclepius in Ptolemaic Egypt, to provide a parallel for his. Asclepius was assimilated with the Egyptian god Imhotep.<sup>479</sup> At Deir el-Bahari, elite priests introduced Asclepius to the site and syncretised him with the existing god on site, Amenhotep, in order to boost Amenhotep's popularity and standing so that the cult would attract more worshippers. Asclepius' name does not appear here until the reign of Ptolemy VI, where he was presented as Amenhotep's equal in the

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<sup>477</sup> Aristid. *Or.* 50.55-6.

<sup>478</sup> Petsalis-Diomidis (2010) 203.

<sup>479</sup> Asclepius also enjoyed royal patronage in Egypt as the Ptolemies were known adherents of the cult. They are depicted on many reliefs, sacrificing to Imhotep-Asclepius and the temple of Imhotep-Asclepius at Philae, one of the more important temples to the god, was built by Ptolemy II Philadelphos; Hurry (1928) 94.

inscriptions and on reliefs.<sup>480</sup> In the same period, in the second half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC, the sanctuary was drastically rebuilt and a new temple was constructed on site for the two gods, probably by Ptolemy VIII.<sup>481</sup> The rebuilding followed a single plan and happened simultaneously. It completely changed the appearance of the sanctuary, which fitted with its change in ideology; the temple interior was also transformed, with a strict parallelism of scenes of Imhotep and Amenhotep now occurring in the cult rooms.<sup>482</sup> While the immediate goal of wider worship seems to have worked, as an increase in dedicatory graffiti reveals, most of these are addressed to both gods together or only Amenhotep but never Asclepius on his own.<sup>483</sup> The original god seems to have remained the more popular with local worshippers and this could have also been the case with the cults of Asclepius at Pergamum. Yet, even if the cult of Zeus-Asclepius did not reach the same level of popularity as that of Asclepius Soter, his introduction to the site had lasting effects on the worshipper's experience of being in the sanctuary due to the presence of a second temple on site.

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<sup>480</sup> Ptolemy VI ruled from 180-145 BC.

<sup>481</sup> Łajtar (2006) 15, 31.

<sup>482</sup> Łajtar (2006) 41.

<sup>483</sup> Around 300 BC the healing deity Amenhotep was introduced into the upper levels of Hatshepsut's temple in Deir el-Bahari, although no reference to Asclepius-Imhotep is made in any of the inscriptions, which occurred both in Greek and Demotic, during the 3<sup>rd</sup> century and the first half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC: Łajtar (2006) 30. Therefore, it is possible that the god did not enjoy a cult in Deir el-Bahari at this time. Łajtar (2006) 34 suggests that it was the priests of Amenhotep who were behind this revamping of the sanctuary and that they were also responsible for the introduction of Asclepius-Imhotep. Amenhotep was not yet worshipped as a full god at that time and, in order to strengthen and increase his standing and worship, the priestly elites introduced Asclepius into the cult. Asclepius-Imhotep was a fully-fledged member of the Memphite pantheon at this time and was worshipped by many people, including mainly local elites: Łajtar (2006) 35. Through his association with Asclepius, Amenhotep became more widely worshipped. The priests' plan to increase worship seems to have worked as there was a drastic increase in the number of supplicants' inscriptions in the late Ptolemaic to early Roman period, suggesting an increase in the cult's popularity. The pinnacle of cult activity seems to fall in the first two centuries of Roman rule over Egypt. In the second half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD the inscriptions rapidly stop, with the last one being dated to AD 162.

The new god does not appear on any Hadrianic coins and Pergamum does not seem to have minted any coins commemorating these events.<sup>484</sup> Asclepius does appear on some Hadrianic *cistophori* from the imperial mint, all of which are uniform in appearance.<sup>485</sup> These coins depict Asclepius in his standardised form. Asclepius is only listed on eight Hadrianic coin types in the *BMC* Greek corpora, although before this he rarely occurs on Roman imperial coinage (see Table 4).<sup>486</sup> The majority of Hadrian's coinage depicted personifications and virtues on the reverse, and only a small percentage showed actual deities.<sup>487</sup> Asclepius was rarely depicted on the coinage of the western part of the Roman empire but was represented in multiple guises on both the coinage and especially statuary in Asia Minor from the late Hellenistic period onwards.<sup>488</sup> He is mostly depicted in the so-called Este type or variations thereof (Fig. 21).<sup>489</sup>

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<sup>484</sup> Metcalf (1980) 11.

<sup>485</sup> See Metcalf (1980) for a full exploration of Hadrianic *cistophori*. The issue of these coins was more an economic measure than a religious one and was not per se intended to promote universal deities.

<sup>486</sup> The term 'Roman Imperial Coins' is used to indicate coins as listed in the *RIC* volumes and which were struck in Rome. Provincial Coinage is used as a term to mean coins which were issued in the provinces and do not occur in *RIC* but in other corpora: see Butcher (1988) 11.

<sup>487</sup> Rowan (2012) 5-6: using data from the Reka-Devnia hoard which provides a sample which reflects evidence from other hoards: see Rowan (2012) 5n.10.

<sup>488</sup> Kranz (1990) 129-30. This type has a more pronounced jut of the hip than the other statue types and the body leans upon a staff which is placed under the god's armpit. The himation is draped diagonally across the torso and crosses the leg in a triangle shape above the knee. The right hand rests on the hip.

<sup>489</sup> Holtzmann (1981) 886: *LIMC* lists sixteen statues or torsos of this type.



Fig. 21: Asclepius Este Statue Type.

Little changed until the late Trajanic period but a new statuary type appears on the coinage of Asia Minor, namely the Asclepius Amelung type. This statue of Asclepius stands barefoot on a round base and is wearing a himation, drawn over his left shoulder and loins, which leaves his chest, right shoulder, and right arm bare. He holds his snake-staff in his right hand, supporting his right shoulder. A round object, the *omphalos*, is on the ground next to his left foot (Figs. 22-24).<sup>490</sup> *LIMC* does not actually list this type as a separate one but lists it under the Este type and only an examination of the photo plates shows certain statues to be of the Amelung type and not the Este one (Fig. 21).<sup>491</sup>

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<sup>490</sup> Grimm (1988) 168. See also *LIMC* nos. 155 and 157 for further representations of Asclepius with the *omphalos*. Kampmann (1992/3) 39-40 states that the round object has been referred to as a globe by some scholars, see Lacroix (1951) 17. However, as there were no connections between the cult of Asclepius and a globe this cannot be the case and, therefore, it must be an *omphalos*. Kampmann describes the depiction of the *omphalos* on coinage as either egg-shaped or hemispherical.

<sup>491</sup> Holtzmann (1981) 886-887.



Figs. 22-24: Asclepius Amelung Statues.

The similarities with the Este type are striking but Grimm states that the Amelung type is actually a variation of the standard Giustiani/Epidaurian type.<sup>492</sup> In this iconographical type Asclepius is standing with his right leg slightly bent. His right arm dangles along a long snake-staff which is fixed under his armpit and his fist is on his hip. His mantle covers his entire body apart from his torso and his right shoulder. The edges of the mantle form a bulge which parts for the right shoulder but traverses the torso and forms a circle around the left elbow.<sup>493</sup>

The Amelung iconographic type is strongly present on numismatic iconography and is first represented on coinage of Amisos in the early 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD.<sup>494</sup> However, Kranz notices something noteworthy: that this type, which became the emblem of Pergamum, virtually does not appear on Pergamene coinage such as the *homonía* coins (see below) though it does appear on Pergamene coinage issued

<sup>492</sup> Grimm (1988) 168.

<sup>493</sup> Holtzmann (1981) 879: *LIMC* lists forty statues or torsos of this type. See for example Rome Museo Nuovo Capitolino Inv. No. 1846. This type is dated to the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC.

<sup>494</sup> Kranz (1990) 131.

by Lucius Aelius Verus.<sup>495</sup> The *homonoia* issues still use the older types such as the Epidaurian one. The *cistophori* represent Asclepius in yet another type.<sup>496</sup> It is likely that this was a local version of the god who was present before the remodelling of the sanctuary. Kranz believes that the Asclepius Amelung was the god who was connected to the Pantheon, and was one which fitted in with Hadrian's religious policies.<sup>497</sup> This combined with the Hadrianic date of his introduction indicates that it is likely that this type represented the new Hadrianic god Zeus-Asclepius. The new Amelung type and the round temple were both bound to the person of the emperor, namely Hadrian.<sup>498</sup> This type was of lasting importance and was represented on a medallion issued by Antoninus Pius commemorating Asclepius' advent to Rome and also by Caracalla on his imperial coinage.<sup>499</sup>

A statue type similar to the Amelung one is known from Nea Paphos in which Asclepius holds an egg in his right hand. Grimm connects this to the prophet Alexander from Abouteichos and his version of the god, Asclepius-Glycon, where the god, in snake form, was made to hatch from an egg as a result of the prophet's duplicitous workings.<sup>500</sup> However, Mazzuca following Sirano argues that the statue type of Asclepius with an egg actually comes from the Coan Asclepieion.<sup>501</sup> Sirano believed that the statue type came from Temple C on Cos sometime in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD.<sup>502</sup> Mazzuca explains the egg iconography as being a symbol for the Universe and he states that 'In this way, the iconography states that the entire

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<sup>495</sup> Kranz (1990) 133. See table 26.1.2: Galleria Brera in Mailand inv. No. 4829.

<sup>496</sup> Kranz (1990) 131; Metcalf (1980) 8, no's 3-8: Asclepius is depicted draped, naked to the waist, standing front with his head to the left, holding his staff with his right hand while the right hand hangs at his side: *RIC* 481b.

<sup>497</sup> Kranz (1990) 134.

<sup>498</sup> Kranz (1990) 137.

<sup>499</sup> Gnechi (1912) Vol. 2, p.9, nos. 1-3, Antoninus Pius nos. 1-3+pl. 431-2.

<sup>500</sup> Grimm (1988) 169.

<sup>501</sup> Mazzuca (2014) 291; Sirano (1994) 199-232.

<sup>502</sup> Sirano (1994) 226.

Universe, represented by the egg, needs the medicine of Asclepius.<sup>503</sup> However, the Coan cult did not seem to have any universal character but it has been shown here that this was more a feature of the Pergamene cult of Zeus-Asclepius as a result of Hadrian's patronage of the cult.

### 3.3.2 The Emperor at Epidaurus

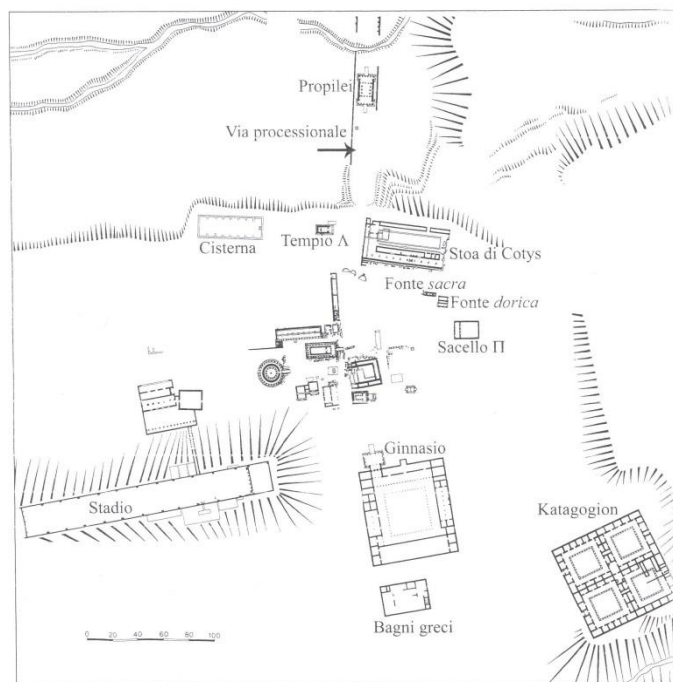


Fig. 25: Plan of the Asclepieion in Epidaurus in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC.

The sanctuary at Epidaurus enjoyed its peak in cultic activity in the 4<sup>th</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> centuries BC (Fig. 25). The sanctuary was rebuilt in the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC, after which the cult went into a period of stasis and decline, not unlike many other sanctuaries at this time.<sup>504</sup> The number of inscriptions and dedications drastically diminished from the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC onwards and was mainly linked to political

<sup>503</sup> Mazzuca (2014) 295.

<sup>504</sup> Melfi (2007a) 63. See also Melfi (2007a) 31-82 for an overview of the popularity of the sanctuary in the pre-Hadrianic period.



events in the 1<sup>st</sup> century BC, such as the sack of the city by Sulla and by the Cilician pirates.<sup>505</sup> Excavations have shown destruction and abandonment in the hostel, gymnasium and the water-supply system, dating to the 1<sup>st</sup> century BC. This decline is also shown by a lack of dedications and healing testimonies from this period.<sup>506</sup>

Melfi states that the sanctuary was only preserved by traditional benefactions from local elites.<sup>507</sup> During the last quarter of the 1<sup>st</sup> century BC the sanctuary suddenly became the focus of these elites who erected many dedications and also statues of the imperial family.<sup>508</sup> This is especially shown by the inscriptions as they document a move away from a cult which was only concerned with religious duties, to one which also had a more public and civic function, as from this period only one dedication was found, but fifty-three honorific inscriptions were erected in the sanctuary.<sup>509</sup>

A new festival called the *Kaisarea* in the imperial period, was founded in AD 32/3.<sup>510</sup> A series of inscriptions suggests that a statue group was set up to members of the imperial family with statues erected of Livia, Drusus, Lucius Caesar, Tiberius, Agrippina Major, Drusilla, Claudius, Agrippina Minor, and Messalina.<sup>511</sup> It is likely that this was an initiative on the part of the sanctuary itself, trying to connect itself with the imperial household and, thus, boosting its status and prestige and perhaps even hoping that imperial honours would be bestowed on them. Melfi states that the

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<sup>505</sup> Diod. Sic. 38.7; Plut. *Vit. Sull.* 12 and *Vit. Pomp.* 24.

<sup>506</sup> Melfi (2010) 330.

<sup>507</sup> Melfi (2010) 330.

<sup>508</sup> Melfi (2007a) 70.

<sup>509</sup> Melfi (2007a) 71.

<sup>510</sup> Melfi (2007a) 73.

<sup>511</sup> Livia: *IG IV*<sup>2</sup> 593 and 594; Drusus: *PIR*<sup>2</sup> II.857; Melfi table 6 n.390-1; Lucius Caesar: *PIR*<sup>2</sup> IV.222; Melfi table 6 n.387; Agrippina Major: Melfi table 6 n.389; Drusilla: *IG IV*<sup>2</sup> 600; Claudius: Melfi tab. 6 n.394; Agrippina Minor: Melfi table 6 n.397; Messalina: *IG IV*<sup>2</sup> 604; Melfi (2007) 74-5.

1<sup>st</sup> century AD was a period of crisis but also of rebirth for the sanctuary, which was the result of imperial interest.<sup>512</sup>

Even though the sanctuary managed to keep on existing and as the result of mainly local interest in the cult, boosted by imperial interest, its decline continued until the Hadrianic period. Hadrian visited Epidaurus in AD 124 and had a definite effect upon the sanctuary as the emperor enforced new regulations concerning the appointment of religious staff. From the second quarter of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD a new dating system appeared on most of the inscriptions, indicating that at some point during this century, and very likely as a result of Hadrian's visit, the priesthood had become an annual post and was probably assigned by allotment.<sup>513</sup> A *hiereus* and a *pyrphoros* were elected together, sometimes consisting of a combination of a father and son.

As a result of Hadrian's visit the festival and games of Asclepius were reorganised as most Hadrianic Epidaurian coins bear *Asklepieia* as part of the reverse legend.<sup>514</sup> The coins also suggest an identification between the emperor and Asclepius, perhaps in a way not dissimilar to what happened at Cos, where the title *Sebasta* was added to the festival name during the Claudian period (see section 3.1.5). Coins depicting Asclepius' head on the obverse were substituted by Hadrian's head, suggesting an interchangeability between the god and the emperor.<sup>515</sup>

Hadrian's visit did not just result in the reorganisation of the sanctuary and revival of the rites but also altered the nature of the worship of Asclepius at Epidaurus. From the Hadrianic period onwards, dedications to 'All Gods' or the Pantheon were found in the sanctuary, indicating that here too Hadrian's new

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<sup>512</sup> Melfi (2007a) 74.

<sup>513</sup> See *IG IV*<sup>2</sup> 89; Melfi (2010) 331-2.

<sup>514</sup> Melfi (2007a) 85.

<sup>515</sup> Melfi (2010) 332.

universal and syncretic religion had been imported.<sup>516</sup> This importation and syncretism with Asclepius is also shown by the identification from this time onwards of Asclepius and Zeus, just as at Pergamum. Hadrian had visited Pergamum before he travelled to Epidaurus and there were further Pergamene influences on the cult here as the figure of Telesphorus appeared for the first time at this point.<sup>517</sup>

The sanctuary at Epidaurus also shows both the lasting impact of an imperial visit and the provincial response to this. Hadrian made the first step in the rehabilitation of the sanctuary by reorganising its administration and rights. However, these acts alone did not completely change the fortunes of the sanctuary as the emperor did not instigate a rebuilding programme here, as he likely did at Pergamum. This in itself is noteworthy if the sanctuary was in as bad a state of disrepair as the archaeology indicates. It was only in the second half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD that the sanctuary was rebuilt and modernised (Fig. 26) by the senator Sextus Iulius Maior Antoninus Pythodorus, as is related in Pausanias.<sup>518</sup> Antoninus came from Nysa and added baths, the so-called portico of Kortys, and the temple of the Egyptian Apollo, Asclepius, and Hygeia to the sanctuary. The structures which he rebuilt had an original superstructure of unbaked mud-brick, which would inevitably have collapsed over time. Tomlinson suggests that the decay of the sanctuary was, therefore, more likely to have been caused by a shortage of funds, rather than as a result of general neglect.<sup>519</sup> Hadrian's interest in the cult instigated a provincial response which then furthered and completed the rehabilitation of the cult. By showing interest in the cult, Hadrian set an example for other elites to follow. The Roman senator Antoninus could have followed Hadrian's lead and carried on his

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<sup>516</sup> Melfi (2010) 333.

<sup>517</sup> See below for a discussion of Telesphorus.

<sup>518</sup> Paus. 2.27.6-7. He came from Nysa on the Menander in Asia Minor and was active in the AD 160s; *IG IV<sup>2</sup>* 454+479.

<sup>519</sup> Tomlinson (1983) 31-2.

momentum. Imperial supplications of a god, therefore, had more lasting and also further reaching effects than just the immediate benefaction.

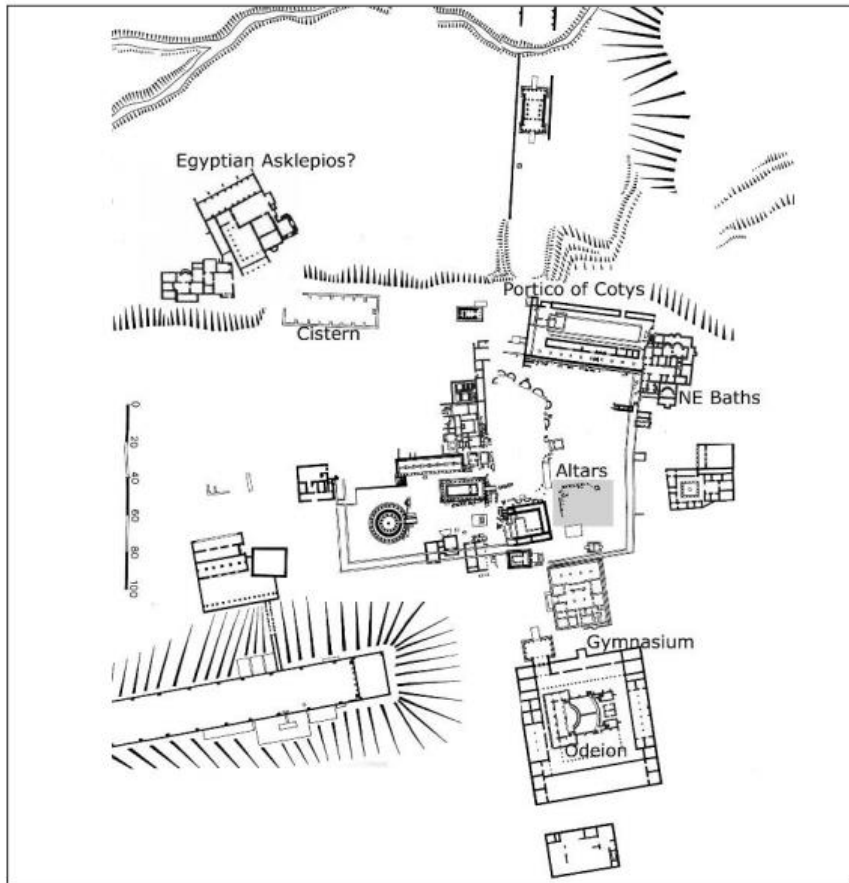


Fig. 26: Plan of the Asclepieion in Epidaurus in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD.

### 3.3.3 Pergamum, Epidaurus, and Eleusis

If Hadrian's visit to Pergamum inspired him to adapt the cult at Epidaurus via the introduction of the syncretic, universal deity Zeus-Asclepius, then it is likely that Hadrian was also influenced by the Pergamene version of the god when he visited Eleusis. Divine connections between the Eleusinian goddesses, their Mysteries, and Asclepius were well known already in antiquity, as Asclepius was initiated into the

Mysteries upon his arrival in Athens.<sup>520</sup> However, a statue from Eleusis reveals even further connections between the emperor and the two cults (Fig. 27):



Fig. 27: Antinous and the *Omphalos*.

The statue depicts Antinous in an unusual iconography, wearing a himation leaving the right shoulder bare and there is a globe at his left foot, which is the *omphalos*. Antinous had been initiated into the Mysteries together with Hadrian in AD 128.<sup>521</sup> The statue was found in the courtyard in front of the Greater Propylon and past scholars believed that the statue was of Antinous in the guise of either Dionysus, as he was associated elsewhere with this god, or Apollo, because of the presence of the *omphalos*.<sup>522</sup> However, the statue looks nothing like either of these gods and the *omphalos* actually does provide the key to identifying the statue as Antinous depicted in the guise of a young Asclepius. Other imagery of Asclepius was found

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<sup>520</sup> See Wickkiser (2008) 87ff for discussion.

<sup>521</sup> Galli (2001) 66.

<sup>522</sup> Clinton (1989) 1523-4.

with the *omphalos* in exactly the same position, especially on numismatic emissions (see below). The statue's right arm is missing where he would normally have held the snake-staff but the garment is draped in typical Asclepieian style.<sup>523</sup> Antinous is depicted as some kind of Neos Asclepius, perhaps echoing Hadrian as he was granted this title in Pergamum.<sup>524</sup> The iconography of the statue is Pergamene, which travelled to Epidaurus and also Eleusis along with the emperor as a result of his patronage, showing the impact the emperor on the dissemination of his new version of the god in Greece but also, and of equal importance, the local response to imperial benefactions.

### 3.4 The Impact of Imperial Sacred Travel on the Cult of Asclepius: Caracalla

#### 3.4.1 Introduction

Like Hadrian, Caracalla travelled through his empire. Of all of the emperors, Caracalla seemingly worshipped Asclepius the most directly and extensively, and perhaps had the most lasting impact on the cult, despite his successor Macrinus' best attempts to change this (see section 3.4.6). Asclepius was most frequently represented on Caracalla's coinage, more so than for any other emperor, and numismatic evidence will form a large part of the material discussed here. This section will examine his visit to the Pergamene Asclepieion and the benefactions which he gave there. The impact this patronage had on other cults of Asclepius in Asia Minor will then be researched, as well as other Caracallan worship of the god

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<sup>523</sup> Galli (2001) 66.

<sup>524</sup> Clinton (1989) 1525: he states that there is 'no doubt' that this is some form of *neos* Asclepius.

and the interaction between Rome and the provinces. Provincial responses to Caracalla's grants will also be explored.

### 3.4.2 Caracalla's Path

Around AD 213-214 Caracalla visited the Pergamene Asclepieion in order to supplicate the god there. This visit was part of a grander tour of Asia Minor. Unfortunately the route which the emperor took on this journey is unknown due to mutilation of some sources and lack of interest by others.<sup>525</sup> Literary sources do not mention the period between Caracalla's departure from Nicomedia in April of AD 215 until his arrival in Antioch later in that year.<sup>526</sup> The main sources of evidence for Caracalla's visit are, therefore, numismatic, epigraphic, and iconographic. *Neocorate* grants also show *poleis* visited by Caracalla at this time.<sup>527</sup> Various modern scholars have tried to provide a definite route for Caracalla and Levick provides an overview of his path, arguing that Caracalla wished to emulate Alexander the Great's travels through Asia Minor. She argues that Caracalla travelled through western Pisidia from south to north, following Alexander's route. Also in the spirit of emulating Alexander, Caracalla sacrificed at Troy, before moving on to Pergamum.<sup>528</sup> Johnston has more recently argued that Levick made several errors in creating this route and that the early numismatic catalogues used by Levick tend to be inaccurate.<sup>529</sup> Johnston's study argues that twenty-five of the seventy-seven places suggested by Levick have proven to be inaccurate and that many others are doubtful.<sup>530</sup> It is,

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<sup>525</sup> Levick (1969) 426.

<sup>526</sup> Johnston (1983) 58.

<sup>527</sup> Levick (1969) 427: this was the weakest sign of an imperial visit according to Levick.

<sup>528</sup> Levick (1969) 440-444.

<sup>529</sup> Johnston (1983) 60.

<sup>530</sup> Johnston (1983) 75.

therefore, impossible to state with any certainty which path Caracalla took through Asia Minor, leading him to and from Pergamum. Halfmann, again, provides the best overview of Caracalla's travels, and Levick in a more recent publication follows him in this.<sup>531</sup>

Halfmann reconstructs Caracalla's path as follows: he left Rome at the end of AD 212 or early 213, leaving his mother, Julia Domna, in charge of correspondence and petitions.<sup>532</sup> He moved through Gaul to Upper Germania and Raetia. At the end of AD 213 the emperor travelled to Pannonia, where he possibly overwintered in Sirmium before continuing through the Balkans in AD 214, going through Dacia, Moesia, Thrace, Marcianopolis, and Perinthos until he reached the Hellespont. In the second half of 214, Caracalla travelled through Asia and Bithynia, visiting Ilium, Pergamum, and Thyateira before moving on to Ionia, Lydia, and Bithynia. He overwintered in Nicomedia in AD 214/5 until the middle of April. Caracalla spent AD 215 in Asia Minor, visiting Prusias ad Hypium, Tyana, and Tarsos, before spending the summer of that year in Antiocheia. Laodikeia and Peleusion were also visited in 215 but he spent the winter in Alexandria before returning to Antiocheia in the spring of AD 216. 216/7 was spent on the Parthian campaigns, before he overwintered in Edessa. Caracalla was assassinated on the road between Edessa and Carrhae on April 8<sup>th</sup> 217, putting a definite end to his travels.<sup>533</sup>

### 3.4.3 Caracalla and the Need for Healing

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<sup>531</sup> See Halfmann (1977) and Levick (2007) 101-2.

<sup>532</sup> Levick (2007) 95; Halfmann (1977) 223.

<sup>533</sup> All from Halfmann (1977) 223-5. See Halfmann for a complete overview of evidence including inscriptions and literary sources.



The ancient sources may not explicitly state which route Caracalla took to get to Pergamum but two literary sources do explain why the emperor travelled there, with Cassius Dio stating that:

ἐνόσει μὲν γὰρ καὶ τῷ σώματι τὰ μὲν ἐμφανέσι τὰ δὲ καὶ ἀρρήτοις ἀρρωστήμασιν, ἐνόσει δὲ καὶ τῇ ψυχῇ πικροῖς τισι φαντάσμασι, καὶ πολλάκις γε καὶ ἐλαύνεσθαι ὑπὸ τε τοῦ πατρὸς ὑπὸ τε τοῦ ἀδελφοῦ ξιφηρῶν ἐδόκει. [...] οὔτε γὰρ ὁ Ἀπόλλων ὁ Γράννος οὔθ' ὁ Ἀσκληπιὸς οὔθ' ὁ Σάραπις καίπερ πολλὰ ἱκετεύσαντι αὐτῷ πολλὰ δὲ καὶ προσκαρτερήσαντι ὠφέλησεν. ἔπεμψε γὰρ αὐτοῖς καὶ ἀποδημῶν καὶ εὐχὰς καὶ θυσίας καὶ ἀναθήματα, καὶ πολλοὶ καθ' ἐκάστην οἱ τοιοῦτό τι φέροντες διέθεον: ἦλθε δὲ καὶ αὐτὸς ὡς καὶ τῇ παρουσίᾳ τι ἰσχύσων, καὶ ἔπραξεν πάνθ' ὅσα οἱ θρησκευοῦσιν, ἔτυχε δ' οὐδενὸς τῶν ἐξ ὑγίαιαν τειόντων.<sup>534</sup>

Herodian informs us that:

ταῦτα δ' ποιήσας, τὰ τε ἐν ταῖς πόλεσι διοκῆσας ὡς ἐνεδέχετο, ἐπειθή ἐς Πέργαμον τῆς Ἀσίας, χρήσασθαι βουλόμενος θεραπείας τοῦ Ἀσκληπιοῦ. ἀφικόμενος δὴ ἐκεῖ, καὶ ἐς ὅσον ἠθέλε τῶν ὄνειράτων ἐμφοράτων, ἦκεν ἐς Ἴλιον.<sup>535</sup>

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<sup>534</sup> Cass. Dio 78.15.3-7: 'For he was sick not only in body, both from visible and also from unspoken illnesses, but he was sick in his mind, seeing distressing visions, and it seemed to him that he was often chased by his father and brother armed with swords [...] but he received no help from either from Apollo Grannus, nor from Asclepius, nor Sarapis, despite making many supplications to them and his persistence. For he sent them prayers and sacrifices and votives even from abroad and many couriers ran about every day carrying something of this kind. And he went to them as he wished to succeed in person, and he went through all the motions which supplicants make but he gained nothing which strengthened his health'. Dio's account of Caracalla's life was written eight years after the emperor's accession and two years after his death. Caracalla is consistently depicted in the worst light, and stated to be cowardly, deceitful and stupid: Cass. Dio 77.14. Dio also shows no pity or mercy towards Caracalla in the passage quoted above.

<sup>535</sup> Herodian 4.8.3: 'And then having done this, he made what administrative arrangements were possible in the cities, he went to Pergamum in Asia, proclaiming that he wanted treatments from Asclepius. When he arrived there, he incubated as much as he wanted, and then he went to Ilium'. Nothing is known about Herodian's life other than what he mentions in his writings. He could have been a senator but was more likely an equestrian: Whittaker (1969) xix-xxi. Whittaker (1969) xiv argues that the work was likely composed sometime after AD 244. One of the main problems with his work are the many omissions. Sidebottom (1998) 2813 argues that the work is extant in an unrevised and incomplete form. In the past, Herodian has been depicted as an ignorant, careless, fraudulent, and trite source, whose work was based upon that of Dio. However, Sidebottom (1998) 2786 has shown that while Herodian did have access to Dio, this was not his only source as Herodian uses material, both artistic and literary, which does not occur in Dio. Herodian claimed to have been a contemporary of the events about which he writes but this does not have to be the case and Sidebottom (2007) 79 argues that some evidence indicates that he may have lived during Gallienus' reign. Herodian also contrasts Geta and Caracalla, although both are portrayed in a negative light from the start. Severus trained both in self-control (3.10.2) but both were corrupted by luxury and their mutual antagonism (3.10.3-4). Their portrayal alters during the British campaign, when Herodian begins to portray Geta in a better light, showing Caracalla to be the worse of the two.

Shortly after Geta's assassination, Caracalla fell ill and dreamt that he was being pursued by his father and brother who were intent upon murdering him. His travels around the empire, and supplication of Asclepius, were connected partially to his need to find a cure for this malady.<sup>536</sup> Dio also mentions that Caracalla sought the help of Apollo Grannus and Sarapis; Caracalla met Apollo Grannus on his northern campaigns in Phoebiana, modern Faimingen.<sup>537</sup> However, while Dio mentions Caracalla also supplicating Apollo Grannus and Serapis, Herodian only lists Asclepius and also does not mention that healing was denied to Caracalla as Dio does. The *Historia Augusta* does not mention Caracalla's visit to Pergamum at all. Literary freedom and bias should be taken into account here and even though the ancient sources state that there were medical reasons for Caracalla supplicating these gods, it is possible that one should seek more reasons for these supplications than just those provided on the surface. Caracalla could have utilised their locally important deities to connect with cities in order to legitimise his reign and ensure their loyalty.<sup>538</sup> The emperor specifically chose to go to Pergamum and not to patronise another cult, such as Epidaurus. It is also at this time, during the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD that meetings between gods and emperors start to become widespread on civic coinages of the Roman east.<sup>539</sup> The rite of *adventus* was the most conspicuous of these and Caracalla's advent to Pergamum in order to worship Asclepius and the lasting effects it had on the cults of Asclepius in Asia Minor will be explored extensively here.

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<sup>536</sup> Fowden (2005) 545. As Levick (2007) 90 points out, though, an open assassination of Geta seems improbable as there were far more subtle ways available for Caracalla to have Geta murdered, such as poison.

<sup>537</sup> Cass. Dio 78.15.6; *IvEph* 3.802; Nollé (2003) 409-10; Haymann (2010) 151.

<sup>538</sup> Rowan (2012) 136. It could also be a combination of both these reasons.

<sup>539</sup> Harl (1987) 52: this started during Commodus' reign.

Emperors generally needed to legitimise their reigns, and Caracalla was no different. In fact, it was probably even more vital for him to do so after Geta's death and he sought an imperial identity other than that of a fratricide. Asclepius as a soteriological deity would have been a logical god to worship in both cases: that of physical healing and of salvation. There were three main groups to whom an emperor had to appeal to in order to remain in power, namely the senate, the army, and the *populus*.<sup>540</sup> Mennen mentions that one way of cultivating feelings of goodwill was by handing out donatives but that these would probably end when the gifts stopped. It would be more fruitful to display personal images of the emperor, showing his power and legitimacy, stressing three aspects, namely military, dynastic, or religious.<sup>541</sup> It was not possible for Caracalla to portray dynastic imagery as he had both his brother and his wife, Plautilla, assassinated, thus literally killing his hopes for any heirs.<sup>542</sup> He, therefore, had to focus on the other two aspects. Many coin reverses show traditional military themes and Caracalla is also often represented in a military fashion, dressed in military garb (see Fig. 34 for an example). Divine military figures such as Victoria, Fides, Pax, and Mars all occur on Caracallan coins.<sup>543</sup> Religious representations played an important role on coins during Caracalla's reign and Rowan has shown how numismatic iconography changed under Caracalla. When he ruled jointly with Septimius Severus, there had been a strong emphasis on personifications and virtues, yet the coinage minted under Caracalla's sole rule focussed more on gods.<sup>544</sup> Asclepius also appears on Severan

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<sup>540</sup> Mennen (2006) 253.

<sup>541</sup> Mennen (2006) 253-4.

<sup>542</sup> Plautilla was killed shortly after Severus' death. Caracalla did not remarry in order to create heirs: Levick (2007) 93.

<sup>543</sup> Mennen (2006) 259.

<sup>544</sup> Rowan (2012) 111-12: gods appeared on about 21% of Severus' coinage but on 59% of Caracalla's. See Langford (2013) for a review of Rowan's work.

coins from the Roman mint, struck in AD 207, which Mennen links to a possible sickness of Severus (Fig. 28):<sup>545</sup>



Fig. 28: Coin showing Severus on the obverse and Asclepius on the reverse from Irenopolis in Cilicia, AD 195-196. SNG *Levante* 1611.

Under Severus, Liber Pater and Hercules were closely connected to the emperor but shortly after Caracalla's accession Liber Pater completely disappeared from the coinage and Hercules also vanished two years into Caracalla's rule.<sup>546</sup> Rowan's quantitative study of Severan coin hoards reveals that a large number of the coins struck in Caracalla's reign show Apollo, Sarapis, or Asclepius, the three gods mentioned in the passage in Dio.<sup>547</sup> She offers two explanations for Caracalla's worship of healing deities and cautions that the motivations given by Dio for imperial worship should not be taken at face value; Caracalla could explicitly have set out with the intention of worshipping these gods, or he could just have worshipped the locally important deities which he encountered on his travels.<sup>548</sup> In both cases the end result was the same. Caracalla publicly worshipped Asclepius and the ways in which he did this and also the lasting effects of this supplication will be shown here. Coinage was a way to connect the emperor and the divine basis of his

<sup>545</sup> *BMCRE* 5.850; Mennen (2006) 263.

<sup>546</sup> Rowan (2012) 110-11.

<sup>547</sup> Rowan (2012) 112. Caracalla's physician Lucius Gellius Maximus was priest for life of Asclepius in Antioch: see Christol and Drew-Bear (2004) 85-118.

<sup>548</sup> Rowan (2012) 113, 115.

power with a local god. For a city, a god was a way to connect itself with an emperor.<sup>549</sup> Many divine motifs appear on Caracallan coins from AD 214 onwards, which was also the last time when Hercules appears on his coins.<sup>550</sup> Asclepius appears more commonly from this year on, probably linked to Caracalla's visit to Pergamum. The god appeared on all types of Caracallan coins, firstly on *aurei* in AD 214 and then on other denominations from 215 onwards.<sup>551</sup>

#### 3.4.4 The Cult at Pergamum

In the Julio-Claudian period Pergamene coinage was dominated by the granting of its first *neocorate* to the city and the imperial succession.<sup>552</sup> In AD 50 the city's output of coinage ceased for about twenty years until it resumed under Domitian, from which point onwards the iconography focussed on new imagery such as divine figures, architecture, and rites. These motifs were continuously struck until Caracalla's reign, after which the city focussed on a select few images such as the emperor or Asclepius. These iconographic themes continued until Gallienus.<sup>553</sup>

Asclepius was one of the main *polis* deities of Pergamum and, thus, was commonly depicted on Pergamene coinage. The first coin depicting Asclepius from Pergamum is dated to between 211-130 BC. The god only starts to appear frequently on coins from 133 BC to the Augustan age where he appears on bronze issues.<sup>554</sup>

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<sup>549</sup> Rowan (2012) 154.

<sup>550</sup> Mennen (2006) 263.

<sup>551</sup> Rowan (2012) 129.

<sup>552</sup> Pergamum was the first city in Asia to receive a cult of the emperor and was also the first city to gain a second cult: Burrell (2004) 22-23.

<sup>553</sup> Weisser (2005) 135.

<sup>554</sup> First Asclepieian coin: *BMC Mysia* 122.84-5; see *BMC Mysia* 127.129ff.

The god appears virtually equally on pre-Roman and Roman coins (see Table 4) and appeared on the coinages struck under various emperors (Table 5 and Fig. 29):<sup>555</sup>

BMC Mysia Coins depicting Asclepius		Total Number of Coins (not counting <i>homonía</i> issues)
Pre-Roman Coins	36	204
Roman Coins	37	145
Total	73	349

Table 4: Coins Depicting Asclepius From *BMC Mysia*, Volume 15.

BMC Mysia Coins depicting Asclepius	
Emperor	Quantity
Domitian	1
Aelius Caesar	1
Antoninus Pius	3
Marcus Aurelius	3
Lucius Verus	2
Commodus	7
Septimius Severus	3
(Julia Domna)	1
Caracalla	9
Maximianus	1
Gordian III	1
(Etruscilla)	1
Valerian I	1
Total	34*
	*3 coins struck in the imperial period are without the emperor's portrait on the obverse (31 of these in total)

Table 5: Members of Imperial Household Depicted on Coins from Pergamum with Asclepius. (From *BMC Mysia*).

<sup>555</sup> These tables do not intend to provide a quantitative overview of all the coins issued by Pergamum and other cities in the Roman empire depicting Asclepius, but wish to offer an indication of the increased depiction of Asclepius on coins issued from the time of Caracalla onwards.

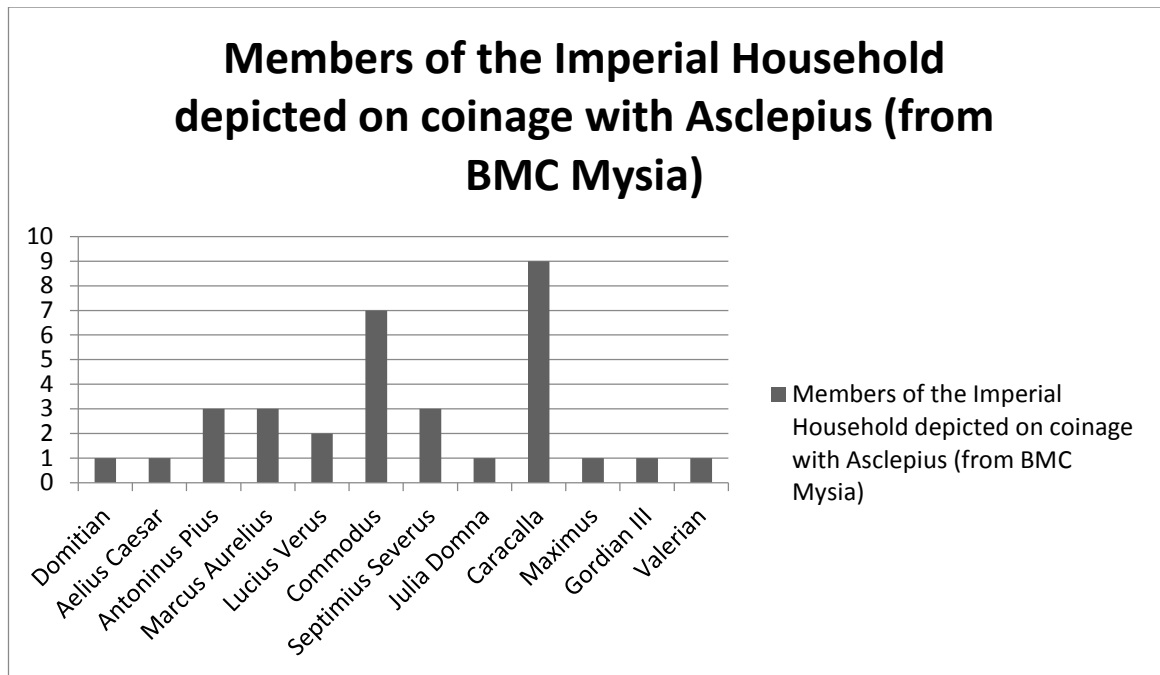


Fig. 29: Members of Imperial Household Depicted on Coins from Pergamum with Asclepius.

These table and graph (Table 5 and Fig. 29) show that the largest number of coins, as listed in *BMC Mysia*, with Asclepius on the reverse were minted under Caracalla, showing the cult's popularity at the time. This was probably the result of Caracalla's public supplications of the god and people reacting to this worship. Williamson makes an important point when stating that the reverse of provincial coin types shows a locus of communal identity and one which has been publicly sanctioned; these representations of local identity were always those which did not threaten Rome, such as religious cults and heroes and other local geographic or geological features.<sup>556</sup>

As a *polis* deity, Asclepius had long been depicted as on the *homonía* coins issued by Pergamum, Ephesus, and Smyrna.<sup>557</sup> These three cities were constantly battling for the title *πρῶτη Ἀσιας* 'first of Asia', which was granted to the leading

<sup>556</sup> Williamson (2005) 26.

<sup>557</sup> Kampmann (1998) 378. Nemesis represented Smyrna and Artemis Ephesus. A real explanation for these coins is unknown.

city on the basis of tradition, beauty, age, origins, culture, and cults.<sup>558</sup> Based upon these criteria, any change in the status of a city, for example due to imperial benefactions, could change these dynamics and cause the title to shift to another city. These coins commemorated these changes in status and also alliances between the cities. It seems that the city whose status had changed, the dominant partner in the alliance, was the one who issued these coins.<sup>559</sup> Antoninus Pius sought to end this internal competition and gave the title first of Asia to Ephesus, which issued two coin series. The other cities were greatly offended so Pius instead called Ephesus ‘ἡ μεγιστη καὶ πρώτη μητρόπολις καὶ δις νεωκόρος’, Pergamum ‘ἡ μητρόπολις τῆς Ἀσίας καὶ δις νεωκόρος πρώτη Περγαμηνῶν πόλις’, and Smyrna ‘The First Capital of Asia Concerning her Beauty’.<sup>560</sup>



Fig. 30: Reverse of Bronze Coin showing *Homonia* Scene with Asclepius Standing between Two Nemeseis of Smyrna. Smyrna, AD 211-217. Cambridge McClean Collection 8339.

Under Commodus, Pergamum issued its biggest series of *homonia* coins (Fig. 30), showing Asclepius, but it was under Caracalla that Smyrna issued its largest series, giving the Pergamene Asclepius the place of honour on the centre or left-hand side on six of its coins.<sup>561</sup> This reflects the increase in Pergamum’s status as a result of his

<sup>558</sup> Kampmann (1998) 376.

<sup>559</sup> Kampmann (1998) 377.

<sup>560</sup> Kampmann (1998) 379. Ephesus *IvEph* Ia.24: ‘The Greatest and First Capital of Asia’; Pergamum: *IvP* VIII 3.157 ‘The capital of Asia, which had as first two provincial temples of the imperial cult’. Kampmann (1998) 31n255, n.259.

<sup>561</sup> Kampmann (1998) 383. Smyrna also received a *neocorate*.



visit and benefactions to Asclepius as represented on the coin series discussed here. However, Smyrna also received an additional *neocorate* which may have promoted this coin series. Commodus is not known to have patronised Asclepius in any way but during his reign Asclepius occurs frequently on Roman provincial coin issues, where the god was struck on the reverse of sixty coin types, this in contrast to coinage of Lucius Verus, where Asclepius occurs on twenty-eight types and that of Marcus Aurelius where there are fifty-two Asclepieian emissions. However, on provincial emissions struck under Antoninus Pius, the god appears on eighty-five types making Commodus the second-most prolific emperor depicted with the god on provincial coins.

Pergamum gained its third *neocorate* in AD 214. Coins of Geta, in the guise of Augustus, dated to AD 209 mention that Pergamum was only twice *neokoros* and it is only after Caracalla's visit that this new inscription appears on coins and the grant should be dated to this time.<sup>562</sup> The first two neocoraes were of Augustus, who shared a temple with Roma, and Trajan, sharing with Zeus *Phlios*. Two statue-bases of Caracalla and Julia Domna, who accompanied her son into Asia Minor, have been found in Pergamum, one dated to 214, confirming that he travelled there in that year.<sup>563</sup> In fact, the empress appears together with Asclepius on thirteen different coin types listed in the *Catalogue of Greek Coins in the British Museum* corpora

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<sup>562</sup> Burrell (2004) 30.

<sup>563</sup> *IvP* VIII 3.12-16. No. 12 found east of the Roman Baths and concerns a statue of Caracalla erected between December 213 and December 214. The head of the colossal statue belonging to this base was found in the Roman Baths nearby and is Figs. 41-42. Nos 13-14 are also statue bases of Caracalla and Nos 15 and 16 concern Julia Domna.

from the Peloponnese, Bithynia, Mysia (Pergamum), Caria, Galatia, Cappadocia, Lydia, and Phrygia.<sup>564</sup>

It is at this time that Caracalla visited the city and Caracalla's movements in Pergamum are well documented on a series of medallions struck by the city after his visit.<sup>565</sup> These medallions were issued by the Pergamene local mint and not the Roman imperial one.<sup>566</sup> They were miniature monuments, documenting the emperor's patronage of Asclepius and Pergamum.<sup>567</sup> The first issuing magistrate of these medallions was Marcus Caerelius Attalus, as indicated by the inscription on the medallions. Two other magistrates' names also occur, namely Julius Anthimos and Marcus Aurelius Alexandros. There are slight differences between these issues as, for example, Caracalla appears both in military and civilian garb on Attalus' coins but only in military dress on Anthimos' in order to emphasise Caracalla's triumph.<sup>568</sup> All of these were annual magistracies and indicate that series of medallions was significant enough to Pergamum to be restruck on two more occasions.<sup>569</sup> Anthimos' series was probably released in AD 217-8, showing Caracalla's *adventus* in order to recall it. Presumably they were reissued before Caracalla's death as Macrinus would not have been keen to see medallions honouring his predecessor

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<sup>564</sup> Peloponnese: *BMC* 113.2; Bithynia *BMC* 162.65; Mysia *BMC* 153.317; Caria *BMC* 73.14; Galatia and Cappadocia *BMC* 26.13, 98.11; Lydia: *BMC* 36.29, 37.31, 37.32, 220.45; Phrygia *BMC* 111.10, 112.11, 375.33

<sup>565</sup> The *BMC* Mysia corpus lists thirteen different coins which were issued under Caracalla. The first, *BMC* Mysia 153.318, depicts a wreath with an inscription, and the last three, *BMC* Mysia 157.328-330, which are all variations of the same coin, show Nike crowning Tyche. All the other coins issued during Caracalla's reign depict the emperor worshipping Asclepius.

<sup>566</sup> The range of their circulation cannot be stated with any certainty nor can Caracalla's approval or authority behind these designs. Butcher (1988) 30 stated that while in the past it was taken that emperors granted permission for cities to strike coins there is no evidence to support this. *Poleis* were not likely to design coins which would have been displeasing to the emperor, especially in cases like these coin series as they were designed to commemorate the emperor's visit and benefactions. As they were to honour the emperor, and also to promote the increased standing these benefactions gave to Pergamum, it would be possible that Caracalla was aware of their existence. The volumes of Roman Provincial Coinage dealing with the Severans have not been published yet in hardcopy but are available online at <http://rpc.ashmus.ox.ac.uk/>.

<sup>567</sup> Rowan (2012) 136.

<sup>568</sup> Burrell (2004) 31.

<sup>569</sup> Nollé (2003) 411; Rowan (2012) 135.

(see below).<sup>570</sup> As the medallions were struck as part of a series and individually, it is more likely that the events they show actually took place in some form.<sup>571</sup> Imperial coinage was issued by the mints several times a year, making it possible to connect specific iconography with events, while medallions were generally issued at the start of each year.<sup>572</sup> Provincial coinage gives an insight into the ideologies and cultures of local cities, identifying events and matters which they thought important.<sup>573</sup> The medallions were not solely concerned with Caracalla's worship of Asclepius, though the god does appear on the majority of the medallions, but also show Caracalla interacting with other civic gods. All of the medallions show a bust of Caracalla wearing a cuirass on the obverse. They depict Asclepius and Caracalla as equals, showing both Asclepius as a symbol of the healing the emperor received in Pergamum, but also his personal devotion to the god and his relations with the city.<sup>574</sup> Albinana argues that Pergamum took advantage of Caracalla and his desire to be healed in order to gain a third *neocorate* and to have the Pergamene temples restored, among other things (see below).<sup>575</sup>

The reverse of the first Asclepieian medallion of the series as listed in *BMC Mysia* (Fig. 31) shows an equestrian Caracalla wearing military dress standing in front of a turreted female figure, the Tyche of Pergamum, who holds a statue of

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<sup>570</sup> There is some debate as to whether these issues should be referred to as coins or medallions. Medallions differ from coins as they generally were presentation pieces which were larger than regular coins in circulation, and also did not have the legend SC on them: Rowan (2014) 109. They differed in size and weight from regular coins. Rowan (2014) 110 notes that early medallions were struck using the same dies as coins but on larger surfaces. However, from the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD onwards special dies were made for the production of medallions. The largest number of medallions were struck during Hadrian's reign. Medallions were a way of showing the owner's close relationship with the emperor: Rowan (2014) 111. Rowan (2014) 115, analyzing medallions struck under Antoninus Pius, states that the audience for these medallions would have been the elite inner circle, who would have had knowledge of the events which were depicted. As such, the term medallion seems more befitting the Caracallan issue and will, therefore, be referred to as a series of medallions.

<sup>571</sup> Johnston (1983) 60.

<sup>572</sup> Rowan (2012) 2; Rowan (2014) 111: they were generally presented to the recipient on New Year's Day.

<sup>573</sup> Rowan (2012) 3.

<sup>574</sup> Weisser (2005) 137; Kadar (1986) 34-5.

<sup>575</sup> Albinana (2006) 441.

Asclepius in her hand.<sup>576</sup> Harl describes an *adventus* as a dramatic event, where the emperor, coming into the city was greeted by the city's magistrates, *populus*, and, most importantly, its gods, who were carried in the form of statues from their sanctuaries to greet the emperor. This was aimed at fostering a positive feeling in the population towards the emperor and, thus, legitimising his rule.<sup>577</sup> The emperor then worshipped at a sanctuary and gave benefactions. Often festivals and games were also held. Here, by connecting Asclepius and Tyche, the chief protective deity of a city, from the outset it was clear that Asclepius was a *polis*-deity, something which is reinforced by the god's presence at Caracalla's *adventus*:



Fig. 31: Coin Reverse Depicting the Emperor on Horseback Greeting a Statue of Asclepius. *BMC* 15.154.319.

The emperor holds his hand up in greeting, which was a typical image of an advent from the time of Trajan onwards.<sup>578</sup> By greeting these local gods, the emperor was seen as emulating both Germanicus and Hadrian, who had toured the provinces.<sup>579</sup>

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<sup>576</sup> *BMC* Mysia 154.319.

<sup>577</sup> Harl (1987) 52.

<sup>578</sup> Harl (1987) 53-4: It was also common for an emperor to greet Tyche at this point.

<sup>579</sup> Harl (1987) 54.

The second Pergamene medallion (Fig. 32) shows Caracalla in military dress, standing on steps in front of Tyche again who holds a statue of Asclepius. A soldier stands behind Caracalla holding a statue of Nike in his right hand and a spear in his left.<sup>580</sup>



Fig. 32: Caracalla on Standing on Steps in Front of Tyche who Holds a Statue of Asclepius. *BMC* 15.154.320.

The third medallion (Fig. 33) depicts Caracalla, still on horseback, standing in front of a statue of Asclepius on a tall pedestal.<sup>581</sup> A soldier follows the emperor. There are, thus, strong military iconographic themes here:



Fig. 33: Caracalla on Horseback in Front of a Statue of Asclepius *BMC* 15.155.321.

The fourth medallion (Fig. 34) shows Caracalla holding a spear in his left hand and a *patera* above a lit altar in his right, while Asclepius stands on the other side of the

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<sup>580</sup> *BMC Mysia* 154.320.

<sup>581</sup> *BMC Mysia* 155.321.

altar holding his snake-staff. This scene, of the emperor sacrificing above an altar, sometimes with the specific god to whom he sacrificed omitted, became one of the more popular depictions of the emperor on coinage issued throughout the 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD.<sup>582</sup>



Fig. 34: Asclepius and Caracalla Standing with an Altar between them. *BMC* 15.155.322.

The fifth medallion (Fig. 35) in the series shows Caracalla holding a *patera* in his right and a globe in his left. He faces Asclepius who is holding his snake-staff. Between them stands a bull:<sup>583</sup>



Fig. 35: Asclepius and Caracalla Standing Facing Each Other with a Sacrificial Animal between Them. *BMC* 15.155.323.

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<sup>582</sup> Harl (1987) 57.

<sup>583</sup> *BMC Mysia* 155.323.

The sixth medallion (Fig. 36) shows Caracalla holding a *patera* and scroll, standing in front of a temple in which a cult-statue of Asclepius can be seen. An attendant stands on the left, striking at the bull who is tied to a ring by his nose.<sup>584</sup> Caracalla is wearing a toga in his capacity as sacrificant. Similar iconography had been present on coins from the Julio-Claudian period onwards.<sup>585</sup>



Fig. 37: Caracalla Standing in Front of a Temple in Which Asclepius Stands. *BMC* 15.155.324.

The seventh medallion (Fig. 37) depicts a togate Caracalla holding a *patera* standing to the left of a temple. Asclepius sits within the temple. Between the two, the attendant has a raised axe and is preparing to strike and, thus, sacrifice, the bull.<sup>586</sup>



Fig. 37: Caracalla Standing in front of the Temple of Asclepius, an Attendant Stands between them Preparing to Sacrifice a Bull. *BMC* 15.155.324.

<sup>584</sup> *BMC Mysia* 155.324. It is possible that Caracalla actually sacrificed a hecatomb to Asclepius: Nollé (2003) 413.

<sup>585</sup> Harl (1987) 57.

<sup>586</sup> *BMC Mysia* 156.325



The seated god was identified as Asclepius on the basis of his seated form as Hellenistic coins from Pergamum also showed him sitting down.<sup>587</sup>

The eighth medallion (Fig. 38) shows Caracalla saluting the Asclepieian snake which curls around a tree. Telesphorus stands between the tree and the emperor.<sup>588</sup>



Fig. 38: Caracalla Standing in front of a Tree around which the Asclepieian Snake is Coiled, with Telesphorus Standing between Them. *BMC* 15.156.326

The ninth medallion in the series (Fig. 39) depicts three temples. Asclepius is shown seated, holding a snake in the central temple.<sup>589</sup> Other deities were placed in the two adjacent temples:



Fig. 39: The Three *Neocorate* Temples of Pergamum. *BMC* 15.156.327.

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<sup>587</sup> Burrell (2004) 32.

<sup>588</sup> *BMC Mysia* 156.326.

<sup>589</sup> *BMC Mysia* 156.327.



Minute letters on the temple pediments identify the temples as those of Augustus on the left, Trajan on the right, and Caracalla in the middle.<sup>590</sup> These three temples housed a cult of the emperor as well as that of a deity. The *neocorate* title was inscribed on all of these medallions such as on the eighth coin, whose inscription reads:

[ΕΠΙ CΤΡ Μ ΚΑΙΡ]ΕΛ ΑΤΤΑΛΟΥ/ΠΕΡΑΜΗ/ΝΩΝ/ΠΙΡΩΤΩΝ Γ ΝΕ/ΩΚΩΡΩΝ<sup>591</sup>

This inscription indicates that Pergamum now had three *neocorate* temples.<sup>592</sup> By depicting himself as a protector and rebuilders of sanctuaries, Caracalla is placed in the heavenly company of the emperors who predeceased him.<sup>593</sup> Fig. 38 shows Caracalla worshipping in front of a temple; Burrell notes that it does not make sense that Caracalla would worship at his own temple and that it is more logical to believe that he shared a temple with another deity and it is to that god whom he sacrifices.<sup>594</sup> This iconography of the three temples continued on Pergamene coins until the reign of Gallienus.<sup>595</sup> Temple sharing was the norm in Pergamum so it would not be unusual for Caracalla also to share his temple. It is possible, then, that Caracalla was incorporated into Asclepius' temple at Pergamum during his lifetime.<sup>596</sup> A monumental statue-head of Caracalla was also found at Pergamum (Figs. 40-41).<sup>597</sup>

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<sup>590</sup> Burrell (2004) 31. Smyrna also minted coins at this time depicting Caracalla's worship of the three main temples there: *BMC Ionia* 288.402.

<sup>591</sup> *BMC Mysia* 155.324: 'In the magistracy of Marcus Caerelius Attalus, Pergamum, first three times Neokoros'.

<sup>592</sup> Burrell (2004) 17, 22; Tacitus *Annals* 4.37. It is unknown who petitioned for the inclusion of Roma here, although Dio 51.20.6-9 does state that the *koinon* of Asia declared their allegiance to Octavian in 29 BC and asked permission in order to establish a cult for the emperor in Pergamum. Cass. Dio 51.20.6 mentions that further cults to Roma and the Divus Julius were established in Asia and Bithynia by Augustus' orders: Friessen (1993) 10.

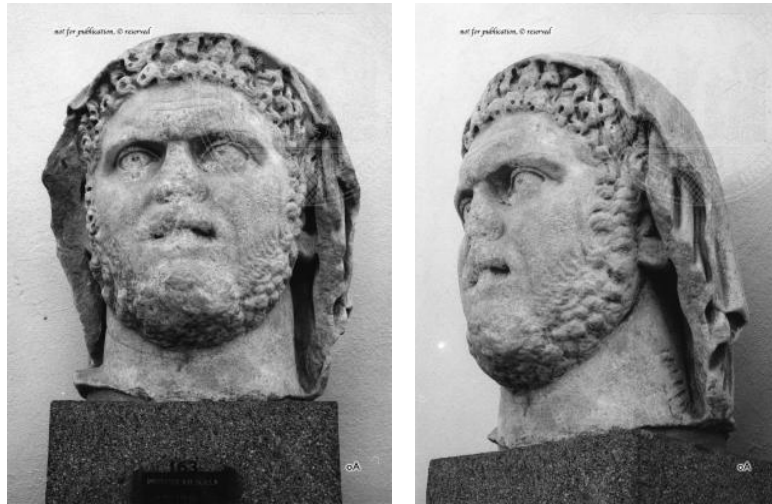
<sup>593</sup> Harl (1987) 61.

<sup>594</sup> Burrell (2004) 31.

<sup>595</sup> Harl (1987) 61.

<sup>596</sup> Nock (1930) 43.

<sup>597</sup> The statue is dated to AD 212-217 and made from marble. It measures 39 cm wide by 49 cm high. The nose is notably damaged.



Figs. 40-41: Monumental Caracallan Statue Head from Pergamum.

An inscription found with this head refers to the emperor as *domino indulgentissimo* indicating that Caracalla had likely already made benefactions to the city, such as the *neocorate*, by then.<sup>598</sup> None of the medallions depict the honour of placing this colossal statue in the temple. The fact that the cult-stature of Asclepius is depicted seated here is remarkable as the more common pose for Asclepieian cult-statues, and the one which most frequently appears on coins as well as statuary, is the standing god who leans on his staff (see above) (Fig. 42):



Fig. 42: Detail from *BMC Mysia* 156.327/Fig. 40.

<sup>598</sup> *IvP* VIII 3.12; Rowan (2012) 132.

The most famous seated cult-stature of Asclepius was that of Epidaurus (Fig. 43) but the Pergamene cult statue (Fig. 44) may have been based upon the famous Epidaurian one:<sup>599</sup>



Fig. 43: Drachm from Epidaurus Showing the Seated Cult Statue of Asclepius, c.323-240BC. *BMC* (Peloponnese) 7.



Fig. 44: Bronze Coin from Pergamum showing the Cult Statue of Asclepius, c.260-170 BC. *SNG* Cop. 340-341

The last medallion of the series shows Nike standing on the left, holding a wreath with which she crowns Tyche, who holds a *patera* and cornucopia.

<sup>599</sup> Burrell (2004) 33. See also *CNG* 81.2886, a *Diassarion* issued under Septimius Severus, showing the enthroned cult-stature of Thrasymedes. Images of the seated god also appears on Thracian coins from Tricca: *SNG* Cop 266; *SNG* Cop 267 and on Pergamene coins: *BMC Mysia* 121.73.

The medallions, thus, have a rich iconography dedicated to showing the viewer all of the actions undertaken by Caracalla when he was in the city and demonstrate the high regard in which he held the cult.<sup>600</sup> They show that he followed both religious and therapeutic rituals in search of healing and give a detailed synopsis of the emperor's actions within the city, namely his advent, the sacrifices, an oracular visit, culminating with the grant of the third *neocorate*. Rowan suggests that it could be possible that these medallions were meant to be viewed together as a record of events which would show the increased status of Pergamum as a result of the imperial visit.<sup>601</sup>

#### 3.4.5 Caracalla and Asia Minor

Caracalla's further travels around Asia Minor are noteworthy as the cities which he visited on this tour were obviously aware of his supplicating Asclepius at the Pergamene sanctuary as there was a surge in coinage depicting Asclepius and other Pergamene deities after this, as well as a rise in festivals and competitions of Asclepius, which will be further explored in this section.<sup>602</sup> The other cities of Asia Minor wished to please the emperor by appearing to honour a god he favoured and also wished to emulate and copy the pre-eminence of the Pergamene shrine. Coinage was one of the most deliberate symbols of public identity, with Roman provincial coinage being especially rich in iconographic types with over a hundred thousand

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<sup>600</sup> Caracalla was depicting honouring a number of other gods on provincial coin emissions, see Harl (1987) 59 for a list. However, here the literary evidence of Caracalla favouring Asclepius in Dio and Herodian should be taken into account. His worship of Asclepius fits into, but also transcends the pattern of imperial worship in the Roman east.

<sup>601</sup> Rowan (2012) 134.

<sup>602</sup> Nollé (2003) 414-416. See below.

coin types from over 500 cities.<sup>603</sup> Religion, in the form of *polis* deities and local temples and shrines, was a common way of expressing identity on these coins.<sup>604</sup> The other *poleis* in Asia Minor witnessed Caracalla's extensive benefactions to Asclepius in Pergamum and wished to honour both the emperor and the god he favoured in order to gain their own imperial patronage. Asclepius occurred frequently on their coinage at this point and the *poleis* either gave new rites, or restored forgotten ones to local cults of Asclepius.<sup>605</sup> Bearing in mind that Caracalla's exact route through Asia Minor is unknown, it is impossible to state which city started this emulation or give a time-scale in which this occurred. However, Pergamum was one of the earliest stops on Caracalla's tour and it is possible to estimate which emulations followed Caracalla's worship of Asclepius at Pergamum, showing the results of imperial worship of a cult and also the provincial response to such supplications and favour. It will also be explored here how it was not just provincials who responded to imperial benefactions but that Rome itself, and the whole empire through this city, altered its perceptions of the god due to imperial worship.

Caracalla spent the rest of AD 214 travelling around other parts of Asia Minor where he visited other *poleis* and Asclepieia. This can roughly be traced by coin emissions and inscriptions. Nollé argues that Caracalla actually returned to Pergamum after 23<sup>rd</sup> September of this year as this is when the second series of these coins was issued by Iulius Anthimos, showing a simpler version of Caracalla's advent to the city.<sup>606</sup> However, this seems unlikely as there was no reason for

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<sup>603</sup> Howgego (2005) 1-2.

<sup>604</sup> Heuchert (2005) 44; Howgego (2005) 2, 4.

<sup>605</sup> See above on Epidaurus (section 3.3.2).

<sup>606</sup> Nollé (2003) 414.

Caracalla to have returned to the city. There was a surge in the worship of Asclepius in Asia Minor at this time: in Laodikeia a festival in honour of Asclepius and Caracalla was founded called the Antonina Asklepieia. This was first held in 215/6 AD and was commemorated by coin issues bearing the legend *Pythia Asklepieia*.<sup>607</sup> This shows the adoption of imperial supplication and ideology on a local, regional level and illustrates the provincial response to an emperor's actions. In Ancyra the equestrian and priest of the *koinon*, Titus Flavius Gaianus, honoured the emperor and petitioned him for the right to commemorate the healing gained at the hands of Asclepius by founding a festival. Caracalla granted this right and the *Asklepieia Soteria Antonineia Isopythia* was founded. A temple to Asclepius Soter, the popular Pergamene version of the god, was built. The festival included athletic competitions which were probably first held in Caracalla's presence. A coin series was again struck to commemorate this.<sup>608</sup>

Caracalla also travelled to Cappadocia and Cilicia after Pergamum. The city of Aigeai in Cilicia had developed as a philosophical and religious centre as a result of its Asclepieion in the imperial era.<sup>609</sup> The emperor visited the famous temple of the god at some time after his visit to Pergamum and the city added the name *Antoninupolis* [sic] to its name and commemorated the emperor's visit by issuing a silver coin showing a statue of Asclepius on the reverse and a bust of the emperor on the obverse.<sup>610</sup> The city issued a new tetradrachm in AD 216/7 which depicts a bust of Asclepius on the obverse and the temple of Asclepius on the reverse.<sup>611</sup> This is the

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<sup>607</sup> Auktion Egger 49 (1914) 1782; Nollé (2003) 415; Rowan (2012) 156; Burrell (2004) 121. The Antonina Asklepieia must have been named thus in honour of Caracalla, whereas Pythia Asklepieia perhaps occurs on account of Asclepius' being the son of Apollo.

<sup>608</sup> Nollé (2003) 416; *BMC Galatia* 12-13, nos 22-26 and 28; *SNG von Aulock* 6164-66.

<sup>609</sup> Haymann (2010) 145.

<sup>610</sup> Nollé (2003) 416; Bloesch (1965) 308 silver coinage was scarce in Cilicia; the only other coins found issued in this medium were Tiberian coins from Tarsos and those of Antoninus Pius in Mopsuestia.

<sup>611</sup> Haymann (2010) 153 Fig 4. The coin came up for auction in 2007 in New York.

first time that the temple of Asclepius was depicted on civic coinage from Aigeai.<sup>612</sup> It is noteworthy that this tetradrachm was inscribed with *theophilous* in its legend. This should be read as ‘the beloved of the god’ which illustrates the emperor’s *pietas* but also his close relationship with Asclepius.<sup>613</sup> Caracalla was now closely associated with the god, which had its basis in his worship of the god at Pergamum. Further Caracallan coins depicting Asclepius and Telesphorus were issued in Aigeai between November 215 and November 216.<sup>614</sup> Severus Alexander and Valerian are also depicted on coins from Aigeai (Fig. 45) worshipping Asclepius and both emperors likely visited the city.<sup>615</sup> The case of Severus Alexander at Aigeai is very interesting as the city starts to call itself *Alexandroupolis* after the emperor, a not uncommon way of honouring an emperor, as it had previously called itself *Antoninupolis* for Caracalla. The obverses of coin-type struck here show the emperor in his usual guise, wearing a military costume, but there is also an Asclepieian snake-staff hovering in front of Severus Alexander.<sup>616</sup> This is the same staff that occurs on the Caracallan silver issue discussed above and on the coin struck under Valerian.



Fig. 45: Severus Alexander Depicted as a Priest of Asclepius, AD 230-1, Aigeai. SNG *Levante* 1772.

<sup>612</sup> Haymann (2010) 154. Other cities had done so from the Hadrianic period onwards.

<sup>613</sup> Haymann (2010) 157.

<sup>614</sup> See Bloesch (1965) 307; Haymann (2010) 154.

<sup>615</sup> Severus Alexander: SNG *Levante* 1771, 1772, 1774, 1775; Ziegler Sammlungen 1394. Valerian: SNG *Levante* 1801.

<sup>616</sup> CNG 94 lot 899; SNG *Levante* 1772.

The legend of Severus Alexander's coin reads: 'Imperator Severus Alexander the architect of the newly repaired temple of Asclepius'.<sup>617</sup> The legend on the obverses of four coin-types struck here, including the one showing the snake-staff, honour the emperor and call him 'greatest chief priest of the world and of Asklepios [sic]'. Burrell suggests that it is likely that the city of Aigeai made Severus Alexander chief priest of Asclepius and that it received a *neocorate*, its first, in return for this honour.<sup>618</sup> It is possible that Valerian, like Severus Alexander, received a priesthood of Asclepius at Aigeai.<sup>619</sup> Bloesch argues that the snake-staff iconography used on these coins would make Severus Alexander a kind of '*neos Asclepius*' here, similar perhaps to Hadrian who was *neos Asclepius* in Pergamum.<sup>620</sup> The second coin in the series shows the emperor sacrificing in front of the temple of Asclepius in an iconography, resembling that of Caracalla worshiping at the temple of Asclepius in Pergamum.<sup>621</sup> On the other two coin-types struck here, Severus Alexander holds the snake-staff with an eagle on top, combining Asclepieian iconography with that of the imperial triumph, perhaps indicating that here the cult of the emperor and that of the god had become intertwined.<sup>622</sup> This case is remarkable as it shows that there was a certain level of continuity in the cult here with imperial patronage and that in both cases the emperors visited the sanctuary and the locals actively sought to connect the emperor with the god here. In a way there was a dynastic link between Asclepius, Caracalla, and Severus Alexander. This dynastic connection between the office of emperor, Severans, and Asclepius is also shown by an inscription from Aigeai:

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<sup>617</sup> Harl (1987) 60-1; Severus Alexander: *SNG von Aulock* 5495 dated to AD 230/1; Valerian: *SNG Levante* 1801; Burrell (2004) 231.

<sup>618</sup> Burrell (2004) 231.

<sup>619</sup> Burrell (2004) 232.

<sup>620</sup> Bloesch (1965) 311.

<sup>621</sup> Burrell (2004) 231-2; *SNG Levante* 1771 and also 1774.

<sup>622</sup> *SNG Levante* 1771; Ziegler *Sammlungen* 1394; Burrell (2004) 232.





It was not just provincial mints in Asia Minor whose worship of Asclepius was adapted and boosted by Caracallan patronage but also in Rome itself. As mentioned above, Caracalla did not represent the Tiber Island sanctuary on his coins. However, Asclepius had been depicted on both provincial coinage, including on that of many Greek *poleis* before the Roman era, and also on issues struck by the Roman mint. However, from the time of Caracalla onwards a new Asclepieian iconography was introduced on coins, namely a ‘globe’ and often also Telesphorus ( Figs. 46-49):



Fig. 46: Silver *Denarius* Showing Asclepius, Telesphorus, and the Globe from the Roman Mint, AD 215. *RIC* 253.



Fig. 47: *Sestertius* showing Asclepius with the Globe on the Reverse from the Roman Mint, AD 215. *RIC* 538.



Fig. 48: Silver *Denarius* Showing Asclepius, Telesphorus, and the Globe from the Roman Mint, AD 215. *RIC* 253.



Fig. 49: Bronze As showing Asclepius with the Globe from the Roman Mint, AD 215. *RIC* 553a.<sup>629</sup>

This iconography was probably based upon the Asclepius Amelung type discussed above, the cult-statue of which had been introduced by Hadrian to Pergamum and placed in the new temple of Zeus-Asclepius there, fitting in with his ideology of a panhellenic universal religion.<sup>630</sup> The globe was a representation of the *omphalos*, which had been connected to the Pergamene cult since the pre-imperial era as 2<sup>nd</sup>- and 1<sup>st</sup>-centuries BC coins depict Asclepius standing with his snake-staff and the *omphalos* which is dated to 133-16 BC (Fig. 50):<sup>631</sup>



Fig. 50: Bronze Coin from Pergamum Showing the Asclepieian Snake Coiled around the *Omphalos* on reverse, c. 133-16 BC. *BMC Mysia* 129.158.

The legend of the coin reads: ΑΣΚΛΗΠΙΟΥ ΣΩΤΗΡΟΣ. The *omphalos* was also a symbol of Apollo and it is possible that due to the familial relations between Apollo and Asclepius the symbol also became linked with Asclepius and was commonly

<sup>629</sup> This coin was struck between AD 198 and 217 and does not show Telesphorus but only a globe. However, another version of the same denomination, an *as*, *RIC* 538a does show Telesphorus.

<sup>630</sup> Kampmann (1992/3) 39-40.

<sup>631</sup> SNG von Aulock 1372; Kampmann (1992/3) 42.

depicted on coins from the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC onwards.<sup>632</sup> Lacroix suggests that this iconography may have been chosen by the Attalid kings in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC as part of their campaign to be on friendly terms with Delphi and Pythian Apollo.<sup>633</sup> Asclepius as the god's son would have been the logical method to stress these connections. The symbol was clearly connected with Asclepius in Pergamum, though, as a *homonía* coin with Ephesus, representing the civic deities of both *poleis*, from Commodus' time depicts the *omphalos* at Asclepius' feet (Fig. 51):<sup>634</sup>



Fig. 51: Bronze Coin Showing Artemis of Ephesus on the Left and Asclepius of Pergamum on the Right with an *Omphalos* at his Feet, Pergamum, AD c.180-182. *BMC Mysia* 164.354.

It was important for the inhabitants of the empire to know that Caracalla had been healed by the Pergamene Asclepius and the emperor was, therefore, represented on the coinage together with an Asclepieian iconography which was specific to Pergamum, namely the *omphalos* and also the figure of Telesphorus.<sup>635</sup> Caracalla would also have wanted to legitimise his reign by divine association. Having obtained this divine sanction, it was portrayed on Caracallan numismatic iconography, as coinage was a very public way of disseminating ideology. This is

<sup>632</sup> Lacroix (1951) 6-7.

<sup>633</sup> Lacroix (1951) 12.

<sup>634</sup> *BMC Mysia* 164.354.

<sup>635</sup> Kampmann (1992/3) 46.

very remarkable as normally local iconography takes over the empire-wide one but here exactly the opposite happened. The orb iconography seems to have become a standardised part of Asclepieian iconography on coins at this point and was found across the empire. This iconographic change outlasted Caracalla's reign and still occurred on Pergamene coins decades later, as well as on Roman imperial coin issues (Fig. 52):<sup>636</sup>



Fig. 52: An *Antoninianus* Depicting Asclepius with the Globe at his Feet from the Cologne Mint with the Emperor Postumus on the Obverse, AD 260-69. *RIC* V/II 327.

This Antoninianus was struck in the Cologne mint between AD 260 and 269 and depicts the radiate emperor Postumus. It clearly shows the Pergamene *omphalos* lying next to Asclepius' right foot. While not all Roman imperial coins depicted the *omphalos* and Telesphorus, the fact that a proportion of them did shows the lasting impact of Caracalla's supplication of the Pergamene Asclepius (Table 6).

Emperor	Quantity	Mint
Postumus	6	Lugdunum Cologne Cologne Cologne Mediolanum
Tetricus I	1	Irregular
Carausius	2	Londinium Unattributed

Table 6: Occurrences of Asclepius on Roman Imperial coinage post-Caracalla.

<sup>636</sup> For example see *RIC* 5.2.478.163. These graphs are not intended to illustrate a quantitative study here but their aim is to give a general indication of the number of coins issued displaying this iconography.

The origins of Telesphorus are unclear but he was a particular Pergamene deity and, in one version of events, was the founder of the city.<sup>637</sup> His cult is not attested much before the time of Trajan, although he did spread to Epidaurus and Athens in the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> centuries AD.<sup>638</sup> He is also found as far away from Pergamum as Batkun in Thrace, where there was a major sanctuary of Asclepius.<sup>639</sup> The earliest representation of Telesphorus is on a Hadrianic coin from Pergamum (see section 3.3.2).<sup>640</sup> However, his main area of influence was in the eastern part of the empire, his place of origin.<sup>641</sup> This god only gained prominence on coins from the time of Caracalla onwards. His name means ‘end-bringer’ and could, thus, indicate an end to Caracalla’s crises.<sup>642</sup> His presence is also a reoccurring motif on imperial coins (Figs. 53-55):



Fig. 53: Bronze Coin from Sebaste in Phrygia Showing Asclepius and Telesphorus on the Reverse and Julia Domna on the Obverse, AD 193-217. *BMC* (Phrygia) 33.



Fig. 54: Coin from Cotiaemum in Phrygia showing Asclepius and Telesphorus on the Reverse and Busts of Severus Alexander on the Obverse, AD 222-235. *SNG* Tubingen 4111.

<sup>637</sup> Nollé (2003) 412; Harl (1987) 57. He is represented on a frieze on the inside of the Great Altar of Pergamum.

<sup>638</sup> Metcalf (2008) 133; Albinana (2006) 445.

<sup>639</sup> Noll (1953) 186.

<sup>640</sup> *BMC Mysia* 143.270. There is a portrait of Hadrian on the obverse.

<sup>641</sup> Noll (1953) 186.

<sup>642</sup> Metcalf (2008) 134.





Fig. 55: Bronze Coin from Cidyessus in Phrygia Showing Hygeia, Asclepius, and Telesphorus on the Reverse and Busts of Philip I and Philip II on the Obverse, AD 244-249.

All these coins come from Phrygia, one of the regions visited by Caracalla after his supplication of Asclepius in Pergamum.

#### 3.4.6 Macrinus, Caracalla, and Asclepius

Coins were issued in various provinces depicting Caracalla's successor Macrinus on the reverse and a standing Asclepius on the obverse (Fig. 56). However, only a few coin types are known and all of these were found in the Roman provinces of Phrygia and Moesia Inferior.<sup>643</sup>



Fig. 56: Bronze Pentassarion from Marcianopolis in Moesia Inferior Depicting Macrinus and Diadumenian on the Obverse and Asclepius on the Reverse, AD 217-218. *CNG* 75.783.

This use of the god's iconography on his coinage is surprising as Macrinus was particularly harsh in his measures against Pergamum and the cult of Asclepius after

<sup>643</sup> Marcianopolis in Moesia Inf.: *BMC* The Tauric Chersonese, Sarmatia, Dacia, Moesia, Thrace 32.32; Aezanis in Phrygia: *BMC* Phrygia 41.128; Cibrya: *BMC* Phrygia 140.54.

Caracalla's death and his own ascendancy to the imperial throne. The emperor withdrew some of the favours which Caracalla had granted to the city, to which Pergamum responded by openly insulting Macrinus. He in turn stripped the city of honours, as is narrated by Dio.<sup>644</sup> Due to Caracalla's patronage of Asclepius and Pergamum, which were very publicly commemorated by the coin series, the city, the cult, and the emperor had become connected in the public eye. By taking harsh measures against Pergamum, Macrinus was publicly working against Caracalla's precedent, although in subtle ways, as he did not wish to anger the army and people, which is why he was cautious in his treatment of Caracalla's mother, Julia Domna.<sup>645</sup> He presented himself as Caracalla's successor while subtly undermining his image.<sup>646</sup> One of the honours which was taken away by Macrinus was the third *neocorate* but after his death and erasure, this honour reappears on Pergamene coins, although only a few coins recall the specific temples they were associated with.<sup>647</sup> This coin legend continued in use until the reign of Valerian and Gallienus. Pergamum was the first city to have received a *koinon* temple of the ruling emperor, as well as the first to receive a second and third temple.<sup>648</sup> The positive aspects of such imperial benefactions are, thus, quite clear, as are the negative side-effects.

### 3.5 Conclusion

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<sup>644</sup> Cass. Dio 79.20.4.

<sup>645</sup> Levick (2007) 105; Cass. Dio 79.20.5, 79.23.2; Scott (2012) 16.

<sup>646</sup> Scott (2012) has studied Dio and Herodian's narratives surrounding Caracalla's death. He states that the sources are unclear and are possibly a later tradition, written after Macrinus' death: Scott (2012) 16. He also states that both accounts were coloured by the author's personal and historical views: Scott (2012) 28.

<sup>647</sup> Burrell (2004) 35.

<sup>648</sup> Burrell (2004) 35.



There was a great imperial impact on the cult of Asclepius and this happened in a variety of ways. As was outlined in the introduction, there was no standard rule to which emperors adhered when worshipping Asclepius. Many are not even reported to have supplicated the god at all, which was especially the case in the early empire. However, from Hadrianic times onwards, the god became more popular with emperors and they continued worshipping him until the late empire, something which is likely connected to the then prevalent idea that the health of the emperor was connected to the wellbeing of the empire. The impact these emperors had on the cults of Asclepius was also in part due to the role provincials played in either motivating imperial worship, as happened with Xenophon on Cos, or in taking up the act of supplication and broadcasting it to the wider world, as Pergamum and other cities in Asia Minor did. Provincial elites played an important role in bringing the god to the attention of the emperor or depicting the emperor's adherence to the cult, increasing its standing and prestige.

Xenophon was a member of Claudius' court and served him until his death in AD 54. Shortly thereafter the Asclepiad returned to Cos where he assumed a number of local priesthoods, among them that of Asclepius, Hygeia, and Epione. Xenophon had previously played a vital role in prompting Claudius to ask the senate to bestow the right of *immunitas* to the Asclepieion and the island. As Tacitus relates, the Coans were ordered to dedicate themselves to serving the god. Xenophon spent the remainder of his time in Cos actively reminding the Coans of his role as imperial courtier and the prestige he had gained for the island. No other Coan or Asclepiead was given the same number of honorific decrees as Xenophon was in Cos and the surrounding islands, and the number of titles given to the physician is also unparalleled. The epigraphical data is overwhelming and shows that Xenophon gave

as much importance to his Coan connections as to his Roman imperial ones. He would have been aware that a courtier's power derived from his access to the emperor and his ability to intercede with him on behalf of his *polis*. However, living in Cos he no longer had access to that power but he was represented as still having a good relationship with Nero by being called himself *philoneron*. The honorific decrees were used as a way to further his self-representation as an imperial courtier in Cos. Asclepius was the conduit by which he could articulate this imperial closeness.

The case of Xenophon illustrates the relationship which he had with the emperor and Asclepius, which had strong regional elements. As well as courtiers, another factor which had considerable impact upon the cult of Asclepius during the empire was the phenomenon of travelling emperors. This chapter has argued that while any journey could turn into a sacred journey, sacred travel for the purpose of healing must have had some degree of predetermination. Therefore, while Caracalla may have worshipped Asclepius because he was the main deity of Pergamum, this does not mean he did not set out with the purpose of worshipping the god. In doing so he was following a precedent set by Hadrian who had worshipped Asclepius at Pergamum. This visit had lasting effects on the sanctuary there as it prompted a rebuilding and also the introduction of a new universal deity, Zeus-Asclepius, whose worship and creation fits in with the unifying ideologies of Hadrian's reign. Something similar occurred at Epidauros, another sanctuary which was visited by Hadrian. Here, he reorganised the priesthoods and festivals of Asclepius and again this initial imperial worship was then taken up by local and also non-local elites who followed the example of their emperor and gave further benefactions to the cult. In the case of Epidauros this also meant a grand rebuilding of the sanctuary. Imperial

benefactions had the further result of creating links and connections between these sanctuaries. This is best shown via the iconography of the new Pergamene god Zeus-Asclepius which had a distinctive round object, the *omphalos*, placed at the god's foot. This iconography also occurred in a statue of Antinous at Eleusis and played a great part in Caracalla's stimulation of the cult.

Caracalla is depicted on a series of medallions extensively worshipping the Pergamene god. Herodian and Dio inform their readers that he worshiped the god as he was being haunted by his murdered brother Geta. However, Caracalla visited the shrine as part of his wider tour of Asia Minor and his supplication may have been a way to legitimise his reign and create goodwill in his population. Nevertheless these supplications had lasting impact on the cult as other cities in the area were aware of his worship of Asclepius, which caused them to revive their own local sanctuaries, such as at Epidaurus. Caracalla is depicted in a number of places together with Asclepius. One of the most notable occurrences of this is at Aigeai, where the city issued a silver tetradrachm depicting Asclepius. Caracalla's successor Severus Alexander also visited Aigeai where he was given the high priesthood of Asclepius and gave a *neocorate* in return for this honour. Severus Alexander's actions must have been prompted by a desire to follow Caracalla's precedent, creating dynastic links between the Severans and Asclepius here. This is also shown by coins and inscriptions of later emperors which explicitly refer to the Severans in connection with Asclepius. Asclepius at Aigeai had, thus, become a Severan dynastic god.

Further imperial impact upon Asclepius across the empire is shown by the adoption of the Asclepius Amelung type, the standing Asclepius with the *omphalos* at his foot, by the Roman imperial mint, which caused the dissemination of this image across the empire. Other specifically Pergamene Asclepieian iconography,

such as Telesphorus, is also found in other *poleis* and provinces after Caracalla's worship of the Pergamene god. Something remarkable had occurred with his worship here as, unusually, there had been a shift in iconography which had come from the provinces to Rome and not *vice versa* as usually occurred. Caracalla's Roman coinage showed this shift as did all coins struck by the Roman mint after his healing at Pergamum, which showed Asclepius with the globe at his foot, the iconography of the Pergamene Zeus-Asclepius. While not all depictions of Asclepius post-Caracalla adhered to this iconography, it became a favoured and standard iconographic theme across the empire. The representation of the Pergamene Telesphorus together with Asclepius also became popular, indicating that post-Caracalla the Asclepius who was depicted and worshipped across the empire had in part become the Pergamene Asclepius. There was, thus, a lasting imperial impact upon the cult of Asclepius. Each individual emperor had an impact upon the god and his cults but connections between these benefactions can be traced across time and the various Asclepieia.

While many of the sanctuaries discussed in this chapter existed and were also popular in the pre-imperial era, they seem to flourish during the Empire, and the emperor was one of the major factors in this. The Roman army also played an important role in boosting worship of the god and also disseminating his worship further across the provinces. The impact of the Roman army upon the cult of Asclepius in the Danube and Balkan regions will be examined in the next chapter.

## Chapter 4: Asclepius and the Army

### 4.0 Introduction

Already in the archaic Greek world there was a strong relationship between war and religion, as gods of battle were worshipped, war booty was dedicated in sanctuaries, and warships named after gods. Soldiers asked deities for protection and oracles, and offered sacrifices in return.<sup>649</sup> There was also a strong belief that the outcomes of battle and wars were determined by the gods. In the Hellenistic period, gods appear as saviours in perilous situations and soteriology, rescue in this life and the next, gained in importance, as is shown by new festivals called *soteria* and the widespread use of the epithet *soter*.<sup>650</sup> In the Roman world there was just as strong a connection between the army and religion and two aspects of this are frequently commented on, namely emperor worship and the worship of healing deities, as inscriptions to these gods are often found both *intra castra* and in close proximity to military camps.<sup>651</sup> The dangers of a soldier's profession meant that he went in search of extra protection and from as many gods as possible to cover all his bases.<sup>652</sup> Dedications were set up both in thanks for healing or prophylactically, to prevent any future harm.<sup>653</sup> The military worshipped the same gods as civilians but paid extra attention to those who could protect them. A number of *sacella* dedicated to healing gods have been found in alleged *valetudinaria*, or hospitals, across the empire. A

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<sup>649</sup> Van Wees (2004) 118ff.

<sup>650</sup> Chaniotis (2005) 146.

<sup>651</sup> Wesch-Klein (2000) 99.

<sup>652</sup> Le Bohec (1989b) 237; Wesch-Klein (2000) 101.

<sup>653</sup> Wesch-Klein (2000) 107.

*sacellum* to Asclepius and Hygeia at Novae in Moesia Inferior is the most important and will be discussed below (section 4.2.1).

This chapter aims to examine the impact of the Roman army on the cult of Asclepius, as the army was one of the most visible symbols of Roman power.<sup>654</sup> It will focus on the cult of Asclepius in the Balkan and Danube provinces and will explore how the army shaped the cult in this area. This region has been chosen as the impact of the military is especially visible near the Danube and Rhine because of the number of legions and auxiliaries stationed there.<sup>655</sup> With the exception of Thrace, none of these provinces seemingly had any cultic worship of Asclepius prior to the Roman conquest and the cult was only transported there with the army after the conquest. As such, this region is an excellent case-study to explore the impact of the Roman army on the cult of Asclepius. The legionary and auxiliary presence was also especially strong here as by the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD almost half of the Roman legions were stationed in this region and nearly a third of auxiliary units.<sup>656</sup>

After establishing himself as Augustus, the emperor made significant changes to the Roman military by creating an official army with a hierarchy of units with himself as supreme commander, ensuring that the legions were loyal to him.<sup>657</sup> He also placed most of the legions in the provinces, on the frontiers, keeping only about 5% of legions near Rome.<sup>658</sup> In the city of Rome there were two separate military forces: the praetorians and the urban cohorts. There were nine praetorian cohorts, whose task it was to guard the emperor, while the urban cohorts were tasked with the security of the city, making them a kind of police force.<sup>659</sup> From a political

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<sup>654</sup> De Blois (2007) xvii.

<sup>655</sup> De Blois (2007) xviii.

<sup>656</sup> Wilkes (2000) 577.

<sup>657</sup> Keppie (1984) 132.

<sup>658</sup> Le Bohec (1989b) 19.

<sup>659</sup> Le Bohec (1989b) 21-2.

perspective the praetorians was perfectly placed to impact directly upon events in Rome but, as Le Bohec points out, the military nature and the large numbers of provincial units gave them a leading position.<sup>660</sup> One of the main characteristics of the Roman army was its relatively small size, consisting of only c.5-7.5% of the population of the empire, which then had to cover a large geographic area.<sup>661</sup> Tiberius did little to alter what Augustus put in place and the structure of the army remained virtually the same throughout the Julio-Claudian dynasty. The military remained the exclusive domain of the emperor, as can be seen from Augustus' will where he detailed the numbers of soldiers and where they were stationed at the end of his reign.<sup>662</sup>

The Roman army worshipped a variety of gods and divinities. Foremost among these was the cult of emperor, which formed an 'official' part of the religion of the army, and all units, no matter where they were stationed, participated in this.<sup>663</sup> This is best shown by the calendar from Dura-Europos, a frontier town on the

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<sup>660</sup> Le Bohec (1989b) 24.

<sup>661</sup> Speidel (2012) 603.

<sup>662</sup> Sue. *Vit. Aug.* 101.4; Tac. *Ann.* 1.11.

<sup>663</sup> Imperial cult or emperor worship has been the subject of much recent scholarly interest, with the latter being the preferred term as the former implies a cohesive religious system which was not the case: Gradel (2002) 7. Notable publications in the field of the cult of the emperor are S.R.F. Price (1984) *Rituals and Power; the Imperial Cult in Asia Minor*, D. Fishwick's series on *The Imperial Cult in the Latin West* (1992-2005) and most recently I. Gradel (2002) *Emperor Worship and Roman Religion*. Gradel (2002) 4 emperor worship should not be treated separately from other forms of ancient religion as it was not treated as distinct at that point either. This practice had its origins in the ruler cults of Hellenistic kings in the east, where they had been given *isotheoi timai*, honours equal to those granted to the gods: Fishwick (1993) 21. There was no such thing as the cult of the emperor as it was not a centrally administered phenomenon and also had no dogma but was made up of a variety of local practices: Galinsky (2011) 3. Price (1984) 53 states that the standard view concerning emperor worship was that the Greeks were the sole initiators of the ruler cult and that the Romans only adapted and modified this practice. The high degree of communal organisation and the dominance of Greek culture in the cults in the east are an explanation for the relatively uniform nature of the cult in this part of the world and its difficulty at disseminating into the wider empire: Fishwick (1986) 227. The Greeks were trying to find a way in which to accept and place the reality of subjugation to Rome in their world; they were coping with being under the dominance of an external power which was outside of their traditional civic structures: Price (1984) 1; Fujii (2013) 157. The uniformity of the cult forms part of this adaption to a changed world. The cults of the emperor were housed in temples which followed plans for those of traditional deities and their priesthoods were also based upon those of the Greek gods: Gradel (2002) 81. Provincials were able to place the emperor in their world,

Euphrates. Religion could have bridged the gap between civilians and soldiers, if both groups had participated in the same cults. However, if they worshipped separate cults, the gap could actually be increased.<sup>664</sup> The main questions this chapter aims to examine are: What was the impact of the Roman army on the cult of Asclepius? What role did mobility play in this? How did the cult differ in the Balkans from the other provinces? And why was Thrace so different from the other Balkan provinces? The main case-studies will be sanctuaries located in the Balkans and Danube regions, namely in the provinces of Pannonia, Moesia, Thrace and, Dacia. Those in Germania and Britannia will be used for comparative material. The questions will be answered via an examination of several factors in the military worship of Asclepius, namely the relationship between army medicine and the god, vows, the Thracian Rider, and religious mobility. Each of these will be studied in turn. The impact of Empire on the cult will be shown via the army, as with Augustus the nature of the army changed and transformed from a situation where units were mobilised only for specific campaigns to a permanent army with an officer class which was constantly moving across the empire. The creation of the permanent army changed the nature of its mobility and it will be shown here how this also changed how soldiers worshipped Asclepius.

#### 4.1 Asclepius and the Army in the Balkan and Danube Provinces; Pannonia, Moesia, Dacia, and Thrace

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between gods and humans, according to their own wants and needs, resulting in highly individual cults which had traditional elements: Fujii (2013) 157.

<sup>664</sup> Pollard (2003) 142, 149: Pollard notes that there is little evidence for civilians and soldiers sharing religious habits in Syria and Mesopotamia.



The previous chapters have shown the diverse groups by whom Asclepius was worshipped, reinforcing the point that his cult was open to all. The god was worshipped in different ways, to varying extents, and by diverse military groups in each of the provinces. This is not surprising seeing as the army was so large and diverse that multiple local communities existed within the army as a whole. There was a close relationship between community and identity which was expressed in the holding of certain types of equipment such as swords and sword belts.<sup>665</sup>

This chapter aims to examine the impact of the Roman army on the cult of Asclepius in the Balkan and Danube provinces and how the army shaped the cult. While it is impossible to state for certain that the army brought the cult with it to these regions, this is quite likely as before the Roman conquest no evidence for the cult was found in these areas, with the exception of Thrace, and the cult, therefore, seems to have been brought here by the Romans. Dissemination of other cults to various provinces by the army is known, for example the Dii Campestris (see below), making it possible that the army transported the cult of Asclepius with them. The fact that there was no Asclepieian cultic activity in these regions before the conquest makes them a good place to study how a fresh cult of Asclepius was transported here and then adapted to suit local needs. In examining this, this chapter aims to look at how collective and individual military identities are expressed via supplication of Asclepius.

#### 4.1.1 Other Military Cults

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<sup>665</sup> Haynes (1999) 7, 9-10.

In order to understand better the relationship between soldiers and gods, two case studies will now be presented, briefly examining these relations. One of the most popular cults with the army was that of the military *genii* (see also section 4.5). The origins of this cult are unknown but probably started as a private cult which then became a state cult at some point. Many places within a camp had a *genius* such as the armoury or granary.<sup>666</sup> Off-duty soldiers were free to worship whatever gods they wished, so long as this did not interfere with their tasks and the epigraphic evidence reflects both the private and public religious acts of the soldiers.<sup>667</sup> Provincial units, due to their contact with a civilian population and influenced by local cults, created their own unique regional religious world, where they did not just worship Roman gods but they also supplicated eastern gods and local deities, evidence for which is mostly epigraphic.<sup>668</sup> These cults and rituals could distinguish the various ethnic backgrounds and identities of army units.<sup>669</sup> The Roman army was vital for the dissemination of cults and, especially as more and more provincials were admitted to the army, more regional deities were spread to places far from where they originated.

One of these ‘private’ cults was that of the *Campestres*. These deities were always worshipped in their plural form and were originally Celtic goddesses whose worship spread across the empire via Gallic cavalymen who were enlisted in the Roman army. Most votives are found in Lower Germany, implying that this was their place of origin.<sup>670</sup> These goddesses were also occasionally called *Matres*, linking these deities to other Celtic triads and their belief in the trifold power of gods, namely war, fertility, and healing.<sup>671</sup> Their worship became strongly linked

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<sup>666</sup> Speidel and Dimitrova-Milčeva (1978) 1542-3, 1553.

<sup>667</sup> Stoll (2011) 464; Fishwick (1988) 351.

<sup>668</sup> Haynes (1997) 114.

<sup>669</sup> Coulson (2004) 136.

<sup>670</sup> Irby-Massie (1996) 293.

<sup>671</sup> Irby-Massie (1996) 294.

with the *equites singulares* in Rome and were commonly listed as one of their patron deities.<sup>672</sup> Here, they were also associated with Epona who was the patron goddess of horses and cavalrymen. Outside Rome, the dedications are completely different in nature. In Rome, the *equites* worshipped these goddesses as a unit and they are also often mentioned on discharge papers, but out in the provinces, the dedications are strictly personal in nature.<sup>673</sup> Their worship was disseminated as far away as Africa where they were called the *Dii Campestris* and altars to these gods have been found at Lambaesis and Gemellae.<sup>674</sup> This is a specifically African version of their name and these goddesses are worshipped under variations of their names in other provinces.<sup>675</sup>

Another god commonly connected to the military is Mithras. Early scholars, such as Cumont, explicitly linked the dissemination of the god's cult with the military, especially since, as Gordon points out, Cumont's theory of oriental religions depended on this.<sup>676</sup> Clauss states that:

As members of Mithraic congregations we find rather soldiers, members of the imperial administration in the clerical and sub-clerical grades, slaves and freedmen belonging to the *domus Caesaris* and private households, and ordinary citizens.<sup>677</sup>

The earliest evidence for Mithraic worship comes from the Roman provinces but, according to Clauss, was connected to people who were originally from Italy, such as a dedication by a centurion from the *cohors XXXII voluntariorum civium*

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<sup>672</sup> *CIL* 6.31139, 31140, 31141, 31142.

<sup>673</sup> Irby-Massie (1996) 300.

<sup>674</sup> Lambaesis: *CIL* 8.2635, 10760. Gemellae: see Mallon (1955) 155-162; *AE* 1976 735.

<sup>675</sup> Speidel (1991) 117.

<sup>676</sup> Cumont (1956b) 38; Clauss (2000) 34; Gordon (2009) 421.

<sup>677</sup> Clauss (2000) 33.

*Romanorum* which came from Nida.<sup>678</sup> Members of this unit had been recruited from among Roman citizens, something unlike what happened with most auxiliary units. Legions worshipped the god extensively in Britannia, Germania, Rome, Ostia, and Numidia but the cult made little headway with the military in the provinces of Noricum, Dalmatia, Raetia, Moesia Superior, the Pannonias, most of Hispania, and the Gauls. The idea that Mithras was an almost exclusively military deity has been shown not to be the case as in the aforementioned provinces the cult mainly drew civilian worshippers while in Britannia and Numidia civilians virtually did not supplicate Mithras at all.<sup>679</sup> In Numidia the provincial governors were entered into the cult.<sup>680</sup> Auxiliaries almost never worshipped Mithras, with the exception of those stationed in Britannia.<sup>681</sup> On the other hand they did worship gods such as Jupiter Optimus Maximus extensively.<sup>682</sup> Parallels with the cult of Asclepius can be drawn as it will be shown in this chapter that there was also a high degree of regional differentiation in his cults.

#### 4.1.2 Provincial Background and Religions

As well as understanding the religious background of the army, a knowledge of the history of each province is also vital for understanding military background and the differences between provinces. Moesia had not yet been established as a province in the second half of Augustus' reign but when the province was formed it

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<sup>678</sup> Clauss (2000) 21. This is in contrast to what is now being argued by Gordon (2009) 394 who suggests that the earliest evidence for the cult's spread is via trade routes and of the four inscriptions often used to indicate military involvement in the cult only one actually shows this, namely *CIL* 3.4416.

<sup>679</sup> Clauss (1992) 262-279; Gordon (2009) 395.

<sup>680</sup> Clauss (2000) 35.

<sup>681</sup> Gordon (2009) 419.

<sup>682</sup> Saddington (2009) 90; for example *RIB* 2062.

was more a process of consolidation than conquest as Crassus had already brought much of the region under Roman control.<sup>683</sup> With its long Danubian border a large military presence in the province was needed and, as in Pannonia, one legion was stationed on the Danube and two inland during Tiberius' reign. However, some changes were made during the Claudian period when the *III Scythica* was permanently replaced by the *VII Claudia*.<sup>684</sup> Vespasian added to the troops already stationed in Moesia by transferring the *V Alaudae* there. Following a number of serious military defeats, Domitian separated the province into two in AD 86 creating Moesia Inferior and Superior.<sup>685</sup> Emperor cult was found across Moesia and the Capitoline triad was second in importance with 18% of the known votives erected by soldiers. Of the military dedications, only 2% were to Mars, this in contrast to Germania where he was very popular, and 5% of the dedications were to Hercules.<sup>686</sup> A disproportionately large percentage of the dedications, namely 18%, were erected to Diana and Apollo. However, this concerns just the 'official' cults from Rome, whose votives were mainly found clustered around military camps. Many unofficial, private, cults also had sanctuaries close to camps and the most popular of these deities were the Thracian Rider with 17% of dedications, Asclepius and Hygeia with 7%, 4% to Silvanus, and 2% to Liber Pater, who was very popular in Pannonia.<sup>687</sup> Dedications to the Rider, Asclepius and Hygeia were mainly found away from camps and cities, despite numerous military worshippers. Important cult sites of Asclepius were at Lilyache, Gaganitsa, Glava Panega, Lyublen and Draganovets.<sup>688</sup> A sanctuary was also probably located near Dorf Tučeniza, one to Asclepius Heros

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<sup>683</sup> Mladenović (2012) 3; Mócsy (1974) 44.

<sup>684</sup> Haynes (2011) 8; Mócsy (1974) 48.

<sup>685</sup> Mladenović (2012) 5.

<sup>686</sup> Alexandrov (2009) 140.

<sup>687</sup> Alexandrov (2009) 142.

<sup>688</sup> Alexandrov (2009) 143.

at Dorf Kalново, and possibly another near Nicopolis ad Istrum which was to the *theoi soter*s.<sup>689</sup> In his catalogue, Riethmüller lists fourteen sites for which there is cult evidence, two of which are shrines of Asclepius located in sanctuaries of the Thracian Rider.<sup>690</sup> All of the cult evidence here is dated to the Roman period.

Dacia was one of the last areas to be added to the empire and only became a province in AD 106. The precise borders of this province are not known and they were redefined under Hadrian following a number of Sarmatian attacks in AD 117-8.<sup>691</sup> At the end of Trajan's campaigns in the region there were two legions stationed in Dacia, namely the *XIII Gemina* and the *IV Flavia Felix* but the latter was moved to Moesia by Hadrian.<sup>692</sup> The province was split into three parts, namely Superior, Inferior, and Porolissensis sometime around AD 120 but the Marcomannic wars which took place some fifty years later prompted another reorganisation.<sup>693</sup> During these wars the *V Macedonica* was permanently transferred from Moesia to Dacia but the vast majority of units stationed in Dacia were auxiliary units with military diplomas mentioning fifty-eight different units.<sup>694</sup> It is not possible to comment on the religious habits of the Dacians before the conquest as there is little evidence for this. After the conquest Liber Pater was one of the most popular gods in the area.<sup>695</sup> Various cults, namely those of the emperor, Liber Pater, Silvanus, Mithras, Apollo, Diana, and Nemesis, were located in Sarmizegetusa Ulpica. An inscription to Aesculapius Pergamenus shows that there was cult here.<sup>696</sup> Riethmüller lists seventeen cult sites, all of which are dated to the Roman period. About seventy

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<sup>689</sup> *IGBulg* 2.684; Velkov and Gerassimova-Tomova (1989) 1356.

<sup>690</sup> Riethmüller (2005) 2.328ff.

<sup>691</sup> Cass. Dio 68.14; Hanson and Haynes (2004) 19.

<sup>692</sup> Oltean (2007) 56.

<sup>693</sup> Hanson and Haynes (2004) 19.

<sup>694</sup> Oltean (2007) 56.

<sup>695</sup> Hanson and Haynes (2004) 23.

<sup>696</sup> *CIL* 3.1417a.

inscriptions to Asclepius and Hygeia have been found in Dacia, of which twenty-three do not have epithets. They are mainly to Asclepius or Asclepius *Augustus* but the god's name is sometimes joined with *numen* or *deus* but *dominus* and *kurios* also occur.<sup>697</sup>

Pre-conquest religion in Pannonia had Celtic and Illyrian elements. However, very few traces of this remain, and where they do they are mainly names which give no indication of the nature of the god worshipped. Fertility deities were supplicated widely across the province and Pan was the main god of the native Illyrian population.<sup>698</sup> During the Julio-Claudian period there was one legion stationed in Pannonia on the Danube and two within the province.<sup>699</sup> The events of AD 69 prompted a revision of the placement of legions in the area even though this did not occur until the time of Vespasian and Trajan. The former transferred a number of auxiliary forces from Pannonia to the Rhine region and the latter divided the province into Pannonia Superior and Inferior.<sup>700</sup> Riethmüller lists six places in Pannonia Superior and five in Inferior where there is evidence for worship of Asclepius.<sup>701</sup>

Thrace became an official Roman province under Claudius in AD 46, although prior to this it had already been a client state from around 20 BC onwards. The military nature of the province was very different from those around it. Regular units were only infrequently stationed in this region and there were no legions there on a permanent basis. However, the province was very important for providing troops for the army and there were in total thirty-one auxiliary units which had the

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<sup>697</sup> Bodor (1989) 1120.

<sup>698</sup> Thomas (1980) 177-8.

<sup>699</sup> Mócsy (1974) 44.

<sup>700</sup> Mócsy (1974) 80-1.

<sup>701</sup> Riethmüller (2005) 453-456.

name *Thracum* and who must have come from Thrace and not Moesia.<sup>702</sup> Gods such as Ares, Dionysus, Artemis, and Hermes enjoyed cult in this area. However, as Hercules was not worshipped extensively here prior to the conquest, it is assumed that he was introduced by the Romans.<sup>703</sup>

It is important to understand the movements of legions in each of these regions as the creation of a permanent army under Augustus altered the nature of the mobility of the army. Units were mobilised not for a specific campaign but were a fixed part of the landscape. They were no longer disbanded at the end of a period of conflict but were either kept in an area to ensure a continuation of the peace or were moved to another area where there was a pressing need for extra military forces due to conflict. This thesis aims to show that the now permanent nature of the army had an impact on the cult of Asclepius as soldiers changed the way they worshipped this god and also disseminated his worship. Collar has argued for the cult of Jupiter Dolichenus (see section 1.1.8) that this cult was disseminated via army officer networks as these officers were more mobile than the infantry. The inscriptions presented in this chapter will be shown to have predominantly been dedicated by members of the officer class. To show the impact of Empire on the cult, the following sections will each examine the factors mentioned above which illustrate the relationship between the army and Asclepius. First, the creation of a medical corps as part of the new permanent standing army will be examined and how this stimulated the worship of Asclepius in new contexts and geographical regions. The connections between sacred and secular healthcare for the army will be looked at, and how both the military and physicians helped disseminate the cult due to high levels of mobility within these two groups. This will be followed by a section on

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<sup>702</sup> Haynes (2011) 8.

<sup>703</sup> Velkov and Gerassimova-Tomova (1989) 1350. This offers a parallel for Asclepius and signals that cultic transferal via the military was possible.



vows and one on worship in Thrace, where the cult of Asclepius was joined with that of the Thracian Rider. These two sections will show the interplay between religion and identity and how supplicants sought to articulate the latter within a dedicatory context and how both regional and global identities were shaped to reflect a dedicator's image of themselves. The final section will examine religious mobility and connectivity and will also focus on the articulation of identity within a cult context.

#### 4.2 Sacred and Secular Healthcare for the Roman Army

Together with the general army reforms (see above), it seems that some kind of health care system for the army was created under Augustus.<sup>704</sup> In the Republican period there were no official army doctors and soldiers had to take care of wounds themselves. This health care was rather *ad hoc* with tents erected where and when they were needed.<sup>705</sup> However, this did not mean that there were no individuals who took care of wounded soldiers but rather signals that there were no members of the army who had the official and specifically appointed position as doctor.<sup>706</sup> Cicero does mention army medics in his work, indicating that soldiers were not completely abandoned when they were in need of health care.<sup>707</sup> The first named army medic was Sextius Titus Alexander who belonged to the *V Praetoria* in AD 82.<sup>708</sup> The army was expensive in its upkeep so it made sense to create a corps dedicated to its

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<sup>704</sup> Israelowitz (2015) 87 argues that the army was the most important place where medicine was practised outside of the household because of its scale, connectivity, and geographical reach. Israelowitz (2015) 93 also states that it is possible that Augustus dedicated a section of his *Disciplina Augusti* to the administration of the health care for the army; Suet. *Aug.* 49.2; Cass. Dio 52.27.

<sup>705</sup> Nutton (2005) 524.

<sup>706</sup> Polyb. 3.66.9; Plut. *Vit. Crass.* 25.5.

<sup>707</sup> Cic. *Tusc.* 2.16.38.

<sup>708</sup> *CIL* 6.20.

wellbeing, part of whose job was also preventative medicine such as preventing and controlling infectious diseases and finding salubrious places to found army camps.<sup>709</sup> The first distinct army medical units appeared from the time of Caesar onwards.<sup>710</sup>

Army medicine differed from the civilian version as these doctors would have wanted to avoid surgery at all costs whereas this was not possible for army physicians who would have had to treat battle wounds.<sup>711</sup> Most of these wounds would have been flesh wounds caused by arrows and other projectiles, for which the chances of healing were relatively great. Celsus devotes a number of chapters to explaining how to treat these using specialised equipment and it is likely that many army physicians would have had access to such texts.<sup>712</sup>

It is unclear exactly to what extent health care was available for soldiers, as no literary text actually discusses this, but it has now been generally accepted that this was better for the legionaries than it was for auxiliaries.<sup>713</sup> Wilmanns has done an in-depth study of the spread of doctors across the troops, leading her to conclude that there were more doctors among the legions while there might only be one doctor or some minor health care workers for a whole auxiliary unit.<sup>714</sup> She argues that if there was one doctor per 500 troops that would mean that in the middle of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD there would have been some 800 doctors in the army, though it might be safer to estimate a figure of between 500 and 800.<sup>715</sup> The actual number and experience of the medical staff assigned to a unit would have depended on the size and prestige of the unit in question, for example the *cohors IV praetoria* had both a *medicus chirurgus* and a *medicus clinicus*, as it was one of the most prestigious

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<sup>709</sup> Tac. *Ann.* 4.63; Jackson (1988) 129.

<sup>710</sup> Aparaschivei (2012) 103.

<sup>711</sup> Israelowitz (2015) 96.

<sup>712</sup> Celsus, *Med.* 7.5.3; Jackson (1988) 128.

<sup>713</sup> This is due to a lack of sources: Penso (1984) 119; Baker (2004) 13.

<sup>714</sup> Wilmanns (1995).

<sup>715</sup> Wilmanns (1995) 173.

units.<sup>716</sup> It is possible that each fort or fortress would have had a *medicus ordinarius* who had a rank equal to that of a centurion and would serve under a *medicus castrensis/castrorum*. However, in auxiliary camps it is possible that the *ordinarius* would have been the highest medical officer, highlighting the difference between legionary and auxiliary medicine.<sup>717</sup> Dedications concerning *medici* were generally either set up by someone else for the *medicus*, or by the *medicus* for another person; for example an inscription from Vinovia (Binchester) (Fig. 57) shows a *medicus* dedicating for the wellbeing of the wing he belongs to, one of the most prestigious army units. This illustrates collective army mentality which apparently included the medical staff as well. The date of the inscription is unknown.

[Aesc]ulapio / [et] Saluti / [pro salu]te alae Vet/[tonum] c(ivium) R(omanorum)  
M(arcus) Aure/[lius 3]ocomas me/[dicus v(otum) s(olvit)] l(ibens) m(erito)<sup>718</sup>



Fig. 57: RIB 1028.

<sup>716</sup> Jackson (1988) 134. *Medicus Chirurgus*: Gaius Terentius Symphorus AE 1945 62; *Medicus Clinicus*: Tiberius Claudius Iulianus ILS 2093.

<sup>717</sup> Allason-Jones (1999) 134: an *ordinatus* would have had a rank equal to that of a centurion.

<sup>718</sup> RIB 1028: 'To Asclepius and Salus for the health of the Vettonian wing of Roman citizens, Marcus Aurelius [...]ocomas, medicus, willingly, and deservedly fulfilled his vow'.

An inscription from Novae, on the other hand, shows a physician setting up a dedication for his own health:

Aesc(u)la/p(i)o et Hy/giae Ae(lius) / Macedo / med(icus) p(ro) s(alute) s(ua) p(osuit?)<sup>719</sup>

None of the lower medical ranks, such as *capsarii*, are attested epigraphically, which would fit in with general army epigraphic trends where mainly men of officer rank, namely centurion and above, made dedications.<sup>720</sup> This chapter aims to explore how the increased mobility of army officers, made possible due to the infrastructure of the Roman empire, aided the transmission of cults and elements of cults of Asclepius, following ideas laid out by Collar (see section 1.1.8).

Further inscriptions were set up by physicians across the Balkan and Danube provinces, for example at Emona in Pannonia. Asclepius and Hygeia were worshipped here from early on and three altars were found dedicated to them. However, only one of these can be dated and was set up by a *medicus* who probably came from Aquileia and possessed Roman citizenship (Fig. 58):

Sacr(um) / Aesculapio / L(ucius) Peticius Techni(cus) / med(icus)<sup>721</sup>

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<sup>719</sup> *AE* 2003 1541: ‘To Asclepius and Hygeia, Aelius Macedo, medicus, erected this for his own health’.

<sup>720</sup> Allason-Jones (1999) 134.

<sup>721</sup> *CIL* 3.3834: ‘Sacred to Asclepius, Lucius Peticius Technicus, medicus, [erected this]’. It is not clear exactly when the colony of Emona was founded but Šašel Kos (2008) 687 argues that it was sometime shortly after the battle of Actium.

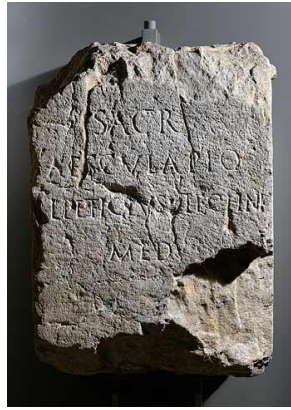


Fig. 58: *CIL* 3.3834.

The altar was found *in situ*, in an area which corresponded to the north-east area of the ancient city, immediately east of the forum.<sup>722</sup> The *nomen* Peticius signals that the dedicator could originally have been from Aquileia. An inscription from the area of Fucino mentions a Titus Peticius *chirurgus* which could indicate that this was a medical family as Tiussi points out that many of the old families from Emona originated from Aquileia and the North-Adriatic region.<sup>723</sup> The religious world of Emona, however, did not resemble that of Aquileia at all but was a blend of Roman and local cults. Aecorna, Asclepius, Ceres, Diana, Hercules, Hygeia, Jupiter, Jupiter Depulsor, Laburus, Lares, Mater Magna and Oraea, Mercurius, Mithras, Nemesis, Neptune, the Nymphs, Silvanus, and Victoria are all attested to have been worshipped here, with Jupiter receiving the most cult with eight extant altars, followed by Aecorna with five, Victoria with four and then Asclepius with three, indicating the importance of the cult here.<sup>724</sup> In this way, religious life at Emona might actually echo that of Aquileia as it had the second largest cult centre of

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<sup>722</sup> Tiussi (1999) 89.

<sup>723</sup> *CIL* 9.3895; Tiussi (1999) 90, 156-7 no. II.A.5.

<sup>724</sup> Šašel Kos (2008) 690: she notes especially the dominance of Aecorna here as being out of the ordinary.

Asclepius in Italy apart from Rome.<sup>725</sup> Other evidence of military adherence to the cult comes from Vindobona where a centurion from the *legio X Gemina*, Publius Aelius Lucius dedicated to Jupiter Optimus Maximus, Asclepius, Sirona and Apollo, and also from Aquincum where two altars to Asclepius and Hygeia were found in the Roman baths, the second of which was dedicated by a junior *decurio* called Marcus Foviacius Verus.<sup>726</sup> It is possible that the baths were connected to the *valetudinarium* and that soldiers used the facilities as a result. Aquicum has the most inscriptions set up by doctors of any site in the North-Western provinces, among which is a dedication to Asclepius by Tiberius Martius Castrensis who was a *medicus* (Fig. 59):

Aesculapio / Ti(berius) Martius / Castrensis / med(icus) leg(ionis) II A(diutricis) / sub Q(uinto) Fufici/o Cornu/to co(n)s(ule) de(signato)<sup>727</sup>



Fig. 59: AE 1937 180.

<sup>725</sup> Šašel Kos (2008) 694.

<sup>726</sup> Vindobona: AE 1957 114: *[[I(ovi)] O(ptimo) M(aximo) / Apollini / et Sirona[e] / [Ae]sculapi[o] / P(ublius) Ael(ius) Luciu/s [(centurio) leg(ionis) X v(otum) s(olvit) / l(ibens) l(aetus) m(erito). Aquincum: AE 1972 363: Aesculapio / et Hygiae / M(arcus) Foviacius / Verus Iu(nior) / dec(urio) kan(abarum) dec(urio) / m(unicipii) Aq(uincensium) Ilvir / q(uin)q(uennalis) flaminicius / v(otum) s(olvit) l(ibens) m(erito).*

<sup>727</sup> AE 1937 180. 'To Asclepius, Tiberius Martius Castrensis, medicus of the legion II Adiutrix under Quintus Fuficius Cornutus, consul designate, set this up'.

Here Asclepius is dedicated to by a *medicus* again. The inscriptions shown here indicate conclusively that there was no competition between Asclepius and physicians but that even the latter asked the former for aid. Likewise, the Athenian Asclepieion Inventories list dedications made by physicians.<sup>728</sup> This shows that this cooperation was not a feature of the military nor the Roman period, but that it was in place from the start. However, these inscriptions clearly illustrate the various forms in which doctors could supplicate the god, namely that they could ask for their own health, that of an individual, but also for the health of an entire unit. There is no tension here between secular and sacred healing and these inscriptions should be taken as evidence that doctors and the gods worked side by side. This very lack of tension between groups would make worship of the gods within military camps and hospitals possible as they would not have been excluded from these places by physicians jealously guarding their healing prerogatives. The inscriptions dedicated by *medici* are not uniform in nature at all but follow the dedicator's own preferences in terms of physical appearance and inscribed text, with some being very succinct and others providing far more details (Fig. 60):

Aesculapio et Hygi/ae Aug(ustis) sacrum / T(itus) Venusius T(iti) f(ilius) Mene(nia) Aper / Praene(ste) opt(io) valetudi(narii) v(otum) s(olvit) l(aetus) l(ibens) m(erito) / V Kal(endas) Octob(res) posuit<sup>729</sup>

<sup>728</sup> See for example *IG II<sup>2</sup>* 1534A.84a, 1534B+1535.155c, 161c. See also Aleshire (1989) 44.

<sup>729</sup> *AE* 1937 181: 'Sacred to Asclepius Augustus and Hygeia Augusta, Titus Venusius son of Titus Aper, tribe Menenia, head of the *valetudinarium* at Praeneste happily, freely and deservedly fulfilled his vow and placed it on 27<sup>th</sup> September'.



Fig. 60: AE 1937 181.

This inscription is remarkable for a number of reasons. First, it mentions that the dedicator, Titus Venusius, was the head of the *valetudinarium* at Praeneste.<sup>730</sup> Secondly, the inscription was set up in Aquincum in Pannonia but the dedicator held his position in Praeneste. This is a good example of the increased mobility which was a result of the creation of a permanent army and units of medical personnel which moved around the empire, further examples of which will be shown below. Titus Venusius does not mention which legion he belonged to so it is not possible to

<sup>730</sup> It is known that these structures definitely existed as *valetudinaria* are mentioned in a number of ancient texts and there are archaeological traces as well, for example see *CIL* 3.14537, 6.175, 8.8099, 13.8099; AE 1987 951; Pseudo-Hyginus *Liber de Munitionibus Castrorum*; SHA *Hadr.* 10.6; SHA *Alex. Sev.* 47.2; Tac. *Hist.* 2.45. However, there has been some recent debate as to whether *valetudinaria* actually existed as the structures we believe them to be, with Baker (2002) 74 arguing that these structures are not hospitals but were more likely to be storage rooms, *fabrica*, and that the original excavators based their interpretations on the 19th and 20th century ideal of a hospital. She also notes that while ancient texts do comment on the existence of *valetudinaria*, none of them give an actual description of the layout of this structure. She also comments on the fact that during excavation little attention was generally paid to the find-spot of any medical equipment which was found on site. However, the hospital at Neuss was well-documented and instruments were found in the *valetudinarium* but also in other areas. She then states that it was possible that these medical instruments did not in fact have a medical use. Baker (2013) 122-4 argues that a lot of the small finds found *in situ* do not point towards a hospital: lamps, animal bones and tableware could suggest a domestic space. However, even the sick needed to eat and see so this seems not to be a likely explanation for this, especially as Room 48 of the building contained broken probes and physician's boxes. On the basis of the literary evidence she admits to the existence of military hospitals but is just arguing against current identifications. However, it is now generally still accepted that these structures were military hospitals for a number of reasons, as listed by Künzl (2005) 59, namely firstly *horrea* and *fabrica* are archaeologically easily recognisable and the structures believed to be *valetudinaria* do not resemble these and are also too big to be *scholae*. Secondly, one of the literary sources, Pseudo-Hyginus *Liber de Munitionibus Castrorum* 4, states that a legion had a *valetudinarium* next to the *veternarium* which could be found among the courtyard rooms. Israelowitz (2015) 100 does believe in the existence of these structures and states that Baker's arguments are focused solely on the physical shape of the *valetudinarium* and not their existence. He also argues that the hospital at Haltern was the oldest as it is possible to date it to between 7-5 BC and AD 9: Israelowitz (2015) 102.



state with certainty whether he moved to Pannonia with his legion, or more likely, that he was transferred from one legion to another. Ordinary soldiers could expect to stay with one legion and possibly in one geographical area for their whole lives, but officers had a far greater mobility and could expect to move between legions (see section 1.1.8). The head of the *valetudinarium* would have had a rank equivalent to that of an officer so increased mobility among these men could also be expected (see above). It may be possible that Titus also held the post of head of the hospital in Aquincum but there is no evidence for this. The *valetudinarium* in Aquincum seemingly had a cult room of Asclepius and Hygeia where cult is visible from the time of Trajan. Another similar room was found in the hospital at Vindobona and there is also evidence for cult at Novae (see below). An altar to Asclepius dedicated by an Iulius Iulianus was found near the *valetudinarium* and statues of Asclepius were also found here.<sup>731</sup> Kádár argues that it is likely that Asclepius had multiple sanctuaries in Pannonia but none was found.<sup>732</sup>

#### 4.2.1 Camp Medicine

There has been some debate whether military camps had specialised medical facilities called *valetudinaria*, ancient hospitals.<sup>733</sup> The inscriptions mentioning these infirmaries are only found in the imperial period, which could either coincide with Augustan reforms to the army health corps or could just be a result of changes in the epigraphic habit. The hospital at Neuss, Novaesium, was the first one to be

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<sup>731</sup> *AE* 1937 182.

<sup>732</sup> Kádár (1989) 1059; he states that it is remarkable that the cult was concentrated along the Amber Route and also along the *limes*.

<sup>733</sup> See above note 717. The word *valetudinarium* is also found in civilian context and must just mean a place for sick people: Künzl (2005) 56. The word is not used to indicate a public civilian hospital before the 4<sup>th</sup> century AD but is found indicating a private house for the sick from about AD 100: Nutton (2005) 523. Infirmaries were found on the estates of wealthy Romans from about the 1<sup>st</sup> century BC onwards, see Celsus, *Med. prooemium* 65, but they vanish here around AD 100, possibly as a result of the prices of slaves: Nutton (2005) 524.

discovered but the one in the Teutoburger Wald is the oldest known, dating to AD 9.<sup>734</sup> They are generally thought to have consisted of two rectangular hallways with a courtyard in the middle (See Fig. 61).<sup>735</sup>

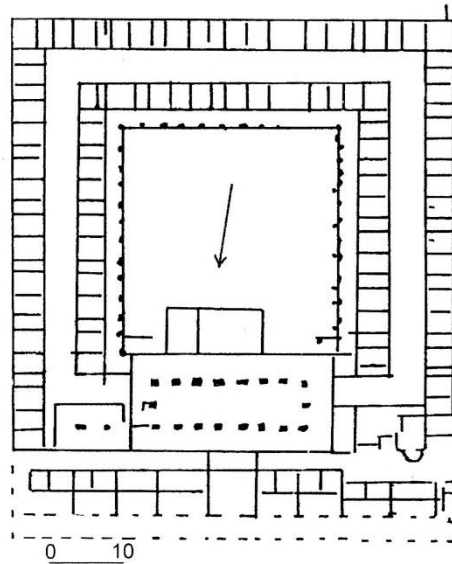


Fig. 61: Plan of the hospital at Vetera I.

A number of inscriptions were found dedicated to Asclepius in and around the site of the alleged *valetudinarium* at Novae, which would indicate the existence of a *sacellum* in the hospital, just as at Vindobona (see above). The presence of a cult of Asclepius in the *sacellum* at the *valetudinarium* at Novae shows that the cult of the god had been introduced into a new context for worship. These military hospitals were created as part of the new medical corps; within this new secular context, sacred space was demarcated for the worship of the god, illustrating the connections and cooperation between sacred and secular healthcare. Worship of the god in this new context illustrates the impact of Empire on the cult, where existing practices were adapted to suit the reality of Empire. The Empire and its provinces necessitated

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<sup>734</sup> Künzl (2005) 55.

<sup>735</sup> Baker (2002) 71.

the foundation of a permanent army, both for future conquests and for the preservation of peace in existing provinces. This in turn caused the creation of a medical corps dedicated to the wellbeing of its soldiers. Historically, physicians had a strong relationship with Asclepius (see section 3.1), which makes it unsurprising to find military doctors also worshipping the god. This prior relationship was then incorporated within the structure of the army and the new buildings, which were constructed as a result of it. Military worship of Asclepius, therefore, brought cult to new contexts but also built upon and adapted existing relationships with the god.

A dedicatory inscription was found here which formed part of an architrave inscription and is concerned with the foundation of a temple or shrine to Hygeia and Asclepius by the *legatus Augusti pro praetore* Titus Vitrasius Pollio, which can be dated to around AD 157 (Fig. 62):<sup>736</sup>

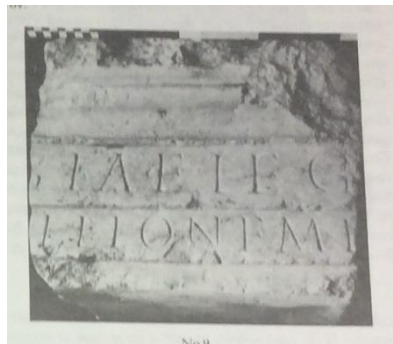


Fig. 62: *ILNovae* 9.

[templum or sacellum Aesculapii et Hy]giae leg(io) [I Italica ---]  
 [dedic(atum) per T(itum) Vitrasium Po]llionem l[eg(atum) Aug(usti) pr(o)  
 pr(aetore)]<sup>737</sup>

This is significant because it is a building inscription which indicates that the legion went to the effort to dedicate a temple on site and the cult here did, therefore, not just

<sup>736</sup> Dyczek (1995) 127; *AE* 1937 247 shows that Vitrasius was legate of the province in AD 157.

<sup>737</sup> 'A temple or *sacellum* of Asclepius and Hygeia dedicated by the *I legio Italica* by Titus Vitrasius Pollio, Augustan propraetorian legate'. *ILNovae* 9. Pollio is known from thirteen inscriptions from Moesia Inferior: Kolendo and Božilova, (1997) 57.

consist of an altar where offerings could be made but was more elaborate. The very fragmentary inscription is linked to the cult of Asclepius and the inscription is set up by the imperial legate making the connection with the *legio I Italica* very probable. The corpus editors state that there is no doubt about Asclepius' reconstructed name here because of the presence of Hygeia's name and she generally did not receive cult by herself.<sup>738</sup> The inscription indicates that there was either a temple somewhere in Novae close to the fort or that there was a *sacellum* inside the *valetudinarium*.<sup>739</sup> Vitrasius Pollio is known to have made another dedication to Asclepius and Hygeia in Varna:

Aesculapio et / [Hy]giae T(itus) Vitra/sius Pollio co(n)s(ul) pon/tifex, proco(n)sul [Asiae]/leg(atu)s Aug(usti) pr(o) pr(aetore) e[x voto posuit].<sup>740</sup>

If the reconstructed dedicatory inscription from the architrave is indeed correct, the temple can be dated to AD 156-9 when Titus Pomponius Proculus Vitrasius Pollio was legate of the province and would mean that the dedication of the shrine would coincide with the Marcomannic wars and the Antonine plague.<sup>741</sup> Due to the timing of when these inscriptions were erected and when the provincial expansion took place, it is possible that the increased interest in the cult coincided with the Antonine Plague.<sup>742</sup> However, the extent to which this plague truly had such devastating effects, as has been claimed in primary sources, both contemporary and later, has now been called into question.<sup>743</sup> Jerome states that the nearly 10,000 people died at Rome alone, the plague was that severe.<sup>744</sup> Bruun has conducted an investigation into the source material and methodology used by scholars to make these claims and has

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<sup>738</sup> Božilova, Kolendo and Mrozewicz (1992) 25.

<sup>739</sup> Božilova, Kolendo and Mrozewicz (1992) 25.

<sup>740</sup> *IGBulg* 1<sup>2</sup> ad 86 bis: 'To Asclepius and Hygeia, Titus Vitrasius Pollio, consul, pontifex, proconsul of Asia, Augustan propraetorian legate, erected this dedication as a result of a vow'. It is dated to AD 167-8 or later.

<sup>741</sup> Dyczek (1999) 497.

<sup>742</sup> Šašel Kos (2012) 110.

<sup>743</sup> Aristid. *Or.* 51.25; Lucian *Alex.* 36; SHA *Verus* 8.1.1-2; SHA *Marc.* 13.3, 17.2, 21.6; Oros. 7.15.5-6; Amm. Marc. 23.6.24; Bruun (2007) 204.

<sup>744</sup> Jer. *Chron.* 188h.

shown them to be faulty.<sup>745</sup> He argues that while there was definitely an epidemic, no one knows how bad it really was and its impact. Duncan-Jones states that it was a literary trope to call each plague the worst ever.<sup>746</sup> The existence of the plague is not in doubt, just its extent. It should, therefore, not be taken as a definite reason for why soldiers at this time erected a dedication to Asclepius and, in fact, its presence in the Balkan provinces cannot be definitely concluded.<sup>747</sup>

The connection with the *legio I Italica* seems very likely here, which would mean that the cult was linked to the military from the start. Another inscription (Fig. 63) from the site links it conclusively to the military, as it is a collective dedication set up from the legion to the god. In cases like this, where there is a joint dedication from the whole legion, a commander generally erected such a dedication on behalf of the whole unit or legion:

Aescula/pio sacrum / leg(io) I Ital(ica)<sup>748</sup>



Fig. 63: AE 1998.1130.

Asclepius was worshipped here for the health and safety of the entire legion. This type of collective dedication also occurs, for example, in the Asclepieion in

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<sup>745</sup> Bruun (2007) 210.

<sup>746</sup> Duncan-Jones (1996) 115.

<sup>747</sup> Mitrofan (2014) 12.

<sup>748</sup> AE 1998.1130: 'Sacred to Asclepius, [erected by the] I Italic legion'.

Lambaesis (see Chapter 5) and the issue of collective versus individual dedications will be examined in more detail in the section on Thrace.

The *valetudinarium* at Novae was built in the Trajanic period and was located in the north-west area of the *praetenatura* of the fortress of the *I Italica*.<sup>749</sup> It was located on top of another structure, probably a bathing complex, which dated to Vespasian's time and the *sacellum* is located directly in line with the main entrance to the hospital.<sup>750</sup> The hospital's plan is similar to those of the *valetudinaria* mentioned above (Fig. 64):

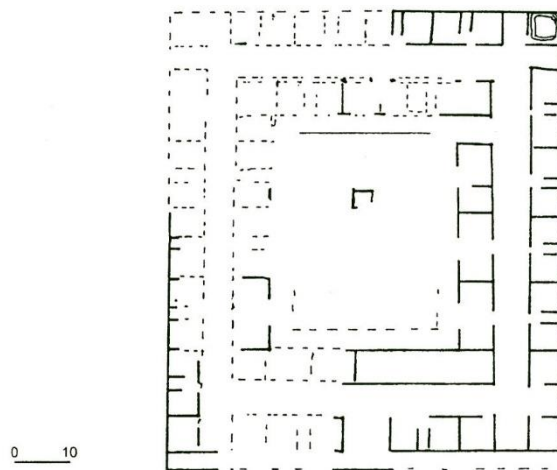


Fig. 64: Plan of the *valetudinarium* at Novae.

This hospital is one of the largest excavated, with only those at Bonn and Lotschitz being bigger.<sup>751</sup> A small building was discovered here in 1985 which was unearthed completely in 1992 and it seems that this structure had been deliberately demolished to make place for a villa, the so-called Building of the Porticoes, and had been

<sup>749</sup> See Press (1986) 529-35 for full archaeological and architectural details of the site.

<sup>750</sup> Press (1994) 93-4.

<sup>751</sup> Dyczek (1995) 125.

abandoned at the same time as the hospital and fort during Caracalla's reign at which point the locals reused materials.<sup>752</sup> Dyczek suggests that it was a small shrine or temple to Asclepius which was placed within the camp, something which is supported by epigraphic evidence as inscriptions to Asclepius and Hygeia were found in three places in the Building with Porticoes.<sup>753</sup> One is a dedication of a silver statuette of Hygeia made by the legate Marcus Clodius Laetas, which has been dated to the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD and is possibly connected to the Marcomannic wars:<sup>754</sup>

Hygiam / ex donis arg(enti) / p(ondo) IIII unc(iis) VII[3] / M(arcus) Clodius / Laetus leg(atus) / Aug(usti) f(aciendum) c(uravit)<sup>755</sup>

An inscription to Asclepius was found in Greek:

Ἀσκλη[πι]-  
 ᾧ θεῶ σῶ[τη]-  
 ρη +++ Διό[δω]-  
 ρος<sup>756</sup>

This inscription was found reused in the walls of the structure built on top of the *valetudinarium* and is dated to between AD 212 and 230. As one of the other inscriptions found in the hospital was by a physician it has been suggested, especially given the fact that this inscription was set up in Greek, that Aurelius Diodorus was also a physician.<sup>757</sup>

Another dedication was erected to Asclepius Saorus:

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<sup>752</sup> Dyczek (1999) 495.

<sup>753</sup> Dyczek (1995) 126.

<sup>754</sup> Dyczek (1995) 126.

<sup>755</sup> *ILNovae* 7: 'Out of the gift of silver weighing 4 pounds and 7 ounces Marcus Clodius Laetus Augustan legate undertook the creation of Hygeia'. See also *ILNovae* 8: *Hygiae sac(rum) / Fl(avius) Hono(ratus) / (centurio) / leg(ionis) I Ital(icae) d(onum) d(edit)*. Božilova, Kolendo and Mrozewicz (1992) 24 suggest that this dedication might have been connected with the Antonine plague.

<sup>756</sup> *IGLNovae* 176: 'Dedicated to Asclepius, saviour god by [Aurelius] Diodorus'.

<sup>757</sup> Bresson and Drew-Bear (1997) 179.

Asclepio Saor/o L(ucius) Appius ++ANI / tes(serarius) leg(ionis) I Ital(icae) / d(onum)  
d(edit)<sup>758</sup>

The editors for *L'Année Epigraphique* state that that there is no clear explanation for this epithet. They state that it could possibly be an unknown toponymic epithet or that it could be a Latinised version of the name of the son of Horus which was Saor.<sup>759</sup> There is another explanation from Pausanias, who mentions that there was a shrine to Asclepius in Arcadia 40 stades from Saurus.<sup>760</sup> These inscriptions were all found close to the building. All of the inscriptions from this site are dated to the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century and the early 3<sup>rd</sup> century.

In total there were ten dedications to healing deities from this area and only two to other gods. The inscriptions to Asclepius and Hygeia were placed in the *sacellum* or within ten meters of it, while the other inscriptions were dotted around the courtyard. Of the thirteen objects found on the site, eight are bases, four altars (of which one uninscribed) and three votive slabs. Of the inscriptions, one was dedicated by the legion as a whole, two by legates, and one each by a *primus pilus*, centurion, veteran, *medicus* and *hastatus*:

[A]esculapium / ex donis arg(enteum) / p(ondo) V unc(iis) V / C(aius) Mansuanus / Severus leg(atus) Aug(usti) f(aciendum) c(uravit)<sup>761</sup>

It is noteworthy here that both this inscription and that to Hygeia (see above) place so much emphasis on the weight and value of the object as this rarely occurs within an Asclepieian context, with the most notable exception being the Athenian

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<sup>758</sup> *AE* 1998, 1133: 'To Asclepius Saorus, Lucius Appius ..ani tesserarius of the I Italic legion gave as a gift'. A tesserarius was a watch commander.

<sup>759</sup> See *AE* 1998 p.421-422 no. 1133.

<sup>760</sup> Paus. 6.21.4.

<sup>761</sup> *AE* 1999.93b: Asclepius out of the gift of silver of five pounds and 5 ounces, Gaius Mansuanus Severus Augustan legate undertook its creation.



Asclepieion inventories. It is possible that this could be a trend, the epigraphic habit, at the time of dedication as inscriptions dating to the AD 200s from Ostia similarly mention the weight and value of the dedication.<sup>762</sup>

Thus, there is definite evidence for a cult of Asclepius and Hygeia within the site of the army camp at Novae. The close proximity of these inscriptions and their content link the cult to the army here. It has also been convincingly argued that the location in which the shrine was located was a military hospital, a *valetudinarium*. For Künzl the existence of the *sacellum* in the *valetudinarium* at Novae also proves the existence of *valetudinaria*.<sup>763</sup> It would make sense for a specially demarcated area to have been dedicated to healing the sick to prevent contamination but also to promote healing.

This section has aimed to show the various ways in which the Roman army dedicated to and worshipped Asclepius. It has firstly shown that there was no competition between healing gods and physicians and that in fact the opposite took place, with *medici* supplicating the gods for their own health and for that of others. This lack of competition then made it possible for a cult of Asclepius to be located within a military camp so that soldiers could worship the god there directly for their wellbeing. While there is some discussion about the correct application of the term *valetudinarium* to certain structures, the location of the shrine of Asclepius in certain parts of the camp at Novae indicates that this is where it would be most logical to have such a military hospital as it would not make sense for wounded soldiers to have to cross the camp to worship at an altar a long distance away from where they

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<sup>762</sup> An EDCS keyword search (accessed 18/10/2015) for the ‘*argenti pondo*’ reveals that this phrase was used in various provinces, from Baetica, to Hispania, to Dacia, revealing its supposed popularity at this time, as it occurs upwards of 100 times.

<sup>763</sup> Künzl (2005) 61.

were laid up. The location of the *valetudinaria* was generally in a relatively secluded spot away from the healthy soldiers. This could be for a reason not dissimilar to the relative isolation of the Tiber Island Asclepieion, namely to prevent cross-contamination with healthy soldiers, in the case of infectious diseases. There was definitely a cult of Asclepius on the site of Novae and from a practical perspective it would make sense for this to have taken place in the *valetudinarium*.

The military health care system changed under Augustus and it is from this period onwards that military doctors are also attested epigraphically. The relationship between doctors and Asclepius was already well known in antiquity (see section 3.1) but now the cult was spread further across the empire and was worshipped in new contexts such as the *valetudinarium*. The presence of the cult of Asclepius and Hygeia on the site of Novae adds to the possibility of identifying this structure as a *valetudinarium* as this section has shown that there was no competition between doctors and the god, but rather the opposite took place with doctors extensively worshipping the god. The new Augustan health care system led to the construction of new buildings concerned solely with the health of the soldiers and this became a new context for the god to work. The next section will briefly look at the occurrence of vows to Asclepius in military dedications from the Balkan and Danube provinces as there are a remarkable number of inscriptions where these are mentioned. Notions of identity and how they were portrayed in these inscriptions will be examined in this section, a theme which section 4.4 will build upon.

### 4.3 Vows

The process of supplicating a god involved a bargain being struck, the *do ut des* principle. A human would pray to a god and make a sacrifice in order to gain the god's attention. Then he would ask the god to fulfil his wish: in the case of Asclepius this would most likely be healing of some kind, and then when this was achieved the supplicant promised to set up a dedication so that everyone could know that the god had been merciful and how powerful the god was that he could have cured the supplicant. The length of the contract which was undertaken by making a vow could differ vastly and depended on each individual case.<sup>764</sup> Fulfilment of vows occurs in many of the military inscriptions from the Danube and Balkan regions, such as:

Aesculapio / et Hygiae / Publ(ius) Ael/i(us) Fronto |(centurio) / leg(ionis) XI Cl(audiae) / v(otum) s(olvit)<sup>765</sup>

Many of the inscriptions discussed in this chapter were dedicated as the result of a vow, far more so than generally occurs in other contexts discussed within this thesis. Roman religion placed great importance on vows where in return for divine help or benefit a supplicant promised offerings, sacrifices, games, temples, and many other things in return. They were quite contractual and while gods were seen to be bound just by the taking of the vow, they were only obliged to do exactly as the vow stipulated, no more and no less.<sup>766</sup> It should also be noted that often a sacrifice preceded the erection of an inscription and that this sacrifice was often the actual votive offering, which was then followed by a lasting monument for the votive.<sup>767</sup> This public display of the fact that a vow had been fulfilled and a votive given could

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<sup>764</sup> Derks (1998) 218.

<sup>765</sup> *AE* 1987 888: 'To Asclepius and Hygeia, Publius Aelius Fronto centurion of the XI Claudian legion fulfilled his vow'.

<sup>766</sup> Beard, North and Price (1998) 1.32, 1.34.

<sup>767</sup> Derks (1998) 221.

then become an object for competition.<sup>768</sup> Vows could be made under special circumstances or annually depending on the situation. In the context of the cult of Asclepius, it was more likely to have been the former reason:

Aesculapio et Hy/giae M(arcus) Ulpus Ho/noratus dec(urio) / eq(uitum) sing(ularium) Imp(eratoris) n(ostri) / pro salute sua / suorumque et / L(uci) Iuli Helicis me/dici qui curam / mei diligenter egit / secundum deos / v(otum) s(olvi) l(ibenter) l(ibens) m(erito)<sup>769</sup>

The inscription was set up by a decurion on behalf of a *medicus* who, together with Asclepius and Hygeia, cured him from either an illness or a wound, the inscription does not specify which. The VSLLM shows that the Decurion was healed.

It has been suggested that the use of the formula VSLM suggested that the vow became mechanical and was not understood by its users.<sup>770</sup> However, Scheid does not believe this and points out that study of trilingual inscriptions shows otherwise, as the dedicators chose not to translate the formula into Aramaic as it only occurs within the Greek and Latin text, indicating that this kind of contract was not deemed suitable for these native gods.<sup>771</sup> The Roman vow had specific vocabulary and phrases which would make it unsuitable for use in a non Graeco-Roman divine context. The remarkably frequent occurrence of the formula here then might indicate the highly Roman nature of the context in the dedications which were set up. The army was a very Roman institution and that was reflected in these dedications. This will also be shown in the next section where Thracian praetorians went to great

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<sup>768</sup> Derks (1998) 231: this was due to the size or material of the votive.

<sup>769</sup> *CIL* 6.19: 'To Asclepius and Hygeia, Marcus Ulpus Honoratus, Decurion of the equites singulares of our emperor, for his health and that of his family and of Lucius Julius Helix, medicus, who carefully treated me, in accordance with the gods, willingly and deservedly fulfilled his vow'. This inscription is dated to around AD 153 on the basis of another dedication set up by Honoratus: *AE* 1954 83. It comes from Rome. See above for similar dedications.

<sup>770</sup> Kiernan (2004) 104-14.

<sup>771</sup> Scheid (2012) 182-3. See the temple of Palmyrene gods in Travestere.

lengths to portray themselves as Roman as possible while still keeping Thracian dedicatory elements. This inscription shows dialogues in religion between Rome and the provinces, which were possible via movement across the Empire.

A superficially less Roman cult was that of the Thracian Rider which originated in Thrace but had important connections with the military and Asclepius and will be examined next.

#### 4.4 The Thracian Rider



Fig. 65: Map of the area of Philippopolis.



Fig. 66: The Thracian Rider, *IGBulg* 5.5806.

The Thracian Rider was one of the most important gods in Thrace. Both Apollo and Asclepius were identified with this god (Fig. 66); the earliest of the dedications to the Rider are dated to the Hellenistic period, but most come from the Roman era.<sup>772</sup> In the south-eastern area of modern Bulgaria the Rider is mainly assimilated with Apollo but in the western Philippopolitan area the Rider is twinned more often with Asclepius.<sup>773</sup> In the area controlled by Philippopolis (Fig. 65), the sanctuary at Batkun was the most important and about 250 reliefs and statues were found in this area.<sup>774</sup> The rider is commonly depicted as Asclepius and bears the epithet *Zimidrenus*, or a variation of this name.<sup>775</sup> An inscription from Rome set up by Thracian members of the praetorian cohorts to Asclepius *Zimidrenus* (discussed below) will illustrate the impact of Empire on the cult via increased mobility which

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<sup>772</sup> Dimitrova (2002) 210. The type is called the Thracian rider as some 2,000 reliefs were found from about 350 locations in Thrace. Circa one-third of these are inscribed, mostly very simply. Of this third, two-thirds are votive in nature and the last third is funerary. Apart from Asclepius and Apollo, Jupiter Optimus Maximus, Ailvanus, Hades, Hephaistos, and the Dioskouroi were also represented in this type.

<sup>773</sup> Oppermann (2005) 351.

<sup>774</sup> Most inscriptions here are to the god plus an epithet and dedications to just Asclepius are in the minority. There are also many dedications to Asclepius Kurios, or a combination of Kurios and *Zimidrenus*, namely: *IGBulg* 3.1118; 1122; 1132; 1145; 1157; 1159; 1167; 1171; 1175; 1180-1; 1188-9; 1203; 1223-5; 1227-8; 1232-3; 1236-43; 1246; 1249 (?); 1257; 1259; 1264-5; 1268-70; 1281. Kurios is a typical Thracian epithet and commonly occurs on votive plaques: Boteva (2011) 86.

<sup>775</sup> Oppermann (2005) 351.

resulted from the creation of a permanent army. This cult is generally not directly associated with the army in Thrace though there are also dedications erected by soldiers. However, in order to understand fully the differing nature of these inscriptions, the cult in Thrace, its nature and dedicatory habits must be fully understood and will, therefore, be discussed first.

Inscriptions in Thrace were mainly set up by people of local origin and at the sanctuary in Glava Panega in Moesia twenty-one of the statues were of Asclepius alone or with Hygeia or Telesphorus in the Classical style but forty-one were in the style of the Thracian rider. At the sanctuary at Batkun 95% of the statuary of Asclepius was in the guise of the Thracian rider.<sup>776</sup> This was a new religious creation and a response to the penetration of Hellenic culture in the area. Dimitrova argues that the Rider was an advanced sign of religious syncretism as it merged with every Greek, Roman, Thracian, and Eastern god it came across.<sup>777</sup> There was a joint sanctuary of Asclepius and the Rider at Dolna Dikanja.<sup>778</sup> In the territory belonging to Philippopolis, the city from which the praetorian dedicators to Asclepius Zimidrenus in Rome came (see below), there were five sanctuaries of both the Thracian Rider and Asclepius, namely Malko Belovo, Malo Konare, Novosel, Pastuša, and Perustica.<sup>779</sup> Boteva states that there are fifty-two dedications in total to the Rider which are known to have been made by soldiers, most of which come from the area between the Danube and the Haemus mountain range.<sup>780</sup> Of these, seven were dedicated to Asclepius, all in Greek, and were erected by soldiers holding a

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<sup>776</sup> Chirassi Colombo (1973) 106-7.

<sup>777</sup> Dimitrova (2002) 211.

<sup>778</sup> Dimitrova (2002) 213, see also p.213 fig. 2; *IGBulg* 4.2134.

<sup>779</sup> Riethmüller (2005) 2.332-3.

<sup>780</sup> Boteva (2005) 199.

variety of military posts, namely one equestrian, two *beneficarii*, one praetorian, two soldiers, and one unknown post.<sup>781</sup>

Recent excavations and discoveries have shown that Asclepius was worshipped all across Thrace, often together with Hygeia and Telesphorus. All the cult evidence for the forty-four sites in Thrace dates from the Roman period. There seems to have been another sanctuary of Asclepius Keilaidenos in Pernik, where 122 votives to the Thracian Rider have been found and twenty-two to Asclepius, Hygeia, and Telemachos.<sup>782</sup> Near Dorf Varvara there was a sanctuary of Asclepius Heros, who could also have been Asclepius Zimidrenus/Zydenos.<sup>783</sup> One inscription here was set up by a soldier called Aurelius Moukatralis:

Αὐρ(ήλιος) Μουκατραλις στρατιώτης κυρίῳ  
Ἀσκληπιῷ.<sup>784</sup>

The inscription is simple and was dedicated in Greek, indicating that the dedicator could have been of local origin as, even though Latin was the dominant language along the Danube, only Greek occurs in Thrace and in the area belonging to Hellenistic Macedonia.<sup>785</sup> With the widespread recruitment of Thracians into the Roman army, a local origin is even more likely.<sup>786</sup> It is remarkable that Asclepius was worshipped under so many epithets in Thrace, which were likely the names of local gods such as Zimdrenus, Koukoussenos, and Zudeono.<sup>787</sup> The best preserved sanctuary is the one at Pernik but all seem to have a similar architecture which is

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<sup>781</sup> *IGBulg* 2.529, 541; 5.5798, 5717, 5818, 5704, 5856.

<sup>782</sup> Velkov and Gerassimova-Tomova (1989) 1355.

<sup>783</sup> *IGBulg* 3.1101-1108, see especially 1108; Velkov and Gerassimova-Tomova (1989) 1356.

<sup>784</sup> *IGBulg* 3.1103: 'Aurelius Moukatralis, soldier, to Lord Asclepius'.

<sup>785</sup> Wilkes (2000) 602.

<sup>786</sup> Zahariade (2009) 59; Strabo 7.47-8.

<sup>787</sup> Koukoussenos: *IGBulg* 4.1934; Zudeono *IGBulg* 3.1108. See also Limenos: SEG 42.660. There was a sanctuary of Asclepius Limenos near Silvnica in north-west Bulgaria.



particular to this region.<sup>788</sup> Most of the inscriptions from this area were dedicated in Greek and seem to have mainly a civilian nature, as for example at Batkun no military ranks or offices are mentioned. There are two inscriptions (Figs 67-69) which could potentially have military connections as an *ordinatus* is mentioned, which was apparently a special position, with the sole purpose of capturing brigands.<sup>789</sup>

Ἐπιφανε-  
στάτω θε-  
ῶ Ζυμυ-  
ζδρηνω  
Αὐρ(ήλιος) Διονυ-  
σόδωρος  
ὠρδ(ινᾶτος) λη-  
στολογή-  
σας εὐαξά-  
μενος ἀ-  
νέθηγα.

Μ(ᾶρκος) Αἴλ(ιος) Σέμνος  
ὠρδινᾶτος  
γενόμενος  
κὲ εὐξάμενος  
ἀνέθηκα<sup>790</sup>

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<sup>788</sup> Szubert (1990) 410.

<sup>789</sup> *IGBulg* 3.1126: ‘To the most manifest god Asclepius Zimidrenus, Aurelius Dionysodorus, *ordinatus* and Leistologein praying, set up this up’. And 3.1127: ‘Marcus Aelius Semnos, being *ordinatus* and having come to pray, set this up’.

<sup>790</sup> *IGBulg* 3.1127.



Figs. 67-68: *IGBulg* 3.1126.

Fig. 69: *IGBulg* 3.1127.

Mihailov also points out that the word *Leistologein* is a novelty for the Greek lexicon and may be an abbreviated term with *leistai* which would indicate an administrative position in the army.<sup>791</sup> The editor again points to a connection with the Marcomannic wars and the Antonine plague here, which coincide with the date of dedication and which could have prompted a boost in dedications, not just by soldiers but also by civilians.

The Rider was not just worshipped in Thrace but was also supplicated in Moesia and there was an important cult site at Glava Panega. A shrine of Asclepius occurred near a spring here. A number of unique epithets occur in this cult, namely Σαλδηνος and Σαλδοκεληνος which correspond to the Latin Saldaecaputenus and Saltecaputenus, which also occur in the cults of Silvanus and Heros here.<sup>792</sup> These

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<sup>791</sup> Mihailov (1961) 123 = *IGBulg* 3.1126.

<sup>792</sup> *SEG* 45.891.

epithets are very different from the ones discussed before (see section 2.3). A number of offerings were dedicated here by soldiers (Figs. 70-71):

Αἴλιος Μεστριανος στρατιω[τ]ης ἀνε vac [θηκεν]<sup>793</sup>

Κυριῷ Σαλδοουγηνω  
.....ος Δεινας στρ(α)τιώ[της]<sup>794</sup>

[κυρι]ῷ Ἀσκληπιῷ  
Διληζονζου στρατιώτου<sup>795</sup>



Fig. 70: *IGulg* 2.518.



Fig. 71: *IGulg* 2.521.

The formulae used in these inscriptions are very simple and generally only state the fact that these men were *strategoï* but do not give their rank or any further hints as to their status. No collective dedications occur here, only individual ones. With a number of the inscriptions, the text itself only refers to the epithet, or is damaged and does not lend itself to identification of the deity in question. However, the *IGulg* volumes also include extensive photo plates and examination of the iconography of these dedications leaves no doubt that there were set up to Asclepius as they show the god holding his snake-staff, depicted in his traditional iconographic pose,

<sup>793</sup> *IGulg* 2.518: ‘Aelius Mestrianos soldier set this up’.

<sup>794</sup> *IGulg* 2.521: ‘To Lord Saldoousenos ...os Deinas soldier [set this up]’.

<sup>795</sup> *IGulg* 2.541: ‘To Lord Asclepius Dilesonos soldier [set this up]’.

accompanied by Hygeia.<sup>796</sup> The second inscription also uses a particular Pergamene iconography as it shows an orb.<sup>797</sup> Text and image here work hand in hand to convey which god was dedicated to here.

The dedications to the Rider and Asclepius in Thrace and Moesia are very different in nature from those in the other provinces discussed in this chapter. First of all they were set up in Greek and are concerned solely with individuals who are dedicating on their own behalf. In the Latin inscriptions, these were either set up by individuals for themselves or for others, and collective dedications also occur. There was, thus, a lot more variety and differentiation within the Latin inscriptions. The dedicants are also less likely to give their military rank in the Greek inscriptions where only *ordinatus* and *strategos* seem to appear. This was in contrast to the wide range of military ranks found in the Latin dedications which range from *miles* to legate. However, the god worshipped in Thrace seems to have been, for the most part, the syncretic god Asclepius Zimidrenus who clearly differed in nature from the straightforward Asclepius, something which will be examined in greater detail in Chapter 5. Another difference between the cult in Thrace and that of the other provinces was that it is likely that the majority if not all of the supplicants were auxiliaries due to the fact that no legions were stationed in Thrace (see section 4.1.2).

In Rome a number of dedications were erected by members of the praetorian and urban cohorts to Asclepius. Renberg points out that a relatively sizeable portion of the extant inscriptions to Asclepius from Rome, at least those which can be ascribed to the god with some certainty, were set up by members of the military and that while some of these dedications were placed in the temples to the god which

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<sup>796</sup> See section 2.4.

<sup>797</sup> See section 3.3.2.

were located in the city, most actually were dedicated in shrines located within military camps and stations which were scattered around Rome, or in *valetudinaria* in forts in the provinces.<sup>798</sup> One of the most remarkable dedications in Rome was to the syncretic god Asclepius Zimidrenus which was erected by Thracian members of the *cohors I praetoria* (Fig. 72):



Fig. 72: *CIL* 6.2799.

<sup>798</sup> Renberg (2006/7) 115-6. In his catalogue he lists 41 dedications which he believes come from various sites in Rome and of these nine were set up by soldiers.

In honore domus divinae / Asclepio Zimidreno cives / Philippopolitanorum quorum nomi/na infra scripta sunt / coh(ortis) I praet(oriae) |(centuria) Coccei / M(arcus) Aur(elius) M(arci) f(ilius) Fl(avia) Diza Philippopoli vico Cuntiegerum / |(centuria) Valentis / M(arcus) Aur(elius) M(arci) f(ilius) Fl(avia) Diza Philippopol[i] vico Vevocaseno / M(arcus) Aur(elius) M(arci) f(ilius) Fl(avia) Cresce(n)s Philippop(oli) vico Vevocaseno / coh(ortis) II praet(oriae) / M(arcus) Aur(elius) M(arci) f(ilius) Fl(avia) Martinus Philippop(oli) vico Palma / |(centuria) Iuliani pr(ioris) M(arcus) A(u)r(elius) M(arci) f(ilius) Bitus Phil(ippopoli) v(ico) Pomp() Burdar / [M(arcus) Au]r(elius) M(arci) f(ilius) Fl(avia) Maximus Philipp[op]oli vico Stelugermme / [M(arcus) Aur(elius)] M(arci) f(ilius) Fl(avia) Maximus Philipp[op]oli vico Tiutiameno / coh(ortis) III pr(aetoriae) / [M(arcus) Aur(elius) M(arci) f(ilius)] Fl(avia) Vitalis Philippopo[li v]ico Cun[ti]egerum) / |(centuria) Saturnini / |(centuria) Magni / [M(arcus) Aur(elius) M(arci)] f(ilius) Fl(avia) Vitalis Philippopol(i) vico Zburulo / coh(ortis) IIII praet(oriae) |(centuria) Celeris / C(aius) Val(erius) C(ai) f(ilius) Fl(avia) Valens Philippopoli vic[o] Zburulo / M(arcus) Aur(elius) M(arci) f(ilius) Fl(avia) Cassius Philippopoli vico Carerino / coh(ortis) VII praet(oriae) |(centuria) Quarti / sp(eculator) M(arcus) Aur(elius) M(arci) f(ilius) Fl(avia) Diogenes Philippopoli vi[c]o C[3]menos / coh(ortis) VIII praet(oriae) |(centuria) Prisci / M(arcus) Aur(elius) M(arci) f(ilius) Fl(avia) Diza Philippopoli vico Ardileno / |(centuria) Calventi / M(arcus) Aur(elius) M(arci) f(ilius) Fl(avia) Diza Philippopoli vico Pupeses / coh(ortis) VIII praet(oriae) |(centuria) Z[eno]nis / [M(arcus) Au]r(elius) M(arci) f(ilius) Fl(avia) Chrestus Philippop[oli vi]co Cuntiegero / coh(ortis) X praet(oriae) [(centuriae) 3]ni / [M(arcus) Aur(elius) M(arci) f(ilius)] Fl(avia) Artila Phi[lippop(oli) vico] Stairesis / [M(arcus) Aur(elius) M(arci) f(ilius) Fl(avia)] Ota[3]is Philippo[p(oli) vico] Stairesis / |(centuria) Augustian[i] / [M(arcus) Aur(elius)] M(arci) f(ilius) Fl(avia) Bithus Philippopo[li vico] Diisure / [(centuria)] Quintiani M(arcus) Aur(elius) M(arci) f(ilius) Fl(avia) Mucianu[s Phili]ppopol(i) vico Lisenon / dedicat(a) VI Kal(endas) Iul(ias) / Albino et Maximo co(n)s(ulibus).<sup>799</sup>

<sup>799</sup> *CIL* 6.2799. ‘In honour of the divine household, to Asclepius Zimidrenus, citizens of Philippopolis whose names are written below: from the cohort I praetoria, the centuria of Cocceius, Marcus Aurelius, son of Marcus, [from the tribe] Flavia, Diza of Philippopolis, vicus Cuntiegerus. From the centuria of Valens, Marcus Aurelius son of Marcus, [from the tribe] Flavia, Diza of Philippopolis, vicus Vevocasenus. Marcus Aurelius son of Marcus, [from the tribe] Flavia, Crescens, of Philippopolis, vicus Vevocasenus. From the cohort II praetoria, Marcus Aurelius son of Marcus, [from the tribe] Flavia, Martinus, of Philippopolis, vicus Palma. From the centuria of Iulianus Prior Marcus Aurelius son of Marcus Bitus Philippopolis, vicus Pomp[.] Burdar. Marcus Aurelius son of Marcus, [from the tribe] Flavia, Maximus, of Philippopolis, vicus Stelugermme. Marcus Aurelius son of Marcus, [from the tribe] Flavia, Maximus, of Philippopolis, vicus Tiutiamenus. From the cohort III praetoria: Marcus Aurelius son of Marcus, [from the tribe] Flavia, Vitalis, of Philippopolis, vicus Cuntiegerus. From the centuria of Saturninus, from the centuria of Marcus Aurelius son of Marcus, [from the tribe] Flavia, Apollodorus, of Philippopolis, vicus Pecetus. From the centuria of Magnus: Marcus Aurelius son of Marcus, [from the tribe] Flavia, Vitalis, of Philippopolis, vicus Zburulus. From the cohort IIII praetoria, the centuria of Celer, Gaius Valerius son of Gaius, [from the tribe] Flavia, Valens, of Philippopolis, vicus Zburulus. Marcus Aurelius son of Marcus, [from the tribe] Flavia, Cassius, of Philippopolis, vicus Carerinus. From the cohort VII praetoria, the centuria of Quartus, speculator Marcus Aurelius son of Marcus, [from the tribe] Flavia, Diogenes, of Philippopolis, vicus C[.]menus. From the cohort VIII praetoria, the centuria of Priscus, Marcus Aurelius son of Marcus, [from the tribe] Flavia, Diza of Philippopolis, vicus Ardilenus. From the centuria of Calventus, Marcus Aurelius son of Marcus, [from the tribe] Flavia, Diza of Philippopolis, vicus Pupeses. From the cohort VIII praetoria, the centuria of Zeno, Marcus Aurelius son of Marcus, [from the tribe] Flavia, Chrestus, of Philippopolis, vicus Cuntiegerus. From the cohort X praetoria, the centuria of [...]us, Marcus Aurelius son of Marcus, [from the tribe] Flavia, Artila, of Philippopolis,

In contrast to all the other inscriptions found to this god in Thrace, this dedication used Latin and not Greek as the dedicating language. Even the physical layout of the inscription differs greatly from the inscriptions back in Thrace where they are often found with a relief depicting either the Thracian Rider or some combination of the triad of Asclepius, Hygeia, and Telesphorus (see Figs. 73-74). Here, there is only the Latin text.

Apart from the name of the god and those of the dedicators together with their places of origin, there is little to link this inscription to the Thracian dedications to the god. However, these Thracian elements must have been considered very important to the dedicators as they went to great care to mention the place and also the *vici* where they came from. The Digest states that all inhabitants of a *vicus* should be registered in their *civitas*. Some extramural settlements attached to a fort, but not all, were deemed to be *vici*.<sup>800</sup>

It is also very remarkable that seemingly most military dedications to Asclepius in Thrace were set up by individuals who only made a generic reference to the fact that they were soldiers, something which also occurs in the Thracian-influenced dedications set up in Moesia. However, here precisely the opposite has occurred. The inscription was set up by a collective group who carefully specify at the start of the inscription that they are praetorians. In fact, larger letters were used at the top of the inscription to draw attention to the fact that this inscription was set up in honour of the imperial household, that it was to Asclepius Zimidrenus, and that

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vicus Stairesis. Marcus Aurelius son of Marcus, [from the tribe] Flavia, Ota[...]is, of Philippopolis, vicus Stairesis. Centuria Augustus Marcus Aurelius son of Marcus, [from the tribe] Flavia, Bithus, of Philippopolis, vicus Diiesure. From the centuria of Quintianus, Marcus Aurelius son of Marcus, [from the tribe] Flavia, Mucianus, of Philippopolis, vicus Lisenon, set this up on 26<sup>th</sup> of June. When Albinus and Maximus were consuls'. Salway (1994) 134 dates this inscription to June 227. See also Tsontchev (1941) 11-12.

<sup>800</sup> Dig. 50.1.30

the dedicators were members of the first praetorian cohort who were all originally from Philippopolis.

The nature of the inscription as well as its physical form differs, thus, greatly from the inscriptions to Asclepius Zimidrenus in Thrace. It is also interesting that while the praetorians were keen to include their Thracian origins by listing both the city where they came from as well as all the *vici*, they also clearly showcased their Roman citizenship by citing their names, which are all Marcus Aurelius bar one, and by listing them underneath each other, drawing attention to the universal citizenship grant under Caracalla. Salway has noted that in the eastern empire Aurelius is the most common *nomen* while in the west this was Iulius, though Aurelius is a close second.<sup>801</sup> The text is so uniform that all the separate cohesive elements occur underneath each other in the inscription. The word Flavia is included with every name in this inscription. It is located in the place where normally the voting tribe would be found. However, there was no tribe Flavia in Rome. This is apparently a fictitious voting-tribe and Salway states that such tribes are found widespread across praetorians who were recruited from the Danubian provinces after AD 212.<sup>802</sup> He further notes that in the east, away from Latin models, people often kept their native patronymics which were placed at the end of the name but still added Aurelius before their given name, following Latin fashion.<sup>803</sup> This must also be the case here as every occurrence of a name is also followed by a Thracian name, for example the first listed name: ‘M(arcus) Aur(elius) M(arci) f(ilius) Fl(avia) Diza Philippopoli

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<sup>801</sup> Salway (1994) 134.

<sup>802</sup> Salway (1994) 134. He also mentions the existence of Aelia, Aurelia, Antonia, Augusta, Iulia, Septimia, and Ulpia as other fictitious voting tribes: Salway (1994) 134n60; *CIL* 6.2832, 2833; *EE* 4.891-5. There were thirty-five tribes in Rome and their purpose was to organize the citizen-body for the purpose of voting in the assembly. Every male citizen belonged to such a tribe and it was a part of their formal name: Rives (1995) 22. During the imperial period the tribe no longer had any practical significance but was still retained as a part of a Roman’s name. Its use here, therefore, served no practical purpose and must solely have been assumed by the Thracians to appear more Roman.

<sup>803</sup> Salway (1994) 134.



vico Cuntiegerum'. This inscription, thus, stands out from others as it differs greatly in physical form from dedications to Asclepius Zimidrenus which were found in Moesia and Thrace. It is also unique as such an effort was made to present the inscription in a very Roman style, including the use of Latin, but still local Thracian elements occur throughout. The fake voting tribes indicate a desire to be Roman and also to be perceived as Roman and fit in with a general trend followed by praetorian soldiers from the Danube lands. This inscription, therefore, illustrates both the global and regional cult of Asclepius as it shows a local response to the fact that the dedicators have come into contact with the Empire, a changed situation as a result of the universal citizenship law, and had to decide how they would respond to this (see Whitmarsh in section 1.1.2). The soldiers did so in a way in which they appeared Roman superficially but kept strong local elements through names and places of origin but also by worshipping their regional version of the god, who is not found anywhere else outside of Moesia and Thrace apart from in Rome, and not the standardised Roman version. This choosing of one version of a god over another will be explored in greater detail in Chapter 5.

Another inscription to the same god, though with a slightly different spelling of the god's name, namely Sindrinus, was found in two fragments, both west of the Castra Praetoria in Rome and likely originated from the same place as the previous inscription to Asclepius Zimidrenus<sup>804</sup>:

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<sup>804</sup> Three more inscriptions to Asclepius were found in Rome which can be linked to the military and have rough find spots, namely *CIL* 6.20, 370 from near the Castra Praetoria and *CIL* 6.13 from Trastevere, possibly near the Castra Ravennatium. One was set up by a *medicus* for the wellbeing of his fellow soldiers: *CIL* 6.20: *Asclepio et / Saluti / commilitonum / Sextus Titius Alexander / medicus c(o)ho(rtis) V pr(aetoriae) / donum dedit / [Imp(eratore) Domitiano] / Aug(usto) VIII / T(ito) Flavio Sabino co(n)s(ulibus)*: 'To Asclepius and Salus, Sextus Titius Alexander, *medicus* of the V praetorian cohort gave as a gift of his fellow soldiers, when the emperor Domitian Augustus was consul for the VIII time and Titus Flavius Sabinus was consul'. *CIL* 6.2, 9, 14 are also military inscriptions which were found in Rome but no find spot for these has been recorded.

Numini sancti dei Aescul[api] / Sindrinae reg(inae) Philippopolitanae Aur(elius) Mucianus sacerdos mi/l(es) coh(ortis) X praetoriae P(iae) V(indicis) Gordianae |(centuria) Seve/[r]us(!) votum quod [s]usceperat liben/s solvit cum civibus et commil/[i]tonibus suis V Idus Mai(as) Imp(eratore) G/[or]diano Aug(usto) II et Pompe/[i]ano co(n)s(ulibus)<sup>805</sup>

The city of Philippopolis was located in an area where votives to the Thracian rider were especially numerous.<sup>806</sup> The inscription from Rome explicitly mentions the region of Sindrina, connecting worship with the sanctuary in Thrace, just as the previous inscription took great care to do with the city of Philippopolis. The epithet does not seem to occur anywhere else other than in Thrace and in Rome.

In the above inscription, Asclepius is dedicated to by Thracian members of the *cohors X praetoria* and praetorians actually formed the largest military body dedicating to Asclepius in Rome as can also be seen from *CIL* 6.2799 (see above). Here again there is a combination of Roman and Thracian elements which can be taken as local people reacting to a new reality of Empire.

This is of vital importance as these inscriptions show that religious mobility was a multi-directional phenomenon and that this did not just occur from Rome to the provinces but also vice versa. Global and regional cult identities worked together and these elements could travel both ways, showing that old ideas that centre and periphery were a one-way cultural exchange are outdated: Rome and the provinces were instead part of a highly dynamic religious mobile web. This fits what was argued in Chapter 1, section 1.1.1, following Nedereen Pieterse, where the Roman

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<sup>805</sup> *CIL* 6.30685+16: 'To the numen of the sacred god Asclepius and Sindrina Regina, of Philippopolis, Aurelius Mucianus priest, soldier of the X praetorian cohort, Pious Defender Gordian, member of the Severan centuria, fulfilled the vow he had undertaken with his fellow citizens and fellow soldiers on the 11th of May when the Emperor Gordian Augustus II and Pompeianus were consuls'.

<sup>806</sup> It was originally a Thracian settlement which was conquered by Philip II of Macedon and subsequently renamed. All the evidence for Asclepieian cult is dated to the Roman period, among which there was a relief, statue fragment, and a dedication to Asclepius and the Thracian Rider: *IGBulg* 3.967.

Empire was globalised by globalising and that the Romans brought their culture, along with that of other peripheries, to the newly conquered regions.<sup>807</sup> This meant that there was a constant exchange of cultures between Rome and the provinces, which was a dynamic and multi-directional process. This cross-provincial mobility also appears in different military contexts in the cult of Asclepius and will be discussed further in the next section.

#### 4.5 Religious Mobility

With the case of Asclepius Zimidrenus there, thus, seems to have been a multi-directional religious mobility where cultic elements were not just transferred to the provinces from Rome but also from the provinces to Rome, something which was also shown in Chapter 3 with the Pergamene orb iconography. The concept of mobility in the cult of Asclepius will be examined further here.

In Dacia, Asclepius is frequently found worshipped in conjunction with other gods. Many people, including soldiers, often supplicated as many gods as they could at the same time, covering all of their bases, to ensure that they had the best divine protection from all the deities they could get to keep them safe. An example of this comes from Apulum where only a temple to Liber Pater and one to Mithras have been identified but there is some evidence of other cults, including that of Asclepius (Fig. 73):<sup>808</sup>

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<sup>807</sup> Nederveen Pieterse (2015) 233-4.

<sup>808</sup> Oltean (2007) 187.

Dis Penatibus Lari/bus Miltaribus Lari / Viali Neptuno Saluti / Fortunae Reduci / (A)esculapio Dianae / Apollini Herculi / Spei Fa(v)ori P(ublius) Catius / Sabinus trib(unus) mil(itum) / leg(ionis) XIII G(eminae) v(otum) l(ibens) s(olvit)<sup>809</sup>



Fig. 73: AE 2002.1218.

On two inscriptions, Asclepius was worshipped with the salubrious gods of the place and another where he is worshipped with the Genius of Carthage and that of Dacia:

Aesculapio / et Hygiae ce/terisq(ue) diis dea/busq(ue) huiusq(ue) / loci salutarib(us) / C(aius) Iul(ius) Fronto/nianus vet(eranus) ex / b(ene)f(iciario) co(n)s(ularis) leg(ionis) V M(acedonicae) P(iae) / redditis sibi lumi/nibus grat(ias) age(ns) ex / viso pro se et Carteia / Maxima coniug(e) et Iul(ia) / Frontina filia / v(otum) s(olvit) l(ibens) m(erito)<sup>810</sup>

Caelesti Augustae / et Aesculapio Au/gusto et Genio / Carthaginis et / Genio Daciarum / Olus Terentius / Pudens Uttedi/anus leg(atus) Augg(ustorum) / leg(ionis) XIII Gem(inae) leg(atus) / Augg(ustorum) pro praet(ore) / [p]rovinciae R(a)e/tiae (Fig. 74).<sup>811</sup>

<sup>809</sup> AE 2002.1218: ‘To the Penates, Lares Militares, the Lar Vialis, Neptune, Salus, Fortuna Redux, Asclepius, Diana, Apollo, Hercules, Spes, Favor, Publius Catius Sabinus military tribune of the legion XIII Gemina freely fulfilled his vow’. The Lares Viales were the Lares of the roads and the commentators state that the inscription is remarkable for mentioning an enlarged family as normally only the nuclear family is listed.

<sup>810</sup> CIL 3.987: ‘To Asclepius and Hygeia and to the other salubrious gods and goddesses of this place, Gaius Julius Frontonianus veteran, from the beneficiarii of the consul, of the legio V Macedonica Pia, the light having been restored to him and thanking [the god], out of a vision, on behalf of himself and his wife Carteia Maxima and daughter Julia Frontina, freely and gladly fulfilled his vow’. It is possible that as this inscription refers to a return of light that the healing sought and gained here was a return of sight.

<sup>811</sup> CIL 3.993: ‘To Caelestis Augusta and Asclepius Augustus and the Carthaginian Genius and the Dacian Genius, Olus Terentius Pudens Uttedianus, Augustan legate, of the XIII legion Gemina, Augustan propraetorian legate of the province of Raetia [set this up]’. The dedication was set up in Apulum.



Fig. 74: CIL 3.993.

The *genii* were some of the most important military cults (see section 4.1.2) and the connection between Carthage and Dacia is also interesting as there was an important cult of Eshmun and Caelestis in Carthage. Eshmun was twinned with Asclepius and the pairing here could be as a result of that as Asclepius was worshipped extensively in North Africa by the army.<sup>812</sup> In Africa Asclepius appears to have been twinned with Eshmun who was sometimes worshipped in conjunction with Caelestis (see section 5.3.3) which could explain the presence of the goddess here. The main African cult centre of Eshmun was in Carthage which could clarify the presence of the Genius of Carthage here (see Chapter 5 for more detail). However, it is not clear why the *genii* of Carthage and Dacia would be twinned here as the legion to which the dedicator belonged was never stationed anywhere near Africa. It would appear that the connection between the two *genii* only makes sense if examined from an Asclepieian context where the place where the dedication was erected was in Dacia

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<sup>812</sup> Cadotte (2006) 170, n.30.

yet there are elements which were specific to the cult in Africa. It is possible that the dedicator, Olus Terentius Pudens Uttedianus, was of African origin.<sup>813</sup> If this was the case then, like with the Thracians and Asclepius Zimidrenus, Terentius took elements of his local version of the god with him to the new place where he was stationed, namely Apulum, and combined elements of his local god with the god which he found there. It seems that these strongly regional dedications, which take a different shape depending on where they are dedicated, (as in the case of the Thracian Rider dedications in both Thrace and Rome), were a result of the increased connectivity of the Empire where cultic elements were linked across provinces as a result of individual dedicators. The form of these inscriptions varies from the Thracian inscriptions as here religious connectivity is achieved through other related gods and deities and not directly through syncretism, although this also plays an important part.

Many Germanic gods such as Apollo Grannus and Sirona, Mercury and Rosmerta, Mars Camulus, Hercules Magusanus, and the Matronae were also found in Dacia. Migration was an important factor in this and Schäfer argues that it was soldiers who originated from the Rhineland but who were stationed in Dacia who were responsible for the introduction of these cults.<sup>814</sup> Immigration to Dacia was fostered post-conquest and many immigrants placed a high importance on their place of origin. A relevant inscription comes from the camp of the legio XIII Gemina in Apulum (Fig. 75):

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<sup>813</sup> Condurachi (1975) 190; Rives (1995) 70. Olus would be Aulus.

<sup>814</sup> Schäfer (2001) 259, 261, 268.

Glyconi / M(arcus) Ant(onius) / Onesas / iusso dei / l(ibens) p(osuit)<sup>815</sup>



Fig. 75: *CIL* 3.1021.

The god is mentioned in another inscription, now lost.<sup>816</sup> Both these dedicators have Greek *cognomina* and were likely from Asia Minor.<sup>817</sup> Glykon here shows one of the clearest examples of the impact of the Roman army on the cult of Asclepius, namely cross-provincial contacts, just as the inscription concerning the *genii* does. The cult of Glykon was established in Abonoteichos in Paphlagonia in the middle of the 2<sup>nd</sup> AD by the prophet Alexander. The god was depicted as a snake with an anthropomorphic head, who was worshipped as an epiphany of Asclepius together with Apollo and was called ‘neos Asklepios Glykon’. The cult suffers from a lack of literary sources as the only extant one, Lucian’s ‘Alexander or the False Prophet’, offering a mocking view of the cult, depicting it as vulgar and barbarous, has influenced scholarship on the cult, despite it being a serious and real cult. Lucian’s

<sup>815</sup> *CIL* 3.1021. ‘To Glykon, Marcus Antonius Onesas, by command of the god, freely placed this’.

<sup>816</sup> *CIL* 3.1022: *G[ly]co(ni) / M(arcus) Aur(elius) / Theodo- / tus ius- / so dei p(osuit)*.

<sup>817</sup> Schäfer (2004) 183.

work aims to ridicule epiphany and pilgrimage and the cult of Glykon bore the brunt of that.<sup>818</sup> Officers were highly mobile and while soldiers in the lower ranks might expect to serve with the same cohort for their entire military career and to belong to the same unit for that whole period, officers were often transferred and moved across the empire.<sup>819</sup> This inscription, *CIL* 3.1021, shows how mobility affects a cult of Asclepius with an ex-procurator from Cilicia dedicating to Asclepius in Germania Inferior and Onesas dedicating to Glykon(-Asclepius) in Dacia. These men were highly mobile and moved across the empire, taking their gods with them but also adhering to regional religious practices in their new place of residence or work.

This connectivity is also shown by locational epithets where the god in one place is given the name place of another as an epithet such as this inscription from Sarmizegetusa Ulpica in Dacia which refers to Asclepius Pergamenos:

Aesculapio Pergam(eno) / et Hygiae / sacrum / C(aius) Spedius Hermias / flamen col(oniae) Sarm(izegetusae) / pos(uit).<sup>820</sup>

This in itself is remarkable, as locational epithets such as these, and others like Apollo Didymeus or Klaros, did not spread far from their primary sanctuary in general.<sup>821</sup> These were the earliest and commonest epithets given to deities but Asclepius does not seem to have had many of these in inscriptions, although some do occur in Pausanias (see section 2.3).<sup>822</sup> Another example of adherence to a god from another location occurs in an inscription from Bad Gotesburg (Fig. 76):

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<sup>818</sup> Petsalis-Diomidis (2010) 12-3.

<sup>819</sup> Collar (2011) 227.

<sup>820</sup> *CIL* 3.1417a. 'Sacred to Asclepius Pergamon and Hygeia. Gaius Spedius Hermias, flamen of the colony of Sarmizegetusa, set this up'.

<sup>821</sup> Davies (2013) 57.

<sup>822</sup> For example see Paus. 3.14.2 and 4.36.7. Also Strabo 8.4.4.



Fortunis / Salutaribu[s] / Aesculapio / Hyg[iae] / Q(uitus) Venidius Ruf[us] / Mariu[s] Maxim[us] / [L(ucius)] Calvinianu[s] / [le]g(atu)s leg(ionis) I Min(erviae) / leg(atu)s Aug(usti) pr(o) [pr(aetore)] / provinc(iae) Cilic[iae] / d(onum) [d(edit)]<sup>823</sup>

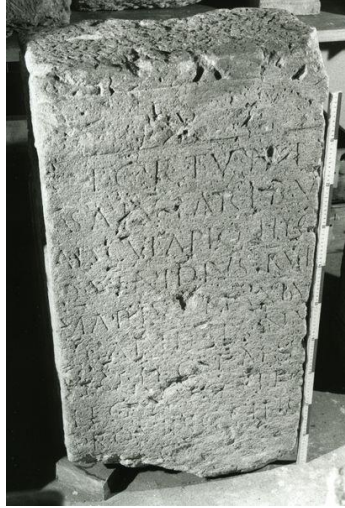


Fig. 76: *CIL* 13.7994.

The dedicator used to be propraetorian legate for the province of Cilicia where sixteen cult sites of Asclepius were known, the most of important of which was at Aigeai.<sup>824</sup> Caracalla visited the sanctuary there after his worship of Asclepius at Pergamum and Severus Alexander and Valerian were also depicted as supplicating Asclepius here (see Section 3.4.5). It is possible that the dedicator had come into contact with the cult there and then continued to worship the god despite moving across the empire.

#### 4.6 Conclusion

This chapter has aimed to show the impact of the Roman army on the cult of Asclepius, especially in the Balkan and Danube provinces of Pannonia, Moesia,

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<sup>823</sup> *CIL* 13.7994 from Bad Godesburg in Germania Inferior. 'To the Salutares Fortunes, Asclepius and Hygeia, Quintus Venidius Rufus Marius Maximus Lucius Calvinianus legate of the legio I Minerva, propraetorian Augustan legate of the province Cilicia gave as a gift'.

<sup>824</sup> Riethmüller (2005) 2.382-5 no.s 346-361. For Aigeai see no. 346.

Dacia, and Thrace. This area was chosen as, with the exception of Thrace, no cults of Asclepius were known from before the conquest and the god must have been introduced by the Romans, possibly the army, here. This region, thus, offers a good area to examine the introduction and dissemination of the cult in a previously untouched region. This study has uncovered a number of elements which stand out and, thus, show the impact of empire on the cult here. Firstly, the small number of actual sanctuaries stands out. Although Asclepius was worshipped extensively here by a large body of worshippers, relatively few sanctuaries to the god are known.<sup>825</sup> Thrace possibly has the largest number of sanctuaries, where Asclepius was commonly twinned with the Thracian Rider.

As was pointed out at the start of this chapter, soldiers were keen to worship Asclepius in order to keep them safe, in whatever form this might take, and there was a military habit of worshipping as many gods as possible at once in order to procure as much protection as they could. Regarding the former, it is possible that Asclepius was especially worshipped at times of crisis by the military, such as during the Antonine Plague and also the Marcomannic Wars, for example at Novae and in Thrace. Movement of troops and an increased military presence in the provinces embroiled with the wars could also partially explain the boom in dedications at these times. Asclepius was also often worshipped here in conjunction with other gods and not just Hygeia and Telesphorus, but with Jupiter, Venus, and Neptune to name but a few. In civilian dedications, the god is generally only worshipped together with family members or gods connected to him in that specific location, such as Silvanus at Lambaesis (see Chapter 5).

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<sup>825</sup> This appears to have been a regional phenomenon as Laurence and Trifilò (2015) 110 (see section 1.1.1) comment that there was a strong emphasis in the province of Africa on temple building and also on the construction of arches, far more than in Italy. The small number of sanctuaries could, therefore, be the result of regional preference for another form of cult or just because they have not been excavated yet.

Another important factor in military worship of Asclepius is the role of officers and their increased mobility. The majority of Asclepieian dedicators were officials and while low-rank soldiers could expect to serve with the same unit for their entire career, officers had a much higher level of mobility and were often transferred to other provinces and parts of the empire. They took with them the gods they had worshipped previously and supplicated them anew in their new province. This would have boosted the dissemination of the cult and it also shows how certain cultic elements were taken up in new places, such as the addition of the Pergamene orb on the Thracian reliefs, or how dedications were adapted to their new environment such as the praetorian dedication to Asclepius Zimidrenus in Rome.

Worship of Asclepius in Thrace differs greatly from supplication in the other provinces discussed here. A number of factors can explain this phenomenon, foremost among which is that Asclepius was already present before the creation of the province of Thracia and was twinned with the Thracian Rider. Yet, there was greater variation on the dedications erected outside Thrace than within, with most not giving a great deal of information about the dedicator. An explanation for this could be that the majority of military worshippers in Thrace were likely to have been auxiliaries due to the lack of legions stationed in this region. As the inscription from Rome indicates, legionary Thracians could depict themselves in a very different way if they so chose. The section on vows also shows a desire to appear as Roman as possible in the dedicatory material.

Military worship of Asclepius was not uniform across the provinces but took different forms in each region, which is not surprising as no global culture is uniform in every locality.<sup>826</sup> This global culture shared similar characteristics but had a

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<sup>826</sup> Hodos (2015) 242.

different identity in each locality as it took on forms which were significant to that locality (see section 1.1.1).<sup>827</sup> There were connecting factors between the cults such as a large number of *medici* who worshipped the god and praetorian mobility which transferred the god across. Differences in rank such as auxiliary and legionary, and also place of origin could determine the regional variations in dedications. There was, thus, a considerable impact of the Roman army on the cult here.

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<sup>827</sup> Hodos (2015) 246.

## Chapter 5: The Cult(s) of Asclepius in Africa Proconsularis and

### Numidia

#### 5.0 Introduction

Worship of Asclepius was spread to the provinces via a variety of methods which boosted and altered his worship. Asclepius' popularity with the army caused the spread of his worship to most of the provinces with even some scarce traces of cult in Syria and Arabia.<sup>828</sup> In Africa legionaries also played an important role in the cult, as Asclepius was apparently so popular with the Third Augustan Legion that it built and dedicated the temple at Lambaesis to him. There had originally been a small cult on site but the Legion's involvement advanced it as it built a temple on site. This temple was built in the name of Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus, and was called an Asclepieion.<sup>829</sup> This dedication, thus, had a dual purpose. On the one hand the legionaries wished to honour Asclepius for their own health and safety. On the other, they also wished him to bestow good health upon the emperors as the fate of the empire was dependant on their well-being. Dedications from this site show that worship took place until the 4<sup>th</sup> century AD.<sup>830</sup> Most inscriptions were erected in Latin with the most common spelling of the god's name being Aesculapius but other forms such as Escolapius also occurred. The Greek spelling Asklepios, which does occur in other Latin provinces, is rarely found in Africa. It is not clear why this was the case but is especially striking as Epidaurus was claimed to be the cult site from

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<sup>828</sup> Benseddik (2010a) 1.49.

<sup>829</sup> *CIL* 8.2579a-c (p 954); Benseddik (2010a) 1.93.

<sup>830</sup> Benseddik (2010a) 1.148.

which the cults in Africa came, which would make it logical for the Epidaurian and Greek spelling of Asclepius' name also to be transferred across.

The majority of Asclepius' supplicants in Africa were officials and administrators. In fact, Benseddik has singled out certain groups of supplicants in Roman Africa, the most important of which are government officials and military men.<sup>831</sup> This category is dominated by the governors and forms a kind of official and elitist group, especially in Numidia, where the Third Augustan Legion worshipped Asclepius (see section 5.4). The second group is the local aristocracy who served as priests of the god; many of the Asclepieian priests also served as priests of the cults of the emperor.<sup>832</sup> A more modest group of worshippers were slaves and freedmen who would have aided in the cult's diffusion. Connections with the imperial household (see Chapter 3) were also present in Africa because three cities also dedicated to Asclepius for the emperor's good health; Musti dedicated statues to Asclepius for Hadrian's health; Thibicae dedicated a temple for Antoninus and his heirs; Caesarea offered land for the Severan dynasty's well-being.<sup>833</sup> As well as being an indication of the cities' concerns, this is also an indication of the political role which the cult of Asclepius played in Africa, as a method by which a city could honour an emperor and seek his favour. The final group of influential supplicants were the legionaries of the Third Augustan Legion, whose worship of Asclepius will be examined extensively here.

Benseddik has argued that the evidence indicates that the cult of Asclepius and Hygeia spread from east to west: there were eighteen temples dedicated to the gods in Proconsular Africa and three in Numidia, three in Mauretania Caesariensis and none in Mauretania Tingitana. It also seems that Asclepius was mostly

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<sup>831</sup> Benseddik (2010a) 1.138.

<sup>832</sup> Benseddik (2010a) 1.196.

<sup>833</sup> Benseddik (2010a) 1.194; Musti: *AE* 1968 586; Thibicae *CIL* 8.765; Caesarea: *CIL* 8.9320.

worshipped alone in Proconsular Africa but was often supplicated in conjunction with Hygeia in Numidia. According to her, sixty-eight inscriptions relating directly to the cult were found in Africa and twenty-nine in Numidia.<sup>834</sup> Benseddik states that there is a clearly decreasing number in the testimonies moving from east to west, indicating the popularity of the cult in the provinces, and that it was likely that the army was one of the main factors behind the dissemination. As the Third Augustan Legion moved from east to west, so did the god.<sup>835</sup> This is an important point as whoever introduced the cult strongly influenced its nature. However, this statement will be explored in this chapter and it will aim to show that this was not completely the case as it passes over regional differences which occurred within the cult in the various provinces. It will be explored here how the cult of Asclepius in Numidia varied in nature from that in Proconsularis. This chapter will explore different groups of worshippers as it will examine the ways in which the military and officials worshipped Asclepius, but also how civilians such as merchants worshipped a version of the god here. This chapter aims to explore how the increased mobility which occurred as a result of the Roman Empire allowed for increased religious diversity in an area. This will be done via the case study of Asclepius: analysis of the various cult paraphernalia, such as iconography and inscriptions, will illustrate how Roman mobility diversified religious life in Africa.

In order to be able to show how the Roman Empire influenced the cult, it is necessary to first understand what is meant by the term syncretism, a history of the cult of Eshmun-Asclepius and also that of the Third Augustan Legion in Africa. Only when all of the above is known can the syncretic cult of Asclepius be compared with others cults of Asclepius and conclusions as to their nature be drawn. This will

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<sup>834</sup> Benseddik (2010a) 1.120.

<sup>835</sup> Benseddik (2010a) 1.120-1, 123.

be done in section 5. 5. Therefore, this chapter will first examine what is meant by the term syncretism and the history of the scholarly use of this term. Then epithets will be briefly studied, followed by a study of syncretism in the non-African provinces. Then, the Asclepieian syncretism in North Africa, namely that of Eshmun-Asclepius will be looked at. It is necessary to explore Benseddik's statement (see above) and it will be examined here if this is actually the case in North Africa as Eshmun-Asclepius was already present here from the Hellenistic period onwards and his cult was, thus, imported prior to the coming of the Roman army. This will then be followed by a study of the history of the *legio III Augusta* in this area, which will explore whether the army brought its own version of the god with it, a god separate from Eshmun-Asclepius. This chapter will, then, examine whether syncretism formed another way of disseminating the worship of the god Asclepius and also whether there were two distinct and separate Asclepieian gods in North Africa, namely the civilian god Eshmun-Asclepius and the military god Asclepius. It will be shown that the Third Augustan Legion was especially instrumental in disseminating the god in the province of Numidia and influencing the nature of the cult there. This chapter aims to show that the cult here grew in diversity through increased mobility which was the result of the creation of the Roman Empire. The main questions for this chapter are: What is syncretism? How was Asclepius syncretised with other gods? and In which ways did the military god Asclepius exist side-by-side and differ from the civilian god Eshmun-Asclepius?

## 5.1 Syncretism

### 5.1.1 A History of the Term Syncretism



It is necessary to examine first the history and then the meaning of the term syncretism before an exploration of the phenomenon within the cult of Asclepius is possible.

In antiquity, Herodotus lists the chief deities of the Scythians first by their Greek names and then by their local ones which seems to be a description of the process of syncretism without actually using the term itself.<sup>836</sup> Plutarch used the word *syngkretismos* in his *Moralia* to indicate that a person should be friends with his brother's friends, and be hostile to the enemies of his brother, following the example of the Cretans who put aside their internal quarrels when faced with an external enemy.<sup>837</sup> This process is what they called syncretism. The term does not really reappear until the Renaissance where Erasmus utilised the term and was pleased with its effects as he believed that Christian theology had absorbed Classical elements which he thought strengthened and enriched the Christian faith.<sup>838</sup> Theologians in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries reversed this positive stance in relation to the term. During this period there was a movement led by Georg Calixtus which aimed to reconcile and join the various Protestant denominations. These debates were called the syncretistic controversies and its opponents argued that they were trying to jumble together various religions. This disapproval remained and syncretism was used to denote the confusing mixing of religions.<sup>839</sup> In the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century scholars used this term in relation to antiquity to mean disorder and confusion. It was also believed to be an imperialist strategy used by the

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<sup>836</sup> Herodotus 4.59.

<sup>837</sup> Plut. *De. Frat. Amor.* 490b. The text is concerned with interactions between brothers and mentions that brothers should not let slander come between them.

<sup>838</sup> Shaw and Stewart (2003) 4. See Mansfield (2003) 140-1; Erasmus *Adagia*.

<sup>839</sup> See Georg Calixtus (1613) *Disputationes de Praecipuis Religionis Christianae Capitibus*; (1619) *Epitome theologiae*.

Roman emperors who appropriated the local cults of conquered lands.<sup>840</sup> This reversed the term's meaning in Plutarch where it was used to indicate common solidarity and it had now become a weapon in the emperor's arsenal and was used to indicate the Other.<sup>841</sup> This makes clear that syncretism is a term whose meaning has been constantly renegotiated and altered throughout history.

Franz Cumont was not the first to use this term in Classical scholarship but he was the earliest to do so consistently and extensively. However, there was no discussion of what he meant or conceived by the use of this term.<sup>842</sup> His usage was varied but lacking in any critical reflection. Cumont paid more attention to syncretism in the Roman period than in the Hellenistic one but did not refer to this as Graeco-Roman syncretism as previous scholars had done, but called it imperial syncretism.<sup>843</sup> It is from the ways in which many 19<sup>th</sup>-century scholars utilised the term that many of the modern problems with its usage stem. Thus, issues must have arisen more from the historical use of this term.<sup>844</sup> Other terms have been suggested to describe this phenomenon and postmodern anthropologists prefer the term Creolisation.<sup>845</sup> Chirassi Colombo has suggested that perhaps the term acculturation is preferable as it indicates an unequal contact between two civilisations.<sup>846</sup> However, Shaw and Stewart rightly point out that it seems limiting not to use a term because of 19<sup>th</sup>-century connotations.<sup>847</sup> The history of the usage of the term should be explored and understood for the correct usage of this word.

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<sup>840</sup> Anonymous review 1853 quoted by Bryson (1992) 8.

<sup>841</sup> Stewart and Shaw (2003) 4.

<sup>842</sup> For example see Cumont (1956a) 60; Motte (1999) 26.

<sup>843</sup> Cumont (1929) 184; Motte (1999) 31. For a description of this see Cumont (1956a) 202.

<sup>844</sup> Shaw and Stewart (2003) 2.

<sup>845</sup> Shaw and Stewart (2003) 2: the term creolisation comes from the field on linguistics and there are numerous prejudices within this field against creole languages.

<sup>846</sup> Chirassi Colombo (1975) 96.

<sup>847</sup> Shaw and Stewart (2003) 2.

Webster, looking at the phenomenon in the Romano-Celtic world defines the term as:

‘By ‘syncretism’ I mean the interaction of two systems of belief and practice in the development of Romano-Celtic religion’.<sup>848</sup>

Webster’s particular focus is on the Celtic world but her definition is equally applicable to other provinces and areas of the Graeco-Roman world. Syncretisms took many different forms.<sup>849</sup> This is not surprising as the process occurred in a variety of different places and contexts. Tacitus described syncretism as *Interpretatio Romana* where:

Apud Nahanarvalos antiquae religionis lucus ostenditur. Praesidet sacerdos muliebri ornatu, sed deos interpretatione Romana Castorem Pollucemque memorant. Ea vis numini, nomen Alcis. Nulla simulacra, nullum peregrinae superstitionis vestigium; ut fratres tamen, ut iuvenes venerantur.<sup>850</sup>

The process described by Tacitus is the Roman interpretation of deities and the rites associated with them. As such, the available evidence shows predominantly the Roman perspective on this phenomenon. This took many forms but, in essence, it entailed an equation between a non-Graeco-Roman deity and one from the Graeco-Roman religious world.<sup>851</sup> A clear example of what is generally conceived by the term syncretism comes from the summit of Nemrud Dağ in Commagene where a hilltop sanctuary was built by Antiochus I who ruled from 70-36 BC. This sanctuary was a royal tomb and shows the king sitting side-by-side with Zeus Oromasdes

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<sup>848</sup> Webster (1997a) 165.

<sup>849</sup> Woolf (1998) 233.

<sup>850</sup> Tac. *Germ.* 43.4: ‘Among the Nahanarvali a sacred grove is shown of ancient holiness. A priest in female dress runs it but the gods are spoken of in Roman fashion as Castor and Pollux. Such are the powers of the god, called Alcis. There are no images, no traces of foreign superstition; that as brothers together, as young men they are worshipped.’ See also Rives (1999) 306-7.

<sup>851</sup> Webster (1995) 154.

Apollo Mithras Helios Hermes, and Artagnes Heracles Ares. Syncretism indicates composite deities who have both Graeco-Roman and Persian elements in their nomenclature and worship.<sup>852</sup> The god is what the king and worshipper say he is; he is not Zeus but he is Zeus Oromasdes.<sup>853</sup> Webster argues that most studies believe that syncretism was a ‘happy marriage’ between the two deities but often ignore the role of indigenous actors. This makes the hybridisation of gods a natural and practical process which does not need much explanation.<sup>854</sup>

Syncretism is a contentious term which has sometimes been taken to mean either a contamination of an original ‘pure’ religion or an inauthenticity thereof.<sup>855</sup> It implies that an original religion was penetrated by symbols and rites from another.<sup>856</sup> Yet, it was an inevitable phenomenon of ancient religion and was present in all ancient societies as polytheistic societies were especially open to new gods.<sup>857</sup> There was a permeability in the Roman pantheon especially due to its lack of dogma.<sup>858</sup> Religious transfers between variant systems depended on similarities between themselves and new cults were often created from a bricolage of older, existing cults.<sup>859</sup> This process was driven by expansion which created new opportunities and pressures but also competition.<sup>860</sup> The Roman imperial period was, thus, a time in which this phenomenon particularly occurred.

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<sup>852</sup> Kaizer (2013) 113. Oromasdes appears to have been another name for Ahura Mazda, the chief god in Persian religion which would make him a suitable choice for syncretism with Zeus. This god seems also to have been another form of Jupiter Dolichenus.

<sup>853</sup> Kaizer (2013) 117.

<sup>854</sup> Webster (1997a) 165.

<sup>855</sup> See, for example, Cumont (1956a) 26-7 where there was a moral decline during the Roman Empire. See also Cumont (1956a) 57.

<sup>856</sup> Shaw and Stewart (2003) 1.

<sup>857</sup> Cadotte (2006) 1.

<sup>858</sup> Cadotte (2006) 8.

<sup>859</sup> Woolf (2014) 68.

<sup>860</sup> Woolf (2014) 70.

It is important to stress that syncretism was a natural happenstance which occurred frequently in antiquity.<sup>861</sup> As Versluys has pointed out, it is far less useful just to name something as Roman, than it is to examine the role it plays within the Roman cultural system and what it means in a particular context. Versluys uses the examples of the cults of Isis, Mithras, and Magna Mater to explain why this is relevant. He argues that these gods frequently occurred in a context where their eastern origins were brought to the forefront, sometimes more so than in their original cult place.<sup>862</sup> This was especially clear in the case of Mithras (see also section 4.1.1) as direct connections between the Iranian Mithra and Mithras cannot be proven. Mithra was closely associated with the Persian ruling household and his cult vanished when this Empire fell. The cult of Mithras, on the other hand, is not attested before the Flavian period. This long period of time between the two cults indicated that at best it is possible to state that a Persian cult concept was taken up and reinterpreted for a Roman context but there is no evidence for any direct connections between the two cults.<sup>863</sup> This Roman cult, thus, chose to present itself in an oriental fashion.

Marcel Le Glay argues that there are three different types or degrees of syncretism. However, a great deal of overlap and fluidity between these modern categories can still be expected. Le Glay examines the phenomenon in North Africa as there were an especially large number of assimilations which occurred there.<sup>864</sup> This was due to its unique location between east and west and there were numerous assimilations between Graeco-Roman gods and the most important gods of Africa,

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<sup>861</sup> Cadotte (2006) 9.

<sup>862</sup> Versluys (2013) 242.

<sup>863</sup> Versluys (2013) 249.

<sup>864</sup> Le Glay (1975) 123.

which is also what makes study of the cult of Asclepius in this area so interesting and fruitful.<sup>865</sup> The three types are:

- *Interpretatio romana*, where there was a direct assimilation
- Assimilation where the deities were adapted from their original cultic nature, leading to an enrichment of their character and worship
- A cumulative assimilation<sup>866</sup>

In the first case the worship of a deity was joined to that of another. This direct connection is often indicated by epithets or double names. Other occurrences of this direct syncretism were with Silvanus who joined with Pegasus in Lambaesis, after the standard of the Third Augustan Legion.<sup>867</sup> The second definition of syncretism, according to Le Glay, encompassed deities which possessed certain characteristics or attributes which they did not have prior to being syncretised. There were three gods in whose worship this happened the most, namely Mercury, Neptune, and Venus. Mercury/Hermes occurred across the Graeco-Roman world and in Punic Africa he generally cropped up in this more traditional form. However, an inscription from Lambaesis calls him *Mercurius Silvanus* and he is depicted in local guise.<sup>868</sup> Le Glay argues that from this point onwards he appeared in a more African form and was commonly found depicted with Silvanus' scorpion.<sup>869</sup> Neptune/Poseidon was syncretised with the African god Yam but was mainly worshipped inland, far away from the sea. He was supplicated more near water sources and fountains, showing a

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<sup>865</sup> Cadotte (2006) 1.

<sup>866</sup> Le Glay (1975) 125.

<sup>867</sup> *CIL* 8.2585.

<sup>868</sup> *AE* 1968 645.

<sup>869</sup> Le Glay (1975) 140-1.

clear adaptation of his worship.<sup>870</sup> Venus was worshipped all across Africa in various guises such as *victrix* and *adquistrix*.<sup>871</sup> The latter is the remarkable one as it occurs in Lepcis Magna where she had taken over tasks and iconography which generally belonged to Mercury as Venus, was the protectress of the customs officers of the *III publica Africae* here.<sup>872</sup> Le Glay's third category encompasses the cumulative process where a deity gathers a number of epithets and attributes. The most obvious is Jupiter who apart from being *Optimus Maximus* was also *valens*, *stator*, *dilectator*, and *depulsorius*, for example.<sup>873</sup> Another form which this took was new groupings of gods such as at Lambaesis with Asclepius, Jupiter Valens, and Silvanus Pegasianus.<sup>874</sup> The more epithets a god had, the more power he was thought to have had. Syncretism happened between gods who were similar but they need not have been alike in every single way. Each god, therefore, gained more spheres of influence as a result of syncretism and, thus, could have also grown in power (see section 2.3).

### 5.1.2 Syncretism in the Provinces

Before continuing the examination of syncretism in North Africa, it is useful to look at the phenomenon in the Northern provinces first as the process also commonly happened there. Caesar, in his *Bellum Gallicum*, stated that the Gauls worshipped Mercury the most, followed by Apollo, Mars, Jupiter, and Minerva.<sup>875</sup> He does not mention any local gods and as the area had only been recently

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<sup>870</sup> Le Glay (1975) 141.

<sup>871</sup> *Victrix*: CIL 8.14809; Venus *Adquistrix*: AE 2000 1602. There was also Venus *Bonifalia*: CIL 8.25347 and Venus *Augusta*: AE 1923 22.

<sup>872</sup> IRT 315a; Le Glay (1975) 142-3.

<sup>873</sup> *Valens*: CIL 8.19121-19123; *Stator*: CIL 8.4642; *Dilectator*: CIL 8.209; *Depulsorius*: CIL 8.2621.

<sup>874</sup> CIL 8.2585.

<sup>875</sup> Caes. *BGall.* 6.17.

conquered it is unlikely that there had been time for these gods to be influenced by Rome already.<sup>876</sup> However, as a Roman commenting on local religious practices, it is perhaps unsurprising that he phrases this in a way which would be easily accessible and familiar to both himself and his reader.

The Roman soldiers were the ones who introduced votive practices to Gaul, especially the act of inscribing on stone.<sup>877</sup> Derks has studied the transformation of religious systems in Gaul and states that there were no known myths extant from Roman Gaul. For an understanding of the Celtic religious world, it is, therefore, necessary to examine the epigraphic and archaeological evidence.<sup>878</sup>

The earliest known altar was likely dedicated to Mars Halamardus as it is dated to AD 10-43 at the earliest and was erected by legionaries.<sup>879</sup> The first non-military altar comes from Ruimel and is dedicated to Magusanus Hercules by the *summus magistratus* of the Batavi.<sup>880</sup> Derks argues that there were general tendencies which governed the twinning of gods where only a small number of Roman gods were linked to a large number of regional deities. Mars and Mercury were assimilated the most and the only other gods chosen were Apollo, Hercules, and Silvanus.<sup>881</sup> Many Celtic deities were mentioned only once and there was likely a high degree of localism within their worship.<sup>882</sup>

Within this there was also a regional difference as Mars was linked to civic deities in the south and Hercules with those in the north. There is a large degree of votive clustering and also onomastic groups, especially with Mars. However, this did not happen with Mercury and his dedications were spread all over the Central and

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<sup>876</sup> Derks (1998) 82.

<sup>877</sup> Derks (1998) 88. See also Table 3.1 in Derks (1998) p.84-5.

<sup>878</sup> Derks (1998) 73.

<sup>879</sup> *CIL* 13.8707. Another dedication to the same god comes from Lottum: *AE* 1987 777.

<sup>880</sup> *CIL* 13.8771.

<sup>881</sup> Derks (1998) 95.

<sup>882</sup> Webster (1995) 155.



Lower Rhine areas but most of his sanctuaries were simple and modest, leading Derks to conclude that he was merely a local god of limited importance.<sup>883</sup> Apollo was mostly linked to Grannus but there were no dedications set up by magistrates or priests, indicating that this was again, probably only a non-official, local, cult.<sup>884</sup> Silvanus was similarly linked to only two local gods, namely Siquates in Gerouville and Vosegus in Busenberg.<sup>885</sup> This would mean that Mars and Hercules were linked to public and civic cult but that Apollo, Mercury, and Silvanus only had localised and private cult.<sup>886</sup>

These associations would have likely been made by local people as Rome only tended to involve itself in religious matters when they were a danger to Rome. Nothing much is known about the gods twinned with the Roman deities and only known from this epigraphic data, yet the gods associated with Mars and Hercules must have been the gods who were important at the time of the conquest, as principal local deities would have been linked with the main Roman gods associated with war.<sup>887</sup>

This *interpretatio* shows how the indigenous elites considered the Roman gods and it did not only take the form of name-twinning two gods but also occurred in divine marriages between a Roman male deity and a female Celtic one.<sup>888</sup> The most famous of these is between Mercury and Rosmerta, the great giver goddess, but there was also one between Apollo Grannus and Sirona. Almost all iconographic images of these two gods together were made by local artists.<sup>889</sup> Therefore, it was

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<sup>883</sup> Derks (1998) 96-9.

<sup>884</sup> Derks (1998) 100.

<sup>885</sup> Siquates: *CIL* 13.3968; Vosegus: *CIL* 13.6027; 6059. There is also an inscription dedicated to Mercury Vosegus: *CIL* 13.4550 from Mediomatrici.

<sup>886</sup> Derks (1998) 100.

<sup>887</sup> Derks (1998) 100-1; Webster (1995) 155-6.

<sup>888</sup> Webster (1995) 157.

<sup>889</sup> Webster (1997b) 326.

also not just epigraphically that a god could be syncretised but also iconographically. This also occurred in Thrace where both Apollo and Asclepius were identified with the Thracian rider (see section 4.4) and were represented in the guise of the Rider and not in the traditional Asclepeieian iconographical pose, for example the Chiaramonti type (see section 2.4). This all indicates that syncretism could take a variety of forms within one context and there can be multiple reasons and explanations for connecting two gods.

### 5.1.3 Epithets

This study of syncretism in the Northern provinces shows its multi-faceted nature and how it can differ in each region. The contact between cultures creates a new situation where a god was created to whom both locals and Romans could relate. This contact created religious diversity. Asclepius was worshipped under numerous epithets in Africa (see section 2.3 for general discussion). He is called *Augustus* in numerous inscriptions from Africa and a few from Numidia:<sup>890</sup>

Aesculapio / Augusto / sacrum / M(arcus) Orbius / Felix / votum / solvit / cum suis<sup>891</sup>

Another epithet which occurs is *Dominus*; it occurs three times, once in Carthage, Thisduo, and Thurburbo Maius<sup>892</sup>:

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<sup>890</sup> Africa Pronconsularis: *CIL* 8.765, 1476, 15446, 27356; *CILPCart* 1; *AE* 1999 1823; *AE* 1999 1826; *IL Afr* 545; *IL Alg* 01.1220; *IL Alg* 01.2031; *AE* 1937 72; *AE* 1938 42. Numidia: *IL Alg* 02-01.3584; *IL Alg* 02-03.7634; *IL Alg* 2-03.7635; *AE* 2000 1792; *AE* 2010 1839; *AE* 2010 1819.

<sup>891</sup> *AE* 1999 1826: 'Sacred to Asclepius Augustus, Marcus Orbius Felix and associates repaid his vow'. See also section 4.2 and *AE* 1937 181 and *CIL* 3.993.

<sup>892</sup> Carthage: *AE* 1949 56; Thisduo: *CIL* 8.1267; Thurburbo Maius: *IL Afr* 225.

Iussu Domini / Aesculapi / L(ucius) Numisius L(uci) f(ilius) / Vitalis / podium de / suo fecit / quisq(uis) intra / podium ad/scendere vo/let a muli/ere a suilla / a faba a ton/sore a bali/neo commu/ne custodi/at triduo / cancellos / calciatus / intrare no/lito<sup>893</sup>

This stele was set up by a Lucius Numisius Vitalis and is dated between AD 117 and 138.<sup>894</sup> The Numisii were known civic benefactors and also erected a temple to Mercurius Augustus.<sup>895</sup> As the inscription states that the podium was built by order of the god, this could indicate that Vitalis had previously been a supplicant of Asclepius and may have been cured of an illness.<sup>896</sup> An inscription from Thisduo also contains an invocation for the health of Marcus Aurelius and his family so the use of the epithet *dominus* might imply that Asclepius is master of health.<sup>897</sup> The title *Dominus* is equivalent to the Phoenician *Adon* which is an epithet found with numerous gods, for example Baal. It identified gods and rulers of cities, signalling the holder's power.<sup>898</sup> *Sanctus* is only found in Numidia in a dedication by Marcus Porcius Iustus, an officer of the Third Augustan Legion (Fig. 77):

Aesculapio / Sancto / M(arcus) Porcius / Iustus / praef(ectus) cas(trorum) / leg(ionis) III Aug(ustae) / d(onum) d(edit) // Dedicata / Idibus / Novemb(ribus) / Imper(atore) / Commo/do III / et Bur(ro co(n)s(ulibus)<sup>899</sup>

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<sup>893</sup> *IL Afr* 225: 'By order of the god Asclepius, Lucius Numisius Vitalis, son of Lucius, built a podium at his own expense. Whoever wishes to enter the podium must have abstained from women, from pork, from beans, from barbers, from public baths for three days. It is not allowed to enter wearing sandals'.

<sup>894</sup> Benseddik 2010: 2.86.

<sup>895</sup> *AE* 1961 71: *Mercurio Aug. sacrum / Pro salute Imp. Hadriani Caesaris Augusti / L. Numisius Vitalis aedem a solo sua pecunia fecit*. The family was originally from Carthage and were still Carthaginian citizens: Benseddik (2010a): 2.86.

<sup>896</sup> A podium should be understood as a continuous base, surrounded by columns and a supporting wall: Benseddik (2010a): 2.86. Purity was essential in order to be able to access this podium.

<sup>897</sup> *CIL* 8.1267.

<sup>898</sup> Benseddik (2010a) 1.58.

<sup>899</sup> *CIL* 8.2587: 'To Asclepius Sanctus, Marcus Porcius Iustus, prefect of the camp of the III Augustan legion, gave as a gift. Dedicated on the Ides of November, when the Emperor Commodus was consul for the third time and Burrus was consul'.



Fig. 77: *CIL* 8.2587.

The term is similar to the Greek *Agios*, which rarely occurs, but a similar term is found in Africa with Baal-Hammon, namely the semitic *qds*.<sup>900</sup> The similarity between the epithets used by Asclepius and Baal is notable and signals the important position and power held by Asclepius in Africa. Baal was a civic god similar to Eshmun, whose worship will be discussed in the next section. Asclepius is also called *Soter* in an inscription from Lepcis Magna (see below).<sup>901</sup> The use of this epithet is perhaps unsurprising in the military context of the cult. The legion, more than anyone else, had a need for a saviour-god and, over time, Asclepius became the healing god for the legion as well as a guarantor of the safety and security of the empire.<sup>902</sup> In Belalis Maior in Africa, Asclepius is hailed as *Repentinus*:

Deo / Aesculapio / Repentino / C(aius) Cornelius / Afranius / Felix posuit.<sup>903</sup>

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<sup>900</sup> Benseddik (2010a) 1.60: in Semitic *sr qds* means holy prince.

<sup>901</sup> *IRT* 265.

<sup>902</sup> Benseddik (2010a) 1.167.

<sup>903</sup> *AE* 2010 1804: 'To the God Asclepius Repentinus, Gaius Cornelius Afranius Felix erected this'.

There is no explanation for Repentinus but it could have been the name of a deity, making this a case of *interpretatio romana* or syncretism.<sup>904</sup> Asclepius was worshipped here not only as a healing god but also as a saviour god. Thus, while Roman terminology is used to describe the various aspects of Asclepius' cult and many of these epithets are found elsewhere, there is also a local meaning to the chosen epithets.

## 5.2 Eshmun-Asclepius

In Africa, Asclepius was assimilated with the god Eshmun. Eshmun was also identified with Apollo but this was the Apollo Medicus of Rome and not the later mantic version of the god.<sup>905</sup> As stated above, Benseddik argued that the cult of Asclepius moved from east to west Africa, with the Roman army being one of the main vehicles of the cult's dissemination. However, the cult of Eshmun-Asclepius was already present in what would later become the province of Africa Proconsularis, focussed especially around Carthage and the Carthaginian lands. Therefore, this section will first explore the cult of Eshmun and then the syncretism between Eshmun and Asclepius as it is necessary to understand this cult and its nature before moving on to the cult focussed in Numidia and around Lambaesis, which appears to have been different in various ways.

### 5.2.1 Eshmun and the Cult at Sidon

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<sup>904</sup> Benseddik (2010a) 1.62.

<sup>905</sup> Lipinski (1994) 20.

The cult of Eshmun was first attested in the 8<sup>th</sup> century BC when the god stood as guarantor in pacts between Mati'el, king of Arpad, and king Assurnirari V of Assyria in 754 BC.<sup>906</sup> There are two likely explanations for the origin of the name Eshmun; the first is that it was some derivation from the number eight or as 'one who was derived from the life-giving warmth', which came from Hebrew.<sup>907</sup> There is a paucity of ancient evidence relating to the cult of Eshmun. What is available puts the god's earliest cult centres in the kingdom of Ebla and in the port-city of Ugarit.<sup>908</sup> In Ebla the cult was aimed more at individuals, whereas at Ugarit the cult fell under royal protection, making it an official cult. It seems that Eshmun was associated with fertility and healing from the start and he appears to have been credited with introducing olive oil to the Mesopotamian world, which was viewed as a kind of panacea, capable of curing virtually any disease and reviving the moribund.<sup>909</sup> In texts, Eshmun appears as one of the greater gods of the Phoenician pantheon. Royal inscriptions from Sidon from the end of the 6<sup>th</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> centuries BC call the god 'Holy Prince' and they also show the nature and placement of the Sidonian gods: Eshmun was the healer, helpful and close to people and was worshipped in a temple located outside the town in Bostan esh-Sheikh, while Baal, protector of the city had an urban temple.<sup>910</sup> In Sidon and Tyre inscriptions suggest a joint healing cult of Eshmun and Melqart. The corpora show a continuous royal devotion to the cult.<sup>911</sup>

The main temple of Eshmun was in Bostan esh-Sheikh near Sidon which was discovered in 1901. More than 660 objects were found on site but 600 of these have

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<sup>906</sup> Benseddik (2010a) 1.27.

<sup>907</sup> Baumgarten (1981) 230.

<sup>908</sup> Benseddik (2010b) 11.

<sup>909</sup> Benseddik (2010a) 1.28.

<sup>910</sup> Benseddik (2010a) 1.29-30. This would fit in with the placement of other Asclepieia such as at Agrigento where the temple was located in the plains (see section 2.2.5).

<sup>911</sup> Benseddik (2010a) 1.30.

been lost in the Lebanese civil wars.<sup>912</sup> Eshmun was worshipped as healing god here and in Amrit from the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC onwards as they were thought to be especially salubrious places due to their water sources.<sup>913</sup> The temple at Sidon can be dated by an inscription which states that king Eshmunazar and his mother built the temple of Eshmun.<sup>914</sup> The temple was expanded between the 6<sup>th</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> centuries BC and some inscriptions to Asclepius were found here.<sup>915</sup> This temple is generally considered to be the cultic centre of the cult of Eshmun and also Eshmun-Asclepius.<sup>916</sup>

However, two main friezes in the temple at Sidon depict Apollo and personal names with derivations of Apollo were also common in Sidon.<sup>917</sup> These are of an earlier date than the earliest mention of Asclepius, which did not occur until 44/3 BC, where the god appears on a series of inscribed urns, which were victory commemorations of contests:

(ἔτους) δξ' Ζωσαῖς Ζήνωνος νικήσας ἀνέθηκεν Ἀσκληπιῶ<sup>918</sup>

Rigsby points out that the evidence indicates that the Sidonians first believed Eshmun to be a version of the Greek Apollo, and not originally of Asclepius.<sup>919</sup>

There are some Hellenistic dedications to Asclepius in Phoenicia which indicate that

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<sup>912</sup> Fischer-Genz (2008) 621.

<sup>913</sup> Lipinski (1994) 22.

<sup>914</sup> KAI-14: This inscription was placed on a sarcophagus held at the Louvre: <http://www.louvre.fr/en/oeuvre-notices/sarcophagus-eshmunazar-ii-king-sidon>: Louvre AO 4806. The sarcophagus is dated to the first quarter of the fifth century BC. 'It was we who built the temples of the gods: the temple for Ashtart at Sidon of the Coast and we enthroned Ashtart of the Majestic Heavens and it was we who built the temple for Eshmun, holy prince of the sacred spring YDLL, and enthroned him. And it was we who built the temples for the gods of the Sidonians at Sidon of the Coast, the temple of the Baal-Sidon and the temple of Ashtart-Name-of-Baal." Eshmunazar lived around the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC.

<sup>915</sup> Stucky (2005) 15.

<sup>916</sup> Benseddik (2010a) 1.33.

<sup>917</sup> Rigsby (2007) 148.

<sup>918</sup> 'On account of having won this year, Zosas Zenonos erected this to Asclepius'; Rigsby (2007) 147; *SEG* 26 1646.

<sup>919</sup> Rigsby (2007) 148.

some Sidonian worshippers had started to call the god Asclepius by then, preferring him over Apollo, but the local festival was called the Apolloneia until the Flavian period, which could indicate a local preference for an identification with Apollo over Asclepius until then, not dissimilar to what occurred at Deir el-Bahari in Egypt (see section 3.3.1).<sup>920</sup>

Other reliefs were found at the temple of Eshmun in Sidon, probably dating from after a fire which destroyed the original temple in 343-342 BC, showing hunting scenes but also a cock, a bird generally associated with Asclepius.<sup>921</sup> A large number of Hellenistic statues were found in Sidon, among them many statuettes of boys, which fits in with dedicatory patterns to Asclepius from Epidaurus, Athens, Corinth, Skopelos, Thespieae, Lissos, and also Lebena where similar statues were dedicated.<sup>922</sup>

In Sidon, Eshmun was never represented as a Phoenician god but he is found in the Greek guise of Asclepius. A fragmentary head of a statue shows a distinct, though simplified, Asclepieian iconography (Figs. 78-79):<sup>923</sup>



Fig. 78: Head of Eshmun- Asclepius from Sidon.



Fig. 79: Torso of Eshmun-Asclepius.

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<sup>920</sup> Rigsby (2007) 148-9.

<sup>921</sup> Benseddik (2010a) 1.30. See p.31 for drawings of the reliefs; Pl. *Cri.* 118a.

<sup>922</sup> See Catalogue in Stucky (1993) 68ff.

<sup>923</sup> Stucky (1993) 76 no. 69, Inv. No. E75.



The hair style indicates that this was of the Giustini type (see sections 2.4 and 3.3.1).<sup>924</sup> A torso belonging to the Asclepius Este or Epidaurus type was also found here, showing typical Asclepieian drapery of the *himation* (Fig. 21).<sup>925</sup> A fragmentary votive relief depicting Asclepius and Hygeia was also found on the site, indicating that Eshmun had not just taken over Asclepius' name but also his most important Greek iconographic types.<sup>926</sup> Stucky argues that the small dimensions of these statues indicate that they must be from the late Hellenistic period as it was only from the start of the Roman period that the Phoenicians started to import marble in enough quantities for life-size statuary. This dating is also more likely seeing as the Phoenicians took up the well-known iconographic types but did not blindly copy them but made small changes to all of them.<sup>927</sup> This, combined with the evidence from an inscription from Sardinia discussed below and iconographic evidence, make the connections between the two gods clear.<sup>928</sup>

Stucky's excavation report of the sanctuary lists some previously unpublished Phoenician inscriptions and also a corpus of Greek inscriptions from the site.<sup>929</sup> Amongst these are four dedicatory inscriptions which are clearly set up to Asclepius.<sup>930</sup> Apart from a single inscription to Dionysus Kademeios, Asclepius is the only god mentioned in the Greek inscriptions. One was erected by a priest of Mithras, indicating that the cult must have continued to prosper for a long time here:

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<sup>924</sup> Stucky (1993) 26.

<sup>925</sup> Stucky (1993) 76 no. 70; Inv. No. E 1920.

<sup>926</sup> Stucky (1993) 26, Catalogue no. 249.

<sup>927</sup> Stucky (1993) 26.

<sup>928</sup> Stucky (1993) 76-8 lists four Graeco-Roman statue-fragments of Asclepius at Sidon and eight statue fragments of Hygeia.

<sup>929</sup> This is the third volume on a series reporting on Maurice Dunand's excavations of the site. The original excavator died in 1987 and passed the task of publishing the final volume on to R.A. Stucky: Fischer-Genz (2008) 620-1.

<sup>930</sup> Twenty-two Greek inscriptions are listed in total. Most are very fragmentary and of these four, two are to Asclepius: Gr6-Gr9, and one to Dionysus Kadmeios: Gr5. These two are the only two gods clearly mentioned here: Stucky (2005) 321-330, Gr1-Gr22.

Θεῶι Ἀγίωι  
Ἀσκληπιῶι  
Θεόδοτος  
ἱερεὺς Μίθρα  
ἀωέθηκεν  
L ANC<sup>931</sup>

Roman coins were found in Sidon depicting Eshmun-Asclepius on the reverse, wearing a *himation* and boots (Fig. 80):



Fig. 80: Coin from Sidon showing Eshmun-Asclepius with the Chariot of Astarte in the Background. *BMC Phoenicia* 199.321.

In his left hand Asclepius holds the snake-staff and in his right there is a *phiale* containing a round object which he holds over a tripod altar. Left above the god there is the chariot of Astarte with two palm branches and the coin is inscribed COL AVR PIA METR and there is a bust of Severus Alexander on the obverse.<sup>932</sup> The cult of Astarte was linked to that of Eshmun as they were worshipped together at Sidon and her cult was syncretised with Cybele (see below).<sup>933</sup> The river close to the sanctuary at Bostan esh-Sheikh, the Nahr el-Awali, was also called the *Asclepius fluvius*.<sup>934</sup>

<sup>931</sup> Stucky (2005) 324 Gr6: ‘To the god Asclepius, Theodotus, priest of Mithras erected this in the year 251’. The year 251 is AD 141. The Roman cult of Mithras was only created in the Flavian period (see section 4.1.1).

<sup>932</sup> This indicates that the city was a colony, founded under Antonines or Severans and was a metropolis. *BMC Phoenicia* 199.321; *SNG Cop.* 151-152. Further coins with Asclepius-Eshmun appear in Sidon with a bust of Elagabalus: *AMS* 1944.100.71775, 1944.100.71776 which have a similar iconography to the coin of Severus Alexander. There are also coins from Carne: *AMS* 1961.154.251, 1944.100.70939, 1944.100.70940 which show Asclepius-Eshmun holding his snake-staff and Nike on a column, and from Marathus: *AMS* 1948.19.2197, 1944.100.70973, 1944.100.70974 which show a crowned head of queen Berenice II on the obverse and Asclepius-Eshmun holding the snake staff on the reverse.

<sup>933</sup> Stucky (2005) 15: There was the ‘*piscine du trone de Astarte*’ at the sanctuary of Eshmun in Sidon which is dated to the Hellenistic period; Cadotte (2006) 192-4.

<sup>934</sup> Stucky (2005) 14.

Strabo also mentions a sacred grove of Asclepius here, one of the few ancient sources to comment on the sanctuary.<sup>935</sup>

### 5.2.2 Assimilation

It is likely that Asclepius and Eshmun were assimilated in the 5<sup>th</sup> BC in Carthage as there was a temple to the god there. Here he formed a triad with Baal Hammin, and Tanit Pene Baal and was one of the main protective deities of Carthage where he was hailed as ‘brother’ showing his extraordinary protective force.<sup>936</sup> The cult was seemingly very popular as the name Eshmun occurs a lot in Carthaginian onomastics.<sup>937</sup> However, only a few inscriptions to Eshmun were found around Carthage, one of which mentions his priest and another which mentions a priest of Eshmun-Astarte. The god appears in Carthage with various epithets, most of which refer to saving and preserving, emphasising his role as a healing deity and the individual dimension of his cult, but also his role as a fertility deity, making him a good fit for syncretisation with either Apollo or Asclepius.<sup>938</sup> Apuleius also refers to Asclepius’ role as protector:

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<sup>935</sup> Strabo 16.2.22. Strabo only mentions Sidon and the grove of Asclepius in passing and is more interested in moving on to Tyre.

<sup>936</sup> *CIS* 1.6066; Xella (1993) 487; Benseddik (2010a) 1.34.

<sup>937</sup> Priest of Eshmun: *CIS* 1.2362; Priest of Eshmun-Astarte *CIS* 1.245; Cadotte (2006) 165. Carthage was one of the largest and wealthiest cities in the Roman Empire during the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD, second perhaps only to Rome in the West: Rives (1995) 27. It had been refounded as a Roman colony about one hundred years after the Punic city had been destroyed in the Second Punic war: Rives (1995) 28. The Capitoline triad was installed on the Byrsa: Rives (1995) 42 and other popular gods here were Venus and Ceres. Caelestis was worshipped as one of the main deities of Carthage and is seen as being the Roman version of the Punic goddess Tanit. Tanit had been the main protective goddess of Punic Carthage and this protective role continued with Caelestis who was also by the Roman emperors precisely for this reason: Rives (1995) 65, 69.

<sup>938</sup> Benseddik (2010a) 1.35.

Nunc quoque igitur principium mihi apud vestras auris auspicatissimum ab Aesculapio deo capiam, qui arcem nostrae Carthagini indubitabili numine propitius respicit.<sup>939</sup>

The temple of Eshmun in Carthage was circular in shape and located on the Acropolis, showing the important place this god held in the civic pantheon. The temple was on the acropolis/Byrsa and was, according to Appian, the richest and most important of all.<sup>940</sup> It was notorious as when Scipio took Carthage in 146 BC, Hasdrubal took refuge on the Acropolis with his wife and sons but the temple was burnt down while Hasdrubal's wife was still in it.<sup>941</sup> Some sources refer to this temple as that of Eshmun and some as that of Asclepius, confirming the twinning of these two gods.<sup>942</sup> Benseddik argues that there was also a circular temple to Asclepius-Eshmun in Thugga.<sup>943</sup> From Carthage, the cult of Eshmun-Asclepius spread across the Carthaginian lands and accompanied the Phoenicians on their conquests. His cult was found across the Orient to Cyprus, North Africa, the Italian Islands, and also Iberia.<sup>944</sup>

The connections between Eshmun and Asclepius transcend the immediate region of Africa and are found elsewhere in the empire. Damascius in his *Vita Isidori* identifies Asclepius as Eshmun, whom he calls a native Phoenician.<sup>945</sup> He is also the only literary author who mentions the cult. However, there are a number of

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<sup>939</sup> Apul. *Flor.* 18: 'Even now, therefore, I shall make a beginning most pleasing to your ears by starting with the god Asclepius, who protects the citadel of our Carthage propitiously with his undoubtable divine power'.

<sup>940</sup> Xella (1993) 487; Strabo 17.3.14; App. *Pun.* 7.31. The Byrsa had been rebuilt during the Augustan period and was transformed into a monumental civic centre: Rives (1995) 40.

<sup>941</sup> App. *Bel. Civ* 8.130-131

<sup>942</sup> Xella (1993) 487.

<sup>943</sup> Benseddik (2010a) 1.92.

<sup>944</sup> Xella (1993) 481.

<sup>945</sup> Dam. *Isid. Fragment* 348; Rigsby (2007) 148. Damascius lived between c. AD 458 and 538 and was the last scholar of the School at Athens and was persecuted by Justinian in the early 6<sup>th</sup> century AD.

inscriptions which do so and the most important of these is a 2<sup>nd</sup>-century BC inscription from Sardinia which shows the assimilation between the two gods:<sup>946</sup>



Fig. 81: *SEG* 50.1030. Trilingual Inscription to Eshmun-Asclepius from Sardinia.

This inscription was found in the area of Santuiaci, northeast of Cagliari in Sardinia.<sup>947</sup> It is now thought to date to the 1<sup>st</sup> century BC and not the 2<sup>nd</sup> as was previously thought.<sup>948</sup> The Greek and Latin texts have a similar context and are dedicated to Asclepius but the Punic text is dedicated to Eshmun<sup>949</sup>:

Cleon salari(or)um soc(iorum) s(ervus) Aescolapio Merre donum dedit lubens  
 merito merente vacat Ἀσκληπιῶι Μηρρη ἀνάθεμα βωμὸν ἔστη-  
 σε Κλέων ὁ ἐπὶ τῶν ἄλῶν κατὰ πρόσταγμα

<sup>946</sup> *SEG* 50.1030. The inscription is dedicated to Eshmun Merre of which the origin is unclear.

<sup>947</sup> Bulla (2004): The inscription was found in February 1861 in the vicinity of the well of Santuiaci which is located about four kilometres outside of the city. The excavations were performed on behalf of the Savoy dynasty, who were based in Turin, where the inscription is now located in the Museo di antichità. The inscribed side is forty centimetres long and seven centimetres high. The temple of Santuaici is believed to be to a Sardinian healing deity.

<sup>948</sup> Chaniotis, Stroud and Strubbe (2014) argue for the 1<sup>st</sup> century; Xella (1993) 482 for the 2<sup>nd</sup> century.

<sup>949</sup> *SEG* 50.1030.

- 1) *l ʿdn l ʿšmn m ʿrh mzbh nhšt mšql lṛm m ʿt 100 ʿš ndr ʿklyn š  
hsgm ʿš bmmhlt šm[ʿ*
- 2) *q]l ʿ rpy ʿ bšt špṭm ḥmlkt wbd ʿšmn bn ḥmlk*

950

The Latin version is the most concise while the Greek text is an individual expression from a slave. The Phoenician includes details from both the Greek and Latin but adds extra details such as the weight of the object and also that the god answered Cleon's prayers. However, in the Latin text this could be implicit in 'merito'.<sup>951</sup> Adams states that the Greek and Latin are nothing more than simple 'lip-service' as they say nothing about the nature of the dedication, unlike the detailed Punic text.<sup>952</sup> The use of Punic is widely attested in Sardinia together with Latin and this is also not the only occurrence of a multilingual inscription from this area.<sup>953</sup> There were connections between Phoenicians and Sardinia as the Carthaginians were settled here from about 500 BC and controlled trade here and as such especially settled in coastal towns.<sup>954</sup> Even after the Roman occupation of the island Phoenician religion maintained a strong hold of the island as is attested by numerous Punic and Neo-Punic inscriptions to numerous Punic gods such as Baal and Astarte.<sup>955</sup> Inscriptions in Phoenician and Punic were erected here from the end of the 9<sup>th</sup> century BC to the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD.<sup>956</sup> Unfortunately, there is no explanation for the epithet Merre. The dedicator is a *servuus sociorum* and salt mining was an important industry in the local area. A votive terracotta hand with the inscription 'Eshmun

<sup>950</sup> 'Cleon a slave of a salt association, willingly, deservedly and rightly gave a gift to Asclepius Merre.

To Asclepius Merre Cleon set up an altar on behalf of himself, following a command To the Lord Eshmun Merre the altar of copper weighing one hundred pounds vowed by Cleon. (The Lord) has heard his voice and healed him. In the year of the suffetes Himilkat and Abdesmun, sons of Himilk.' Phoenician text trans. Moscati (1973) 261. Greek and Latin are the author's own. See Xella (1993) 482 for a German translation of the Phoenician.

<sup>951</sup> Chaniotis, Stroud and Strubbe (2014).

<sup>952</sup> Adams (2008) 211.

<sup>953</sup> For example see *KAI* 172.

<sup>954</sup> Strabo 5.2.7; Adams (2008) 209.

<sup>955</sup> Moscati (1973) 280-1.

<sup>956</sup> Adams (2008) 209.

listens' was found near Cagliari. Xella suggests that this could be an *ex-voto* similar to those found within the cult of Asclepius.<sup>957</sup> Inscriptions set up to Asclepius *Epekoos* were also relatively common in the Hellenistic and Roman periods, suggesting further possible connections between the gods here.<sup>958</sup>

From Carthage the cult of Eshmun-Asclepius seemed to spread to the immediate area under Carthaginian influence, especially Thugga and Thuburbo Maius.<sup>959</sup> There were a lot of similarities between the cults there and the one at Carthage, as Asclepius-Eshmun is associated with Caelestis and the god is called *dominus* in both Carthage and Thuburbo Maius.<sup>960</sup> The presence of this god in Carthage explains the presence of Eshmun-Asclepius in the Carthaginian lands and his prominence on the hill of Byrsa.<sup>961</sup> A further point of note is that Asclepius was connected with Cybele sometimes in Africa, something which rarely occurs elsewhere. This connection can be explained by syncretic links as Eshmun and Astarte were gods worshipped side-by-side at Sidon and Eshmun was assimilated with Asclepius and Astarte with Cybele. The identification of Eshmun and Asclepius appears not to have been popular in Phoenicia, which would explain its scarcity in the epigraphic sources and absence on coinage from Berytus which depicted Elagabalus.<sup>962</sup>

The cult of Eshmun, thus, had a rich history of its own, dating back to the 8<sup>th</sup> century BC. At some point, maybe during the Hellenistic period, the cult of Asclepius was joined with that of Eshmun. This happened probably at Carthage as the sources there refer to both a temple of Eshmun and that of Asclepius on the

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<sup>957</sup> Xella (1993) 483.

<sup>958</sup> ICO Sard. Npu 4, 129; Xella (1993) 483.

<sup>959</sup> Cadotte (2006) 170.

<sup>960</sup> Cadotte (2006) 170 n30.

<sup>961</sup> Cadotte (2006) 171.

<sup>962</sup> Benseddik (2010a) 1.53.

Byrsa and also this seems to have been the point from which the cult was disseminated further. The cult at Sidon shows clear traces of Asclepieian cult in its iconography and also the dedications. There are no clear military connections with this cult. The inscription from Sardinia shows that the cult spread and was popular in lands controlled by the Carthaginians and this seems to have been the cult's stronghold in Carthaginian lands. If the gods were indeed connected at Carthage, it is probable that the Asclepius which Eshmun came into contact with had been imported from Sicily, simply due to its close geographical proximity and the presence of a cult of Asclepius at Agrigento (see section 2.2.5). The next section will examine the cult of Asclepius in Africa Proconsularis and Numidia generally, including a study of an iconographic type which was specific to Africa. Thereafter, the cult after the Roman conquest will be examined and specific cultic elements will be highlighted which seem to differ from those of the cult of Eshmun-Asclepius.

### 5.3 Asclepius in Africa Proconsularis and Numidia

The cult of Eshmun-Asclepius has been examined above and it appears to have had a distinct cultic identity. However, this chapter aims to explore the cults of Asclepius in Roman North Africa and whether people from this region all worshiped the same god. Sometime after the cult of Eshmun-Asclepius gained in strength in Carthage, the *legio III Augusta* was settled in this region and it also supplicated the god Asclepius. Section 5.4 will examine the worship of Asclepius by members of the legion, but before a comprehensive study of the two cults can be undertaken and compared, it is necessary to first make some general comments on the cult of



Asclepius in the provinces of Africa Proconsularis and Numidia to properly understand the nature of the cults in this region.

### 5.3.1 Asclepius in Africa

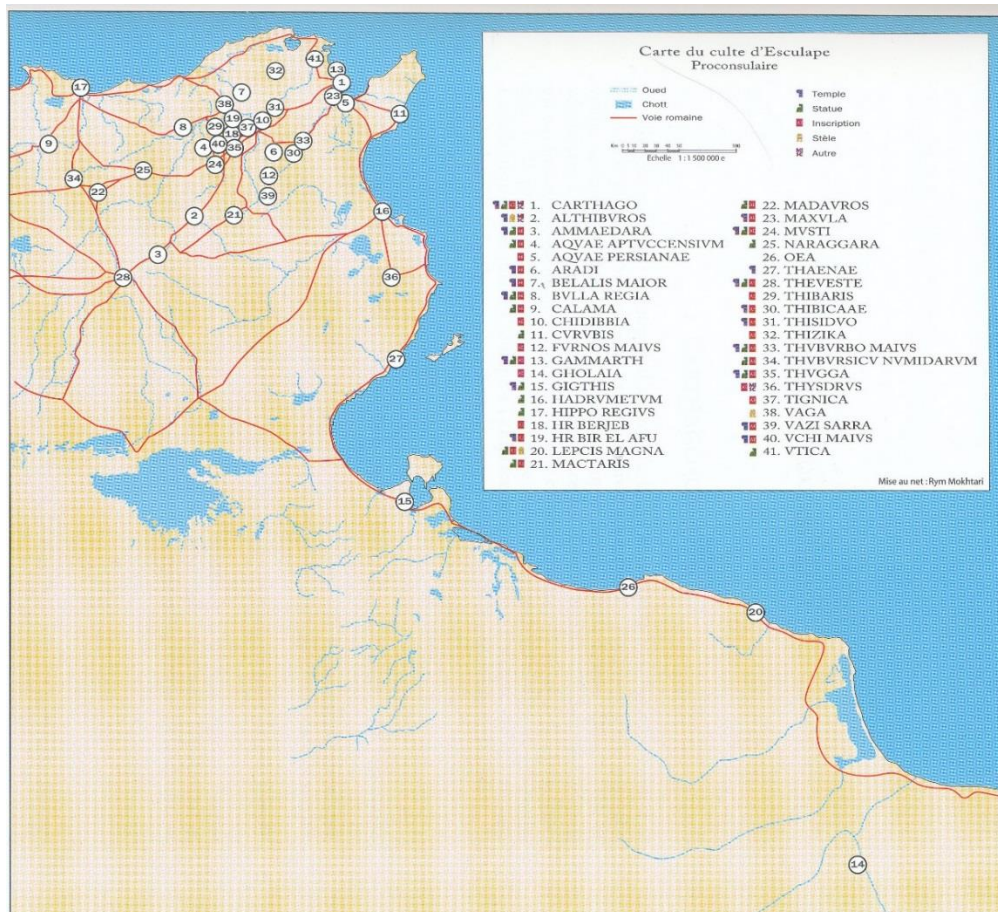


Fig. 82: Evidence for Cult of Asclepius in Africa Proconsularis.

Benseddik makes several important points in relation to the cults of Asclepius in both the Latin provinces and in North Africa. She points out that Asclepius has almost no military-related presence in certain Latin provinces such as Dacia but was strongly associated in others such as Africa, Spain, Britain, Dalmatia, and Pannonia, with many garrison towns also having important centres, such as

Lambaesis and Bracara Augusta in Spain.<sup>963</sup> However, Chapter 4 of this thesis has shown this statement to now be erroneous as Dacia did have an important military-related cult of Asclepius as did the other Balkan and Danube provinces. She also points out that cult of Asclepius in Africa Proconsularis (see Figs. 82-83 and Table 7) had three aspects; the first was where solely Asclepius was worshipped, the second where he was worshipped as a protector of thermal complexes, and the third as the tutelary deity of the Third Augustan legion.<sup>964</sup> While not always mutually exclusive, this did mean that there are certain cult-centres in Africa which had more of a civilian connection than a military one, for example at Timgad, Cuicul, and Rusicade.<sup>965</sup>

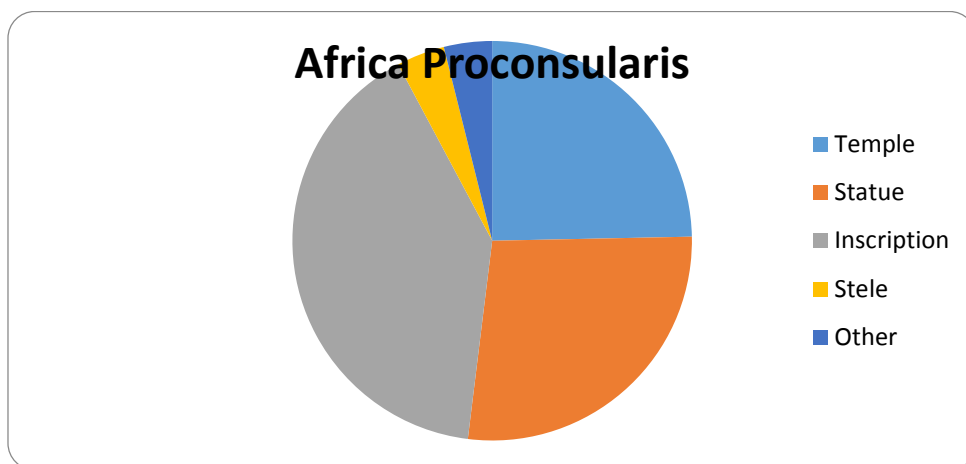


Fig. 83: Evidence for Cult from Sites in Africa Proconsularis.

<sup>963</sup> Benseddik (1995) 16: she states that ‘Firstly (concerning mainly Dacia and *Apulum* in particular) those documents where the military aspect of the cult plays a diminished role, no doubt explicable as due to the influence of Greek and oriental immigrant colonists in the area. Secondly (concerning Africa, Spain, Britain, Norica, Dalmatia and Pannonia) those documents which are, by contrast, of an almost exclusively military character.’ She also notes that there has been a lack of scholarly interest in the cult of Asclepius in North Africa. Her two volume monograph, Benseddik (2010a) has done a lot to rectify this but apart from her excellent work there is still a distinct scholarly lack of interest in the cult here.

<sup>964</sup> Benseddik (2005) 273.

<sup>965</sup> Benseddik (1995) 17.

	Temple	Statue	Inscription	Stele	Other
Carthage	X	X	X		X
Althiburos	X			X	X
Ammaedara	X	X	X		
Aquae Aptuccensium		X	X		
Aquae Persianae			X		
Aradi	X		X		
Belalis Maior	X		X		
Bulla Regia	X	X	X		
Calama		X	X		
Chidibbia			X		
Curubis		X			
Furnos Maius			X		
Gammarth	X	X	X		
Gholaia			X		
Gigthis	X	X			
Hadrumentum		X			
Hippo Regis		X			
Hr Berjeb			X		
Hr Bib el Afu	X		X		
Lepcis Magna		X	X	X	
Mactaris		X	X		
Madauros		X	X		
Maxula	X		X		
Musti	X	X	X		
Naraggara		X			
Oea					
Thanae	X				
Theveste	X	X	X		
Thibaris			X		
Thibicaae	X		X		
Thisiduo	X		X		
Thizika			X		
Thuburbo Maius	X	X	X		
Thuburicu Numidarum		X	X		
Thugga	X	X	X		
Thysdrus			X		X
Tignica			X		
Vaga				X	
Vazi Sarra	X		X		
Uchi Maius	X		X		
Utica		X			
Total	19	21	31	3	3

Table 7: Evidence for Cult from Sites in Africa Proconsularis.

An especially large number of statues of Asclepius and Hygeia were found in bathing complexes in Africa as twenty-one statues were found from twenty-four bath complexes here, whereas in Italy and Asia Minor combined, only eleven statues were

recovered from twenty-three complexes.<sup>966</sup> Most of these statues belong to either the Tunis or Campana type.<sup>967</sup> Asclepius and Hygeia were commonly associated with bathing and their iconography in thermal complexes served to underscore the healthiness of the act of bathing.<sup>968</sup> A colossal gilded statue of Asclepius stood in the Baths of Caracalla in Rome and an altar to Asclepius was also found in *Aquae Sulis*.<sup>969</sup> Baths were also places to refresh the body and attain good health. Statues of healing gods such as Asclepius and Hygeia, and also gods who could be involved with healing such as Venus and Cupid, Bacchus and Hercules, were common.<sup>970</sup> Health-related inscriptions and statues of these healing deities would complement the message that bathing was good for a person.<sup>971</sup> The god found in these bathing centres had a strong Graeco-Roman iconography and cultic nature and, therefore, the god depicted by the military here was probably not the syncretic deity of Eshmun-Asclepius but one which they had brought to Africa themselves. This can also be seen from the god's name as the syncretic version of the god is generally called Eshmun-Asklepios whereas all the dedications in military context were to Aesculapius, following the Latinised spelling of the god's name.

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<sup>966</sup> Manderscheid (1981) 31: Manderscheid takes data from both *Africa Proconsularis* and *Numidia* to reach this figure, which was accurate at that time.

<sup>967</sup> Manderscheid (1981) 73, no.46 (Rome), 76 no.71 (Ostia), 83 no.130 (Athens), 83 no.134 (Argos), 84 no. 135 (Argos), 89 no. 175 (Ephesus), 93 no.208 (Miletus): this statue depicts Asclepius together with Telesphorus, 99 no. 259 (Ankara), 104 nos.293-8 (Lepcis Magna), 111 no.352 (Thurbo Maius), 113 no.384 (Hammam-el-Oust), 117 no.433 (Bulla Regia), 118 no. 444 (*Aquae Flavianae*), 119 no.446 (Madaurus), 120 nos.456-457 (Thubursicum Numidarum), 123 no.488 (Lambaesis), 125 no. 504 (Iol-Caesarea): the full catalogue for statues of Asclepius in baths. Neither of these types occurs in *LIMC* and the Tunis type does not occur in baths outside of Africa.

<sup>968</sup> Fagan (2002) 88-89.

<sup>969</sup> Only the head has been found, see Fagan Fig. 23, which measures 49 cm high, resulting in an estimation of 4 meters for the original statue: Rome Museo Nazionale Romano Inv. 11.614; See also Lucian *Hipp.* 5. For *Aquae Sulis* see *CSIR* 1.2 no. 3.

<sup>970</sup> Cooley (2013) 193.

<sup>971</sup> Cooley (2013) 195.

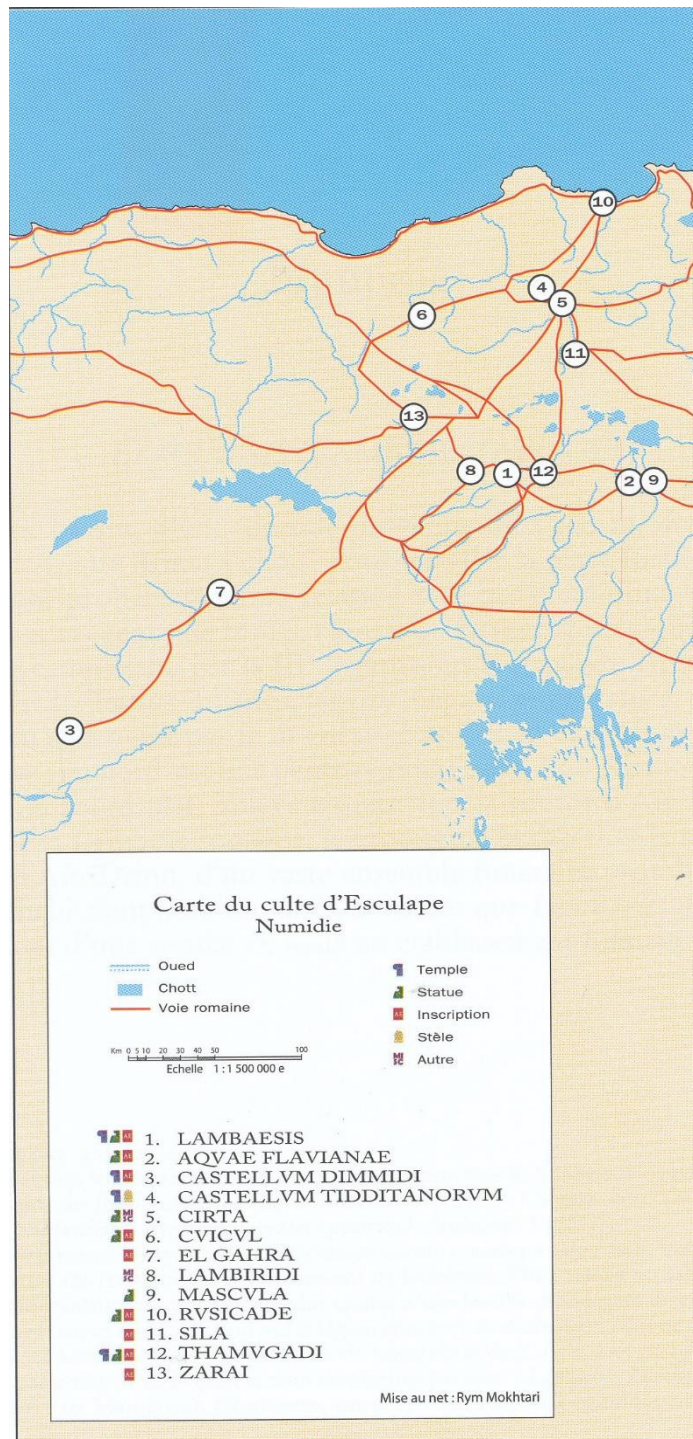


Fig. 8: Evidence for Cult of Asclepius in Numidia.

It is clear that Asclepius was worshipped in different ways and to varying degrees in each of the African provinces. His main military cult-centre in Africa was at Lambaesis in Numidia (Fig. 84) but there was also a temple at Castellum



Tidditanorum where there are ruins of a rectangular complex and a bearded head of Asclepius was found. Another temple was built in Timgad, which was constructed during Commodus' reign and expanded in AD 213 by the local town. Asclepius was worshipped here together with Dea Africa (see Table 8/Fig. 85).<sup>972</sup>

	Temple	Statue	Inscription	Stele	Other
Lambaesis	X	X	X		
Aquae Flaviana		X	X		
Castellum Dimmidi		X	X		
Castellum Tidditanorum	X			X	
Cirta	X				X
Cuicul		X	X		
El Gahra			X		
Lambirdi					X
Macula		X			
Rusicade		X	X		
Sila			X		
Thamugadi	X	X	X		
Zarai			X		
Total	4	7	9	1	2

Table 8: Evidence for Cult from Sites in Numidia.

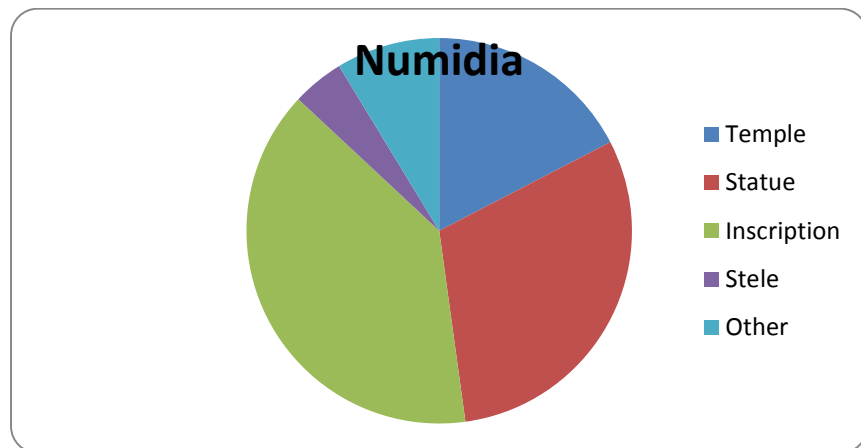


Fig. 85: Evidence for Cult from Sites in Numidia.

<sup>972</sup> Benseddik (2010a) 2.143ff.

The tables and graphs show a varying spread of cult paraphernalia across the two provinces. In Proconsularis there were generally more cult sites including a large number of temples.<sup>973</sup> After all, temples were not a prerequisite for cult on a site and all that was needed was an altar. In some cases only a statue may have been found in bathing complexes, which were especially numerous in Proconsularis. In this case it is not possible to state with certainty that this was a cult site as the statue could merely have served as decoration on the one hand or a reminder of the salubrious nature of the environs on the other. In Numidia most cult sites seem to be clustered around military sites even though civilian settlements did also grow out of these places. The gap between the military and civilian religious lives are, therefore, not completely clear and there must have been a certain level of contact between these groups. However, the military camp at Dura Europos was drastically rebuilt in AD 180-190 and the walls now encircled three temples which had been used by civilians before, namely those of Bel, Mithras, and Artemis Azzanathkona and it seems that from this point onwards they were solely used by soldiers.<sup>974</sup> This could imply that a cult located within an army camp would have been for the sole use of members of the military. This in turn could mean that every cult located within an army camp was, in fact, a so-called 'official' cult. There seem to have, thus, been elements of the cult which occurred more strongly in one of the two provinces. An Asclepieian iconography specific to Africa will be examined next and it will be shown that this too occurred more frequently in Proconsularis.

### 5.3.2 African Iconography

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<sup>973</sup> Laurence and Trifilò (2015) 110.

<sup>974</sup> Downey (2007) 109; Fink, Hoey and Snyder (1940) 11.

It has been shown that the syncretism between Eshmun and Asclepius had a rich history in Africa which was connected with Carthage specifically and the lands under Carthaginian control. The African version of the god also had his own iconography. In Africa, Mercury was represented in a more regional guise with a scorpion as a result of his twinning with Silvanus. Something similar apparently occurred with Asclepius, although, as shown above, Eshmun was represented in the guise of Asclepius, so it is hard to state that this differing iconography was as a result of syncretism. However, the god does appear in a very local guise which occurred only in Africa, indicating that some local elements must have been in play here. This statue is called the Tunis type (Figs. 86-87):



Fig. 86: Statue of Asclepius from Lambaesis.



Fig. 87: Asclepius depicted in the Tunis Type



A statue of Asclepius excavated in the sanctuary of Apollo in Bulla Regia was the first version of this type to be found.<sup>975</sup> *LIMC* lists five occurrences of this statue, four of which come from Africa and the fifth is held in Florence.<sup>976</sup> No other statues from Africa are listed in any of the other iconographic categories, with the exception of statuary from Lepcis Magna. The Tunis type is a variation of the Campana type. The latter type has both arms separate from the torso and Asclepius holds a short snake-staff in his right hand. The *himation* leaves his stomach and left shoulder bare and folds to the knee. This type is based upon the Hellenic iconography of the standing Asclepius and follows the generic and standardised representations of the god found across the Graeco-Roman world (see section 2.4).<sup>977</sup> The Tunis type, according to *LIMC*, has the same drapery and attitude but Asclepius holds his short snake-staff in his left hand.<sup>978</sup> Benseddik adds to this description in an article in which she explores the Asclepieian African iconography in detail. She states that there are forty statues of Asclepius and Hygeia known in Africa. Only in the east of Africa Proconsularis was there any variety in iconographic types of Asclepius but not so much in those of Hygeia.<sup>979</sup> The provinces of Proconsularis and Numidia yield twenty-three statues of the Asclepieian Tunis type with the distribution being as follows:

Africa Proconsularis:

Carthage 1, Gammarth 1, Hamman Djedid 1, Khanget 1, Hadrumentum 2, Thugga 2, Hippo Regius 1, Calama 1, Madaure 1, Thubursicu Numidarum 2.

Numidia:

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<sup>975</sup> Janon (1985) 72.

<sup>976</sup> *LIMC* 2.nos 276-280.

<sup>977</sup> Benseddik (2007) 205.

<sup>978</sup> Holtzmann (1981) 884.

<sup>979</sup> Benseddik (1997) 145.

In general, fewer statues were found in Numidia than in Proconsularis (see below). Benseddik notes that in addition to the variations noted in *LIMC*, there is another difference which was not mentioned as most of these statues also have a vegetative crown, generally made of laurels, although the statue from Hammam Djedid has a crown made of ears of wheat instead.<sup>981</sup> Both this statue and one from Carthage are also accompanied by a statue of Telesphorus. Telesphorus gained prominence in Pergamum and his worship was disseminated from there and grew in popularity from the Trajanic period onwards. Hadrian visited the province of Africa in AD 128 after he had visited Pergamum in AD 124 and, thus, it may be that this iconographic addition was added to the Asclepieian iconography after Hadrian's visit, an after effect of the emperor's worship of the Pergamene Asclepius.

Asclepieian iconography was standardised across the empire and *LIMC* lists seventeen types from across the Graeco-Roman world which were slight variations upon the core Asclepieian representation.<sup>982</sup> This makes the Tunis variant all the more striking, especially as *LIMC* does not comment on the major differences of this type, namely the crown. The crown and the styling of the hair, which was long and arranged in curls, seems to have been a local preference. The origin of this could be from the local deities Eshmun and Marcurgum. The connection with Eshmun is hard to prove as no statue from Africa can be ascribed to this god with any certainty. However, a relief from Beja, badly damaged, depicts a local healing deity called Marcurgum in a group of other such gods. He sits facing the viewer and wears a long tunic and a cape around his right shoulder which leaves the arm bare. He holds a

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<sup>980</sup> Benseddik (1997) 145.

<sup>981</sup> Benseddik (1997) 145-6.

<sup>982</sup> Holtzmann (1981) 863-890.

short staff around which a snake coils in his left hand and the right lies on his knee shaking a *volumen*.<sup>983</sup> The two gods may have been twinned and their iconographies merged here. It is also possible that the vegetative crown iconography comes from Dionysus via Eshmun. Eshmun was also twinned with Dionysus, statues of whom were also found in Sidon and who was commonly depicted wearing such crowns. There are further connections between the three gods as a relief from Lepcis Magna depicts two pillars and a pediment, possibly indicating the temple of Asclepius as this is to whom the dedication is erected. A bearded man, presumably Asclepius, looks on from the pediment and in the centre there is a curled snake and a pine-cone on a stick. This staff is possibly Dionysus' Thyrsus, which was always topped with a pine cone and was a symbol of prosperity and fertility (Fig. 88).<sup>984</sup>



Fig. 88: IRT 264.

**a**

(On the pediment.)

ἀγαθῆ τύχη [τῶν κυ]ρίων

Ἀσκληπιάδης θεῶ

Ἀσκληπιῶ εὐχαριστήρ[ι]ον

<sup>983</sup> Benseddik (1997) 143-4.

<sup>984</sup> Eur. *Bacch.* 23-25; IRT 264: The dedication is dated to the 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD on the basis of its lettering.

**b**

(On the pilasters.)

Pro uic-  
toria  
domi-  
norum  
nostro-  
rum

**c**

(On the base.)

Aretes cau-  
sa dio Aescu-  
lapio Ascle-  
piades Ascle-  
[piadis filiu]s marmorari[u]s  
Nicomed[ia]<sup>985</sup>

Asclepius is worshipped here by a marble merchant. One word stands out in particular from the inscription, which is *aretēs*. The word is Greek but has been code-switched to Latin here.<sup>986</sup> This was perhaps done as the dedicator felt that the meaning of the word had no suitable equivalent to the meaning he wishes to convey.<sup>987</sup> Code-switching often expresses social meanings where the dedicator seeks to present a specific image of himself to the reader.<sup>988</sup>

Only three other inscriptions mentioning Asclepius come from Roman Tripolitania, all of which come from Lepcis Magna and are dated to the 2<sup>nd</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> centuries AD. These inscriptions mention a priest and statues of Asclepius which would imply a cult here but none of the dedicators mention a rank of any sort. They were probably of a non-military origin like Asclepiades the marble-merchant from

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<sup>985</sup> ‘A. For the good fortune of our lords. Asclepiades, (set up) a thank offering to the god Asclepius. B. For the victory of our lords. C. Asclepiades, son of Asclepiades a marble dealer from Nicomedia [set this up] because of his excellence to the god Asclepius’.

<sup>986</sup> Code-switching is a ‘switch from one language into another within one person’s utterance or piece of writing’: Adams (2003) 19. When an author or dedicator did so, he could either use the word in its original alphabet or could switch the characters as well, something which occurs here: Pelttari (2011) 461.

<sup>987</sup> Adams (2008) 23.

<sup>988</sup> Adams (2008) 300.

the above inscription.<sup>989</sup> This matters as it shows the non-military nature of the cult in Roman Tripolitania as none of the worshippers were connected with the army in any way. The epigraphic material shows that the cult in Proconsularis was mainly a civilian cult. Whereas in Numidia (see below) most Asclepieian dedications were erected by people connected to the military, especially *legati*, in Proconsularis there were only two, one a dedication set up by a *propraetor* in Carthage and the other an inscription which mentions a *decurion* who was also a priest of Asclepius from Tiberis.<sup>990</sup> The cult seems to have been civilian in nature and to have had its own iconography which was connected to various local gods. The cults of the god discussed thus far have a strong civilian nature and the military version of Asclepius and his worship will now be explored, starting with an overview of the history of the Third Augustan legion and its movements in Africa, followed by an examination of its religions in general. When the cult of Asclepius in Numidia has been explored extensively, it will be possible to compare the two cults and see whether there were two distinct cults in Africa.

#### 5.4 The Roman Army in Numidia

The previous section (5.2) has shown that the gods Eshmun and Asclepius were syncretised during the classical era and that their joint cult was present in North Africa from this period. From Carthage the cult of Eshmun-Asclepius spread to the rest of Africa Proconsularis and also other lands which were under Carthaginian control. Section 5.3.2 has explored an Asclepieian iconography which was unique to Africa and has highlighted several aspects of the cult which were seemingly

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<sup>989</sup> *IRT* 263, 265, 396. *IRT* 396 is a building inscription from the baths at Lepcis and mentions the erection of a statue of Asclepius there.

<sup>990</sup> *CIL* 8.24535, 8.26185.

distinctive to this area. As such, it cannot be doubted that there was a cult of this god in North Africa. However, the aim of this chapter is to explore whether there was only one cult of the god in Roman North Africa or if there was a higher degree of religious differentiation in this region via the existence of multiple cults. The Roman army, which had been garrisoned in the province of Proconsularis, also worshipped a god Asclepius and this section will examine whether this was the same god as Eshmun-Asclepius or if this was a god which the legion had brought with them to Numidia. In order to understand this properly, the history and movements of the Third Augustan Legion will first be explored, followed by a brief examination of the religion of the legion before moving on to its interactions with Asclepius.

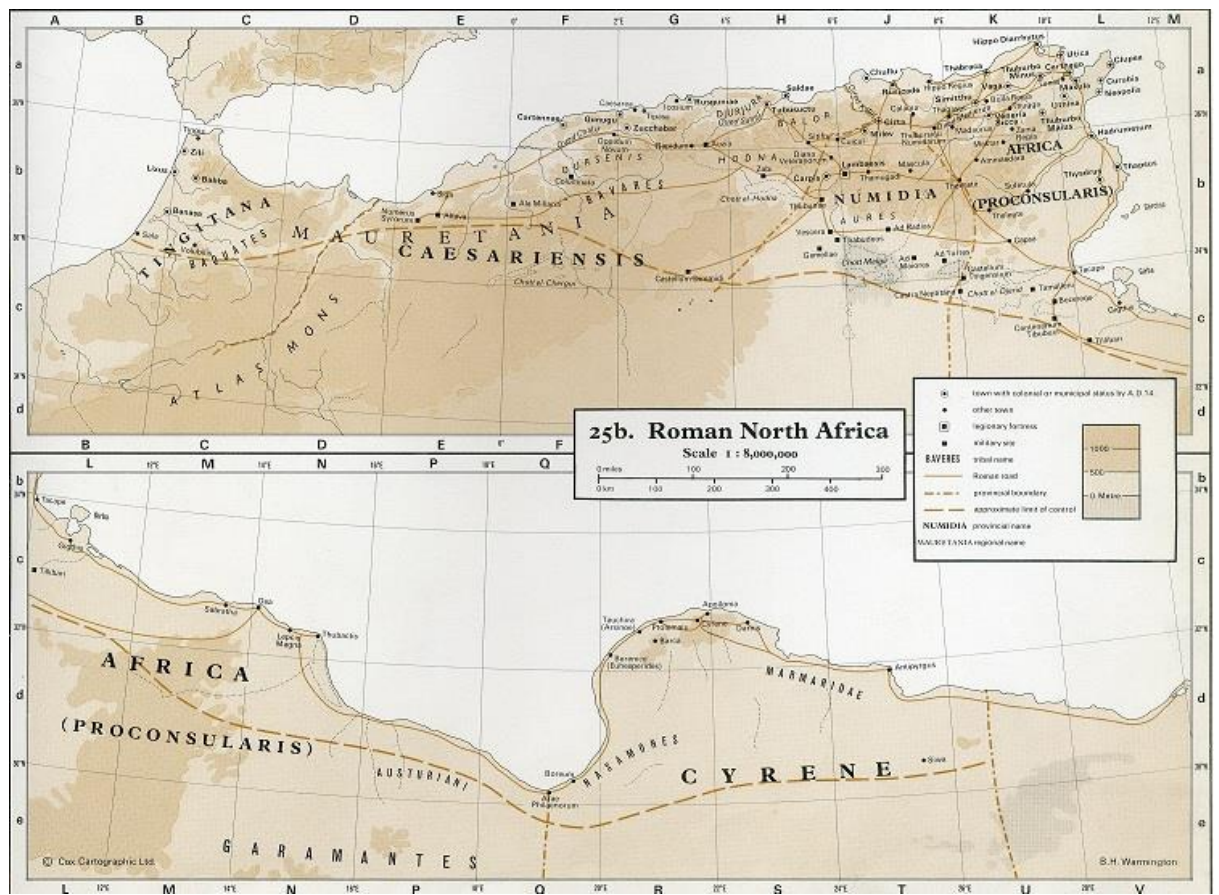


Fig. 89: Map of Roman North Africa.

#### 5.4.1 The *legio III Augusta* in Africa<sup>991</sup>

For most of the imperial era the only legion which was stationed in North Africa (Fig. 89) was the Third Augustan. It is not known when this legion was created but Le Bohec suggests that it is probable that the Third Augustan had been a part of Lepidus' army and that the legion had performed some kind of service to Augustus which made him grant the honour of the use of his name at some time between 27 and 19 BC.<sup>992</sup> However, there is no evidence relating to the Third Augustan before AD 5.<sup>993</sup> It is also not known with any certainty when the *legio III* arrived in Africa, although it was first attested when the legion participated in the African wars which lasted from 6 BC to 9 AD.<sup>994</sup> The earliest garrison of the Third Augustan legion was previously thought to have been at Ammaedara but recent scholarship has now called this into doubt, stating that this camp could have housed only part of the legion.<sup>995</sup> An army was present in Africa from 19 BC and Tacitus mentions that two legions were stationed there, of which the Third Augustan must have been one and the *XII Fulminata* probably the other.<sup>996</sup> However, from AD 6 the *legio III Augusta* was the only one in Africa. Its main task appears to have been surveying the Tunisian mountain ridge from the Tell Atlas to the Oued Medjerda,

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<sup>991</sup> The seminal work on the *legio III Augusta* is Y. le Bohec (1989a) *La Troisième Légion Auguste*. He has published numerous other articles on the legion and its history in Africa as well as another publication on the auxiliaries stationed in Africa: Le Bohec (1989c) *Les unités auxiliaires de l'armée romaine en Afrique Proconsulaire et Numidie sous le Haut-Empire*. As he himself notes, see Le Bohec (2000) 373, this legion has been greatly overlooked by scholars, with the exception of M.P. Speidel (1992) 'The Roman Army in North Africa' in *JRA* 5, 401-7.

<sup>992</sup> Le Bohec (1989a) 337.

<sup>993</sup> Cass. Dio 55.23.

<sup>994</sup> Le Bohec (2000) 373.

<sup>995</sup> Le Bohec (1989a) 335; Le Bohec (2000) 373. Haïdra is the modern settlement built around Ammaedara. For the camp at Haïdra see Mackensen (1997). Where possible the ancient Roman place names have been given but for some places only the modern name is known.

<sup>996</sup> Tac. *Ann.* 4.5; *CIL* 8.26580. The *IX Hispana* was also sent to Africa to deal with some uprisings, for example, Tac. *Ann.* 3.9.

forming a defensive line, Le Bohec's '*système défensif*'.<sup>997</sup> The earliest epigraphic evidence connected to the Third Augustan, victory commemorations, dates to the Augustan era and the latest is dated to 244/5, namely religious dedications.<sup>998</sup>

The *legio III Augusta* was first stationed about two and a half kilometres from Vaga from where two strategic routes through Africa were created in the Tiberian period, one from Tacape to Ammaedara and one to Lepcis Magna further inland.<sup>999</sup> Caligula transferred control of the legion from the proconsul to a legate and also established a defensive system around Cirta, with the main emphasis on the camp at Ain Phua and other local garrisons.<sup>1000</sup> The legion was possibly moved to Ammaedara where it was garrisoned up to AD 75, leading to a revolt by the local population.<sup>1001</sup> From there the Third Augustan was moved to Theveste in AD 75, where the legion remained until the late Trajanic or early Hadrianic period. Ammaedara became a colony in AD 76 which may have been linked to the legion's move.<sup>1002</sup> The move led to the creation of further defensive lines around the army headquarters, with new outposts being founded. Carthage and Cuicul were the main posts of the Ammaedara defensive system and garrisons were installed at Mascula, Henchir el-Hammam, and Lambaesis around Theveste.<sup>1003</sup>

The legion moved to Lambaesis where it remained until the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD.<sup>1004</sup> It is not known when exactly the legion moved here but Le Bohec suggests between AD 115 and 120.<sup>1005</sup> Theveste also became a colony at the end of Trajan's reign and, as with Ammaedara, this may have been connected to the

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<sup>997</sup> The word *limes* was rarely used in an African context. Le Bohec (2000) 373 therefore states that he prefers the usage of the term defensive system. The Oued Medjerda was also referred to as Bagradas.

<sup>998</sup> Le Bohec (1989a) 58, Table '*Contexte épigraphique (inscriptions militaires africaines)*'.

<sup>999</sup> Le Bohec (1989a) 341.

<sup>1000</sup> Le Bohec (2000) 374. Cirta is modern Constantine.

<sup>1001</sup> Le Bohec (1989a) 341, 357.

<sup>1002</sup> Le Bohec (1989a) 361-2.

<sup>1003</sup> Le Bohec (2000) 374-5.

<sup>1004</sup> *CIL* 8.2534; Cagnat (1908) 10.

<sup>1005</sup> Le Bohec (2003) 45.



legion's departure.<sup>1006</sup> Hadrian himself visited Africa and Lambaesis, the then general quarters of the legion, in AD 128.<sup>1007</sup> During its period in Africa the legion had to deal with numerous local revolts but also vastly expanded Roman territory, eventually controlling most of the north of the African continent, consisting of four provinces: Africa Proconsularis, Numidia, Mauretania Caesariensis, and Mauretania Tingitana via numerous forts and garrisons stationed across these frontiers.<sup>1008</sup> From the Trajanic era the Aurasian defensive systems were in place and did not need to develop much further. This included the legion's headquarters at Lambaesis and outposts at Tfilzi, Vazaivi, Mascula, Aquae Flavinanae (?), Casae, Vazubi, Zarai, ad Calceum Herculis, two *burgii speculatorii*, Zebaret et Tir, Mchaieb, Henchir Sellaouine, the camp at Montagne de Sel, the one at Confluent and Gemellae, and an unknown post.<sup>1009</sup> Also at this time, the defensive lines from the Sahara to Numidia were in place which included six new forts at Ad Maiores, El-Gahra, Aïn Rich, Castellum Dimmidi, Gemellae, and Hammam du Charef.<sup>1010</sup>

The legion only slowly expanded out of Numidia and defensive systems are found in Tripolitania from the time of Commodus onwards with outposts at Henchir Mgarine, Vezereos, Tisawar, Henchir Medeina, Remada, and Si Aoun. The military frontiers moved further into Africa under Severus and garrisons were established at Zella, Waddan, Tagrifit, Bu Njem, Gasr Zerzi, the two Gheriats, Aïn el-Avenia, and Ghademes.<sup>1011</sup> In the Hadrianic period, there were numerous posts occupied by soldiers, but only a few are now known and only two with any certainty, namely

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<sup>1006</sup> Le Bohec (1989a) 362.

<sup>1007</sup> Wolff (2003) 53.

<sup>1008</sup> See Le Bohec (1989a) 335-365 for a full overview of military actions during this period; Le Bohec (2007) 242.

<sup>1009</sup> Le Bohec (2000) 376.

<sup>1010</sup> Le Bohec (2000) 377.

<sup>1011</sup> Le Bohec (2000) 377. Bu Njem may also have been called Chol, Chosol, Golas or Gholana. Ghademes may also have had the name Cydamus.

Carthage and Gemellae, as no legionaries are attested to the south-west of the Aures in the pre-Hadrianic period.<sup>1012</sup> The expansion, especially to the south and into Tripolitania, reached its apogee under the Severans, and Septimius Severus also created the official province of Numidia.<sup>1013</sup> As Le Bohec points out, the *legio III Augusta* was the army belonging to a province which had not officially been created yet, although the legion was referred to in various ways such as *exercitus Africae*.<sup>1014</sup> The legion was disbanded for political reasons in AD 238 and re-founded in AD 253.<sup>1015</sup>

#### 5.4.2 The Religion of the *legio III Augusta*

Thus, Roman North Africa was garrisoned for the most part only by the *legio III Augusta*, stationed at Lambaesis in AD 128/9.<sup>1016</sup> In the course of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD other localities sprang up around Lambaesis, adapting to the presence of the legion in the area. Originally the legion may have comprised men primarily of Italian origin but later on the legion would have probably recruited locally. The army was created for the purpose of war and in order to adapt to a peacetime and more settled situation, the legion changed both the secular and the sacred space around it to suit its purposes, outlining its territory, which included an infrastructure and hydraulic system.<sup>1017</sup> From the moment of settlement, religious space was created for the

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<sup>1012</sup> Le Bohec (2003) 42. A cohort was stationed in Carthage and there was a fort in Gemellae.

<sup>1013</sup> Le Bohec (1989a) 395; Le Bohec (2000) 375n40: a Commodan date may be preferred for the installation of the legion in Tripolitania but the greatest expansion and advance into the area happened under Severus as Tertullian and the foundation of forts at Bu Njem (see above), Gheriat, and Ghadames show.

<sup>1014</sup> *CIL* 5.531; Le Bohec (2003) 41.

<sup>1015</sup> *ILS* 531/*CIL* 8.2482.

<sup>1016</sup> *CIL* 8.2534; Benseddik (2009) 239 has noted that scholars have mainly paid attention in the past to the placing of the military and the defensive lines, paying little attention to the religious life in Africa. Lambaesis is modern Tazzoult in Algeria.

<sup>1017</sup> Hilali (2007) 481.

traditional military Roman gods, such as *Disciplina*, the military *genii*, and the cult of the emperor. The Graeco-Roman gods Jupiter, Juno, Minerva, Mercury, Demeter, Diana, Cybele, Hercules, Asclepius, Hygeia, Venus, Mars, Isis, and Serapis were all worshipped in Africa.<sup>1018</sup>

*Pro Salute* dedications were also very common and are attested from the early principate to the late 2<sup>nd</sup>-early 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD.<sup>1019</sup> These are found together with most deities, for example Jupiter Dolichenus, and Asclepius and Victory.<sup>1020</sup> However, they are most commonly found in conjunction with Jupiter Optimus Maximus and Fishwick states that its use could either be of a general or a specific nature. In the latter case, this was usually as a result of conspiracies and other calamitous events which threaten the emperor and, therefore, the stability of the Empire.<sup>1021</sup> Fishwick also comments that *pro salute* dedications in Roman Africa often invoke gods with an African character, for example Pluto Augustus, together with gods such as Jupiter Optimus Maximus, which he states shows a realisation on the dedicator's part that he was a member of an Empire who should express loyalty to the emperor, as the stability of the *orbis Romanus* depended on the emperor's wellbeing.<sup>1022</sup> Dedicators were here, thus, combining regional with global religious elements.

From the moment of settlement, the Third Augustan legion defined their religious space. There was a religious communality within the camp focussed on traditional beliefs but oriental gods such as Jupiter Dolichenus and Mithras were also

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<sup>1018</sup> Benseddik (2009) 240-241.

<sup>1019</sup> Le Bohec (1989a) 563; Fishwick (2004) 352.

<sup>1020</sup> Jupiter Dolichenus: *CIL* 8.2680; Asclepius and Victory: *CIL* 8.17726.

<sup>1021</sup> Fishwick (2004) 353, 355.

<sup>1022</sup> Fishwick (2004) 357. Pluto was imported together with the Cereres to North Africa in the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC: Cadotte (2007) 325. Cadotte (2007) 329-332 table 17 lists 71 inscriptions set up to this god in North Africa between the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> centuries AD where they are possible to date.

worshipped by the legion.<sup>1023</sup> Deities with connections to Africa such as Neptune, Ceres, and Saturn (see above) were also supplicated by the *legio*, which consisted, later on, mainly of locally recruited troops.<sup>1024</sup> However, the officers were mainly of a non-African origin and it was precisely this group which was the most mobile and facilitated the spread of cults.<sup>1025</sup> Archaeological and epigraphic evidence indicates that Lambaesis grew to be the administrative, military, and religious centre of North Africa.<sup>1026</sup> Benseddik states that Asclepius and Hygeia dominated the pantheon here because of the importance of the sanctuary and the number of dedications.<sup>1027</sup> Dedications were made to the gods here by legates and provincial governors, amongst others, further attesting to their prominence.<sup>1028</sup> The Asclepieion became an important healing centre with soldiers from all across the province dedicating there and seeking the god's help.<sup>1029</sup>

A *vexillum* was sent from Lambaesis to Bu Njem, where dedications were found within the camp to traditional Roman deities such as Fortuna, Salus, Jupiter and the *genius* of the place. Dedications found outside the camp proper were solely to Libyan syncretic gods, namely Mars Canaphar and Jupiter Hammon, indicating that they were probably also supplicated by the local population.<sup>1030</sup> These deities

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<sup>1023</sup> Benseddik (2009) 239; Hilali (2007) 482-5. There was also a public cult of Caelestis to whom a temple had been built by the legate Claudius Gallus in AD 202-5: *AE* 2010.1834. For more on Mithras see Chapter 4.

<sup>1024</sup> These are gods who were either worshipped from early on in Africa or enjoyed extensive cult here. Dio. Sic. 11.21.4 mentions a sacrifice made to Neptune in North Africa and Cadotte (2007) 312-314 table 16 lists 51 inscriptions dedicated to the god. The cult of the Cereres was founded early on in Africa in the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC as Dio. Sic. 14.70.77 narrates, who states that the Carthaginians introduced the cult to Carthage in order to atone to the goddesses after they sacked their sanctuary in Syracus in 396 BC. Cadotte (2007) 348-352 table 18 lists 88 inscriptions erected to the goddesses in Africa. Cadotte (2007) 25 states that Baal Hammon was twinned with Cronos, the Greek version of Saturn, in the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC in Africa. In table 1, p. 30-37, Cadotte lists 129 inscriptions dedicated to Saturn dating to between the 1<sup>st</sup> century BC to the 4<sup>th</sup> AD; Benseddik (2009) 253.

<sup>1025</sup> Le Bohec (2000) 378; Collar (2011) 8. See also section 1.1.8.

<sup>1026</sup> Hilali (2007) 486.

<sup>1027</sup> Benseddik (2005) 275.

<sup>1028</sup> *AE* 1973 630.

<sup>1029</sup> Benseddik (2005) 277.

<sup>1030</sup> Hilali (2007) 488.

were not chosen by chance as Jupiter Hammon protected travellers and caravans, upon whom Bu Njem was dependant for economy and trade.<sup>1031</sup> Not much is known about Canaphar, other than that he was probably another version of the god Sinipher, who was a god of war and shared many characteristics with Canaphar and Mars.<sup>1032</sup> Here there was a combination of traditional and local gods, chosen for their suitability for the indigenous and also military population. African architecture was also introduced and Libyan temples erected on the camp peripheries. Seventeen dedications were made by soldiers from the legion in Tripolitania, which were a mixture of private and group, and also to both Roman and oriental gods.<sup>1033</sup>

Having examined religion in the Roman army generally (see section 4.1.1), and also the religion of the *legio III Augusta*, the rest of the chapter will now focus on the impact of the Roman army on the cult of Asclepius in Roman North Africa.

#### 5.4.3 The *legio III Augusta* and Asclepius

Soldiers followed their set hierarchical, collective way of life in many aspects of their off-duty existence, including religion, which meant that many dedications erected by soldiers were not always done by individuals but by groups (see Chapter 4).<sup>1034</sup> Asclepius would have been a natural deity for soldiers to worship but they also supplicated long lists of deities, and often dedicated to All the Gods, adding to

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<sup>1031</sup> Hilali (2007) 487-8.

<sup>1032</sup> AE 1979 645: *Deo Marti Canaphari Aug(usto) / pro salute et incolumitate domini n(ostri) / Imp(eratoris) Caes(aris) divi Septimi Severi [[nepotis]] / divi Magni Antonini [[filii]] / M(arci) Aureli Severi [[Alexandri]] In(victi) Pii Felicis Aug(usti) pontificis / maximi trib(uniciae) potestatis III co(n)s(ulis) / p(atris) p(atriciae) et Iuliae [[Mamm(a)ea]] Aug(ustae) matris / Aug(usti) n(ostri) et castrorum totiusque / domus divinae per vexillatio/nem [[leg(ionis) III Aug(ustae) P(iae) V(indicis)]] Severianae / curante T(ito) Flavio Aproniano (centurione) / [[leg(ionis) eiusdem]] praeposito vexillationis*

<sup>1033</sup> Hilali (2007) 488-9.

<sup>1034</sup> Le Bohec (1989b) 236-7.

the efficiency of their prayers and protecting themselves in all ways.<sup>1035</sup> The Third Augustan Legion was, in general, prolific in erecting dedications, as can be shown from a table from Le Bohec's study (Table 9):

	Ie S	Iie S	IIie S	IVe S
<i>Gouverneurs</i>	4	29	58	91
<i>Officiers</i>	0	7	11	18
<i>Centurions</i>	1	11	38	50
<i>Soldates gradés</i>	2	9	28	39
<i>Simple soldates</i>	1	1	1	3
<i>Unités (vexillations, légion)</i>	0	4	27	31
<i>Total</i>	8	61	163	232

Table 9: Dedicators from the Third Augustan Legion.

Apollo and Diana provided a 'divine health service' during the early empire but Asclepius soon took over from them and was quite popular, in military as in civilian life, and was favoured by soldiers, for example at Lambaesis where there was a large Asclepieion built onto the camp walls.<sup>1036</sup>

#### 5.4.4 Lambaesis

Lambaesis is located in a small valley, and was probably chosen for its strategic position, abundance of water sources and forests, as well as a good climate.<sup>1037</sup> The *legio III Augusta* moved its headquarters from Theveste to Lambaesis. It is not known precisely when this transfer took place but Le Bohec

<sup>1035</sup> Le Bohec (1989b) 237, 248.

<sup>1036</sup> Benseddik (2005) 275. Two altars to Apollo dating to AD 121-3 were found at Lambaesis making Benseddik argue that there was originally a temple to Apollo on site as was the case with other sanctuaries such as at Epidaurus. However, given the late date of the foundation of the temple here this seems unlikely as by this time Asclepius was already well established as the healing god of the Graeco-Roman world and had already been worshipped by the military for some time as well. Two altars also does not seem enough to argue for the existence of a temple as they could have been dedicated within the Asclepieian context, due to the familial relations between the two gods: *AE* 1920 37; *AE* 1913 24.

<sup>1037</sup> Benseddik (2010a) 2.107.

suggests sometime between AD 115 and 117, as is indicated by numismatic evidence and a mention in Claudius Ptolemy's Geography about a legion stationed at Lambaesis.<sup>1038</sup> There was already a military outpost in place in Lambaesis prior to the official move of the headquarters, as the camp here, the so-called camp of Titus, was built between 1<sup>st</sup> July and 13<sup>th</sup> September AD 81 and the camp site was chosen by the propraetorian legate Lucius Tettius Iulianus.<sup>1039</sup> The original excavations of the site were badly documented, leading scholars to be uncertain whether there had been any prior settlement before the foundation of the camp and the legion's arrival as there was no evidence for this apart from a few coins featuring Numidian kings found in the area.<sup>1040</sup> Janon states that the place name Lambaesis is not of Latin origin but belongs to a group of names in central Numidia which start with Lam-, for example Lambiodi, Lamsorti, and Lamigig. In fact, 80% of the cities in Numidia had a Libyan origin.<sup>1041</sup> However, after a recent series of excavations, a vast ensemble of protohistorical funerary ware has been discovered in the highlands of Ain Drinn confirming that the site of Lambaesis was settled prior to the arrival of the Third Augustan Legion.<sup>1042</sup>

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<sup>1038</sup> Le Bohec (1989a) 362; Ptol. *Geog.* 4.3.

<sup>1039</sup> *AE* 1954 137: *Imp(eratore) T(ito) Caesare divi Ves/pasiani filio Aug(usto) pon(tifice) max(imo) / trib(unicia) pot(estate) [[XI]] co(n)s(ule) VIII / [[imp(eratore) XV cens(ore) p(atre) p(atriciae) et Caes(are) di]] / [[vi filio) Domitiano co(n)s(ule) VII]] / L(ucio) Tettio Iu[l]iano leg(ato) Aug(usti) pr(o) pr(aetore) / [[leg(io) [III]] Aug(ustae) / muros et castra a solo / fecit.*

<sup>1040</sup> Janon (1977) 3-4; Benseddik (2010a) 2.108.

<sup>1041</sup> Janon (1977) 4.

<sup>1042</sup> Benseddik (2010a) 2.107.



Fig. 90: Map of Lambaesis.

The city of Lambaesis grew around the camp and became a *municipium* at the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD before it became a *colonia* between AD 246 and 252 (Fig. 90).<sup>1043</sup> It was divided into the upper and lower city with the grand camp located in the lower city. The camp was 500 meters long and 420 meters wide and had a wall constructed around it, separating it from the city.<sup>1044</sup> The best known structures in the upper city were the Capitoline temple and a temple to an unknown god, which Janon states can be securely identified as a temple of the cult of the

<sup>1043</sup> Janon (1977) 9.

<sup>1044</sup> Janon (1977) 5.



emperor on the basis of an unpublished inscription.<sup>1045</sup> Other sanctuaries in the city were a nymphaeum, a temple to Isis and Serapis, a Mithraeum, a temple to Dea Africa, and the Asclepieion.<sup>1046</sup> The Asclepieion was built against the southern wall of the camp of Titus and is demarcated by a wadi in the west and the Via Septimiana in the east.<sup>1047</sup> Surprisingly, the earliest evidence for a healing cult in Lambaesis is not for that of Asclepius, but two altars which were dedicated to Apollo Salutaris, dated to AD 123.<sup>1048</sup> Between AD 143 and 146 Asclepius replaced his father as healing god on this site. The first evidence for the cult of Asclepius on site was a dedication by a Gaius Prastina Messalinus who dedicated a pool to Asclepius and Hygeia between AD 143 and 146 (Figs. 91-92):

C(aius) Prastina / Messalinus / cum suis conse/crauit piscinam / Aesculapio / et Hygiae<sup>1049</sup>



VIII 4149

AE 1989, 870

VIII 18275



Figs. 91-92: AE 1989 870.

<sup>1045</sup> Janon (1977) 13.

<sup>1046</sup> Christol and Janon (2002) 73.

<sup>1047</sup> Janon (1985) 38.

<sup>1048</sup> AE 1920 37: *Apollini / Salutarifero / iussu ipsius / P(ublius) Metilius Secundus / leg(atus) Aug(usti) pr(o) pr(aetore)* and CIL 8.2591.

<sup>1049</sup> AE 1989.870: 'Gaius Prastina Messalinus and associates consecrated a pool to Asclepius and Hygeia'.

Messalinus was a *legatus* who was attested in Lambaesis, Timgad, and Aquae Flavianae where he dedicated to the nymphs.<sup>1050</sup> This inscription has long been taken as a sign of the introduction of the cult here.<sup>1051</sup> The nature of this dedication is private and there is no architectural evidence which points to a temple or sanctuary of the god at this point. Temples were common cultic accessories as they were houses of the gods and also acted as treasuries but they were expensive to build so, as a cult developed, more cultic amenities could be added later on. Therefore, it is possible that a cult of Asclepius was already present on site prior to the building of the temple but that there is no evidence for it.

The temple of Asclepius was not built until AD 162 and it had a very unusual floor plan (Figs. 93-94):

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<sup>1050</sup> *CIL* 8.2535-2541, 18044, 17851, 17893, 17723.

<sup>1051</sup> Benseddik (2010a) 2.120; Benseddik (2007) 197.

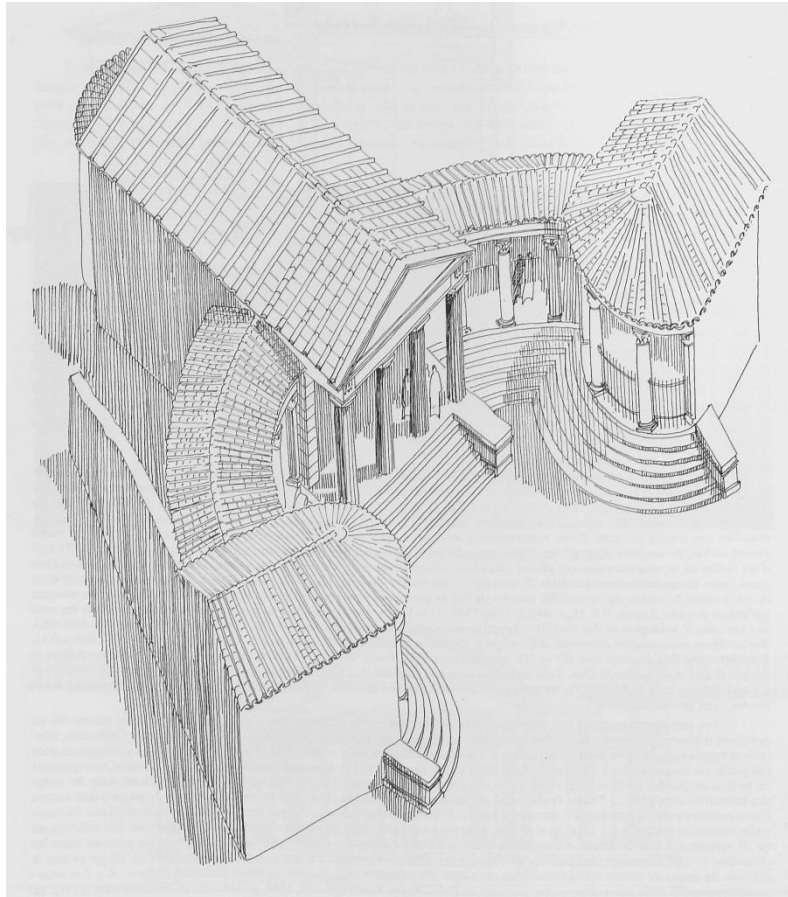


Fig. 93: Reconstructed drawing of the Asclepieion.



Fig. 94: Aerial Photo of the Lambaesis Asclepieion.

The temple is divided into three parts, of which the central structure was dedicated to Asclepius and Salus, the Latin version of Hygeia. The two side chapels were

dedicated to Jupiter Valens and Silvanus Pegasianus.<sup>1052</sup> These two side structures used the Corinthian order but the temple of Asclepius used the Doric order, which rarely occurs in North Africa. It seems that this order was used to signal something about Asclepius and not about the legion *per se* as at Bu Njem, where a *vexillum* had been sent, other orders combined with African elements were used for temple architecture (see section 5.4.2).<sup>1053</sup> This order could have been used to either connect the god here to the Epidaurian version of Asclepius, or maybe to distinguish Asclepius from local healing gods.<sup>1054</sup> Janon suggests that the Doric order was also linked with, and refers to, the tradition of Greek medicine, as numerous healing temples such as the Asclepieia in Athens, Cos, Epidaurus, and Messene, and also the temple of Apollo Epicures at Bassae, used this order.<sup>1055</sup> Greek gods had been present in Africa, especially in Carthage, since the Hellenistic ages, either brought there directly from Greece or indirectly via Magna Graecia and Alexandria.<sup>1056</sup>

The temple has four columns which supported an inscribed architrave, identifying the temple (Figs. 95-96):

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<sup>1052</sup> Janon (1977) 15; Pegasus was one of the symbols of the legion.

<sup>1053</sup> Hilali (2007) 488-9.

<sup>1054</sup> Janon (1985) 86.

<sup>1055</sup> Janon (1985) 84-5.

<sup>1056</sup> Benseddik (2007) 195.



Fig. 95: Temple of Asclepius at Lambaesis.



Fig. 96: *CIL* 8.2579.

Iovi Valenti / has aedes // Aesculapio et Saluti / Imp(erator) Caes(ar) M(arcus) Aurelius Antoninus Aug(ustus) pont(ifex) max(imus) et / Imp(erator) Caes(ar) L(ucius) Aurelius Verus Augustus // Silvano / per [[leg(ionem) III]] Aug(ustam) fecerunt<sup>1057</sup>

<sup>1057</sup> *CIL* 8.18089a-c: ‘Emperor Caesar Marcus Aurelius Antoninus Augustus, *pontifex maximus*, and Emperor Caesar Lucius Aurelius Verus Augustus built this temple to Jupiter Valens, Asclepius and Salus, and Silvanus, on behalf of the III Augustan legion’. Only one column is still standing now as the whole structure collapsed.

As the co-rule of Marcus and Verus is mentioned in the inscription, the temple can be dated to between AD 161 and 169. Two dedications to Jupiter Valens and Silvanus were placed in the foundation mouldings which reduces the possible construction period to between AD 161-2 as the dedicator Decimus Fonteius Frontianus Lucius Stertinius Refinus was *legatus* of the legion between 160 and 161.<sup>1058</sup> Janon believes that the temple was built for use by the legionaries here. Benseddik argues that the profound attachment of Marcus to Asclepius was probably reason enough to erect the sanctuary here but it could also be tentatively placed in the context of the plague which spread through the empire at this time.<sup>1059</sup> The order in which the gods are named here is significant as Jupiter's name occurs above the entrance to his chapel. The inscriptions were structured and created thus, that the names of the gods appeared above the entrances to their respective temples and it also allowed for the association between Asclepius, Salus, and the emperors.<sup>1060</sup> Janon gives the following schema to understand the layout of the inscription with regard to the temple<sup>1061</sup>:

IOVI VALENTI	AESCVLAPIO ET SALVTI	SILVANO
	IMP.CAES.M.AURELIUS AVG.PONT.MAX.ET	
	IMP. CAES.L.AURELIUS VERUS AVGVSTVS	
HAS AEDES		PER LEG III FECERVNT

The name of the god would thus correspond to the physical placement of his temple.

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<sup>1058</sup> *CIL* 8.18089; Janon (1985) 83; *PIR*<sup>2</sup> A.472 p.199. He was perhaps consul in AD 162 or 163.

<sup>1059</sup> Benseddik (2010a) 2.109: she does not explain why Marcus Aurelius should have such an attachment to Asclepius, apart from the plague which occurred during his reign. Renberg (2006/7) 125 mentions that Aurelius also went to the Pergamene shrine: Fronto *Ep.* 3.10.2. See also M. Aur. *Med.* 1.17.20 which could refer to dreams sent by Asclepius.

<sup>1060</sup> Benseddik (2010a) 2.121.

<sup>1061</sup> Janon (1985) 69.

North of the Asclepieion were eight *sacella* dedicated to various gods, for example the *dii patrii*, Medaurus, Iarhibôl, the *genius* of Colonia Cirta, and Jupiter Bazocenus, and to the south, next to the chapel of Jupiter Valens there was a small temple to Aquae Silnuessaniae.<sup>1062</sup> Why this temple was placed here is unclear but Pliny mentions that the waters there were thought to be especially good for curing women from infertility and men from madness. Imhotep-Asclepius specialised in fertility and was thanked by Ptolemy VI Philopater and Cleopatra for granting them a son (see section 3.1.2).<sup>1063</sup> This could be the connecting factor between the two localities. Inscriptions found in the camp attest to a second Mithraeum and a cult of the *genius Vici*. In the smaller camp at Djebel Asker there was a temple to Minerva and in other places in the area there were cults to Jupiter Optimus Maximus, Jupiter Heliopolitanus, Caelestis, Mercury, Dii Mauri, Neptune and many others.<sup>1064</sup> Saturn was the main African deity worshipped in the region of Lambaesis where there were three sanctuaries to him.

The collective nature of military dedications (see Chapter 4) also occurs here as it aptly shown in an inscription from the Asclepieion at Lambaesis (Fig. 97):

Religiosi / qui stipem / ad Aescula/pium pone/re volunt / in thes/aurarium / mittant / ex quibus / aliquod / donum / Aescula/pio fiat.<sup>1065</sup>

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<sup>1062</sup> Medaurus was Dalmatian, Iarhibôl came from Palmyra, the *genius* of Colonia Cirta, now Constantine in Algeria: Janon (1977) 15-6. Silnuessa was a famous bathing complex near Naples. See Le Bohec (1989a) 566-7 for a tabulated list of dedications to these gods.

<sup>1063</sup> Hurry (1928) 95-96.

<sup>1064</sup> Janon (1977) 16.

<sup>1065</sup> *AE* 2003.2021: 'The pious men who wish to make payment to Aesculapius should place it in this collection bowl and we will make some sort of offering to Aesculapius with it. '; Le Bohec (1989b) 237.



Fig. 97: AE 2003 2021.

This inscription was found in a cistern in the camp and is undated. The inscription concerns the erection of a future dedication to Asclepius, calling upon any soldiers who want to, to put money into a bowl, which will provide the funds for the dedications. Le Bohec imagines the *thesaurus* to be a bowl but it is unknown what form this actually took, as it is no longer extant.<sup>1066</sup> It concerns a collective military dedication. The terminology used in this dedication is important and Christol and Janon have pointed out that the term *stips* was also used in a dedication to Asclepius from Rome.<sup>1067</sup> They argue that *religiosi* indicates not a general invitation for anyone to give money, but that this is aimed at donors from a specific and closely defined group of people. The inscription points these people in the direction of Asclepius and indicates that as the act is voluntary so those who dedicate funds are the most religious of this delineated group of potential worshippers. It is because they are the most religious that they are mentioned by the inscription.<sup>1068</sup> The inscription, thus, shows a very exclusive group of worshippers in this case.

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<sup>1066</sup> Le Bohec (1989b) 237.

<sup>1067</sup> *CIL* 6.7; AE 1987 53; Christol and Janon (2002) 77.

<sup>1068</sup> Christol and Janon (2002) 78; Cicero *De Nat* 2.72 states that the *religiosi* are the most pious of worshippers.



At Lambaesis the majority of the inscriptions erected in the Asclepieion were dedicated by individuals who were members of the military. Yet, it seems that in general the collective nature of military life prompted soldiers to make dedications together. Examples of this within the cult of Asclepius are inscriptions, such as the one mentioned above and the foundation inscription of the cult at Lambaesis. Yet, an inscription has also been found in Lambaesis which fits in with other collective dedications such as one from Rome, where a group of Thracian soldiers who were part of the praetorian cohort erected a dedication to the syncretic god Asclepius Zimidrenus together (see section 4.4).<sup>1069</sup> This dedication does not mention a specific god to whom the soldiers dedicated it, making it possible that they were worshipping Asclepius, due to its location in the temple of Asclepius, or as Fishwick has argued that it was set up for the *domus divina*, which seems the more likely option:<sup>1070</sup>

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<sup>1069</sup> *CIL* 6.2799.

<sup>1070</sup> Fishwick (1990) 336-337. The inscription was found *in situ* in the temple and was not taken to either the temple or the camp of Titus as was long thought: Benseddik (2010a) 2.136 no.45.

Qui imagines sa/cras aureas fecerunt / corniculari(i) / L(ucius) Considius Paulus Rusic(ade) / C(aius) Calventius Ianuar(ius) cas(tris) / comment(arienses) / Aufidius Rufus Lamb(aesi) / L(ucius) Orbius Felix trib(uni) leg(ionis) / speculatores / L(ucius) Publicius Florentin(us) Lamb(aesi) / C(aius) Caecilius Felix Bisica / C(aius) Iulius Dexter Theves(te) / Fadius Dubitatus Hadr(umeto) / beneficiari(i) co(n)s(ulares) / Q(uintus) Iulius Fructuosus Kart(hagine) / L(ucius) Agrius Felix Utica / Q(uintus) Iulius Catulus Lamb(aesi) q(uaestor) / M(arcus) Caesius Honoratus Tham(ugade) / L(ucius) Valerius Iulianus Tham(ugade) / C(aius) Aelius Iulianus Sarmi[z(egetusa)] / M(arcus) Valer(ius) Aquileiensis Thev(este) / T(itus) Aelius Victorinus Siscia / Q(uintus) Fulvius Natulus Kart(hagine) / Caelius Victor Hadr(umeto) / M(arcus) Iulius Proculus Lamb(aesi) / M(arcus) Aurel(ius) Nicostratus Thars(o) / P(ublius) Cornelius Victor Cuicul(o) / L(ucius) Fonteius Demetrian(us) Masc(ula) / M(arcus) Attius Pacatianus Cirta / Veturius Vitalis Lamb(aesi) / D(ecimus) Iunius Felix Utica / L(ucius) Atilius Barbarus Mil(evo) / Sex(tus) Marcius Felix Assur(a) / Firmius Felix cast(ris) / Q(uintus) Duronius Primus Vaga / P(ublius) Claudius Valentin(us) Had(rumeto) / Cornelius Claudian(us) Lamb(aesi) / T(itus) Flavius Fortunatus Hadr(umeto) / P(ublius) Egnatius Felix Karth(agine) / L(ucius) Valerius Niger Tham<u=O>g(ade) / C(aius) Annius Iulianus castr(is) / M(arcus) Septimius Tutianus Kart(hagine) / M(arcus) Helvius Conductor cast(ris) / C(aius) Iulius Verus Amm(a)eder(a) / quaestionari(i) / C(aius) Iulius Donatus castr(is) / <T=I>(itus?) Marcius Gemellus / T(itus) Aemilius Victor Kart(hagine) / Q(uintus) Salonius Repentinus Tha(mugade) / P(ublius) Aelius Tauriscus Sufet(ula) / b(eneficiarii) sexm(estrus) / Furfanius Felix / C(aius) Iulius Felix Tham(ugade) / Valerius Daphnus / L(ucius) Clodius Concessus Kart(hagine) / Q(uintus) Iulius Victor Thel(epte) / harusp(ex) / S(extus) Iulius Felix Thev(este) // Cura agente / C(aio) Memmio Vic(tore) |(centurione) leg(ionis) II Aug(ustae).<sup>1071</sup>

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<sup>1071</sup> *CIL* 8.2586: ‘Those who made these sacred golden statues, the officer’s aide Lucius Considius Paulus from Rusicade, Gaius Calventius Ianuarius *commentarius* of the camp, Aufidius Rufus from Lambaesis, Lucius Orbius Felix tribune of the legion, the scouts Lucius Publius Florentinus from Lambaesis, Gaius Caecilius Felix from Bisica, Gaius Julius Dexter from Theveste, Fadius Dubitatus from Hadrumetum, the consul’s bodyguards, Quintus Julius Fructosus from Carthage, Lucius Agrius Felix from Utica, Quintus Julius Catulus from Lambaesis quaestor, Marcus Caesius Honoratus from Thamugade, Lucius Valerius Julianus from Thamugade, Gaius Aelius Julianus from Sarmizegetusa, Marcus Valerius Aquileiensis from Theveste, Titus Aelius Victorinus from Siscia, Quintus Fulvius Natulus from Carthage, Caelius Victor from Hadrumetum, Marcus Julius Proculus from Lambaesis, Marcus Aurelius Nicostratus from Tharsus, Publius Cornelius Victor from Cuicul, Lucius Fonteius Demetrianus from Mascula, Marcus Attius Pacatianus from Cirta, Veturius Vitalis from Lambaesis, Decimus Junius Felix from Utica, Lucius Atilius Barbarus from Milevus, Sextus Marcius Felix from Assura, Firmius Felix from the camp, Quintus Duronius Primus from Vaga, Publius Claudius Valentinus from Hadrumetum, Cornelius Claudianus from Lambaesis, Titus Flavius Fortunatus from Hadrumetum, Publius Egnatius Felix from Carthage, Lucius Valerius Niger from Thamugade, Gaius Annius Julianus from the camp, Marcus Septimius Tutianus from Carthage, Marcus Helvius Conductor from the camp, Gaius Julius Verus from Ammaedera, *quaestionarii*, Gaius Julius Donatus of the camp, Titus Marcius Gemellus, Titus Aemilius Victor from Carthage, Quintus Salonius Repentinus from Thamugade, Publius Aelius Tauriscus from Sufetula, bodyguards of the tribune *sexmenstris* Furfanius Felix, Gaius Julius Felix from Thamugade, Valerius Daphnus, Lucius Clodius Concessus from Carthage, Quintus Julius Victor from Thelepte, the *haruspex* Sextus Julius Felix from Theveste. Undertaken by Gaius Memmius Victor centurion of the III Augustan legion’. A *commentariensis* was a registrar or camp secretary who could also compile lists of prisoners and soldiers. A *tribune sexmestris* was a tribune who only served for a period of sixth months. *Quaestionarii* were legal staff, responsible for policing and questioning people: Adkins and Adkins (2004) 87.

Further parallels with the worship of other gods often found around military sites, such as Mithras to whom there was a sanctuary in the Lambaesis camp, can also be made. With regards to officers making dedications, it is useful to examine the cult of Jupiter Dolichenus (see section 1.1.8) as Collar has argued that officers were the main disseminators of the cult, as they were the most mobile, and that the lower ranks then picked up this worship from them. It is possible that the same happened here with Asclepius, as most of the dedicators listed in the Table 10 below were officers or officials. However, Asclepius' openness to worship from the lower socio-economic strata should not be forgotten either. This emphasises why it is important to examine the global nature of Asclepius as well as his regional and sanctuary-based aspects.

At Lambaesis, there seems to have been a room to incubate in, prior to which supplicants would purify themselves, and would also sacrifice to the god.<sup>1072</sup> The temple was used frequently and for a long period of time as is attested by the great number of epigraphic sources, by legionaries, officers, and *legati*.<sup>1073</sup> No medical instruments, *ex-votos*, or inscriptions similar to the Epidaurian *iamata* were found here, although there is a relatively rich cache of epigraphic dedications.<sup>1074</sup> There is a strong military element to the dedications to Asclepius at Lambaesis. Most of the inscriptions to Asclepius and other gods, erected in or near the Asclepieion, had a soldier or an official as their dedicator, where this is mentioned (see Table 12). *Legati* most frequently dedicated to the gods but other titles also occur. It is

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<sup>1072</sup> Benseddik (2010a) 2.113.

<sup>1073</sup> Christol and Janon (2002) 73.

<sup>1074</sup> Benseddik (2010a) 2.115: the lack of anatomical *ex-votos* is unsurprising as this dedicatory habit fell out of practice in the late 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC.

sometimes hard to identify which structures were civilian and which military in Lambaesis. However, the cult here had strong military overtones:

Type	Dedicator	Reference	God
Altar	<i>Praefectus Castrorum</i>	<i>CIL</i> 8.2587/B3	Asclepius
Pedestal	<i>Religiosi</i>	<i>AE</i> 1908 11/B4	Asclepius
Altar	<i>Legatus</i>	<i>CIL</i> 8.2588/B5	Hygeia
Altar	<i>Legatus</i>	<i>AE</i> 1960 107	Bonae Deae
Altar	<i>Centurion – primus pilus</i>	<i>CIL</i> 8.2624	Asclepius and Hygeia
Altar	<i>Pelusii – members of a college</i>	<i>CIL</i> 8.2590	Asclepius and Hygeia
Altar	<i>Legatus</i>	<i>CIL</i> 8.2589	Asclepius and Hygeia
Base	<i>Vir perfectissimus</i>	<i>AE</i> 1973 630	Asclepius and Salus
Moulding stone	<i>Consul</i>	<i>AE</i> 1915 30	Escolapio and Hygeia
Dedication		<i>CIL</i> 8.18218	Hygeia
Moulding Stone	<i>Legatus/propraetor</i>	<i>CIL</i> 8.2579d	Jupiter Valens
Dedication	<i>Legatus/propraetor</i>	<i>CIL</i> 8.2579e	Silvanus Pegasianus
Pediment	-	<i>AE</i> 1916 9	IOM Dolichenus
Altar	<i>Commander of the legion</i>	<i>CIL</i> 8.2614	IOM
Altar	<i>Legatus/propraetor</i>	<i>CIL</i> 8.2615	IOM
Column base	<i>Vir perfectissimus</i>	<i>CIL</i> 8.2663	Jupiter Bazosenus
Altar fragment	<i>Vir perfectissimus</i>	<i>CIL</i> 8.2687a	Jupiter Bazosenus
Altar Fragment	<i>Vir perfectissimus</i>	<i>CIL</i> 8.2678b	Jupiter Bazosenus
Altar	<i>Legatus</i>	<i>CIL</i> 8.2621	Jupiter and the Genii Locii
Altar	-	<i>CIL</i> 8.2672	Silvanus
Altar	-	<i>CIL</i> 8.2673	Silvanus
Altar	-	<i>CIL</i> 8.2674	Silvanus
Fragmentary altar	-	<i>AntAfr</i> 5 1971, p.148	Silvanus Castrensi
Altar	<i>Legatus</i>	<i>AE</i> 1920 37	Apollo Salutaris
Altar	<i>Legatus</i>	<i>CIL</i> 8.2591	Apollo
Two fragments	<i>Legatus/propraetor/consul designatus</i>	<i>CIL</i> 8.2583	Aquae Sinuessanis
Base	<i>Legatus</i>	<i>CIL</i> 8.2581	Medaurus
Fragmentary base	-	<i>CIL</i> 8.2642	Medaurus
Altar	-	<i>AE</i> 1957 83	Genii of the legion
Plinth	-	<i>CIL</i> 8.2595	Genii of the colony of Cirtae
Altar	-	BCTH 1920 p.XC-XCI	Luna
Base	-	BCTH 1921 p.CCXLVII	Hercules
Altar	<i>Vir perfectissimus</i>	<i>CIL</i> 8.2643	Mercury
-	<i>Aedile</i>	<i>CIL</i> 8.2631	Isis
-	<i>Legatus/propraetor</i>	<i>CIL</i> 8.2630	Isis and Serapis
-	-	<i>CIL</i> 8.2580	Diana
Three fragments	<i>Legatus/propraetor/consul</i>	<i>CIL</i> 8.2585	Jupiter Valens,

	designate		Asclepius and Silvanus Pegasianus
Honrific dedication	Military tribune	<i>CIL</i> 8.2582	-
Dedication	Collective military dedication	<i>CIL</i> 8.2586	-
Fragments	<i>Aedile</i>	<i>CIL</i> 8. 3295	-
<i>Ex-voto</i>	-	BCTH 1918 p.CCLXIV	Serapis
Altar	-	BCTH 1921 p.CCXLVII	Eirene
Base	Doctor	BCTH 1915 p.CXXV- CXXVI	-
Altar	-	Janon (1985) p. XVIII	Athena
Altar	-	Janon (1985) p.XIX	Theos

Table 10: Inscriptions found in the area of the Asclepieion.

One dedication from the above Table 10 stands out from the others as the spelling Escolapio is used, something very rare and seemingly unique (Fig. 98).<sup>1075</sup>

Di{i}s Salutari/bus Escolapio / et Hygiae quo/rum ope adver/sae valetudines / propelluntur Domi/tius Zenofilus(!) v(ir) c(larissimus) / cons(ularis) sexfascalis p(rovinciae) N(umidiae) sacrum reli/gionis suae iux/ta eos indici/um dedit / Curetii.<sup>1076</sup>

<sup>1075</sup> This spelling has been ignored/corrected by corpora editors in the past who change it to fit with the traditional spelling of Asclepius' name, namely: (A)esc<u=O>lapio.

<sup>1076</sup> *AE* 2003 2022/*AE* 2010 88: 'To the healing gods Asclepius and Hygeia through whose help the enemies of the healthy were defeated, Domitius Zenofilus, *vir clarissimus*, consul sexfascalis of the province of Numidia, gave a sacred sign of his own religious observances among them. The people from Cures [dedicated this].' '*Sexfascalis*' does not occur in literary sources but is found in numerous inscriptions from North Africa in the second half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century AD. Here, they state that the governor holds this title as part of the formula 'consularis sexfascalis provinciae Numidiae': Cotton (2000) 230 n. 48; *AE* 1888.30, 1885.108, 1902.166, 1909.220, 1911.110, 1913.23, 1913.35; 1917/18.58, 1936.30, 1946.107, 1946.110, 1987.1062, 1987.1082, 1987.1083; *CIL* 8.7015, 8.7034, 8.7975, 8.10870, 8.17896, 8.19502.



Fig. 98: AE 2003 2022.

A clear explanation for why this spelling was used is not clear but it was perhaps an error or perhaps a deliberate attempt at archaising Asclepius' name. The inscription was set up by a Domitius Zenofilus whose career is well known as he was *corrector provinciae Siciliae*.<sup>1077</sup> Zenofilus is also attested as proconsul of Africa, signalling the high status of this dedicator.<sup>1078</sup> Curetius possibly comes from Cures, a Sabine city where Zenofilus was governor in AD 320. The word Cureti also occurs on another inscription which mentions Zenofilus from Lilybaeum:

Cureti vivas / pro meritis eximiae lenitatis et benignae administrationis / strenuo ac  
 praedicabili iudici / Domitio Zenofilo / v(iro) c(larissimo) corr(ectori) prov(inciae)  
 Sicil(iae) / <sup>1079</sup>

<sup>1077</sup> *CIL* 10.7234.

<sup>1078</sup> *CIL* 8.1408; Christol and Janon (2002) 81-82.

<sup>1079</sup> *CIL* 10.7234. 'The man from Cures, for services of extraordinary leniency and obliging administration, vigorous and praiseworthy judge, Domitius Zenofilus, illustrious man and corrector of the province of Sicily'.

The Curetii were trying to honour their erstwhile administrator Zenofilus. Perhaps with the inscription to Asclepius they added these gods as Asclepius was locally the most popular god in Lambaesis, or he had suffered from an illness from which the Curetii hoped he would recover or were honouring the gods as he had already recovered. This inscription shows the interconnected nature of mobility and communication. Zenofilus, as a high ranking official, was highly mobile and held various offices across the empire. Zenofilus must have been stationed at Cures first, which was then probably followed by his post in Sicily and then lastly in Africa.<sup>1080</sup> In doing so, he illustrates the high levels of mobility, similar to what was argued by Collar with regards to officers (see section 1.1.8) and which played such an important role in the dissemination of Asclepius through the Balkan and Danube provinces by the army (see Chapter 4). In keeping the connections between themselves and Zenofilus alive, the Curetii both honoured him but also promoted themselves as being connected with Zenofilus, perhaps in a way not dissimilar to Xenophon and Claudius. If so then the Curetii would have probably chosen Asclepius as he was a locally important god. There was no direct connection between Zenofilus and Asclepius as the god is not mentioned in the inscription from Lilybaeum. However, the inscription set up by the Curetii from Lambaesis makes it clear that Zenofilus was ill and then recovered due to the intercession of Asclepius and Hygeia, which is conveyed by the *quorum ope* in the inscription. The Curetii then erected a dedication in thanks for this cure at Lambaesis as that is where Zenofilus must have been stationed at that time.

#### 5.4.5 Lambaesis and Epidaurus

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<sup>1080</sup> *PLRE* 1.993.

Despite the fact that the *legio III Augusta* probably had an Italian origin, Benseddik draws attention to the possible connections between Epidaurus and Lambaesis. Lambaesis was, according to her, the epicentre of the dissemination of the cult of Asclepius in Africa.<sup>1081</sup> This was probably the case for the cult in Numidia but maybe not so for the cult in Proconsularis. Benseddik uses the fact that at Lambaesis, in the south portico of the Asclepieion, a statue group of Asclepius and a dog was found, the only such representation to be found in Africa.<sup>1082</sup> This Asclepieian iconography was especially linked to the Epidaurian cult-statue of the god by Phrasymedes (see Fig. 43).<sup>1083</sup> However, this statue was lost soon after it was found and no images of it remain.<sup>1084</sup> There is only a short note of it in the original excavation notes, which compare it to the statue at Epidaurus, which is also lost but known from numismatic evidence. There was also an inscription on the entrance to Chapel C ‘*bonus intra, melior exi*’ (Fig. 99) which she believes echoes the inscription over the entrance to the Epidaurian sanctuary: ‘Pure must be he who enters the fragrant temple; purity means to think nothing but holy thoughts’.<sup>1085</sup>

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<sup>1081</sup> Benseddik (1995) 17.

<sup>1082</sup> Benseddik (1995) 19.

<sup>1083</sup> Paus. 2.27.2.

<sup>1084</sup> Benseddik (1997) 148.

<sup>1085</sup> *CIL* 8. 2584; Porphyrius *De Abstinencia* 11.19 trans. Edelstein and Edelstein (1998) 1.318.





Fig. 99: Mosaic from Lambaesis. *CIL* 8.2584.

The mosaic and inscription would connect the two sanctuaries across the Mediterranean with their express messages of purity. While the inscriptions definitely echo each other's message, there was such a stress on purity within the cult in general that this was perhaps simply part of the cult's general nature. It is curious that there would be such an emphasis on the Epidaurian origins of the cult here, as was stated in an inscription from Carthage, when the legion came from Rome. It would have been far simpler to state that the legion took the Roman version of the god with them to Africa. The Roman cult was an off-shoot of the Epidaurian cult so perhaps they did take the Roman god with them but had an awareness of the mythological past of the cult and, therefore, called it an Epidaurian cult which could have also given it an extra sense of authenticity. As stated above, when the legion first came to Africa, it was probably made up of Italian soldiers though later the lower ranks were recruited locally while the officers would still have come from other parts of the empire, which might provide a possible explanation for the

Epidaurian connections.<sup>1086</sup> Whitmarsh has argued that provincials reacted to the global Roman Empire by becoming more regional.<sup>1087</sup> However, this would assume that it was only people in the provinces who had to adapt to the new reality of Empire and the culture and customs of the Romans. Yet, for the original legionaries Africa would also have been a foreign place and they in turn could have reacted to this new reality of Empire by reviving ancient rites of their own. The cult of Asclepius at Rome was an off-shoot of the Epidaurian cult, as was stated in numerous sources (see section 2.2.5).<sup>1088</sup> It is possible that the legionaries sought to come to terms with their new reality of Empire by resuscitating ancient customs. In doing so, they reached back into the past, further back than the creation of the cult at Rome, and sought to import the cult from Epidaurus which was thought to be the oldest and one of the most powerful cults of Asclepius. The soldiers themselves would be reacting to the new Empire and their foreign surroundings by connecting with the ancient past. This would fit in with theories on the pericentric Empire which were presented in Chapter One, where Nederveen Pieterse argued that Romans were both globalising and globalised and that the latter was a result of the former. During this process the cultures and religions of the provinces were taken up by the Romans and were then, in turn, transported to new provinces.<sup>1089</sup> The Roman socio-religious and cultural identities which came to the provinces were, therefore, not purely Roman, but were those which had already come into contact with other provincial cultures before they were then again taken to new lands. Thus, in Africa, the claimed Epidaurian origins of the cult of Asclepius could be a combination of the identity and nature of the cult in Rome combined with elements from Greece. This would

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<sup>1086</sup> Le Bohec (2000) 378; Collar (2011) 228; Mattingly (1987) 8. The Italian origins can be surmised from the fact that the legion was first attested under Lepidus: Le Bohec (1989a) 337.

<sup>1087</sup> Whitmarsh (2010) 3.

<sup>1088</sup> See, for example, Livy *Per.* 11.

<sup>1089</sup> Nederveen Pieterse (2015) 233.

indicate a more multi-faceted and layered approach to the cult in the Roman world that was previously explored and combines various strands of current theories on globalism in antiquity to show a possible actual application of these in antiquity.

Benseddik states that the army and its officials introduced the cult to Africa but did not have the power or desire to force its dissemination there. This is why the cult differed in nature in each province. She argues that the cult was the most diverse in Africa Proconsularis, where the god was worshipped in Carthage by officials, slaves, priests, and freedmen alike, similar to the province of Narbonensis, which was a bulwark of Roman and Hellenistic culture. This indicates that the cult in Proconsularis perhaps had a wider socio-economic cross-section of worshippers, whereas the cult in Numidia was mostly frequented by soldiers and officials. A cult of Asclepius was introduced to a locality but then this cult adapted to suit local needs and preferences. This cult would keep the global aspects which made Asclepius who he was but they were free to choose which elements of the cult were best suited for that region. Following Whitmarsh (see section 1.1.2), it was the introduction of the global god Asclepius which seems to have prompted the creation of a regional version of this god, as he argues that regionalism needs globalism to define itself against. Even though the Roman army allegedly introduced the cult to this area, the flexibility of the cult to the worshippers' needs would have remained the same. This is perhaps even more so if the cult of Eshmun-Asclepius was already present in Africa, and the Roman cult of Asclepius was introduced at a later stage, making Numidia a stronghold of the military Asclepius and Proconsularis one of Eshmun-Asclepius.

### 5.5 The Cultic Differences between Proconsularis and Numidia

This chapter has explored the cults of Asclepius in Roman North Africa, both in Africa Proconsularis and in Numidia. It explored the history of both the cult of Eshmun-Asclepius and the god who was worshipped by the soldiers of the *legio III Augusta* in Numidia and Lambaesis. It has become clear that both these cults had very different histories and characters. Eshmun-Asclepius's strong-hold was Carthage and the Carthaginian lands, whereas the military Asclepius was located more in Numidia. The former cult seems to have been brought over from Sicily whereas the latter was said to have come from Epidaurus.

There are further elements which set the two apart. The two deities were associated with different gods, Eshmun-Asclepius with Cybele and Dionysus and Asclepius mainly with Salus, Jupiter Valens and Silvanus Pegasianus. The dedications erected to the gods differ as those in Numidia were predominantly set up by members of the military, including many *legati*, and there is also a strong collective element to these which was lacking in the more individualistic dedications from Proconsularis. The temples belonged to different styles, with those in Proconsularis in general being more frequent in number but also being round in shape in Carthage and Thugga. The temple at Lambaesis had a unique tri-part plan and was apparently the only temple in Africa which used the Doric order, an order which was strongly connected with healing deities and also Epidaurus. The connection between Epidaurus and Lambaesis also shown by a statue iconography of the seated god which directly recalls the Epidaurian cult-statue and also the strong emphasis on purity with two inscriptions which seemingly echo each other's message.

It would, therefore, appear that there were two distinct cults of Asclepius in Roman North Africa. One which was more civilian in nature, located in Africa Proconsularis and which had its roots in the syncretism between Eshmun and Asclepius. The other was brought to Africa along with the Third Augustan legion and had strong military connections as well as links to Epidaurus. The increased mobility of the Roman Empire facilitated the introduction of this second god. Therefore, it would seem, that the Roman Empire aided the creation of religious diversity in a region via its high levels of mobility.

## 5.6 Conclusion

This chapter has examined the cults of Asclepius in Roman North Africa and has aimed to show that there was a duality in the worship of the god here. On the one hand there was the god Eshmun-Asclepius who was one of the most important gods of the future province of Africa Proconsularis. The centre of this god's worship was in Carthage, from where he was disseminated across the areas under Carthaginian control. This god was both a healer and a protector of the city, as is shown especially by the location of his temple on the Acropolis of Carthage. Asclepius had been brought here during the classical era and assimilated with Eshmun as is shown by iconographical, architectural, and numismatic evidence. These also indicate the non-military nature of later dedications and inscriptions relating to Asclepius. There is only one inscription erected in Proconsularis which can be directly connected to a member of the Roman army. This was in contrast to Numidia where these are far more numerous, indicating that the cult of Asclepius in Africa Proconsularis likely was of a civilian nature. At Lambaesis in Numidia the inscriptions to Asclepius all

clearly state the military post occupied by the dedicator. Only one dedication to Hygeia alone does not give any name or occupation. The inscriptions, thus, clearly indicate the military connections with the cult here, in contrast to Carthage and Africa Proconsularis where these barely occur or are not mentioned in the dedications. Benseddik claimed that the Roman army was one of the main factors behind Asclepius' dissemination across Africa. The available evidence indicates that the cult in Numidia was dominated by military worshippers. This does not seem to have been the case in Proconsularis, where the Asclepius worshipped was Eshmun-Asclepius and not the military Asclepius.

There are also further aspects which set the gods apart from each other. In Numidia, Asclepius was worshipped alone or with Hygeia but is not found worshipped with other gods. Even in Lambaesis where a temple was set up to Asclepius and Hygeia, Jupiter Valens, and Silvanus Pegasianus, the latter two gods were worshipped in separate chapels which were differentiated architecturally from the temple of Asclepius by their use of another order. In Africa Proconsularis Asclepius was found together with a number of other gods such as Cybele, a partnership which rarely occurs outside Africa. The syncretism with Eshmun explains this as these two gods were twinned, as were Cybele and Astarte, and Astarte and Eshmun were commonly worshipped together. There was also a difference in the dedicatory habits of the worshippers in the two provinces as there was a far greater percentage of temples dedicated to Asclepius in Africa Proconsularis than there were in Numidia.<sup>1090</sup> This was perhaps because the military supplicants were smaller in number in general than the civilian worshippers of the god. There were also more inscriptions dedicated to Asclepius in Proconsularis but

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<sup>1090</sup> Laurence and Trifilò (2015) 110.

more statues set up in Numidia, indicating further regional differences between the two provinces. This also would argue against Benseddik's statement as it is it does not fully take the regional differences within the cult into account. The cult of Asclepius in general in Africa differs from those in other parts of the Roman Empire. This is in part due to its distinct iconography in the form of the Tunis type, but also the fact that Apollo was worshipped at a number of sites prior to the introduction of Asclepius, despite Asclepius already being firmly established as the healing god of the Graeco-Roman world. The large number of bathing complexes in Africa and the number of statues of Asclepius, represented in the Tunis or Campana type, and Hygeia found here are also noteworthy.

The study of epithets indicates that it was possible for the various functions of the god to operate separately from each other and that, even though one aspect of the god was pleased with a supplicant's actions, another aspect could be displeased. Xenophon's failure to sacrifice to *Zeus Meilichios* even though he had offered to *Zeus Basileus* is often quoted as evidence supporting this.<sup>1091</sup> Each Zeus was perceived to be a different Zeus.<sup>1092</sup> Applying this theory to the cults of Asclepius, this would indicate that not all versions of the god had to be the same god. Section 2.3 has argued that Asclepius only started to receive epithets from the Hellenistic period and that this practice boomed under the Roman Empire. The nature of the worshippers in Africa seems to indicate not just two aspects of the same god but two different gods. Whoever introduced a god to an area would have had a significant impact upon the nature of that cult and military worshippers had very different needs from civilian supplicants. Versnel argues that Graeco-Roman gods bearing the same

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<sup>1091</sup> Xen. *An.* 7.8.3-4.

<sup>1092</sup> A contemporary example of this phenomenon comes from Greece where Versnel (2011) 67 describes a Greek stating that the Hagios Georgios is not the same as those from other places as those Georges are from Cappodocia but the Hagios Georgios is from a local place.

name but different epithets may, but need not, have been perceived as one and the same deity depending on the supplicant's perceptions.<sup>1093</sup> The most important function of the name or epithet was then differentiation.<sup>1094</sup> This indicates that it was possible to have multiple versions of the same god in one place at the same time.

This chapter has argued that there were not one but two versions of the god present in Roman North Africa. The cults of Asclepius and Eshmun-Asclepius differed in a number of ways, encompassing the dedicatory habits of worshipers, the gods they were associated with, and also the type of dedications offered to them. Syncretism was, thus, another way of disseminating the god to the provinces but it also shows the impact of the Roman Empire upon the cult in the area, as without the expansion of empire, the Third Augustan Legion would have never been transferred to Africa and there would have been only one version of Asclepius, Asclepius-Eshmun. It seems that, in this instance, improved mobility resulted in increased religious choice.

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<sup>1093</sup> Versnel (2011) 82

<sup>1094</sup> Parker (2003) 177



## Chapter 6: The Impact of the Roman Empire on the Cult of Asclepius. Conclusions.

This study has sought to examine the impact of the Roman Empire on the cult of Asclepius. The key questions asked in order to ascertain the extent of this impact were: How did the Roman Empire impact upon the cult of Asclepius? By which factors did this impact take place? How are global and regional cult identities articulated in response to each other as a result of this impact? Did Asclepius' spheres of influence grow or adapt as a result of Roman benefactions? How did increased mobility influence the impact of Empire? and What were the provincial responses to Roman worship and dissemination of the cult? Answering these questions has been done by the analysis of several factors which were carefully analysed and chosen as they showed the greatest impact on the cult, namely Roman emperors, courtiers, and the creation of a permanent army. Emperors and the army were a direct effect of the creation of the Empire as before the founding of the principate these did not exist. This work has aimed to show the ways in which Rome took over a Greek cult and adapted it to suit the needs of people both in Rome and in the provinces. An examination into regional and global characteristics of the cult offers a general overview of how Rome influenced the cult. The first aim of this work has been to focus on the cult in the Roman provinces. While it cannot be doubted that worship of Asclepius enjoyed a rich and varied history in Greece during the Classical and Hellenistic periods, his worship continued for four more centuries under the Roman Empire and was disseminated further across the known world than before. This broad timespan and vast geographical space must have also created an atmosphere in which the cult could flourish. The second and third aims of this thesis

build on the first as this thesis seeks also to move away from studies which have focussed solely on one sanctuary or on one region but has addressed global themes in the cult and show the high level of connectivity and mobility within the cult of Asclepius. In doing so, it also has examined geographical areas which have previously been overlooked or rejected as being irrelevant to study of Asclepius, such as the Balkan and Danube provinces. By thematically examining the cult, new conclusions can be drawn about how the cult changed over time and how it adapted and was changed during the Roman imperial period. A fourth aim is to further reject outdated notions of the Empire as a centre and periphery and that culture and religion were imposed on the provinces by Rome in a one-directional cultural process. This work has shown the multi-directional and cross-provincial nature of socio-cultural exchanges and has illustrated that a pericentric model of Empire is preferred and far better reflects the exchanges of culture between Rome and the provinces. This is done by illustrating the high level of connectivity within the cult and also the ways in which cultic elements travelled from one locality to another. This religious influence did not just happen in the provinces, but the core cult in Rome and the image of the cult of Asclepius, disseminated from Rome, was also changed by coming into contact with the cults in the provinces, which, in turn, had changed because of contact with Rome. The final aim of this work is to show the role which individual choice and agency played within the cult and how individual actors could have a great impact on the cult.

Chapter One has shown why Asclepius is such a suitable paradigm for a study into mobility and connectivity. The cult attracted worshippers from all socio-economic backgrounds and flourished until the 4<sup>th</sup> century AD. This provides a rich

cache of evidence from which studies into the cult can be done. The cult also enjoyed a wide geographical dissemination. The chapter, furthermore, provided the theoretical framework in which this examination has been set. It offered three main theoretical arguments as to how the impact of Empire can be detected, via both global and regional characteristics in the cult. This thesis aims to examine how the cult reacted to coming into contact with the global Roman Empire and it is by exploring and identifying these characteristics that this is possible. Three main theories as to why regionalism occurred were analysed in this chapter. The first, following Whitmarsh (section 1.1.2), argues that the idea of the local was only created when people come into contact with the global; that one only became aware of their regional identity when a global one had become clear. This contact with global identity then led to a readdressing of regional identity. A second explanation for globalism comes from Chaniotis (see section 1.1.3) who suggests that civic competition was another reason for this as cities strove to create their own identity in order to be superior to their neighbouring cities. By coming into contact with their neighbour's cultures, their own became more important and prominent. A third explanation, following Chaniotis again (see section 1.1.4) is that people deliberately revived ancient rites, or created those which they claimed were ancient, as a result of coming into contact with a global phenomenon. Rüpke's emphasis on religion as a communicative framework fits in well with these theories as it stresses the connectivity which is vital for these regional elements to become visible. It was only when people connected with a global culture, such as that from Rome, that they questioned and adapted their own regional identities and cultures. Communication, connectivity, and mobility are key themes for this thesis as only when one culture comes into contact with another are these elements shown. The chapters in this thesis

have shown how cults of Asclepius reacted and adapted after coming into contact with the global Roman Empire but also how new cults, when disseminated to regions where the god had not been worshipped previously, changed to suit their new surroundings. This spread of cults was not a one-directional religious dialogue and the high level of interconnectedness of the Asclepieia has been shown. The cult of Asclepius in its core sanctuaries did not remain unaffected by the founding of new cult-sites and the adaption of others (see Chapter 2) but the nature of these sites also changed as a result of increased mobility. This multi-directional religious mobility is articulated by Nederveen Pieterse (see section 1.1.1) who argues that the Roman Empire was globalised by globalising and that the Empire should be seen as being pericentric, where the outer regions influenced the inner ones and where there was a continuous cultural exchange between Rome and the provinces. The Roman culture brought to new provinces was one which had already been influenced by the socio-cultural identity of other provinces. For the cult of Asclepius, this means that we should expect to find aspects of the cult transcending one locality and when new cults were founded, these contained elements of various Asclepieia and not just those of the mother-sanctuary.

It is only possible to appreciate how the cult of Asclepius changed under the Roman Empire if one also has a strong understanding of the nature of the cult in the Classical and Hellenistic periods. Chapter Two, therefore, explored the cult from the earliest mention up until the age of Caesar. It was shown that while Asclepius was mentioned in Homer, he was only a mortal healer at that point and that the cult of the god Asclepius did not flourish until the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC. His main sanctuary was that of Epidauros, although his true place of origin may have been Tricca in Thrace.

However, as this has not been excavated this cannot be ascertained for certain. The Delphic oracle proclaimed Epidaurus to be the birth-place of Asclepius, which cemented its position as one of the main Asclepieia in the ancient world and one from which many other sanctuaries, such as the ones at Athens, Rome, and Pergamum, were founded. This also shows the high degree of connectivity in the cult, which is one of the main themes of this work. It also showed the early dissemination of the cult, as provided from analysis of Riethmüller's work, which showed that Asclepius spread to most areas of the Greek world, but that the main heartland of his cult lay in the Peloponnese, with the largest number of sanctuaries being present there.

The chapter focussed on providing a brief history of the main sanctuaries of the god, providing a foundation for research presented in Chapters Three, Four, and Five. The same was done with a brief analysis of the iconography of Asclepius and also the use of epithets. It was ascertained that the latter did not occur in the Classical period within the cult, and that their use only really took off from the Roman period onwards. This shows a clear adaptation of the cult to needs which were only perceived in that era as Asclepius appears to have grown more powerful at that time and have become more active in further spheres of influence. Another important point which was made from the analysis of the early dissemination of the cult was that it seems that if no need was felt by local people for a healing cult, Asclepius did not penetrate a region. This happened in Boeotia where there were no sanctuaries of the god, despite the presence of numerous other cult sites in other areas of Greece, especially the Peloponnese. This was probably due to the presence of the healing god Trophonius in this region which negated the need for a new healing god here. Asclepius was only imported if people felt a need for the god.

Building on the preliminary information provided in Chapter Two, Chapter Three examined the impact of emperors on the cult, focussing particularly on three emperors, namely Claudius, Hadrian, and Caracalla. The earlier emperors did not seem to have a great interest in the cult but did supplicate Asclepius on occasion. However, things greatly changed with Claudius who gave honours and rights to the Coan Asclepieion as the result of the intervention of his personal physician, Gaius Stertinus Xenophon. Xenophon had trained as a doctor on Cos and come to Rome as part of an embassy which petitioned Tiberius for a reconfirmation of the right of *asylia* for Cos. After this embassy Xenophon stayed in Rome and became Claudius' personal physician at some point. After Claudius became emperor, the Coans seem to have used Xenophon as an intermediary between them and the emperor, taking advantage of the direct connection they had with the imperial court in order to achieve their aims. Instead of sending embassies which took time to put together and get matters sorted, the Coans took advantage of Xenophon's position at court in order to further their own affairs. Xenophon secured the grant of *immunitas* for the Asclepieion from Claudius, exempting the sanctuary from taxation. Xenophon, as an Asclepiad, was connected to Asclepius and his intercession was a large part of the reason why Claudius granted this right, according to Tacitus.<sup>1095</sup> Xenophon was trained in the arts of Asclepius, which gave him his position at court, and he used this position to gain favours for both his people and the god whom he served. Claudius' interest in Cos continued as he took an interest in Coan affairs, which can be seen from inscribed letters which refer to some form of *stasis* which took place on the island. This perceived status and influence on Xenophon's behalf continues to be

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<sup>1095</sup> Tac. *Ann.* 12.61.

shown in inscriptions which were set up by and for Xenophon, which continuously mention his position at the Roman court via a number of titles, despite Xenophon being back in Cos following Claudius' death. Xenophon's power, and, via him, the Coans' ability to gain favours from the emperor, were at the forefront of these inscriptions set up in the Coan Asclepieion and referring to the god Asclepius. The impact of the Roman Empire on the cult here is clear as the sanctuary gained prestige and extra rights as the result of an emperor's direct intercession. This interest in the region continued as Claudius continued to take part, to a certain extent, in Coan regional affairs. The importance of this imperial connection is visible from titles in dedications set up for Xenophon as his Roman connections are continuously allude to, as are his Coan ones, leading to the creation of both a global and regional identity on his part in which both illustrate different roles which Xenophon played.

The strong relationship between a city, an emperor, and the god is also shown in the second part of the chapter via the study of travelling emperors. Hadrian's visit to the Pergamene Asclepieion promoted the cult and prompted a drastic rebuilding of the sanctuary there with many amenities being added to the site. The visit had another lasting result as a new god was introduced, the syncretic deity Zeus-Asclepius, who fitted in with Hadrianic ideologies concerning universal deities. However, there is little evidence of the actual worship of this god, with only two dedications known, showing that where there was no actual need for a god, as in Boeotia, he would not be worshipped.

An imperial visit would have a direct impact upon a cult as was shown with Hadrian's visit to Epidaurus which prompted a rebuilding of the site and also a revival of ancient rituals, which is in accordance with what was argued in Chapter One. Zeus-Asclepius was introduced into Pergamum as the result of Hadrian's visit

and the iconography of this syncretic god travelled with the emperor to Greece where the *omphalos*, which was part of Zeus-Asclepius' iconographic scheme, was found in Eleusis. This iconography played a further role in the history of Asclepius and emperors in antiquity as it formed an important part of Caracalla's worship of Asclepius. This emperor supplicated Asclepius in either AD 213 or 214, possibly because of a need for healing or from a desire to legitimise his reign by worshipping locally important gods. Caracalla's worship of Asclepius was documented on a series of medallions which depict his actions as he moved through the city and from secular to sacred space. The cities of Asia Minor had long been in constant competition with each other and Pergamum took this visit as another method for self-aggrandisement. Pergamum itself greatly benefited from it as the city gained many honours such as a third *neocorate*. Other cities in Asia Minor saw that Caracalla had sought out Asclepius and, as a result, revived their own ancient Asclepieian rites, following Whitmarsh's and Chaniotis' theories (as set out in Chapter One), and new rites such as festivals were also held for the god.

Asclepius was more commonly depicted on the coinages of Asia Minor and his newfound popularity continued past the reign of Caracalla as Severus Alexander was also shown to worship Asclepius on coinage of Aigeai. Alexander had visited Aigeai and had been given a priesthood of Asclepius and granted a *neocorate* in return. This worship could have been part of creating dynastic links between him and Caracalla via the worship of the same god, as part of the strategy to legitimise his rule was to claim that he was Caracalla's son. Wider ramifications of Caracalla's worship of Asclepius at Pergamum were the adoption of the iconography of the god Zeus-Asclepius by the mint of Rome and also others across the empire. From the time of Caracalla onwards, Asclepius become depicted on coinages across the



provinces but also those issued by the mint in Rome showing the *omphalos* at his feet. The Pergamene iconography was adopted as a way to show Caracalla's worship of the god at this place across the empire. While not all depictions of Asclepius show the *omphalos*, it occurred frequently showing that, in part, the image of Asclepius presented across the empire after Caracalla's supplication of the god, was that of the Pergamene Asclepius and not another local variation.

This is highly important as it shows that there was a multi-directional religious mobility and connectivity between Rome and the provinces where it was not just Rome which imposed its culture on the peripherally situated areas but that the cultures of the provinces were also assimilated by Rome and then disseminated further. This does away with outdated ideas of centre and periphery in the Empire and shows the actual application of Nederveen Pieterse's argument in which he states that the Empire should be viewed through a pericentric model where elements from the outer regions were taken up by Rome and then spread to new frontiers. The Roman culture which was disseminated to the provinces was, therefore, not a purely Roman one but one which had already been influenced by the cultures of other provinces. The iconography of Asclepius of Pergamum which occurs on coinage issued by the Roman and other provincial mints is a direct example of this.

This cross-provincial multi-directional connectivity is also shown in Chapter Four, which looked at the Roman army and how it worshipped and disseminated the cult in the Balkan and Danubian provinces. By examining the cult of Asclepius here, this study is contributing to a relatively new but flourishing field in classics in an area which is rich in epigraphic evidence. As mentioned above, the army was one of the clearest factors by which to show the impact of the Empire, as a permanent

standing army was only created under Augustus, together with a medical corps, and is, therefore, a direct product of Empire. This region also clearly shows this impact as, with the exception of Thrace, no pre-Roman traces of any cult of Asclepius have been found in these regions. There is, thus, great scope for innovative study here. Collar (see section 1.1.8) has argued that it was army officers who were the most highly mobile members of the military and that they were responsible for the dissemination of cults. Infantry men were the more static group and could often expect to be stationed in the same location for their entire term of service but officers were transferred often enough to ensure the transmission of cults across the empire with them. Worship of these gods was then taken up by the lower ranks, following their officers' example.

This cross-provincial mobility is shown in this work by inscriptions set up by military worshippers of Asclepius and also officials as, for example, a former propraetorian legate from Cilicia and current legate of the *legio I Minerva*, Quintus Venedius Rufus, set up a dedication to Asclepius in Bad Gotesburg in Germania Inferior.<sup>1096</sup> As was shown in Chapter Three, there was a flourishing cult of Asclepius in Cilicia, especially at Aigeai, and it is not impossible to imagine that this legate encountered and worshipped the cult there and decided to continue worship of Asclepius even after he had been posted to another province. Other examples of this phenomenon have been presented in this chapter but they show that the god could be continuously worshipped by an individual in different areas.

This mobility is also shown by medical officers and their worship of Asclepius. A medical corps was created as part of the Augustan permanent army and numerous dedications to Asclepius by army physicians are known. These doctors

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<sup>1096</sup> *CIL* 13.7994.

worshipped the god either for their own health or, and also commonly, for the restoration of health or the continued well-being of members of their cohort or their superiors. There was no competition between sacred and secular healing. The god travelled with these doctors to the forts and fortresses where they were stationed and it is in this context that an entirely new place of worship for Asclepius is found. The existence of the *valetudinarium* is not in question and debate is solely concerned with the form which these structures took, and in the hospital at Novae inscriptions and dedicatory evidence were found concerning worship of the god here. The inscriptions attested to a *sacellum* which was erected by the legion which was stationed there, within the hospital. Military worship of Asclepius did not just introduce him to new regions but also brought him into new contexts in which the god was worshipped. A dedication to Asclepius was set up in Aquincum by a former head of the *valetudinarium* at Praeneste, illustrating both the new context for worship but also the continued existence of the high degree of religious connectivity within the cult of Asclepius.

A second example of Asclepius' mobility within a military context is that of Asclepius Zimidrenus. The Thracian Rider was a locally popular god in Thrace who was associated with Asclepius at some point. Numerous dedications, some bearing the epithet Zimidrenus, were erected to this god in various sanctuaries across Thrace and also some in Moesia. These dedications were all set up in Greek, were often accompanied by a relief which actually helped to identify the god to whom the dedication was set up, as the text was generally brief and lacking in many details beyond the dedicator's name. These dedications were also set up by individuals, whilst group dedications are not found. However, one inscription from Rome tells a completely different story; it was set up by Thracian members of the praetorian

cohorts to the god Asclepius Zimidrenus. These cohorts brought their version of the god Asclepius with them to Rome, preferring him over the already present Asclepius of Tiber Island, which illustrates dissemination of cults via the army. Yet, in this inscription the praetorians tried their hardest to present themselves as Roman as possible by using Latin and not Greek as the dedicating language and inscribing it in a uniform Roman style without accompanying relief. They also included fictitious Roman voting tribes to further this Roman illusion. Thracian elements do also come through as the Thracian *vicus* to which they belonged is continuously mentioned. These soldiers wished to appear Roman but also kept core elements from their place of origin, mixing their culture with that of Rome.

Chapter Five has shown how the cult can be further spread when disseminated by legions and also the role choice played in this. With Asclepius Zimidrenus the praetorians chose to worship him rather than the Tiber Island Asclepius. Caracalla also did not chose to visit the Tiber Island sanctuary or any other one but selected the Pergamene shrine as the place to supplicate Asclepius. Choice played an important part in the dissemination and worship of Asclepius. A cult of Asclepius had long been present in North Africa before the Roman period. However, this was the syncretic cult of Eshmun-Asclepius which had its stronghold in Carthage and the later province of Africa Proconsularis. From Carthage this god was disseminated to other lands under Carthaginian control, such as Sardinia, where an inscription allows for a conclusive identification of this syncretic pairing. However, it seems that there was also a second Asclepius in North Africa whose worship was focused mainly in Numidia with its cult centre at Lambaesis, and, in contrast to the cult in Proconsularis, was worshipped mainly by soldiers.

This duality is possible, as study of epithets shows. The use of an epithet signalled that a god had a different function from the god whose name was connected to another epithet. This means that Asclepius Soter was not necessarily seen as being the same god as Asclepius Kurios. The Pergamene sanctuary also shows that it was possible for multiple versions of the same god to coexist peacefully in the same locality, with supplicants free to choose which of the gods they worshipped. Choice and religious diversity, thus, were a strong characteristic of the cults here. A number of elements set the cults of Eshmun-Asclepius and Asclepius apart from each other, such as the differences in worshippers, where the dedications in Numidia were dominated by soldiers and people associated with the legion, whereas in Proconsularis worshippers were mainly civilians such as traders. In Numidia, Asclepius was associated predominantly with Hygeia but many different gods and deities, including Caelestis, were associated with the cult of Eshmun-Asclepius. The gods had differing iconographies and there were also differences in the cultic attributes, such as temples, in both cults and provinces. All this gives a clear impression of two distinct cults, one of which had probably been established in Africa some time during the Hellenistic period, and the other which had come to Africa with the legion.

No reasons are given why this second god was imported with the legion, although Asclepius' importance should not be underestimated as it was the legion's legate who introduced the cult the god at Lambaesis and the temple was built here by Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus for the wellbeing of the legion.<sup>1097</sup> Parallels with the praetorian worship of Asclepius-Zimidrenus should be drawn here and it was the legion's choice to prefer one version of the god over another. This version would

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<sup>1097</sup> *CIL* 8.18089a-c.

have had elements which the legion thought suited it better than the other version of the god. It seems then that the direct impact of the Roman army upon the cult here was to increase the religious diversity of the area as a result of improved choice. The agency of the legion should, therefore, not be underestimated. A surprising aspect of the cult here was its emphasis on its Epidaurian origins. This connectivity between the two sanctuaries is shown via the extra emphasis on purity in these places and also via the cult-statue iconography. If a more pericentric model of Empire is accepted then this is perhaps another way of viewing these connections. Firstly, the socio-religious culture of one of the provinces was transported to another region via the agency of Rome, which fits in exactly with this theory. Yet, further explanations need to be sought. Therefore, secondly, a revival of ancient rites in this region is found, which fits in with the theory argued by Chaniotis (see section 1.1.4). These Epidaurian origins would, therefore, combine some of the possible theories of why globalism and regionalism happened. It is possible that the members of the Third Augustan legion were themselves reacting to the reality of Empire. These men were originally probably of an Italian origin who then were transported to a foreign land. They, like provincials who reacted when coming into contact with the Roman Empire, responded to this new world by focussing on old and familiar rites. The cult of Asclepius was one of the ways in which this occurred. Nederveen Pieterse also argued that by globalising, the Roman Empire became globalised in turn. By travelling to foreign lands the legion exported its culture to these provinces but also took on new aspects of this provincial culture as its own. The legionaries could have reacted to the new reality of Empire by reaching back into their own culture and reviving old and familiar rites and by worshipping a god whom they thought would adequately protect them in this new world.

It is, furthermore, possible that there was something about the Tiber Island sanctuary which supplicants did not like, once again factoring in choice. No Roman emperor seems to have supplicated Asclepius there, though they did do so in various other Asclepieia in the provinces (see Chapter Three) and soldiers also seem to have distinct lack of interest in this cult, worshipping Asclepius at other sites in Rome or even supplicating different versions of this god rather than the Tiber Island one. Perhaps it was because this sanctuary was frequented by people of lower socio-economic status, such as slaves, but this would not readily provide an answer as to why this sanctuary seemed to be less popular than others, despite its favoured position in Rome.<sup>1098</sup>

The impact of Rome on the cult of Asclepius has been shown via a number of factors which all tie in with each other. The cult-sites examined in this work were geographically far apart, yet they shared a level of connectivity with each other which had not been present in the pre-Roman era. These connections were articulated by the exchange of religious elements between cult-sites and also by the creation of highly local and regional cultic nature as a result of exposure to the global Roman Empire. Parallel studies into other cults would be able to show whether this was a phenomenon limited to the cult of Asclepius, a certain type of god, or whether this was widespread for all Graeco-Roman deities. Under Roman rule, the cult of Asclepius changed, adapted and also flourished, reaching new areas, founding new cult sites, and also gaining worship in new contexts and from new groups of worshippers.

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<sup>1098</sup> Sue. *Claud.* 25.2.

In conclusion, this study has shown that the cult of Asclepius enjoyed a rich and varied history under the Roman Empire. The cult adapted to the new reality of Empire and was directly influenced by the institutions which were newly created as a result of the creation of the Empire, namely emperors and the army. Existing sanctuaries were patronised by emperors and, as a result, saw their standing increased and an amplified interest from other parties which led to the enrichment and rebuilding of these sites and a revival of old rites. However, the foundation of new sites was also affected as, because of the increased mobility and connectivity of the empire, the cult spread further than before and gained access to new kinds of places of worship such as *valetudinaria*. Elements of particular cults were taken up and disseminated to other parts of the empire, influencing and shaping the cults there and in Rome, showing the multi-directional connectivity which dominated the cult in the Roman era. As a result, the heightened mobility and connectivity of the Roman Empire ensured that cults of Asclepius during this period were both global and regional.



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Arachne Archive: <http://arachne.uni-koeln.de/arachne3/drupal/>

Beazley Archive: <http://www.beazley.ox.ac.uk/index.htm>

Bryn Mawr Delian Inventory Lists:

<http://www.brynmawr.edu/classics/Delian/minor%20Delian%20treasures/Asklepieion.pdf>

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Classical Numismatic Group Inc.: <http://www.cngcoins.com/>

Coinproject Numismatic Database: <http://www.coinproject.com/>

EDCS Inscriptions Database: [http://db.edcs.eu/epigr/epi\\_de.php](http://db.edcs.eu/epigr/epi_de.php)

ERGA/PHI Greek Inscriptions Database: <http://epigraphy.packhum.org/inscriptions/>

Impact of Empire Research Network: <http://www.ru.nl/impactofempire/>

Inscriptions of Roman Tripolitania: <http://inslib.kcl.ac.uk/irt2009/>

Louvre Collections Database: <http://www.louvre.fr/en/moteur-de-recherche-oeuvres>

Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Collections Database: <http://www.mfa.org/collections>

Roman Inscriptions of Britain: <http://romaninscriptionsofbritain.org/>

Roman Provincial Coinage: <http://rpc.ashmus.ox.ac.uk/>

Wildwinds Coins Archive: <http://www.wildwinds.com/>