

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

# Impact of Empire

ROMAN EMPIRE, C. 200 B.C.–A.D. 476

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

*By*

Ghislaine van der Ploeg



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# Contents

Acknowledgments	VII
List of Figures and Tables	VIII
List of Abbreviations	XI

Introduction	1
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1	Mobility and Connectivity in the Cult of Asclepius	6
2	Asclepius before the Roman Imperial Period	46
3	Imperial Relations with Asclepius	83
4	Asclepius and the Army	166
5	The Cult(s) of Asclepius in Roman North Africa	215
6	Conclusions	263

Bibliography	275
Index of Modern Authors	304
Index of Ancient Authors	306
Index of Subjects	307



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# List of Figures and Tables

## Figures

- 1 The Athenian Asclepieion 54
- 2 Coan Mosaic showing Asclepius' Advent 61
- 3 Wall relief from the Tiber Island Asclepieion 65
- 4 Temple attributed to Asclepius in Ostia 67
- 5 Temple of Asclepius in Agrigento 69
- 6 Asclepius depicted in the Chiaramonti Type, 2nd century AD, Rome 77
- 7 Plan of the Pergamene Asclepieion, 2nd century AD 116
- 8 Asclepius Este statue type 122
- 9 Asclepius Amelung statues 123
- 10 Asclepius Amelung statues 123
- 11 Plan of the Asclepieion in Epidaurus in the 3rd century BC 126
- 12 Plan of the Asclepieion in Epidaurus in the 2nd century AD 129
- 13 Antinous and the *omphalos* 130
- 14 Pentassarion showing bust of Severus and Hygieia feeding a snake on the obverse and Asclepius on the reverse from Irenopolis in Cilicia, AD 195–196 135
- 15 Members of Imperial Household depicted on coins from Pergamum with Asclepius 139
- 16 Reverse of bronze coin showing *Homonoia* scene with Asclepius standing next to Artemis of Ephesus 140
- 17 Coin reverse depicting the Emperor on horseback greeting a statue of Asclepius 144
- 18 Caracalla on standing on steps in front of Tyche who holds a statue of Asclepius 144
- 19 Caracalla on horseback standing in front of a statue of Asclepius 145
- 20 Asclepius and Caracalla standing with an altar between them 146
- 21 Asclepius and Caracalla standing facing each other with a sacrificial animal between them. *BMC Mysia* 155.323 146
- 22 Caracalla worshipping in front of a temple in which Asclepius stands 147
- 23 Caracalla standing in front of the temple of Asclepius, an attendant stands between them preparing to sacrifice a bull 147
- 24 Caracalla standing in front of a tree around which the Asclepieian snake is coiled, with Telesphorus standing between them 148



- 25 The three *neocorate* temples of Pergamum 149
- 26 Coin from Pergamum showing the seated cult statue of Asclepius 151
- 27 Severus Alexander depicted as a priest of Asclepius, Aigeai 154
- 28 *Denarius* from the Roman mint showing Asclepius with the globe on the reverse, AD 215 157
- 29 Bronze coin from Pergamum showing the Asclepieian snake coiled around the *omphalos* on reverse 158
- 30 Caracallan Sestertius showing Asclepius with Telesphorus and *omphalos* 160
- 31 Hadrianic Cistophori from Pergamum depicting Telesphorus 160
- 32 *RIB* 1028 182
- 33 Plan of the hospital at Vetera I 186
- 34 *ILNovae* 9 188
- 35 Plan of the *valetudinarium* at Novae 191
- 36 The Thracian rider, *IGBulg* 5.5806 196
- 37 Map of Philippopolis 197
- 38 *IGBulg* 3.1126 200
- 39 *IGBulg* 3.1126 200
- 40 *IGBulg* 3.1127 201
- 41 *IGBulg* 2.518 203
- 42 *IGBulg* 2.521 203
- 43 Head of Eshmun-Asclepius from Sidon 221
- 44 Torso of Eshmun-Asclepius 221
- 45 Map of Roman North Africa 227
- 46 Evidence for cult from sites in Africa Proconsularis 229
- 47 Evidence for cult of Asclepius in Numidia 231
- 48 Tunis type statue of Asclepius from Lambaesis 235
- 49 Reconstructed drawing of the Asclepieion at Lambaesis 248
- 50 Temple of Asclepius at Lambaesis 249

### Tables

- 1 Reasons for the dissemination of a cult and its application to the cult of Asclepius with data from Davies (2005) 34
- 2 Percentage of *ex-votos* from Fregellae and Ponte di Nona with data from Potter (1988) 68
- 3 Data from the *PHI* database showing the frequency of occurrence of the titles utilised in *BMusImp* 3 (1932) 22.19 99

- 4 Coins depicting Asclepius. From *BMC Mysia*, Volume 15 137
- 5 Members of Imperial Household depicted on coins from Pergamum with Asclepius. From *BMC Mysia* 138
- 6 Occurrences of Asclepius on Roman imperial coinage post-Caracalla 159
- 7 Evidence for cult from sites in Africa Proconsularis. With data from Benseddik (2010a) 229
- 8 Evidence for cult from sites in Numidia. With data from Benseddik (2010a) 231
- 9 Inscriptions found in the area of the Asclepieion. With data from Benseddik (2010) 254

# List of Abbreviations

Abbreviations of ancient authors and modern journals generally follow those used by the Oxford Classical Dictionary, 3rd 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
<i>Acta Ant. Hung</i>	<i>Acta Antiqua Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae</i> . Akadémiai Kiadó: Budapest
AE	<i>L'Année épigraphique</i> (Paris 1888–)
<i>Ael.</i>	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–
<i>AncSoc</i>	<i>Ancient Society</i> . Peeters: Leuven
<i>AntAfr</i>	<i>Antiquités africaines</i> . CNRS Éd: Paris
<i>App. Bel. Civ</i>	<i>Appian Bella Civilia</i>
<i>App. Ill.</i>	<i>Appian Illyrica</i>
<i>App. Mith.</i>	<i>Appian Mithridates</i>
<i>App. Pun</i>	<i>Appian Punica</i>
Apollod. Bibl.	Apollodorus <i>Library</i>
<i>Apul. Flor</i>	Apuleius <i>Florida</i>
<i>Ar. Vesp.</i>	Aristophanes <i>Wasps</i>
ARG	<i>Archiv für Religionsgeschichte</i> . de Gruyter: Berlin
<i>Aristid. Or.</i>	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. <i>De Vir. Ill.</i>	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
Caes. <i>BGall</i>	Caesar <i>Bellum Gallicum</i>
Callim. <i>Hymn</i>	Callimachus <i>Hymns</i>
Cass. Dio	Cassius Dio
Celsus, <i>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
Cic. <i>Div.</i>	Cicero <i>De Divinatione</i>
Cic. <i>Fam.</i>	Cicero <i>Epistulae ad Familiares</i>
Cic. <i>Nat. D.</i>	Cicero <i>De natura deorum</i>
Cic. <i>Tusc</i>	Cicero <i>Tusculanae disputationes</i>
Cic. <i>Verr.</i>	Cicero <i>In Verrem</i>
CIL	<i>Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum</i> (Berlin, 1863–)
CIS	<i>Corpus inscriptionum semiticarum</i> (Paris, 1881–)
CNG	Classical Numismatic Group
CQ	<i>Classical Quarterly</i> . Oxford University Press: Oxford
CSIR	<i>Corpus signorum imperii romani</i> . (Coimbra, 1990–)
CW	<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.

Dam. <i>Isid.</i>	Damascius <i>Vita Isidori</i>
<i>Dig.</i>	<i>Digesta</i>
Dio Chrys. <i>Or.</i>	Dio Chrysostomus <i>Orationes</i>
Diod. Sic.	Diodorus Siculus
Dion. Hal. <i>Ant. Rom.</i>	Dionysus of Halicarnassus <i>Antiquitates Romanae</i>
DOP	<i>Dumbarton Oaks Papers</i> . Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection: Washington (D.C.)
EDCS	Epigraphik Datenbank Clauss/Slaby (Frankfurt) <a href="http://db.edcs.eu/epigr/epi_de.php">http://db.edcs.eu/epigr/epi_de.php</a>
EE	<i>Ephemeris Epigraphica</i> (Rome, 1872–1913)
Eur. <i>Bacch.</i>	Euripides <i>Bacchae</i>
Euseb. <i>Chron.</i>	Eusebius <i>Chronica</i>
Festus Glos. Lat.	W.M. Lindsay's 2nd edition version of Festus in his <i>Glossaria Latina</i> , Vol. 4
Fronto <i>Ep.</i>	Fronto <i>Epistulae</i>
<i>Gnomon</i>	<i>Gnomon: kritische Zeitschrift für die gesamte klassische Altertumswissenschaft</i> . Beck: Munich
GRBS	<i>Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies</i> . Duke University, Department of Classics: Durham (N.C.)
<i>Gymn. Agone</i>	<i>Zur Geschichte der gymnischen 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
Herod.	Herodas <i>Mimiambos</i>
Herodotus	Herodotus, <i>Histories</i>
Hes.	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 <i>Asc.</i>	<i>Homeric Hymn to Asclepius</i>
Hom. <i>Il.</i>	Homer <i>Iliad</i>
Hom. <i>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>Iambl. Myst.</i>	Iamblichus <i>De Mysteriis</i>
ICO	<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)

- IG *Inscriptiones Graecae* (Berlin, 1873–)
- IGBulg *Inscriptiones Graecae in Bulgaria repertae*, G. Mihailov ed. (1958–70)
- IGLNovae *Inscriptions grecques et latines de Novae (Mésie inférieure)*. J. Kolendo and V. Božilova (eds.) (Bordeaux, 1997)
- IGUR *Inscriptiones Graecae Urbis Romae* L. Moretti ed. (Rome, 1968–90)
- IGR *Inscriptiones graecae ad res romanas pertinentes*. R. Cagnat et al. (Paris, 1906–27)
- IK Erythrai *Die Inschriften von Erythrai und Klazomenai*, H. Engelmann, R. Merkelbach eds., (Bonn, 1972–1973)
- ILAlg *Inscriptions latines de l'Algérie* 1, ed. S. Gsell (1922); 2 ed, H.-G. Pflaum (1957)
- IL Afr *Inscriptions latines d'Afrique (Tripolitanie, Tunisie, Maroc)* (Paris, 1923)
- ILNovae *Inscriptions latines de Novae*, J. Kolendo and V. Božilova eds., (Poznań, 1992)
- ILS *Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae*, H. Dessau, ed., (Berlin, 1892–1916)
- IRT *Inscriptions of Roman Tripolitania*, J. M. Reynolds and J.B. Ward-Perkins eds., (1952–)
- IvEph *Die Inschriften von Ephesos*, H. Wankel et al. (Bonn, 1979–84)
- IvP *Altertümer von Pergamon, VIII 1–2*, M. Fränkel (Berlin, 1890–1895)
- IvOL *Die Inschriften von Olympia*, W. Dittenberger and K. Purgold (Berlin, 1896)
- JEA *The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*. Egypt Exploration Society: London
- Jer. Chron. *Jerome Chronicle*
- JNG *Jahrbuch für Numismatik und Geldgeschichte*. Bayerische Numismatische Gesellschaft: Munich
- Joseph. AJ *Josephus Antiquitates Judaicae*
- JRA *Journal of Roman Archaeology: an International Journal*. Journal of Roman Archaeology: Portsmouth (R.I)
- JRS *The Journal of Roman Studies*. Society for the Promotion of Roman Studies: London
- KAI *Kanaanäische und aramäische Inschriften*, H. Donner and W. Rölling eds. (Wiesbaden, 1966–69)
- Kernos *Kernos: revue internationale et pluridisciplinaire de religion grecque antique*. Centre international d'étude de la religion grecque antique: Liège; Athens

- Ktema* *Ktema: civilisations de l'Orient, de la Grèce et de Rome antiques.* Université Marc Bloch, Centre de Recherches sur le Proche Orient et la Grèce antique: Strasbourg
- Latomus* *Latomus: revue d'études latines.* Latomus: Brussels
- Libyca* *Libyca. Archéologie, épigraphie: bulletin du Service des antiquités.* Le Service: Algiers
- LIMC *Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae.* Artemis & Winkler Verlag: Zürich
- Limes* *Limes.* Centro de Estudios Clásicos de la Universidad Metropolitana de Ciencias de la Educación: Santiago (Chile)
- Livy Epi.* *Livy Epitomae*
- Livy Per.* *Livy Periochae*
- LSCG *Lois sacrées des cites grecques,* F. Sokolowski. de Boccard: Paris (1969)
- LTUR *Lexicon Topographicum Urbis Romae.* Edizioni Quasar: Rome. (1996–)
- Lucian Alex.* *Lucian Alexander*
- Lucian Hipp* *Lucias Hippias*
- Lycoph. Alex.* *Lycophron Alexandra*
- M. Aur. Med.* *Marcus Aurelius Meditations*
- MAAR *Memoirs of the American Academy in Rome.* University of Michigan Press: Ann Arbor (Mich.)
- MediterrAnt* *Mediterraneo antico: economie, società, culture.* Istituti Editoriali e Poligrafici Internazionali: Pisa
- MedSec* *Medicina nei secoli: arte e scienza.* Università degli Studi di Roma La Sapienza, Dipartimento di Medicina Sperimentale, Sezione di Storia della Medicina: Rome
- MDAI(R) *Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts, Römische Abteilung = Bullettino dell'Istituto Archeologico Germanico, Sezione romana.* von Zabern: Mainz
- NSER *Nuova silloge epigrafica di Rodi e Cos,* A. Maiuri. Le Monnier: Florence (1925)
- Numisma* *Numisma.* Sociedad Ibero-Americana de estudios numismáticos: Madrid
- NZ *Numismatische Zeitschrift.* Selbstverl. der Österreichischen Numismatischen Gesellschaft: Vienna
- OAth* *Opuscula Atheniensa: Annual of the Swedish Institute at Athens.* Åström: Sävedalen
- OGIS *Orientis Graeci Inscriptiones Selectae,* W. Dittenberger, ed., (Leipzig, 1903)

Oros.	Orosius
Ov. <i>Fast.</i>	Ovid <i>Fasti</i>
Ov. <i>Met.</i>	Ovid <i>Metamorphoses</i>
<i>Pallas</i>	<i>Pallas: revue d'études antiques</i> . Pr. Universitaires du Mirail: Toulouse
Paus.	Pausanias
PBSR	<i>Papers of the British School at Rome</i> . British School at Rome: London
PH	<i>The Inscriptions of Cos</i> , W.R. Paton and E.L. Hicks (1891)
PHI/ERGA	Packard Humanities Institute <i>Searchable Greek Inscriptions</i> <a href="http://noapplet.epigraphy.packhum.org/">http://noapplet.epigraphy.packhum.org/</a>
Philostrat. <i>V.A.</i>	Philostratus <i>Vita Apollonii</i>
Philostrat. <i>V.S.</i>	Philostratus <i>Vitae Sophistarum</i>
<i>Phoenix</i>	<i>Phoenix: Journal of the Classical Association of Canada</i> = <i>revue de la Société canadienne des études classiques</i> . University of Toronto Press: Toronto (Ont.)
Pind. <i>Pyth.</i>	Pindar <i>Pythian Odes</i>
PIR	<i>Prosopographia Imperii Romani Saeculi I, II, III</i> , 1st edition by E. Klebs and H. Dessau (1897–8), 2nd edition by E. Groag, A. Stein et al. (1933–)
PLRE	<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 HN	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>
RBN	<i>Revue belge de numismatique et de sigillographie</i> . Société royale de numismatique de Belgique: Brussels
RH	<i>Revue historique</i> . Pr. Universitaires de France: Paris
RIB	<i>The Roman Inscriptions of Britain</i> , R.G. Collingwood, R.P. Wright et al. Clarendon Press: Oxford (1965–)
RIC	<i>Roman Imperial Coinage</i> (London 1923–)
RMD	<i>Roman Military Diplomas</i> , M.M. Roxon. Institute of Archaeology: London (1985–)



- Robertson *Roman Imperial Coins in the Hunter Coin Cabinet, University of Glasgow*, (5 vols.), A.S. Robertson. Oxford University Press: Oxford (1978–1982)
- RPC *Roman Provincial Coinage* (London, 1992–)
- SEG *Supplementum epigraphicum Graecum* (Leiden, 1933–)
- SHA *Alex. Sev.* *Scriptores Historiae Augustae Alexander Severus*
- SHA *Ant. Pius* *Scriptores Historiae Augustae Antonius Pius*
- SHA *Aurel.* *Scriptores Historiae Augustae Aurelian*
- SHA *Had.* *Scriptores Historiae Augustae Hadrian*
- SHA *Marc.* *Scriptores Historiae Augustae Marcus*
- SHA *Verus* *Scriptores Historiae Augustae Lucius Verus*
- Smyrna* *Smyrna Inscriptions: Texts and List*, D.F. McCabe. Princeton University Press: Princeton (1988)
- SNG *Cop.* *Sylloge Nummorum Graecorum, Denmark, The Royal Collection of Coins and Medals, Danish National Museum* (1942–1979)
- SNG *Levante* *E. Levante Sylloge Nummorum Graecorum, Switzerland I. Levante-Cilicia* (1986)
- SNG *von Aulock* *Sylloge Nummorum Graecorum, Deutschland, Sammlung Hans Von Aulock* (1957–1967)
- Stat. Sib.* *Stattus Silvae*
- Strabo *Strabo, Geography*
- Sue. *Aug* *Suetonius Divus Augustus*
- Sue. *Claud* *Suetonius Divus Claudius*
- Syll.*<sup>3</sup> *Sylloge Inscriptionum Graecarum* 3rd edition, W. Dittenberger (1915–24)
- Syria* *Syria: revue d'art oriental et d'archéologie*. Institut français d'archéologie du Proche-Orient: Beyrouth
- Tac. Ann.* *Tacitus Annals*
- Tac. Germ* *Tacitus Germania*
- Tac. Hist.* *Tacitus Histories*
- TAPhA* *Transactions of the American Philological Association*. Johns Hopkins University Press: Baltimore (Md.)
- Them. Or* *Themistius Orations*
- Thuc. *Thucydides The History of the Peloponnesian War*
- Tit. Calymnii* *Tituli Calymnii*, M. Segre (Bergamo, 1904–44)
- Tyche* *Tyche: Beiträge zur Alten Geschichte, Papyrologie und Epigraphik*. Holzhausen: Vienna
- World Archaeol.* *World Archaeology*. Routledge: London

VA Phrygiens	<i>Münzen und Städte Phrygiens</i> , H. von Aulock, (Tübingen, 1987)
Val. Max.	Valerius Maximus
Varbanov	<i>Greek Imperial Coins and their Values</i> (3 vols), I. Varbanov, (Burgas, 2005–07)
Virg.	Virgil <i>Aeneid</i>
Xen. An.	Xenophon <i>Anabasis</i>
ZAC	<i>Zeitschrift für antikes Christentum</i> . de Gruyter: Berlin
ZPE	<i>Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik</i> . Habelt: Bonn

# Introduction

Originating in Greece in the 5th century BC, worship of Asclepius continued until the late 4th century AD by which time the god had been supplicated at over 900 cult sites across the Graeco-Roman world.<sup>1</sup> Although the cult had been disseminated across the Mediterranean by the Greeks, it was only when the Romans took over the cult that it was widely dispersed across the empire, with worship of Asclepius occurring in most of the provinces.<sup>2</sup> The cult had been introduced to Rome in 293 BC where a temple was dedicated to Asclepius on Tiber Island in 291 BC.<sup>3</sup> The cult was spread by various groups, among which the Roman army, and this work will examine how this occurred and the reasons for this dissemination. The connections between cults can be understood via a knowledge of how, and from which points, a cult spread. This will then show which rites and cultic elements were unique to a site and which were shared by multiple sanctuaries. Increased mobility during the Roman Empire played an important role in this dissemination.<sup>4</sup> As put by Adams: ‘Travel and communication are dynamics which were central to the Roman Empire.’<sup>5</sup> The empire’s size and diversity demanded that there was an efficient communication system in place for government. This infrastructure was safeguarded by the *pax Romana*, making the dangerous days of travelling during the Classical and Hellenistic periods a thing of the past.<sup>6</sup> While travel by land was slower than voyages by sea, it had the benefit of being a far safer mode of transport.<sup>7</sup>

This work examines the impact of the Roman Empire on the cult of Asclepius, looking at how Rome took over the Greek cult, and how it was influenced by Rome.<sup>8</sup> It will explore the ways in which the cult varied in the city

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- 1 With data from Riethmüller (2005) Vol. 2. Not all of these sites enjoyed cult simultaneously.
  - 2 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.
  - 3 Livy *Per.* 11.
  - 4 See Davies (2005) 62 and also Table 1 in Chapter 1 for some of the reasons why cultic dissemination could occur.
  - 5 Adams (2001) 1.
  - 6 Adams (2001) 2.
  - 7 Collar (2013) 49.
  - 8 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.

of Rome and the Roman provinces as it had scope for strong regional tendencies within its worship. In order to establish this, the religion of the empire versus the religion of the local will be investigated, showing global and regional characteristics of the cult. 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 scholars in the Roman Imperial period as it was believed that there were few important changes which took place during this time.<sup>9</sup> This book aims to bring a new dimension and improved understanding to the cult of Asclepius by showing how rich and varied the cult became during the Roman period but also how worship of Asclepius continued undiminished and even grew in popularity at this time. The majority of secondary sources have focused solely on the earlier cult or only on the cult in Greece, yet worship of Asclepius flourished during the Roman period and grew more multifaceted in nature.<sup>10</sup> By studying the cult of Asclepius in this period, this book aims to show that the Roman-period cult should not be overlooked but that it is vital to examine it in order to understand the entire history of the cult. A second aim of this work is to show the high levels of connectivity within the cult via an examination of how it spread and was altered in each site. This work will, furthermore, show that the cult in the Roman era had to adapt to the new reality of Empire, as did the world around it. Therefore, in undertaking this study, this work will also illustrate the dynamics of empire via a case-study of the cult of Asclepius. By examining the methods by which the cult changed under the empire and how it was spread to the provinces, it will demonstrate the impact which the creation of the Roman Empire had upon religious life in the provinces and improve understanding of socio-cultural dynamics during the empire.

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 movement. The institution of emperor, imperial courtiers, and a permanent army were created as a result of the advent of Empire and the other factors also changed or became more prominent at this time.<sup>11</sup> As such, they are best situated in order to show the changes which a cult underwent as the result of the foundation of the Roman Empire. The Roman

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9 Edelstein and Edelstein (1998) 2.253–5.

10 See Chapter 1, section 'Current State of Asclepieian Scholarship'.

11 See Chapter 1, section 'Factors of Imperial Change' for why precisely these factors were chosen.

Empire was known for its rich religious diversity and the effects which the advent of Empire had upon this will be shown. The discussion of the cult in North Africa (see Chapter 5) will illustrate how the movements of the army within the empire increased this religious diversity through choice. Mobility and connectivity were vital for this and the improved infrastructure, both physical and human, lay at its core. The Roman Empire, its army, and emperor facilitated religious choice and diversity through cultural encounters, movement, and connectivity. This work will explore how this took place, laying out a number of theories in the first chapter and then examining how the cult of Asclepius adapted to the Roman Empire in subsequent chapters. Cult spaces are one of the best areas in which to perform such an investigation, as they reflect the beliefs of the people around them and did not just have religious meaning but also had socio-political connotations.<sup>12</sup>

The first chapter lays out the theoretical framework which underpins this work. It will also explain why certain factors were chosen in order to show the impact of the Roman Empire on the cult of Asclepius here. This is followed by an overview of Asclepieian scholarship and other works, such as the *Impact of Empire* series, which have been greatly influential for this book. The theories discussed in this chapter frame the phenomenon of religious change examined here. A brief overview of parallel cult changes is also given in order to place the religious changes in the cult of Asclepius in their proper context. The chapter will conclude with a discussion on the phenomenon of syncretism as twinned deities play an important role in this work.

The second chapter examines the cult of Asclepius prior to the Roman era, as it is only possible to understand the impact of the Roman Empire upon the cult, 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 namely, Epidaurus, Athens, Cos, Pergamum, and the Italian Sanctuaries, illustrating how these sites were connected as well as showing their patterns of dissemination. This will then be followed by a case-study on the occurrence of epithets within the cult. Statue iconography will also be discussed here as it is the main art form relevant to showing the impact of Empire. A section on incubation and epiphany closes the chapter as this was one of most characteristic Asclepieian rites and lay at the core of the search for healing by worshippers.

The third chapter focuses specifically on Roman imperial worship of the cult. Emperors in general had a resounding impact on religious life in empire and their influence on worship of Asclepius will also be shown. Emperors have

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12 Stek (2015) 1–2, 14.

been chosen as one factor by which to show the impact of the Roman empire on the cult of Asclepius as they played a significant role in the history of these cults. Imperial patronage could drastically alter the popularity of a cult and could lead to the revival of a moribund sanctuary. However, it was not just the direct impact of imperial patronage which is important but also its after-effects. People in the provinces wished to please their emperor and, as such, also patronised Graeco-Roman cults popular with the emperor. It will be shown in this chapter how imperial patronage of Asclepius caused emulation of this act in the provinces, leading to cities reviving and revitalising their local cults. Not all emperors worshipped Asclepius to the same extent; Hadrian and Caracalla especially patronised the cult, whereas others, for example Vespasian and Titus, interacted with it 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. In fact, the mobility and movement of people is one of the most important themes of this work as it will be shown in each of the chapters how this greatly impacted upon the cult during the empire and its further expansion. It was precisely the travelling emperors who had the greatest effect upon the cult of Asclepius, something which will be explored in this chapter.

The fourth chapter examines the Roman army and how it worshipped the god. The army has been chosen to show the impact of the Roman Empire as it was an important vehicle for the dissemination of the cult into the provinces, especially into newly conquered regions such as Moesia and Dacia, but also because soldiers were prolific dedicators. Asclepius 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 explores 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. This is another reason why soldiers were chosen, as many of them enjoyed higher levels of mobility than people in other professions. They were able to bring their own cults or cultic elements with them as they moved from one place to the next. This ties in with the discussion in Chapter 3 as there the impact of emperors, and the role mobility played within this, is shown.

The fifth chapter looks at syncretism in the cult in Roman North Africa. The worship of the syncretic god Eshmun-Asclepius will 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 deity in one area and how these different

gods were supplicated by and appropriate for different groups of worshippers. Connectivity 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. This chapter, thus, ties in with other reoccurring themes in this work, namely mobility and connectivity, and explores patterns of dissemination within the cult in Africa but also the effects which the movements of people and troops had on this region. It will be shown how the mobility of the cult led to increased religious choice in this area and also how it affected the outward trappings of the cult, namely the iconography of the cult-statues, the appearance of its temples, and the people whom this cult attracted.

The key questions that this work 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? The geographical scope for this work will be North Africa, Asia Minor, Italy, Greece, and the Balkan, Danubian, and Thracian regions. The timeframe will extend from 27 BC until Severus Alexander's death in AD 235.

## Mobility and Connectivity in the Cult of Asclepius

While the cult of Asclepius originated in Greece, it was introduced to Rome in 293 BC by order of the Sibylline Books.<sup>1</sup> The cult flourished in the Classical and Hellenistic eras and worship of the god was spread across the Mediterranean. However, a secondary dissemination took place during the Roman Empire when the cult spread into the Roman provinces through, among others, the army. As the cult came into contact with more peoples and regions, worship of the god was changed, altered, and intensified. This was because the advent of the Roman Empire was a momentous event which greatly influenced all aspects of Roman society, among which its religious world. A cult could be taken over by Rome and, as Rome extended its empire, worship of a god could be disseminated along with this provincial expansion. Vital for this cultic diffusion was the improved infrastructure which was central to the Empire.<sup>2</sup> The increased levels of mobility and connectivity which occurred at this time facilitated cultic transferral as well as the creation, or intensification, of a global cult. However, at the same time, cults also became more regional as a result of coming into contact with a global cult, a phenomenon which will be explored in this work. As local people encountered more cultic options, they could pick which were the most suitable for their needs and purposes. New cultic elements were introduced as a result of this expansion and other aspects, which were perhaps only relevant to a certain area, were discarded; supplicants determined which parts of the cult were relevant to their needs and which were extraneous. Thus, each sanctuary could show distinct rites which were specific to that one locality alone.

Change was highly important for the continued existence of any cult and this should be seen as a sign of vigour and not of decline.<sup>3</sup> For a cult to attract worshippers there had to be a reason or a need for people to seek help from a god. While certain deities may have been imported in order to deal with momentous events which threatened the Roman state, for example Asclepius and Apollo were introduced to the city as the result of plagues, it was the day-to-day interactions which people had with a cult, shown, among others, in dedications, which showed its importance. As Bendlin puts it, the gods can only be

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1 Livy *Per.* 11.

2 Adams (2001) 1.

3 Bendlin (2000) 119.



fully appreciated through the analysis of private, mundane, religious actions.<sup>4</sup> If people did not have a need for a god, then the cult would not penetrate an area (see Chapter 2) or a cult would dwindle in importance and eventually cease to exist. In order to suit the needs of its worshippers, a cult had to adapt with the world around it. In an expanded Roman world, this would have meant incorporating elements and gods from newly conquered regions and adapting worship in order to reflect the newly formed institutions of the empire, namely the emperor, imperial courtiers, and the army.

This work aims to examine the impact of Rome on the cult of Asclepius and how it adapted and changed under the Roman Empire. The Roman Imperial era has often been overlooked by Asclepieian scholars who prefer to focus on the Classical Greek cult (see below). However, Asclepieian worship became more multifaceted over time and it is necessary also to understand the history of the cult during the Imperial period in order to be able to comprehend fully the nature of the cult throughout antiquity. It will be examined how Asclepieian identities were formed by looking at the cult in the provinces, where the god was worshipped by various groups of people or individuals, and by 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 visible. In order to show whether or not Rome had an impact on the cult, it is necessary to examine the global and regional aspects of the cult. The creation of a global cult would have been more possible than before as a result of increased mobility in this period and this movement of people would have also facilitated transference and dissemination of the cult.<sup>5</sup> Mobility, connectivity, and movement will be key themes for this work as the factors for cultic change 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.

Thus, a study of the impact of the Roman Empire on religion in the ancient world will be presented in this work via the case-study of Asclepius, filling in the gap in current scholarship. It does so by isolating a number of factors by which the Empire changed the cult, namely emperors, courtiers, the army, and cross-provincial mobility and movements. The Empire has been chosen as the time period for this study as at this time many of the factors which influenced

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4 See Chapter 2 for the importation of Asclepius into Rome; Bendlin (2000) 119.

5 Chaniotis (2009) 20.

the cult were created or evolved further, most notably emperors, imperial courtiers and a professional army.

The 'Impact of Empire' research network has been prolific in examining how Rome affected political, religious, social, and economic aspects of the Graeco-Roman world, and another volume has been edited by Tesse Stek which examines how Rome impacted upon cults in Italy, especially after its conquest. However, no conclusive study has been undertaken on a single cult in the Roman Imperial period, something which this work aims to rectify. Based upon the various theories offered by scholars examined below, this work will show 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 demonstrate the impact of Empire on the nature of Asclepieian cults. As such, this work 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. Stek has singled out certain factors which need to be considered for the study of this impact and stresses the importance of moving away from the abstract concept of Rome and looking instead at the individual actors in these situations.<sup>6</sup> This because religious rituals are a way of conceptualising one's place within the social world and something which changes according to one's surroundings.<sup>7</sup> Here, the role of these individual actors upon the cult will be examined via an analysis of worship by emperors, courtiers, as well as members of the Roman army. Bendlin also emphasises the role which individuals played within ancient religion as he notes that each person perceived the meaning of a ritual in a different way and that the contextual meaning of these rites was not fixed but was fluid in order to suit multiple needs.<sup>8</sup>

This chapter provides a framework for the issues discussed in this book. It will first expound why certain factors were chosen in order to show the impact of the Roman Empire on the cult of Asclepius. It will then provide an overview of current Asclepieian scholarship and also works from the *'Impact of Empire'* series which have been especially influential for this book. Thereafter, a number of theories will be discussed which give reasons for why regional cults were created and why cults could be disseminated. These theories will underpin the

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6 Stek (2015) 11; see also Collar (2013) 19 who argues 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.

7 Bendlin (2000) 119.

8 Bendlin (2000) 128.

work presented here and provide a framework for the discussion into the impact of the Empire on the cult. No single theory alone offers a comprehensive explanation for the phenomenon of religious change examined here and it is, therefore, necessary to apply multiple theories to the discussed material. As a result, some theories will be more prominent and feature more heavily in the discussion of certain chapters than others. The chapter will conclude with an overview of the history and use of the term syncretism as syncretic cults play an important part in the discussion presented here.

### Factors of Imperial Change

Interest in empires is almost as old as the empires themselves, in part as the result of the great impact they had upon the world.<sup>9</sup> Rome was not a typical empire, as is pointed out by Woolf, and nothing on the scale of the Roman Empire had existed in the Mediterranean world before it.<sup>10</sup> Hopkins argues that the key to the success and durability of the Roman Empire was the radical innovations and changes which it successfully underwent, for example in administration.<sup>11</sup> This indicates that the Empire had a relative fluidity where it could change to suit circumstances which ensured its longevity.<sup>12</sup> In order to understand the dynamics of an empire numerous issues can be examined, among which tensions between politics and the military, religious structures, the economy, as well as the elites who were the core of imperial power systems.<sup>13</sup> There are various factors by which a cult, including that of Asclepius, could change under the Empire. This section will expound why certain factors have been isolated in this work in order to show this phenomenon of religious change under the Empire, namely emperors, courtiers, the army, and cross-provincial mobility and movement.

Religion touched upon virtually every aspect of life in antiquity and Bendlin, examining the late Republican Roman religious world, stresses that religion, ritual, and the ability to allow a person to formulate their social position in the world should not be seen as something static, fixed in terms of its origins, or unchangeable. Rather, these were dynamic and adaptable.<sup>14</sup> This dynamism

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9 Morrison (2001) 1.

10 Woolf (2001) 312–3.

11 Hopkins (2009) 179.

12 Sinapoli (2001) 196.

13 Goldstone and Haldon (2009) 4.

14 Bendlin (2000) 119.

shows the power of religion but also why a study into how the cult of Asclepius changed during the Roman imperial period is relevant. It is logical to expect that the cult of Asclepius adapted under the Roman Empire, as the advent of this Empire was a monumental event which affected virtually all facets, political, social, and religious, of Roman life. This cultic change could also be expected because religion and power were especially closely linked as religious rites gave elites a platform for self-representation.<sup>15</sup> Bendlin notes the social centrality which religion had in public life at this time; according to him there was an inseparable connection between priestly and civic offices, between religion in the city-state and political life, and between religion and the state in general.<sup>16</sup> The emperor was, of course, central to the new imperial institution and his power was dependent on his control of the army, administration, and finances.<sup>17</sup> The emperor, imperial courtiers, and a permanent army were all created as the result of the advent of empire and will, therefore, give a clear image of the impact which an Empire could have on cults in antiquity.

The change from Republic to Empire had numerous effects upon every aspect of the Roman world. The most obvious is the change in government style, where control moved from an oligarchy to an Empire, headed by a sole ruler and the emperor is the first factor chosen here to show how the cult of Asclepius changed under the Roman Empire. Emperors had a great impact upon many aspects of Roman life and he had a great religious authority which legitimised religious action, as Beard, North, and Price argue:

Throughout the empire the emperor was seen as the principal source of innovation and took the lead in promoting new cults. This is one important facet of the religious focus on the emperor, characteristic [...] of the Augustan restructuring and continued—if anything, intensified—throughout the principate.<sup>18</sup>

Even the creation of the position of emperor resulted in a major religious change due to the introduction of the cult of the emperor, as provincials sought to adjust to the new reality of Empire by finding a suitable place for the emperor in their civic world.<sup>19</sup> How emperors could promote and influence cults will be explored in Chapter 3. As well as religion, the emperor also affected

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15 Rüpke (2014) 271.

16 Bendlin (2000) 119.

17 Woolf (2001) 311.

18 Beard, North and Price (1998) 1.251–2.

19 Price (1984) 1; Fujii (2013) 157.

social, political, and administrative structures. For example, he altered the way wars were waged by founding a permanent standing army with an accompanying medical corps (see Chapter 4). This facilitated the expansion of the empire as well as the conquest of further regions as the larger the empire was, the greater the resources available, both in terms of finances and in the number of soldiers available, in order to expand the empire.<sup>20</sup> Augustus also made administrative changes to the provincial organisation as he divided control of the provinces between himself and the senate.<sup>21</sup> The majority of provinces were governed by the senate but most notably Egypt was under Augustus' control.<sup>22</sup> This Augustan administrative structure remained largely in place for three centuries showing the great impact it, as well as the institution of the emperor, had upon Roman life.<sup>23</sup>

As has been argued by Millar, an essential feature of Roman Empire was '[...] the immense complex network of relationships with bound the emperor to the educated bourgeoisie of the cities.'<sup>24</sup> In fact, he argues, the whole social system was dictated and defined by contact between the emperor and individuals.<sup>25</sup> There was, as such, a constant flow of letters from and to the emperor wherever he physically was present in the empire.<sup>26</sup> This contact is, furthermore, shown in the many embassies which were sent to the emperor, asking for him to intervene in local affairs. One such event was when the Greek island of Gyaros asked for a reduction of their taxation. They sent an embassy to meet with Augustus at Corinth when he was travelling back to Rome.<sup>27</sup> This is in contrast to the end of the Republic where an inscription from Aphrodisias records that the *koinon* of the cities of Asia made a complaint about their taxation but did so by sending an embassy to the senate in Rome.<sup>28</sup> This clearly shows the shift in power from the senate to the emperor. The close, personal, contact with the emperor by cities and individuals is very important for the discussion in Chapter 3. It will be shown there how individuals, using the example of the Coan physician Gaius Stertinius Xenophon, used personal connections in order to further themselves and the communities where they came from.

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20 Hopkins (2009) 185.

21 Sumi (2011) 85.

22 Sumi (2011) 85.

23 Sumi (2011) 86.

24 Millar (1992) 9.

25 Millar (1992) 7.

26 See, for example, Philostrat. *V.S.* 11.27–8.

27 Strabo *Geog.* 10.5.

28 The Aphrodisias inscription was edited in T. Drew-Bear (1972) *BCH* 96 443; Millar (2002) 296. For the importance of embassies within the cult of Asclepius, see Chapter 3.

It will also illustrate how the power of these courtiers derived from a closeness to the emperor; when away from the emperor's affections, the courtier was without power. Chapter 3 will, furthermore, focus on the communication between emperors and communities. Millar states that most of the emperor's actions were undertaken in response to petitions which were sent to him and that, in general, this was also the extent to which an emperor interacted with many of his subjects.<sup>29</sup> This made an imperial visit to a city a highly important point of personal contact with the emperor and its potential for impacting on local life should not be underestimated. During the later Empire, emperors increasingly travelled greater distances and spent more time away from Rome in the provinces. This mobility was made possible via the excellent imperial infrastructure where people could now travel to meet with the emperor but the rulers themselves also increasingly travelled greater distances. Travelling emperors, as mentioned in the introduction, had a great impact on the cult of Asclepius and it was this combination of an improved imperial infrastructure together with a new focus on the emperor which allowed the ruler to have such an impact upon the cult of Asclepius. The emperor was, thus, one of the most impactful factors of the Empire and it is because of the above reasons that the emperor has been chosen as a factor to demonstrate how the cult changed during the Roman Empire.

As the emperor grew in importance and power, the senate weakened in turn. Good relations between the emperor and his elites were central to the running of the Roman administrative system. A specific institution was needed in order to mediate relations and, thus, the imperial court was created which grew in importance as the senate's authority diminished, eventually replacing the senate as the centre of power.<sup>30</sup> In literary sources the term *aula* was used to describe the physical location of the court, the type of power wielded by people here, and also the dangerous lifestyle it entailed as courtiers were dependent on the favour of the emperor who could suddenly turn against them.<sup>31</sup> Anyone could, in theory, become a member of the imperial court and enjoy power as a result of this; if the emperor favoured an individual, there were many favours and gifts which could be granted to this person. While legal status dictated admittance to the senate, membership of the court was determined by proximity to the emperor.<sup>32</sup> Elites remained important for the day-to-day running of the empire, despite the emperor now being the centre of power, and they could be

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29 Millar (1992) 8.

30 Hopkins (2009) 189.

31 Cic. *Fam.* 15.4.6; Virg. 2.504; Val. Max. 7.1.2; Wallace-Hadrill (1996) 283.

32 Wallace-Hadrill (1996) 285.

great influential in bringing certain matters, people, or cults to the emperor's attention. As courtiers now possessed the power and influence once held by the senate, they have also been chosen as a factor to show religious change under the empire.

In addition to the emperor, the Roman army also had an important effect upon religious life at this time, which is why it was chosen as a factor to illustrate religious change here. The Roman Empire, above all, was originally one of conquest, and this military consciousness remained at the core of the Roman spirit.<sup>33</sup> While the conquest of a region was generally a quick and dramatic event, or series thereof, the period of state-formation was rather a long, drawn-out process of integration which is often much harder and complex than the actual conquest.<sup>34</sup> Hopkins states:

The huge size of the Roman Empire was a symptom of the fanatical dedication at all levels of Roman society to fighting wars and to military discipline and of the desire both for immediate victory and for long-term conquest.<sup>35</sup>

Thus, military prowess was one of the core elements of Romanness and, as a result, the empire was greatly expanded. The impact of the military on the empire is, thus, immediately clear but the precise forms which this took are worth examining in further detail. It is important to note that the majority of legions was stationed on the frontiers, far away from Rome, and it is precisely in these frontier regions, namely Eastern Europe and North Africa, that the impact of the military upon the cult of Asclepius is the clearest.

Soldiers were some of the most prolific dedicators to the gods, which was a result of their desire and need for protection because of their dangerous profession. However, the study of military religion is also useful to illustrate other dedicatory dynamics as these men came from a wide variety of geographical and social backgrounds and they also erected dedications both collectively and individually, displaying a different range of needs which could be met by the gods.

Rüpke stresses why the military was so important for the Empire and he argues that it is almost impossible to overstate the role the army played as a conveyer of religion, partially because of their mobility but also the heterogeneity

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33 Hopkins (2009) 178.

34 Sinapoli (2001) 195; Goldstone and Haldon (2009) 7.

35 Hopkins (2009) 185.

of religion and influences within the military.<sup>36</sup> It is for these reasons, then, that the army has been chosen as a factor to illustrate the impact of the Empire on the cult of Asclepius. Rüpke argues that:

It has become clear that the diffusion of religious practices was much facilitated by the establishment of the military and administrative structures of the Roman Empire.<sup>37</sup>

Thus, while military prowess lay at the heart of Roman consciousness, the frequent troop movements also aided the spread of the cult of Asclepius. Here, once again, the potential effect of movement and mobility upon the cult and the role it played in how the cult of Asclepius changed during the Empire is shown. Rüpke also points out that when religion was represented on a medium of public communication, such as was communicated to and spread via the army, then this also often had a pan-regional message.<sup>38</sup> It was, in fact, the result of another central factor of the Roman Empire, namely its infrastructure and resulting mobility, which allowed the military to play such an important role despite being located far away from Rome.

The flexibility of the Roman Empire with regards to innovation and adaption was noted above. This was also the case when it came to religious diversity.<sup>39</sup> Rome was well-known for being open to the existence of new cults within its religious world as long as they did not threaten it.<sup>40</sup> This religious openness, combined with an increased mobility, is another important factor of imperial change and also something which increased in prominence during the Imperial period. This '[...] proliferation of religious choices [...]' had already started during the Republic but '[...] came even more strongly to characterize the religious world of the city of Rome during the empire [...]':<sup>41</sup> Beard, North, and Price also note how religion must have changed over the course of time; they argue that an identical ritual which was held both the 1st and 3rd centuries AD would have acquired different meanings over time.<sup>42</sup> This phenomenon of how mobility increased religious choice will be examined in Chapter 5.

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36 Rüpke (2014) 276.

37 Rüpke (2014) 280.

38 Rüpke (2014) 272.

39 Hopkins (2009) 179.

40 Beard, North and Price (1998) 1.314.

41 Beard, North and Price (1998) 1.245.

42 Beard, North and Price (1998) 1.249.



The factors expounded in this section had a clear impact upon the Empire in general and it will be shown in this work how they affected the cult of Asclepius. None of these factors stood alone but were highly interconnected and together facilitated the growth and dissemination of the cult of Asclepius and allowed its adaption and change during the Imperial period.

### Current State of Asclepieian Scholarship

A significant study of the cults of Asclepius in the ancient world has been undertaken by Jürgen Riethmüller, published in two volumes. The first of these provides a survey of the cult's history as well as an overview of all evidence for cult sites across the ancient world. As Riethmüller's main focus is on Greece, he offers interpretations and new suggestions as well as dates for various structures and rites in Greece. However, for sanctuaries outside of Greece, Riethmüller only gives available evidence without providing any analysis.<sup>43</sup> The work also includes a list of bibliographic references to 2002 which is when Riethmüller submitted his PhD.<sup>44</sup> However, Gil Renberg, in his review of the work, comments on the fact that this is by no means a complete list and that there are several important omissions such as L.R. LiDonnici (1995) *The Epidaurian Miracle Inscriptions: Text, Translation and Commentary*, which discusses the Epidaurian *iamata*, their dating, and audience.<sup>45</sup> Renberg also points out a number of significant flaws which makes it vital that Riethmüller's work should be approached with some caution.

A number of important works have been published since 2002, furthering knowledge and understanding of the cult of Asclepius in antiquity. An especially large portion of these are dedicated to studying a single sanctuary or a geographic region but individual works also focus on various aspects of the cult, for example, Emma Aston examines the early origins for the cult of Asclepius by looking at the literary evidence for the cult at Thessaly and its connection with early hero cults.<sup>46</sup>

Bronwyn Wickkiser examines the cults of Asclepius in Greece, with a monograph on the sanctuary at Athens, as well as a number of articles on individual aspects of the Athenian cult. She has also looked at other sanctuaries located

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43 Some of these references are only tangentially relevant to the site discussed.

44 Riethmüller (2005) 1.22–30. The book is a revised version of his PhD thesis.

45 Renberg (2009).

46 Aston (2004).

in Greece, such as the one in Corinth.<sup>47</sup> Wickkiser, furthermore, examines the special relationship between the Athenian sanctuary and the adjacent Theatre of Dionysus. This connection between the dramatic arts and Asclepius is also explored by Robin Mitchell-Boyask whose focus is on the representation of health and plague within plays produced in 5th century Athens as well as the physical connection between the Theatre and the Sanctuary on the South Slopes of the Acropolis.<sup>48</sup>

Milena Melfi has made a significant contribution to understanding the architectural history of Asclepieia in Greece throughout their entire period of use, from the Classical period throughout the Roman era, in two monographs. The second of these focuses especially on the cult at Lebena in Crete but the first proves to be the most valuable for the purposes of this study as it includes extensive sections on Athens and Epidaurus.<sup>49</sup> Similarly, Elisavet Sioumpara looks at the Hellenistic temple architecture of the sanctuary at Messene in the Peloponnese, examining in great detail each architectural element used in the sanctuary.<sup>50</sup> She, furthermore, looks at the building history as well as the identity of the cult here.

Sebastian Prignitz examines four building inscriptions relating to the 4th century rebuilding of the Asclepieion at Epidaurus and he argues that these inscriptions indicate that there was a coherent building programme which took place at this time when the sanctuary was growing in importance.<sup>51</sup> Inscriptions are also the subject of Stephen Ahearne-Kroll's work which examines how a private religious experience became public via the erection of a dedication and which also looks at the role of the goddess Mnemosyne in the Epidaurian Asclepieion.<sup>52</sup>

Outside of Greece, the military fortress at Novae on the Danube in Bulgaria has been the subject of extensive excavations by a group of Polish and Bulgarian researchers who excavated a shrine to Asclepius there. One of the most important articles was published by Ernst Künzl who argues that this shrine was placed within the legionary *valetudinarium*.<sup>53</sup>

A comprehensive overview of the various cults of Asclepius and Hygieia in Roman North Africa is provided by Nacera Benseddik in her monograph on

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47 Wickkiser (2006), (2008), (2009), (2010), (2011).

48 Mitchell-Boyask (2008).

49 Melfi (2007a), (2007b).

50 Sioumpara (2011).

51 Prignitz (2014).

52 Ahearne-Kroll (2013).

53 Künzl (2005). See also <http://www.novae.uw.edu.pl/english/novae/research.htm>.

the subject (see Chapter 5 for further discussion). However, she has also authored a number of articles covering various aspects of the cult of Asclepius in this region, for example looking at individual cult sites, the iconography of cult statues within the African cult, and its relationship with Greece.<sup>54</sup>

A great number of recent works have focused on the cult at Pergamum. Alexia Petsalis-Diomidis looks at the history of this sanctuary during the Second Sophistic and its relationship with the orator Aelius Aristides. However, she also provides valuable insights into the physical layout of the sanctuary as well iconographic features.<sup>55</sup> Other cultic aspects of the sanctuary at Pergamum are examined by Peter Kranz who explores the numismatic and iconographic evidence, providing a useful understanding into the use of iconographic types here but also the change over time between the Hellenistic period and the Imperial era.<sup>56</sup> The numismatic evidence during the Severan period for the cult of Asclepius, among others, is examined by Clare Rowan. She looks at the iconographic evidence per emperor, including a section on Caracalla's visit to the Pergamene Asclepieion which was documented on a series of medallions.<sup>57</sup> Numismatic evidence for Asclepius in Asia Minor is also examined by Florian Haymann who looks at the cult in Aigeia in Cilicia. He presents a newly found tetradrachm as well as other numismatic emissions related to the cult here.<sup>58</sup>

Important work on the cult at Rome is undertaken by Gil Renberg who presents an overview of all evidence, mainly epigraphic, for the cult of Asclepius in Rome, focusing not just on the Tiber Island sanctuary but also on a second sanctuary on the Esquiline.<sup>59</sup> He has, furthermore, extensively researched the rite of incubation, especially its representation within epigraphic sources and how this would have physically taken place within sanctuaries (see Chapter 2).<sup>60</sup>

Incubation is also the focus of Hedvig von Ehrenheim's studies, especially during the Classical and Hellenistic periods. She notes, as does Georgia Petridou, that the evidence for incubation is the most commonly connected with the cult of Asclepius. Her monograph provides an extensive overview of

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54 Benseddik (1995), (2005), (2007), (2009), (2010a), (2010b).

55 Petsalis-Diomides (2010).

56 Kranz (2004).

57 Rowan (2012).

58 Haymann (2010).

59 Renberg (2006/7).

60 Renberg (2009), (2017b), (2017c).

all the aspects of incubation, studying this ritual in its chronological and cultic context in order to provide greater clarity on the subject.<sup>61</sup>

Related to incubation is divine epiphany which is the subject of two recent monographs which look at the phenomenon more generally but have substantial sections dedicated to its occurrence within the cult of Asclepius. The first of these by Verity Platt examines epiphany in visual and literary sources whereas the second by Georgia Petridou looks at epigraphic sources as well at literary ones. This results in two complimentary volumes which provide a comprehensive overview of epiphany within the cult of Asclepius.<sup>62</sup>

### Impact of Empire Scholarship

Also greatly influential for this book are works from the *Impact of Empire* series, especially articles included in edited volumes but also several monographs. A brief discussion of the most important works will be included here:

Lukas de Blois and Elio Lo Cascio presented a volume on *The Impact of the Roman Army*. Two articles from this volume prove especially helpful, namely the introduction given by the editors which provides a good overview of the Roman army, its spread, and the effect which it had upon life in the provinces, as well as the article by Arbia Hilali on the impact which the Third Augustan Legion had on religious life in the North African provinces.<sup>63</sup> Hilali does not just focus on the main camp at Lambaesis but also looks at the smaller ones such at Bu Njem and notes how vital the army was for the spread of Graeco-Roman cults around the empire.<sup>64</sup> Another contribution to the impact of the Empire on the Roman Army comes from the *Roman Rule and Civic Life* volume where Jon Coulson examines military- and self-identity in the army by examining personal adornments as markers of identity for soldiers.<sup>65</sup>

Inge Mennen's focus is on status and power relations between the emperor and elites in the period between the rules of Pertinax and Diocletian, from AD 193 and 284.<sup>66</sup> The first chapter of her work gives a background for all of the emperors who ruled during her timeframe and comments on social changes which happened over time, both in the body and background of the

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61 Von Ehrenheim (2015).

62 Platt (2011); Petridou (2015).

63 De Blois (2007) and Hilali (2007).

64 Hilali (2007) 481.

65 Coulson (2004).

66 Mennen (2011) 2.

emperor but also in the empire itself, such as the change from Romans acting as conquerors, to Romans being defenders between the reigns of Hadrian and Trajan.<sup>67</sup> As such, she traces catastrophes and critical events which foreshadowed later crises. Mennen notes that while all the emperors who ruled during this period had hereditary intents, the only successful dynasty was that of the Severans.<sup>68</sup> The differences in social background of the emperor and quick turnaround of emperors resulted in an alteration in the nature of the emperorship itself.<sup>69</sup> Communication between a subject and the emperor changed because of this, also as emperors were often no longer spending large periods of time in Rome due to crises in the East and West which meant that many tasks were delegated to elites, granting them greater powers and changing the dynamics between emperor and elites.<sup>70</sup> Mennen also makes a valuable contribution in *The Impact of Imperial Rome on Religions, Ritual and Religious Life in the Roman Empire*, wherein she examines how Caracalla used official iconography, especially military and religious imagery, in order to legitimise his reign.<sup>71</sup>

This theme is continued in Erika Manders' work, whose timeframe is also from AD 193 and 284. Manders examines the representation of emperors on the coins which were issued at the time, thus, providing a broader analysis on the same theme, aiming to present a diachronic overview of this.<sup>72</sup> In the second part of the book, Manders focusses on three emperors in particular, namely Caracalla, Gallienus, and Decius, and the section on Caracalla is especially relevant to this current work (see Chapter 3). The coin imagery issued during Caracalla's sole reign is compared with that produced during his joint rule with Severus, showing changes over time which are indicative of Caracalla's needs and ideologies.<sup>73</sup> She notes that imperial coinage was the most efficient medium by which the emperor's image could be conveyed to the people, making a study of this iconography highly relevant.<sup>74</sup>

Christer Bruun examines the effects of the Antonine Plague upon life in the empire and if it could be the cause for the third-century crisis in the volume *Crises and the Roman Empire*. He states that it is not known how severe the

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67 Mennen (2011) 29.

68 Mennen (2011) 33–4: after Severus Alexander's death no emperor managed to establish a dynasty which lasted for any considerable amount of time.

69 Mennen (2011) 35.

70 Mennen (2011) 38, 42.

71 Mennen (2006).

72 Manders (2012) 1.

73 Manders (2012) 225–252.

74 Manders (2012) 227.

plague was and discusses evidence and data presented by other scholars, especially for Egypt. Bruun argues that it is likely that the extent of the plague has been overstated which also indicates that the plague cannot have been a responsible factor for the Third-Century Crisis.<sup>75</sup> Bruun's argument about the plague is especially relevant for the discussion in Chapter 4 where the possibility is discussed whether an increased number of dedications erected to Asclepius was the result of the plague.

The two most relevant articles from the *Ritual Dynamics and Religious Change* volume come from Greg Woolf, 'The Religion of the Roman Diaspora', and Angelos Chaniotis, 'The Dynamics of Rituals in the Roman Empire', which are both examined in detail below.<sup>76</sup>

Achim Lichtenberger examines the relationship between the representation and reception of the Severan dynasty in epigraphic, numismatic, literary, and iconographic sources. He looks at the central role which the cults of Liber Pater and Hercules gained in Rome. Neither of these cults were traditional Roman fatherland cults but they were very important in Lepcis Magna, Severus' place of origin. Lichtenberger examines how Severus increased the importance of these cults, even calling them *Dii Patrii* on his official coinage issued during the *ludi saeculares* in AD 204.<sup>77</sup> This research into the adoption and promotion of cults by emperors, especially the Severans, forms parallel research to what is presented in this book.

The volume on *Integration in Rome and the Roman World* offers some important articles, especially those of Lukas de Blois, which focuses on the Roman Army during the 3rd century, and that of Frederick Naerebout on 'One Empire, Many Cultures'. De Blois examines whether the Roman army can still be considered a unified whole in the 3rd century when it consisted more and more of ethnically and culturally diverse units, or whether there was an increased sense of disintegration.<sup>78</sup> He concludes that there is no evidence that the Roman army was falling apart into smaller regional armies but, as a result of having to travel vast distances because of constant wars, men saw careers which spanned the empire.<sup>79</sup> The effect which these travelling soldiers had on cults will also be explored in Chapters 4 and 5. Naerebout, on the other hand, tackles the issue of integration and how widespread the use of this term is in many fields. He states that he wants to '[...] problematize the very notion

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75 Bruun (2007).

76 Woolf (2009) and Chaniotis (2009).

77 Lichtenberger (2011) 1–2; *CNG* 73.13.11.2006 no. 943.

78 De Blois (2014) 187.

79 De Blois (2014) 196.

of integration' by a close criticism of how current scholars interpret sources via the use of social science models in order to improve understanding of the ancient world.<sup>80</sup> Naerebout notes that while integration seems to be an obvious explanation for processes undergone during the Empire, where many places had features in common with other places, that this type of integration, which started from conquest, is more about homogenisation.<sup>81</sup> He argues that integration actually carries divergence of common cultural traits.<sup>82</sup> Naerebout makes a vital point by stating that:

As the existence of a common culture fosters immigration, integration leads to more immigration leads to greater integration. But let us look at it from another perspective: that of the local community where the immigrants come in. That local community is faced with—as long as migration continues—the introduction of new habits, new products. Seen from within their own cultural repertoire this means divergence.<sup>83</sup>

The cultural divergence discussed here is not just the 'flip side' of integration but actually forms part of this process where regions are not just conquered by Rome but they are integrated with each other.<sup>84</sup> This echoes what has been argued by Nederveen Pieterse in his pericentric model of empire (see below), and also what will be argued in this work, that the provinces were all interconnected and that the culture exported by Rome to a newly conquered area was already a blended culture, one which had been affected previously by other regions which had been incorporated into the empire. However, it would also mean, as is demonstrated in this work, that this globalism also caused an increased regionalism following Whitmarsh (see below).

### Asclepius as Paradigm

The overview of the current state of affairs highlights how, in general, the cult of Asclepius in the Roman period has been given less attention than that in the Classical and Hellenistic periods. There is also a focus on the cult in Greece, with less attention given to the cult in other parts of the empire, leaving much

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80 Naerebout (2014) 266.

81 Naerebout (2014) 268–9.

82 Naerebout (2014) 270.

83 Naerebout (2014) 276.

84 Naerebout (2014) 278.

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, something which has long been pointed out as a notable feature of his worship, it has also sometimes been taken as an indication that the elites would not supplicate the god.<sup>85</sup> This is not the case as from early on Asclepius was worshipped by civic entities, for example 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 whom people would want to supplicate and worship. 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 5th century BC and had continuous worship until the 4th century AD, providing a rich and long time-period for this study. The cult did not diminish in popularity, but worship actually increased during the Roman period as many new cult sites were founded across the empire, for example in the Balkan and Danube regions and in North Africa (see Chapters 4 and 5). This work examines the cult in areas where it was already established before the advent of the Roman Empire and also in sites which were founded in newly conquered provinces in order 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 an exploration 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 a 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 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. All of these features make Asclepius stand out from the other gods but he was a

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85 Herod. 4.1; Ael. *Fragment* 100. See, for example, Sigerist (1961) 2.73; Ferngren and Amundsen (1993) 2959–2960.



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 can be applied to other cults. This also paves the way for future parallel studies.

### 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>86</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 era but means the entirety of the Roman empire and its provinces. Hodos 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 west-ernisation. 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.<sup>87</sup> For Pitts and Versluys globalisation can be described as: '[...] processes by which localities and people become increasingly interconnected and interdependent'.<sup>88</sup> The term global is not as applicable to the Greek world as a result of the fragmented nature of the Greek city-states while the unity of empire facilitated global cults.<sup>89</sup> It is also important to state

86 Pitts and Versluys (2015) 6.

87 Hodos (2015) 240–2.

88 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 instructions while fostering cultural diversity but also social inequalities: Pitts and Versluys (2015) 11, 14.

89 This is not to say that there was no connectivity in the Greek world, on the contrary. 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

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, which resulted in different versions of a phenomenon which can be called Roman globalism.<sup>90</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 work. 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>91</sup> The peripheries of the 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:

[...] 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>92</sup>

This could happen because, as Orlin notes:

A fundamental feature of the Roman state, and a key element in their successful expansion during the Republic, was the permeability of the boundaries of Romanness.<sup>93</sup>

Thus, what it meant to be Roman was always changing and was never static. The ways in which this cross-provincial connectivity happened within the cult of Asclepius will be shown in this work in various contexts.

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and this increased connectivity is expected to have impacted upon the religious world of the Empire, among which the cult of Asclepius.

90 Pitts and Versluys (2015) 18; Laurence and Trifilò (2015) 101.

91 Nederveen Pieterse (2015) 225.

92 Nederveen Pieterse (2015) 233–4. It is not just Nederveen Pieterse who stresses the importance 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.

93 Orlin (2010) 215.

Like globalism, 'region' is 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>94</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>95</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 locality 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. For example, 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>96</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 cult-site. Worshippers 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>97</sup> These locally individual rites were set within a larger macro-identity of purity within the cult.

There were rites which occurred globally and this overarching cultic identity manifested itself as rites which were shared across the board such as, for example, the ritual of incubation and the formula 'on account of a dream' which was often inscribed on votive dedications.<sup>98</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 2nd century BC onwards and

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94 Goltermann, Lohaus, Spielau and Striebringer (2013) 3.

95 Goltermann, Lohaus, Spielau and Striebringer (2013) 4.

96 *PH* 4.3; Sherwin-White (1978) 339.

97 See a comparison between *SEG* 20. 759 (2nd or 3rd–4th century AD) and *ILAFr* 225 (AD 113–138).

98 *IG* IV<sup>2</sup> 1.470; Ferngren and Amundsen (1993) 2959.

do not factor much into the discussion here.<sup>99</sup> This work will include literary, visual, epigraphic, and numismatic material which provides clearer evidence for the impact of Empire, though 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. Even when the text is clear and undamaged the inscription's meaning can still be vague or open to numerous interpretations. 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. To properly study an inscription from the various corpora, it is important to access all of the available sources for the fullest understanding.

### Identity and Regionalism

This work will, thus, examine the regional and global features of the cults of Asclepius and it is underpinned by 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 have come into contact with the wider world, and globalism, therefore, causes an intensified view of regionalism.<sup>100</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>101</sup> This local distinctiveness, in fact, needed another identity, a panhellenic, national, imperial, or cosmopolitan one, to define itself against.<sup>102</sup> For the cult of Asclepius this meant that regional characteristics would gain in 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

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99 Glinister (2006) 30 n.84.

100 Whitmarsh (2010) 2.

101 Goldhill (2010) 49; Whitmarsh (2010) 3; Broodbank (2013) 506.

102 Goldhill (2010) 48.

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>103</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>104</sup>

Pausanias seems to have a dual perspective where he examines the local and trans-local at the same time.<sup>105</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 multifaceted worship of Asclepius as they offer examples both of 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 would have caused an inter-reliance of Pausanian regionalism and Aristidean global unity.<sup>106</sup> Regional Asclepieian micro-identities would have been buried within Asclepieian global macro-identities, with a high degree of interconnection.<sup>107</sup>

### 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 are the *homonoia* coins minted by Smyrna, Ephesus, and Pergamum, which are visible testimonies of the constant competition to be the first city

103 Aristid. *Or.* 42.4; Paus. 3.22.9.

104 Whitmarsh (2010) 14.

105 Whitmarsh (2010) 14.

106 Whitmarsh (2010) 8, 10.

107 Woolf (2010) 200.

in Asia as well as the high level of connectivity between these *poleis* (see Chapter 3).<sup>108</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>109</sup> When religion is interpreted as a communicative system, it creates a framework in which dedications and inscriptions can be analysed.<sup>110</sup> Most religious actions are regional acts which become obsolete over time unless specifically recorded. Inscriptions and dedications are tangible reminders of a successful communication between god and human and are placed in surroundings where such communication constantly takes place.<sup>111</sup> The Imperial period stands out for Rüpke as it was then that a grid of regional networks, in the form of dedications and inscriptions, developed, of which there is only fragmentary evidence now.<sup>112</sup> This religious infrastructure was integral to Graeco-Roman religion.<sup>113</sup> The 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. 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, and Chaniotis argues that:

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.<sup>114</sup>

It will be shown that this also happened within the cult of Asclepius, especially in Asia Minor (see Chapter 3). This is in contrast but also complementary to what Whitmarsh has argued. 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

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108 Kampmann (1998) 375–6; Dio Chrys. *Or.* 34. Aristid. *Or.* 23 provides the historical background to this conflict.

109 Rüpke (2011) 22–3; Rüpke (2015) 340: dedications monumentalised religious communication.

110 Rüpke (2009) 31.

111 Rüpke (2001) 73–4.

112 Rüpke (2011) 23; Rüpke (2015) 333 states that the Empire allowed for a diffusion of ideas and media.

113 Rüpke (2009) 34–5.

114 Chaniotis (2009) 27.

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>115</sup> Rüpke's study, furthermore, is very influential for this work 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>116</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 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>117</sup> He also stresses the role of provincial elites in the importation and adaptation of new cults (see Chapter 3) and notes the pivotal phase which preceded the actual conquest, namely the period of trading between Romans and locals.<sup>118</sup>

### Conquest and Regionalism

These theories offer a framework for innovative study of the cult of Asclepius and 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>119</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

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115 Rüpke (2011) 25.

116 Rüpke (2011) 26.

117 Rüpke (2011) 31.

118 Rüpke (2001) 71, 79.

119 Chaniotis (2012) 319.

where he argues that the establishment of the principate meant that new ritual forms of communication between emperor and subjects were introduced which affected religion. An example of this is the celebration of the emperor's advent to a city (see Chapter 3).<sup>120</sup>

Roman conquest and the formation of the 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>121</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 3rd-century AD inscription from Rome:

[...] Λουκίῳ πλευριτικῶ καὶ ἀφηλπισμένῳ ὑπὸ παντὸς ἀνθρώπου ἐχρησμάτι-/  
σεν ὁ θεὸς ἐλθεῖν καὶ ἐκ τοῦ τριβώμου ἄραι τέφραν καὶ μετ' οἴνου ἀνα-/φυρᾶσαι  
καὶ ἐπιθεῖναι ἐπὶ τὸ πλευρόν· καὶ ἐσώθη καὶ δημοσίᾳ ἠὺχαρίστησεν τῷ θεῷ καὶ  
ὁ δῆμος συνεχάρη αὐτῷ.<sup>122</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>123</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 Chapter 5).<sup>124</sup> Ritual transfer did take place, and this was heavily influenced by local competition between cities. This rivalry caused the emulation and diffusion of rituals but also, and most importantly, it effected differentiation in rites.<sup>125</sup> Thus, it is to be expected that if the emperor or other influential officials showed a strong preference for a particular god

120 Chaniotis (2009) 6.

121 Chaniotis (2009) 7.

122 *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.' This inscription is possibly dated to between AD 212 and 217. Unless noted, all translations are the author's own.

123 Chaniotis (2009) 20.

124 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.

125 Chaniotis (2009) 24–28.



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, but also that cities would seek to develop their own cultic version in order to compete with and triumph over their neighbours.

### 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>126</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>127</sup> This demarcation goes hand in hand with the notion that the sea creates a single entity.<sup>128</sup> Broodbank notes that the centrality of the Mediterranean was already observed in antiquity, as can be seen from ancient maps.<sup>129</sup>

Fragmentation and connectivity were the characteristics of the Mediterranean.<sup>130</sup> Horden and Purcell argue that the sea was a vital tool for communication and that Rome especially depended on the sea for nautical communication with all the far corners of the empire.<sup>131</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>132</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>133</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

126 See Broodbank (2013) 18–19 for a section on connectivity scholarship pre-Corrupting Sea.

127 Horden and Purcell (2000) 22, 445.

128 Horden and Purcell (2000) 10.

129 Broodbank (2013) 20. See also Broodbank (2013) Fig. 1.3.

130 Woolf (2010) 189.

131 Horden and Purcell (2000) 23.

132 Horden and Purcell (2000) 24.

133 Shaw (2001) 423.

religious geography.<sup>134</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>135</sup> However, while the sea can facilitate horizontal transmission of these changes, it can also form a barrier against them.<sup>136</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 Chapter 3). 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>137</sup> In the same fashion, any and every place could turn into a place of contact with the divine.<sup>138</sup> Religious travel played an important part in most cults but was especially present in healing cults and oracles, which often went hand-in-hand.<sup>139</sup> Travel was a common part of 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 mainly motivated by their personal concerns.<sup>140</sup> As Asclepius was predominantly 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 work 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>141</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

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134 Horden and Purcell (2000) 404.

135 Horden and Purcell (2000) 407.

136 Horden and Purcell (2000) 408.

137 Horden and Purcell (2000) 446.

138 Horden and Purcell (2000) 444.

139 Dillon (1997) xiv, 73.

140 Dillon (1997) xviii.

141 Malkin (2011) 5.

and coastal existence which facilitated the creation of lateral connections.<sup>142</sup> Geographical distance worked the same as temporal distance and awakened the desire to affirm a sameness or *koine*.<sup>143</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 local until they come into contact with the wider world.<sup>144</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 1st century BC as it would have been for someone living two centuries earlier.<sup>145</sup> The issues of static versus dynamic identities will be addressed in Chapter 3, where the influence of imperial patronage on the cult, and the effects this had on individual sanctuaries will be shown.

### 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>146</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>147</sup> Although Davies did not find a reason for the dispersal of these epithets, he makes several valuable observations about the 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>148</sup>

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142 Malkin (2011) 13.

143 Malkin (2009) 392.

144 Whitmarsh (2010) 2.

145 Wallace-Hadrill (2012) 375.

146 Davies (2005) 57.

147 Davies (2005) 57.

148 First column from Davies (2005) 61–2.

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

	Davies (1)	Asclepius (2)
1	Top-Down Spread	Yes—Emperors and elites worshipped Asclepius and boosted the cult (see Chapter 3)
2	The building up of local divinities as symbols of domestic identity	Yes—The Thessalian hero Asclepius evolved into the god Asclepius (see Chapters 2 and 5)
3	The cult centre which disseminates itself and its deity	Yes—Epidaurus (see Chapter 2)
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 Books (see Chapter 2)
5	An individual has a divine epiphany and the community later formally recognises the cult	Yes—Telemachus in Athens and Archias in Pergamum (see Chapter 2)
6	The individual takes the initiative but the cult remains private	Uncertain
7	Native deities were set up abroad by slaves, mercenaries, <i>metics</i> and freedmen	Yes—Soldiers transported local version of the god— <i>CIL</i> 6.2799 (see Chapters 4 and 5)
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 (see Chapter 2)

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 argues that these approaches show the most common factors behind a community's decision to import a cult and bind a god's powers.<sup>149</sup> The spread of the cult is very important for this work 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

149 Davies (2005) 62.

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 shape of 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.

### Religious Change in the Provinces

Having examined various methodologies which will be adopted in this work, 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 indicate the further scope of the impact of the Roman Empire on cults.

Most studies concerned with associations between local gods and Romans focus on *interpretatio Romana*. This is mainly taken to mean that similar notions concerning the natures of twinned deities showed links between Roman and regional deities and that the Romans introduced these connections (see below).<sup>150</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 a local population with their regional variations.<sup>151</sup> Derks cautions against the use of the term *interpretatio Romana* as it implies that the Roman and local deity were identical and that the regional gods have the same capabilities as those of the Roman gods.<sup>152</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>153</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

<sup>150</sup> Derks (1991) 236.

<sup>151</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>152</sup> Derks (1991) 249.

<sup>153</sup> Whittaker (1997) 144.

from about 430 dedications which reveal the cult's distribution pattern.<sup>154</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>155</sup> Religious syncretism is especially noteworthy as it concerns an essential aspect of cultic change.<sup>156</sup> The cult boomed in popularity between AD 125 and 230 particularly in the northern frontier regions and the god was especially popular with the army but was also worshipped by civilians.<sup>157</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 cavalrymen on the Caelian.<sup>158</sup> The god also does not seem to have been particularly worshipped by Syrian units but was supplicated by soldiers from all over the empire.<sup>159</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>160</sup> She argues that people who worshipped this god were already in place and formed an open system of communication, namely Roman army officers, as their social ties would facilitate the spread of ideas.<sup>161</sup> The officers would have had close links 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 empire. There would then have been a trickle-down effect which is indicated by a larger number of dedications set up by officers than by soldiers.<sup>162</sup> These religious innovations would have moved through

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154 Collar (2011) 217.

155 Speidel (1978) 1.

156 Haynes (1993) 141.

157 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).

158 Speidel (1978) 12.

159 Haynes (1993) 149.

160 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.

161 Collar (2011) 3, 226.

162 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.

receptive social space.<sup>163</sup> Evidence also suggests that people worshipped the god as he came and supplemented their dedications as they were accustomed to.<sup>164</sup> A local interpretation of a cult is, thus, shown by the case-study of Jupiter Dolichenus.

In this case, the regional version of a god was taken up by the army and spread across the Roman Empire. The cult of Jupiter Dolichenus was introduced by the army to the civilian population, who then took up this worship. It is possible that Asclepius was also 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 supplicate 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 examines the phenomenon of religious change when a cult is introduced into a new territory. Some cultic elements were less portable than others, some less or actually important, and sometimes substitution or syncretism took place.<sup>165</sup> He states 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.<sup>166</sup> For the cult of Asclepius, this means that scholars should expect a high degree of regionalism in each cultic 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>167</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.

### Syncretism

Lastly the issue of syncretism needs to be addressed as it plays an important part of the discussion presented in this book as Asclepius was twinned with a number of deities in the provinces, most notably Zimidrenus in Thrace

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163 Collar (2011) 236.

164 Collar (2011) 220.

165 Woolf (2009) 245.

166 Woolf (2009) 248.

167 Woolf (2009) 251.

(Chapter 3) and Eshmun in Africa (Chapter 5). The dissemination of the cult of Jupiter Dolichenus discussed above shows how global and local elements could be connected and spread within the cult of a syncretic deity. Therefore, it is necessary to examine what is meant with the term, the problems with its use, and also how this phenomenon occurs with other deities.

In antiquity, Herodotus lists the main gods 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>168</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>169</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>170</sup> Theologians in the 16th and 17th 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>171</sup> In the second half of the 19th 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 Roman emperors who appropriated the local cults of conquered lands.<sup>172</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>173</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

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168 Herodotus 4.59.

169 Plut. *De. Frat. Amor.* 490b.

170 Shaw and Stewart (2003) 4. See Mansfield (2003) 140–1; Erasmus *Adagia*.

171 See Georg Calixtus (1613) *Disputationes de Praecipuis Religionis Christianae Capitibus*; (1619) *Epitome Theologiae*.

172 Anonymous 1853 review quoted by Bryson (1992) 8.

173 Stewart and Shaw (2003) 4.



no discussion of what he meant or conceived by the use of this term.<sup>174</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>175</sup> It is from the ways in which many 19th-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>176</sup> Other terms have been suggested to describe this phenomenon and postmodern anthropologists prefer the term creolisation.<sup>177</sup> Chirassi Colombo has suggested that perhaps the term acculturation is preferable as it indicates an unequal contact between two civilisations.<sup>178</sup> However, Shaw and Stewart rightly point out that it seems limiting not to use a term because of 19th-century connotations.<sup>179</sup> The history of the usage of the term should be explored and understood for the correct use of this word.

Webster 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>180</sup>

Webster's particular focus is on the Romano-Celtic world but her definition is equally applicable to other provinces and areas of the Graeco-Roman world. Syncretisms took many different forms.<sup>181</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,

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174 For example, see Cumont (1956a) 60; Motte (1999) 26.

175 Cumont (1929) 184; Motte (1999) 31. For a description of this see Cumont (1956a) 202.

176 Shaw and Stewart (2003) 2.

177 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.

178 Chirassi Colombo (1975) 96.

179 Shaw and Stewart (2003) 2.

180 Webster (1997a) 165.

181 Woolf (1998) 233.

nullum peregrinae superstitionis vestigium; ut fratres tamen, ut iuvenes venerantur.<sup>182</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>183</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 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>184</sup> The god is what the king and worshipper say he is; he is not Zeus but he is Zeus Oromasdes.<sup>185</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>186</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>187</sup> It implies that an original religion was penetrated by symbols and rites from another.<sup>188</sup> Yet, it was an inevitable phenomenon of ancient religion and was present in all ancient societies as polytheistic civilisations were especially open to new gods.<sup>189</sup> There was a permeability in the Roman pantheon espe-

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182 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.

183 Webster (1995) 154.

184 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.

185 Kaizer (2013) 117.

186 Webster (1997a) 165.

187 See, for example, Cumont (1956a) 26–7, 57.

188 Shaw and Stewart (2003) 1.

189 Cadotte (2006) 1.

cially due to its lack of dogma.<sup>190</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>191</sup> This process was driven by expansion which created new opportunities and pressures but also competition.<sup>192</sup> The Roman Imperial period was, thus, a time in which this phenomenon particularly occurred.

It is important to stress that syncretism was a natural happenstance which occurred frequently in antiquity.<sup>193</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>194</sup> This was especially clear in the case of Mithras (see also Chapter 4) 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 era. This long period of time between the two cults indicates 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>195</sup> This Roman cult, thus, chose to present itself in an oriental fashion.

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 (see Chapter 5).<sup>196</sup> This was due to its unique location between east and west and there were numerous syncretisms between Graeco-Roman gods and the most important gods of Africa, which is also what makes study of the cult of Asclepius in this area so interesting and fruitful.<sup>197</sup> The three types are:

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190 Cadotte (2006) 8.

191 Woolf (2014) 68.

192 Woolf (2014) 70.

193 Cadotte (2006) 9.

194 Versluys (2013) 242.

195 Versluys (2013) 249.

196 Le Glay (1975) 123.

197 Cadotte (2006) 1.

- *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>198</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>199</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>200</sup> Le Glay argues that from this point onwards he appeared in a more African form and was commonly found represented with Silvanus' scorpion.<sup>201</sup> Neptune/Poseidon was syncretised with the African god Yam but was mainly worshipped inland, far away from the sea. He was more commonly supplicated near water sources and fountains, showing a clear adaptation of his worship.<sup>202</sup> Venus was worshipped all across Africa in various guises such as *Victrix* and *Adquistrix*.<sup>203</sup> The latter is the remarkable one as it occurs in Lepcis Magna where Venus was the protectress of the customs officers of the *III publicae Africae* and had taken over tasks and iconography which generally belonged to Mercury.<sup>204</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, for example, *Valens*, *Stator*, *Dilectator*, and *Depulsorius*.<sup>205</sup> Another form which this took was new groupings of gods such as at Lambaesis with Asclepius, Jupiter Valens, and Silvanus Pegasianus.<sup>206</sup>

198 Le Glay (1975) 125.

199 *CIL* 8.2585.

200 *AE* 1968 645.

201 Le Glay (1975) 140–1.

202 Le Glay (1975) 141.

203 *Victrix*: *CIL* 8.14809; Venus *Adquistrix*: *AE* 2000 1602. There was also worship of Venus *Bonifalia*: *CIL* 8.25347 and Venus *Augusta*: *AE* 1923 22.

204 *IRT* 315a; Le Glay (1975) 142–3. See also Rüpke (2014) 280.

205 *Valens*: *CIL* 8.19121–19123; *Stator*: *CIL* 8.4642; *Dilectator*: *CIL* 8.209; *Depulsorius*: *CIL* 8.2621.

206 *CIL* 8.2585.

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 Chapter 2).

It is also useful to look first at the phenomenon in the Northern provinces 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>207</sup> He does not mention any local gods and as the area had only recently been conquered it is unlikely that there had been time for these gods to be influenced by Rome already.<sup>208</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.

Roman soldiers were the ones who introduced votive practices to Gaul, especially the act of inscribing on stone.<sup>209</sup> Derks has studied the transformation of religious systems in Gaul and states that there are 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>210</sup>

The earliest known altar was likely dedicated to Mars Halamardus as it is dated to AD 10–43 and was erected by legionaries.<sup>211</sup> The first non-military altar comes from Ruimel and is dedicated to Magusanus Hercules by the *summus magistratus* of the Batavi.<sup>212</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>213</sup> Many Celtic deities were mentioned only once and there was likely a high degree of localism within their worship.<sup>214</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 grouping, especially with Mars.

207 Caes. *BGall.* 6.17.

208 Derks (1998) 82.

209 Derks (1998) 88. See also Table 3.1 in Derks (1998) pp. 84–5.

210 Derks (1998) 73.

211 *CIL* 13.8707. Another dedication to the same god comes from Lottum: *AE* 1987 777.

212 *CIL* 13.8771.

213 Derks (1998) 95.

214 Webster (1995) 155.

However, this did not happen with Mercury and his dedications were spread all over the Central and 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>215</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>216</sup> Silvanus was similarly linked to only two local gods, namely Sinquates in Gerouville and Vosegus in Busenberg.<sup>217</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>218</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 who are only known from this epigraphic data, yet the gods associated with Mars and Hercules must have been the divinities 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>219</sup>

This *interpretatio* shows how the indigenous elites considered the Roman gods and this 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>220</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>221</sup> Therefore, it was 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 Chapter 4) and were represented in the guise of the Rider and not in the traditional Asclepieian iconographical pose, for example the Chiaramonti type (see Chapter 2). This all indicates that syncretism could take a variety of forms within one context and there could be multiple reasons and explanations for connecting two gods.

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215 Derks (1998) 96–9.

216 Derks (1998) 100.

217 Sinquates: *CIL* 13.3968; Vosegus: *CIL* 13.6027, 6059. There is also an inscription dedicated to Mercury Vosegus: *CIL* 13.4550 from Mediomatrici.

218 Derks (1998) 100.

219 Derks (1998) 100–1; Webster (1995) 155–6.

220 Webster (1995) 157.

221 Webster (1997b) 326.

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 modern scholarship. When people and sanctuaries became cognisant of their place within the empire, they gained an interest in their regional version of the cult. This 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, an inter-reliance 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 work, then, will offer new insight into the cult of Asclepius as scholarship has generally focussed on either worship of the god in the Classical period or examined the cult in specific sanctuaries without looking at how a shrine fitted into the global net of Asclepieia. The impact of the Roman Empire on the cult of Asclepius will be examined 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 work 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.

## Asclepius before the Roman Imperial Period

### Introduction: The Pre-Imperial Cult

The cult of Asclepius is believed to have originated in either Tricca in Thessaly or in Epidaurus at some time during the 5th century BC. Worship of the god continued and flourished throughout antiquity; by the end of the 4th century AD cults of Asclepius had been disseminated all over the ancient Graeco-Roman world. The god was known in different guises before the 5th century BC and the physician Asclepius is mentioned a number of times in Homer.<sup>1</sup> Myth relates that Apollo, who was also worshipped as a healing deity, was believed to be Asclepius' father.<sup>2</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>3</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>4</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 5th century BC, something which furthered connections with Apollo.<sup>5</sup> Delphi ratified a number of Asclepieia and played an important role in the early history of the cult. 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>6</sup> The number of dedications declined and while there was a level of

1 Hom. *Il.* 2.729–33, 4.193; Hom. *Hymn Asc.*

2 Apollod. *Bibl.* 3.10.3; Paus. 2.26.4ff.

3 Tomlinson (1983) 22–23. See also Chapter 5 on Eshmun-Asclepius.

4 Paus. 2.26.7; Nutton (2013) 105.

5 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.

6 Scott (2014) 204.



interest from some of the emperors in Delphi, over time the sanctuary changed from an important consultation hub to a tourist attraction which engaged with memory and history.<sup>7</sup>

This chapter will examine Asclepieian cults in the Classical and Hellenistic periods up to the age of Augustus. As the Roman Imperial era from 27 BC to the death of Severus Alexander is the timeframe for this work, 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 of Asclepius 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. It is necessary to understand how the cults spread and were connected with each other as it possible that if two sanctuaries shared the same place of origin, they might also have certain rites and rituals in common. Understanding the shared and unique aspects of each sanctuary, their patterns of dissemination, and the connections between them, allows for the regional and global characteristics of the cult to become clear. As such, regional and more generic characteristics of the cult will be examined and also how external factors, such as the patronage of Hellenistic kings, influenced worship of Asclepius. 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 sanctuaries of Asclepius, namely Epidaurus, Athens, Cos, and Pergamum, and those located in Italy will also be examined in more detail. These cult sites will each be discussed further for the Roman period in the subsequent chapters. A general discussion on epithets and their use within the cult will follow this as well as a survey of Asclepieian iconography. The chapter will conclude with an overview of the role which divine epiphany and the rite of incubation played within the cult.

### Homeric Origins

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

οἱ δ' εἶχον Τρίκκιην καὶ Ἰθώμην κλωμακόεσσαν,  
οἱ τ' ἔχον Οἰχαλίην πόλιν Εὐρύτου Οἰχαλιῆος,

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7 Scott (2014) 219.

τῶν αὐθ' ἠγγείσθην Ἀσκληπιόο δύο παῖδε,  
 ἰητῆρ' ἀγαθῶ, Ποδαλείριος ἦδ' ἘΜαχάων.<sup>8</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 and they had the Delphic oracle pronounce it to be the true birthplace over rival claims.<sup>9</sup> However, the earlier Homeric passages, as well as those in Hesiod and Pindar, led to some debate already in antiquity about whether or not Asclepius originated in Tricca in Thessaly.<sup>10</sup> The earliest Asclepieian material from Epidaurus dates to the 5th century BC although there is some earlier material from the site which was originally dedicated to Apollo Maleatas.<sup>11</sup> The sanctuary at Tricca has not yet been found or excavated, making it impossible to state with certainty which 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>12</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 5th 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>13</sup> This version of events

8 Hom. *Il.* 2.729–33: 'And they held Tricca and rocky Ithome, and Oechalia, the city of Oechalian Eurystus, 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.

9 Paus. 2.26.7.

10 Hes. *Frag.* 53a, b; Pind. *Pyth.* 3.5–6; Edelstein and Edelstein (1998) 2.71.

11 Tomlinson (1983) 12.

12 Riethmüller (2005) 1.78.

13 Hom. Hymn *Asc.* This hymn is one of the shortest ones extant and consists of only five lines: 'Ἰητῆρα νόσων Ἀσκληπιῶν ἄρχομ' αἰδεῖν, υἱὸν Ἀπόλλωνος, τὸν ἐγένεατο δῖα Κορωνίς Δωτίῳ ἐν πεδίῳ, κούρη Φλεγύου βασιλῆος, χάρμα μέγ' ἀνθρώποισι, κακῶν θελκτῆρ' ὀδυνάων. καὶ σὺ μὲν οὕτω χαίρει, ἄναξ: λίτομαι δέ σ' αἰοιδῆ'. In contrast to some of the longer hymns, these short ones do little more than hail the god to whom they are dedicated and list their main attributes: Evelyn-White (1914) xxxix. Thuc. 3.104 believed that these hymns were written by Homer himself though Raynor call them 'basically anonymous poems' which were predominantly written between 700 and 500 BC though some are later Rayor (2004) 2. He also notes, p. 1, that these 'Hymns are Homeric because they are composed in the

is taken up by later authors such as Ovid who describes Asclepius' mother Coronis as being 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>14</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>15</sup> Homer generally eschewed magical elements and no reference was made to any later cult of other heroes such as Achilles or Menelaus.<sup>16</sup> The absence of any mention of an Asclepieian cult in Homer could, 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 5th 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 5th century. Another reference to Asclepius makes clear that Homer viewed Asclepius as a hero as he is called the 'ἀμύμονος ἰητῆρος/blameless physician' (see also Chapters 3 and 4 for Asclepius' relations with doctors).<sup>17</sup> Other Homeric kings healed wounds but none was ever designated as a physician; only heroes received this epithet.<sup>18</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

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same traditional epic meter (dactylic hexameter), dialect, and style as Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. Strabo 9.5.22 states that the Dotian plain is located in the centre of Thessaly and is surrounded by hills. It is located near the Perrhaebia, Ossa, and Lake Boebeis.

14 *Ov. Met.* 2.542–632; Strabo 9.5.17.

15 Aston (2004) 25; Edelstein and Edelstein (1998) 2.17 state that in historical times Tricca was a renowned town in Thessaly.

16 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 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.

17 *Hom. Il.* 4.194.

18 Edelstein and Edelstein (1998) 2.3.

heroes with regard to healing as it is he whom Agamemnon summoned to heal Menelaus when he was grievously wounded in battle.<sup>19</sup> Only a hero would have been capable of this feat of healing in Homer.<sup>20</sup>

### Dissemination

Despite his presence in Homer, the cult of the god only spread throughout Greece in the 5th 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>21</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 Hygieia by a Micythus of Rhegium, and also Corinth, where he was housed in a temple of Apollo.<sup>22</sup> He remained there until the 4th century BC when the whole sanctuary was rebuilt in his name.<sup>23</sup> Other Asclepieia such as at Mantinea, Sicyon, and Cyllene were also founded in the 5th century, indicating that the Peloponnese was quickly becoming a focal point for cults of Asclepius, as is shown by Riethmüller who states that there were twenty-three sanctuaries in total there.<sup>24</sup> The other listed sanctuaries show that Asclepius was spreading quickly to most other areas of the Greek world. During the 4th century BC more than 200 Asclepieia were founded. In the Peloponnese the cult spread to such *poleis* as Troezen, Halieis, and Gortys.<sup>25</sup> Messene, which grew to be an important centre for healing with its own version of the Asclepieian origin-myth, was founded in the 4th century.<sup>26</sup> Sanctuaries were also established in Euboea, Lebena, Locris, Naupactus, and even Epirus.<sup>27</sup> The cult, furthermore, spread to Greek colonies such as Balagrae in North Africa, which was an Epidaurian offshoot, Tarentum in Southern Italy, and Acragras

19 Hom. *Il.* 4.192–219.

20 Edelstein and Edelstein (1998) 2.7.

21 Ar. *Vesp.* 121–3.

22 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, the tyrant of Rhegium who reigned in the 5th century BC; Lang (1977) 3–4.

23 Lang (1977) 9.

24 Wickkiser (2008) 36; Paus. 8.9.1; Strabo 8.3.4; Riethmüller (2005) 1.78.

25 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.

26 Paus. 2.26.7.

27 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.

in Sicily (see below).<sup>28</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>29</sup>

The sites mentioned here show that Asclepius did not reach all areas of Greece, as Boeotia did not have any sanctuaries at this time. In his catalogue, Riethmüller lists only five sanctuaries in this area, indicating that the cult never became very popular here.<sup>30</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>31</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>32</sup>

It is important to understand from and to where the cult spread as this forms the base of this exploration of 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>33</sup> This belief is shared by Riethmüller who argues that the cult spread to three-quarters of the Greek world in the Classical and Hellenistic eras.<sup>34</sup> By comparing the cult in the pre-Imperial and the Imperial eras, this work 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.

28 Wickkiser (2008) 37.

29 Cos: Herzog and Schazmann (1932) 75; Pergamum: Paus. 2.26.8; Rome: Livy *Per.* 11.

30 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.

31 Amphiaraus was located in Oropus and Trophonius' cult centre was at Lebadeia in Boeotia; Paus. 1.34; Edelstein and Edelstein (1998) 2.248.

32 The sanctuary was built here at the end of the 4th 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.

33 Edelstein and Edelstein (1998) 2.251.

34 Riethmüller (2005) 1.90.

### *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>35</sup> The sanctuary is located southwest of the *polis* of Epidaurus and the cult of Asclepius was established here in the 5th century BC and was added to the sanctuary of Apollo Maleatas whose cult had existed from the 8th century BC onwards.<sup>36</sup> The connections between the cults of these gods remained strong and Isyllus mentions in his hymn that it was customary to sacrifice first to Apollo Maleatas before going into the Abaton at the Epidaurian Asclepieion.<sup>37</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>38</sup>

Tomlinson argues that it was the Athenian plague which advanced the god's worship. The town of Epidaurus was attacked during the Peloponnesian War by Athenian soldiers who could have carried the plague with them.<sup>39</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 4th 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>40</sup> Epidaurus' new status is also shown by 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 above), but Pergamum was also connected to Epidaurus in this way. Pausanias reports that the Asclepieion at Balagrae was also an Epidaurian off-shoot, as was the sanctuary at Cyrene, which in turn spawned the sanctuary at Lebena.<sup>41</sup> This passage from Pausanias indicates how connected the Mediterranean Asclepieia were with Epidaurus and how this cult was at the

35 Paus. 2.26.4–5.

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

37 *IG* IV<sup>2</sup> 1 128.329–31. For more on this hymn see: Kolde (2003).

38 Tomlinson (1983) 23.

39 Tomlinson (1983) 24; Thuc. 2.47ff.

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

41 Paus. 2.26.9.

centre of the web of sanctuaries. This fits in with what has been argued by Davies (see Chapter 1) whereby a cult could be disseminated through the active promotion by a sanctuary of itself and its god.<sup>42</sup> As a result of Epidaurus' machinations to have itself proclaimed as the birthplace of the god, the sanctuary eventually became the centre-point for dissemination and the mother-sanctuary of many other cults.

From the 3rd century BC 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>43</sup> Fewer inscriptions and dedications were erected during the 2nd century BC as the political situation between the Achaean League and Rome degenerated. The sanctuary also had its treasures confiscated by Sulla and some physical damage occurred to the site during the Roman civil wars.<sup>44</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 here, waiting for the god to appear to them in a dream.<sup>45</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 socio-economic status.<sup>46</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>47</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>48</sup>

42 See Chapter 1, Table 1 no. 3; Davies (2005) 62. See also Chapter 5 for the important position which Epidaurus was thought to have as mother-sanctuary of cults in Roman North Africa.

43 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.

44 Diod. Sic. 38.7; Plut. *Vit. Sull.* 12, *Vit. Pomp.* 24; Paus. 9.7.5; Tomlinson (1983) 31.

45 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.

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

47 LiDonnici (1995) 1.

48 Versnel (2011) 416.

*Athens*

FIGURE 1 The Athenian Asclepieion.  
PHOTO AUTHOR'S OWN

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 which states that the cult was founded in 419/8 BC.<sup>49</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>50</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>51</sup> The monument is dated to

49 *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.

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

51 Stafford (2005) 124.



400 BC on basis of its letterforms and is named after the private individual who transported the cult to Athens from Epidaurus.<sup>52</sup>

[Τ]ηλέμαχος ἰδ[ρύσατο τὸ ἰ]-/  
 [ε]ρὸν καὶ τὸν βω[μὸν τῷ Ἀσ]-  
 [σκλη]πιῶι πρῶτ[ος καὶ Ὑγι]-  
 [εἶαι], τοῖς Ἀσσ[κληπιάδαι]-  
 [ς καὶ τ]αῖς Ἀσσ[κληπιῶ θυγ]-  
 [ατράσιν] κα[ι— — — — —]

[..... ὁ ἐν Ἐ]πιδ[αύρω]ι [Ἀσσ]-  
 [κληπιὸς ἀ]νελθὼν Ζεὸθ[ε]-  
 [ν Μυστηρί]οις τοῖς μεγ[ά]-  
 [λοις κατ]ήγετο ἐς τὸ Ἐ[λ]- \  
 [ευσίνιο]ν καὶ οἴκοθε[ν]  
 [μεταπεμ]ψάμενος δ<ρ>ά[κ]-  
 [οντα ἦγ]αγεν δεῦρε ἐφ' [ἄ]-  
 [ρματος] Τηλέμαχο[ς κ]α[τ]-  
 [ἀ χρησμός]ς· ἅμα ἦλθεν Ὑγ-  
 [εία καὶ] οὕτως ἰδρύθη  
 [τὸ ἱερὸ]ν τόδε ἅπαν ἐπὶ  
 [Ἀστυφί]λο ἄρχοντος Κυ-  
 [δαντίδ]ο. Ἀρχέας· ἐπὶ το-  
 [ύτο οἱ Κ]ήρυκες ἡμφεσβ-  
 [ήτον τῶ] χωρίο καὶ ἔνια  
 [ἐπεκάλ]υσαν ποῆσαι. Ἀν-  
 [τιφῶν ...]· ἐπὶ το[ύτο εὐ]-  
 [τύχησαν. Εὐφημος]· ἐπὶ τ-  
 [ούτο ..... 14 .....]

desunt vss. tres \

. ε..... 16.....

ν ἔκτ[ισε καὶ .. 6 ... κα]-  
 τεσκ[εῦασε. Χαρίας· ἐπὶ]  
 τοῦτο τὸν [περίβολον ἀ]-  
 πὸ τῶ ξυλοπυ[λίου. Τείσα]-  
 νδρος· ἐπὶ το[ύτο ἐπεσκ]-  
 εὐάσθη τὰ ξ[υλοπύλια κ]-

52 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.

αὶ τὰ λοιπὰ [τῶν ἱερῶν π]-  
 ροσιδρύσατ[ο. Κλεόκρι]-  
 τος· ἐπὶ τοῦ[το ἐφυτεύθ]-  
 ῆ καὶ κατέστ[ησε κοσμή]-  
 σας τὸ τέμεν[ος ἅπαν τέ]-  
 λει τῶι ἔαυ[τῷ. Καλλίας]  
 [Σκαμβωνίδης· ἐπὶ τούτ]-  
 [ο— — — — — — — — — —]⁵³

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>54</sup> The connections between Athens and Epidaurus were shown in various ways as, for example, one of the two festivals of the Athenian Asclepius was called the Epidauria and the other the Asclepieia.<sup>55</sup> A red-figure plate dated to 420–400 BC by the Meidias painter is one of the most striking expressions of the links 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.<sup>56</sup> These identifications are confirmed by inscriptions painted on the plate which has [Ἐπι]δαυρος above the woman holding the child and Ἄσπ[κληπιος] to right

53 *SEG* 25.226a: 'Telemachus set up the sanctuary and the altar to Asclepius and Hygieia first, and to the Asclepiadae 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. Hygieia 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 Skambonidae was archon .....'. Astyphilus was archon in 420/19, Archeas in 419/18, Antiphon in 418/17, Euphemus in 417/16, Arimnestos in 416/15, Charias in 415/14, Teisandros in 414/13, Kleokritos in 413/12 and Callias of Skambonidae in 412/11: Beschi (1967/8) 412–13.

54 Wickkiser (2008) 62.

55 Epidauria: Paus. 2.26.8. Asclepieia: Aeschin. 3.67.

56 Burn (1987) 8, 11; Aleshire (1989) 11; Leuven University 1000; Antwerp Private G36; Beazley 4615.

of the child. Ἐυδαίμωνια is written above the seated woman.<sup>57</sup> The tripod and wreath depicted on the plate suggest that it 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>58</sup>

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>59</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>60</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, mostly temporarily, and this could shake belief in the gods.<sup>61</sup> It was generally up to local people themselves to deal with the aftermath of such events and there was a social expectation that the rich would help the poor in such times.<sup>62</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.<sup>63</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>64</sup> Aegina was constantly challenging Athens during the 5th 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 had been almost completely wiped out at the battle of Thyrea in 424 BC.<sup>65</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 one from Tricca.

57 <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.

58 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.

59 Thuc. 2.47–54.

60 Wickkiser (2008) 64.

61 Toner (2013) 76–7.

62 Toner (2013) 47, 50.

63 Wickkiser (2008) 64.

64 Athanassaki (2010) 257.

65 Fearn (2010) 2, 5; Thuc. 2.27, 4.56–57.

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>66</sup> This cult was only ever a local one and attracted supplicants from Athens and Attica but never reached importance beyond the Athenian empire.<sup>67</sup> Here, three of Davies' mechanisms for cultic transfer are combined (see Chapter 1, Table 1), namely, firstly, a sanctuary could disseminate its god through the active promotion of the cult-site itself. In the case of Asclepius, Epidaurus had positioned itself as the most important Asclepieion in the Mediterranean and, therefore, it was important for Athens to be linked with that cult and not that of Aegina. Secondly, a cult could be imported by an individual, often as the result of a divine epiphany, and this was then taken over by the state at some point, something which occurs in Athens as Telemachus is said to have founded the cult yet, over time, it becomes a state cult. Finally, a cult could be imported as the result of a monumental event, which in the case of Athens was the Great Plague.<sup>68</sup>

The Asclepieian Inventories list the dedications given to the sanctuary from 350 BC to the late 2nd century BC.<sup>69</sup> The inventories list 1,347 dedications with most of them falling into one of three categories, namely: anatomical *ex-votos*, coins, or *typoi*.<sup>70</sup> The *ex-votos* rarely show signs of disease, which was more common in later Roman votives.<sup>71</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>72</sup> However, there is no direct evidence for this and Aleshire has clearly shown the biases in the available material.<sup>73</sup> The majority of the eye-dedications

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66 Aleshire (1989) 14. Aleshire (1989) 14n.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.

67 Riethmüller (2005) 1.241.

68 See Table 1 nos 3, 5, and 8.

69 See Aleshire (1989) for a full overview, translation, and analysis of these inventories.

70 Aleshire (1989) 39.

71 Van Straten (1981) 110.

72 Van Straten (1981) 149; he does say that this is unlikely but for Roebuck (1951) 114 there is strong evidence for this argument.

73 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

come from Inventory v, one of the best preserved which dates to 250 BC and lists 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>74</sup> The rest of the *ex-votos* indicate that healing was sought for all types of body-parts at Athens. The inventories show that a wide variety of objects were dedicated, from various materials, including gold and silver. Noteworthy in the Athenian Asclepieion is the higher proportion of female dedicators than males.<sup>75</sup> Women dedicated anatomical *ex-votos* more commonly than men, while men offered coins more frequently.<sup>76</sup> A number of objects were dedicated whereby it was explicitly stated that they belonged to women but other objects were also offered, for example jewellery, which could also have been dedicated by women. A number of physician's instruments were also dedicated at the Athenian Asclepieion which indicate good relations between the god and doctors here just as at Cos and Epidaurus.

### Cos

The exact foundation date of the Coan sanctuary is not known as there are no origin 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 3rd century BC nor on coins before the 2nd century BC.<sup>77</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>78</sup> The site's excavators dated the sanctuary to around 350 BC on basis of the architecture but Sherwin-White argues for the last quarter of the 4th century while Guarducci believes it was introduced in the second half of the 4th century.<sup>79</sup> However, Interdonato argues that there is evidence for a prior cult on the site of the later Hellenistic

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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 3rd century as nearly eighty percent of the dedications listed are dated to this period.

74 Aleshire (1989) 42.

75 Aleshire (1989) 45. There were also a number of specifically female items dedicated.

76 As analysis of the inventories shows: Aleshire (1989) 46.

77 Herzog and Schazmann (1932) x.

78 Strabo 8.6.15.

79 Herzog and Schazmann (1932) 73; Sherwin-White (1978) 74; Guarducci (1978) 146.

temple complex, which can be dated to the 5th century BC. Her main evidence for this are two inscriptions, namely one dedication to Paeon and one sacred law, which can be dated to this period.<sup>80</sup> Interdonato notes that Paeon is an epithet found with both Apollo and Asclepius.<sup>81</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 Interdonato signals a cult organisation. She also refers to two testimonies in Pliny and Strabo who claim that Hippocrates used *iamata* inscriptions to learn his art.<sup>82</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 2nd- or 3rd-century AD mosaic was found in a Coan house depicting the god's arrival (Fig. 2). The seated man on the left is thought to be Hippocrates, indicating the connections between the god and doctors which flourished on Cos. 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 the god 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>83</sup> Pausanias recounts that the god arrived in snake-form here just as he did in Rome later on. He also believes that Cos was a daughter-sanctuary of Epidaurus.<sup>84</sup> 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 ὤκηκας  
σὺν Κορωνίς ἥ σ' ἔτικτε κῶπολλων  
χαίροισιν [...]<sup>85</sup>

80 Interdonato (2013) 108; Herzog (1928) 33 no. 2; *IG* XII.4.1.

81 Interdonato (2013) 108.

82 Plin. *NH* 29.2; Strabo 14.2.19; Interdonato (2013) 108.

83 Paus. 3.23.7.

84 Here, once again the notion of Epidaurus as the main Asclepieion in the Graeco-Roman world is shown, following ideas laid out by Davies (2005) 62.

85 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 Doric form here would fit in with the few locations known from the texts which are mainly on the island of Cos; Zanker (2009) 1. He argues that the location of the fourth Mimiambic should



FIGURE 2 Coan Mosaic showing Asclepius' Advent.  
FROM WICKKISER (2008) COVER PAGE

Thus, the Coan cult's origins were unclear even in antiquity. The archaeological remains indicate that the sanctuary was built as a unified whole as part of a wider building programme in the 3rd century BC, which was ratified by the Delphic oracle before construction began.<sup>86</sup>

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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).

86 Sherwin-White (1978) 341–2.

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>87</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 recognise this right for their festival.<sup>88</sup> Panhellenic festivals enjoyed this honour and by requesting the recognition of *asylia* here, the Coans were asking for acknowledgement of the Panhellenic status of their right.<sup>89</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 above).<sup>90</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>91</sup> A festival called the Attaleia was held in Cos-town, celebrating another of the Hellenistic kings.<sup>92</sup> One of the site excavators, Schazmann, suggests that both Ptolemy VI and Eumenes II donated money towards the rebuilding of the sanctuary especially for the new temple, stoas on the upper levels, and monumental staircase.<sup>93</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 Chapter 3 and it will be shown how there was a degree of continuity in this practice with the emperors, but that this took a different form. 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' personal 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

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87 Höghammar (1993) 23.

88 Rigsby (1996) 106–7: *Asylia* meant that all travellers to and from the festival were free from violence.

89 Rigsby (1996) 106.

90 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(?).

91 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.

92 Höghammar (1993) 24.

93 Herzog and Schazmann (1932) 72–74.



those related to him, as a more direct and, more than likely, swift and efficient way of achieving their goals.

### *Pergamum*

The cult of the Pergamene Asclepius was of only local importance up to and during the Roman Republican era.<sup>94</sup> It was not yet the globally popular sanctuary it would later become (see Chapter 3) and Athena was the main civic deity at this time.<sup>95</sup> The Pergamene sanctuary of Asclepius was founded by an 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>96</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 one 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>97</sup> A temple was built and a cult-statue erected to the god at this point.<sup>98</sup> Coins with images of this cult-statue and ones of a seated Asclepius with the legend ΑΣΚΛΕΠΙΟΥ ΣΩΤΗΡΟΣ appear from c.240 BC.<sup>99</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>100</sup>

Pergamum 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

94 Habicht (1969) 4.

95 Rigsby (1996) 362.

96 Paus. 2.26.8. There was also a settlement of Epidaurian colonists at Pergamum: Aristid. *Or.* 1.520. See also Renberg (2017b) concerning the identification of Archias and how this relates to the dating of the sanctuary.

97 The Athenian Asclepieion was also founded by an individual and then taken over by the *polis* at a later point; Habicht (1969) 2. See also Davies (2005) 62 and Chapter 1, Table 1 no. 4 where Davies argues that cultic transfer could take place when a state took over a cult which had first been introduced to a city by an individual. This foundation myth also shows the central position of Epidaurus as mother-sanctuary of many Asclepieia.

98 Habicht (1969) 2.

99 See Hansen (1971) 476–477, 480 for a list of these coins; Habicht (1969) 2.

100 *IvP* 8.3.3; Habicht (1969) 2.

all too keen to obey, killing the Romans who had fled to the Asclepieion for sanctuary.<sup>101</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>102</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>103</sup> These events caused a decline in worship at the sanctuary which continued into the Imperial period and the city and Asclepieion 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>104</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>105</sup> Unlike at Epidaurus, no miracle healings were recorded at Pergamum and the extant healings have their basis in daily treatments of fasting and bathing and not in supernatural miracles.

### *The Italian Sanctuaries*

The cult of Asclepius is poorly attested in Republican Italy as the majority of sources concerning this cult comes from the Greek East.<sup>106</sup> In general there is not much evidence for the cult here which makes in-depth study of the cult in this region difficult.<sup>107</sup> For example, there are only three sanctuaries known for the whole of Campania, namely at Misenum, Pompeii, and Puteoli. For the former, Riethmüller lists a statue base and for the latter only a Greek inscription.<sup>108</sup> In his catalogue there are generally only one or two entries listed per sanctuary, indicating how scarce and also fragmentary evidence for the cult in Italy is.

Asclepius was transported to Rome in 293 BC and Livy says that the people sent an embassy, headed by Quintus Ogulnius Gallus, to Epidaurus in order to bring Asclepius to the city on account of a plague.<sup>109</sup> The god was transferred to

101 *IGR* IV 289; Dignas (2002) 114; App. *Mith.* 23.1.

102 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.

103 App. *Mith.* 12.60.1.

104 Hoffman (1998) 42; Habicht (1969) 5–6.

105 Jackson (1988) 167.

106 Glinister (2006) 22; Renberg (2006/7) 87.

107 See Riethmüller (2005) 2.417ff for an overview of the evidence for cult in Italy including Sicily.

108 Riethmüller (2005) 2.428; *IG* XIV.832.

109 Livy *Per.* 11. This follows Davies (2005) 62/Chapter 1, Table 1 no. 8 where a momentous event, such as a plague, caused a cult to be introduced in a new place.



FIGURE 3 Wall relief from the Tiber Island Asclepieion.

PHOTO AUTHOR'S OWN

Rome on 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>110</sup> Asclepius' arrival on a ship was commemorated with a relief still extant on the island (Fig. 3) and it was not uncommon for many of the Epidaurian daughter-sanctuaries to import the god in snake form.<sup>111</sup> At the time of its foundation the sanctuary was located *extra-pomerium*. Little is extant of the sanctuary nowadays so not much is known about the rites which took place here; for example, it is not clear whether there was an Abaton on site.<sup>112</sup>

Few sources comment on the god's arrival into the city as well as its early history though Livy does mention a second plague which struck Rome, especially its army, in 180 BC for which the Romans once again sought help from

110 *Ov. Fast.* 1.290–4; Degrassi (1986) 146.

111 Degrassi (1986) 145.

112 Renberg (2006) 140 mentions that there is no evidence for incubation having taken place here. Inscriptions conclusively linked to the Tiber Island Asclepieion: *CIL* 6.12, 30842, 30843, 30845, 30846; *IGUR* 1.148.

Asclepius.<sup>113</sup> However, there is little evidence about the cult until the Augustan era and even after this period sources are scarce and mainly epigraphic in nature.<sup>114</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>115</sup> The only architectural evidence for cults of Asclepius in Rome comes from Tiber Island but by the end of Asclepieian worship there were four probable cult sites to Asclepius in Rome. It is likely that there was a sanctuary to Asclepius near the Baths on Trajan on the Esquiline and further epigraphic evidence indicates that there might have been another cult site outside the Porta Flaminia and another in the northern suburbs of Rome, past the Pons Milvius.<sup>116</sup>

In Latium, apart from the sanctuaries in Rome, there is evidence for cults of Asclepius in Ostia, Praeneste, Tivoli, Antium, and Fregellae.<sup>117</sup> A Republican temple has been possibly ascribed to Asclepius in Ostia (Fig. 4) and a colossal statue to the god, dated to the end of the 2nd or early 1st century BC was found here.<sup>118</sup> Fregellae was a Latin colony probably founded in 328 BC which was subsequently destroyed in 125 BC by the Romans after the town revolted against them. No origin myths are given for the temple of Asclepius at Fregellae but it is possible that this was a Roman foundation as it is dated to the second half of the 2nd 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.<sup>119</sup> The original excavators argued that the cult's possible founder could have been Lucius Mummius and they reasoned that the cult could have followed the model of the Coan one.<sup>120</sup> Over 4,000 dedications were found at Fregellae with a great many of these being terracotta anatomical *ex-votos*, dated to the

113 Livy 40.37.2–3.

114 See Festus *Gloss. Lat.* 110 M; Livy *Epi.* 2.5.4, 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; Renberg (2006/7) 90.

115 Degrassi (1963) 111: '*Fasti Praenestini* January: [A *k(alendae) Ian(uariae) f(astus). Aescu lapio, Vediovi in Insula [...]*'].

116 Renberg (2006/7) 90–1. 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; *IGUR* 1.104; Degrassi (1993) 22–23; De Spirito (1993) 23; *CIL* 6.19, 10234.

117 Glinister (2006) 22; See Riethmüller (2005) 2.429ff for a full listing.

118 Bolder-Boos (2014) 14.

119 *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.

120 Känel (2015) 68; Coarelli (1986a) 9; Coarelli (1987) 31.



FIGURE 4 Temple attributed to Asclepius in Ostia.

PHOTO AUTHOR'S OWN

3rd and 2nd centuries BC.<sup>121</sup> *Ex-votos* were commonly dedicated between the 4th and 1st centuries BC though some anatomical heads have been found dating to the 5th century BC and others which are possibly dated to the Imperial period.<sup>122</sup> These *ex-votos* have often been seen as a simply copying a Greek dedicatory habit but while there are great similarities, there are also significant differences. Italic body parts commonly depict internal organs but in Greece these are virtually non-existent as the Greek *ex-votos* only represented the external body, for example limbs and heads.<sup>123</sup> Though there was an unusually large preponderance of terracotta heads deposited at Fregellae, the make-up of these votives is very similar to other votive deposits in Latium, Mid-Etruria, and Campania.<sup>124</sup> At the same time, only 4% of votives found at Fregellae depict sexual organs while these were some of the most common *ex-votos*

121 Ferrae and Pinna (1986) 89; Ferrae (1986) 92. These dedications were found in or around the sanctuary of Asclepius.

122 Hughes (2017) 67.

123 Hughes (2017) 62–63.

124 Ferrae (1986) 91–2.

found in the Campetti deposit at Veii. 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 (See Table 2).<sup>125</sup>

TABLE 2 Percentage of *ex-votos* from Fregellae and Ponte di Nona with data from Coarelli (1986) *Fregellae* and Potter (1988)

	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%

The god was not popular in Etruria possibly because native deities already fulfilled local peoples' need for healing, just as occurred in Boeotia.<sup>126</sup>

There were also a few cults of Asclepius in Sicily. Of these, the sanctuary at Acragas (Agrigento) has the best preserved extant structure (Fig. 5) and lies in the valley below the Acropolis on which the three main temples were located. The temple was probably built in the second half of the 4th century BC. No foundation myths are known, no dedicatory inscriptions have been found, and only a few *ex-votos* are extant so there is little here which might shed light on the sanctuary's history.<sup>127</sup>

There was also a cult at Syracuse; although no cult buildings have been identified, a number of statues are extant. A monumental torso was found which is made of luna marble and forms part of a colossal statue of Asclepius. Its dimensions are 154×90×37 cm and it was probably a copy of a late 2nd-century BC original. The torso was found in Ortygia during excavations prior to the building of the Spanish fortifications on the island. It was inscribed with a

125 Potter (1988) 210. Because these *ex-votos* were made from moulds they are hard to date. However, at Ponte di Nona Republican votives were found together with a Domitianic coin which suggests that they were dedicated here until a later period: Hughes (2017) 67.

126 Glinister (2006) 22.

127 De Miro (2003) 73, 77.



FIGURE 5 Temple of Asclepius in Agrigento.  
PHOTO AUTHOR'S OWN

celebratory text in Spanish across the torso during the 19th century.<sup>128</sup> A full-body statue of the god was found with a dog standing next to Asclepius. This is noteworthy as this was an iconographic element which was strongly linked

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128 Gallo, Milanese, Sangregorio, Stanco, Tanasi and Trupia (2010) 93. See article for full Spanish text.

to the cult at Epidaurus. The only real mention of the cult here in any literary source is in Cicero's *Verrines* where he accuses Verres, who was governor of Sicily at the time, of stealing a statue of Apollo from the temple of Asclepius in Syracuse.<sup>129</sup> This also demonstrates the continuing connections between Asclepius and his father.

### 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 the 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 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>130</sup> These epithets described various powers and functions of the deity in question.<sup>131</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>132</sup> The Greeks and Romans believed in a polytheistic world and the main problem with this plurality was choice.<sup>133</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>134</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

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129 Cic. *Verr.* 4.127: '*Quid? signum Paeanis ex aede Aesculapii praeclare factum, sacrum ac religiosum, non sustulisti?*' See also Cic. *Verr.* 4.43-93.

130 Parker (2003) 173.

131 Parker (2003) 176.

132 Parker (2003) 173.

133 Versnel (2011) 25.

134 Versnel (2011) 25.



period (see below), and that the practice only became habitual in the Roman era, 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 deity. This follows the theory advocated by Chaniotis where cities resisted the homogenisation of religion by reviving ancient local rites and traditions.<sup>135</sup> 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.

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>136</sup> For Burkert, the polytheistic world was one of potential chaos.<sup>137</sup> Even though their arguments seem diametrically opposed, they both agreed on one thing: it is impossible to define one god separately from the rest of the gods. Vernant believed that no deity 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>138</sup> Epithets could be used as a way either to organise the pantheon or to express the chaos that existed in the guise of a single deity bearing multiple names.

### *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>139</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 focusing device, picking out the relevant aspect of the god.<sup>140</sup> The various functions of a deity 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

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135 Chaniotis (2009) 28.

136 Vernant (1990) 94–5.

137 Burkert (1985) 119.

138 Versnel (2011) 33.

139 Pulleyn (1997) 97.

140 Parker (2003) 175.

had offered to *Zeus Basileus* is often quoted as evidence supporting this.<sup>141</sup> The divine epithets seem almost to indicate here not just two aspects of the same god but two different gods.<sup>142</sup> 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 in Chapter 5.<sup>143</sup> Versnel argues that Graeco-Roman gods bearing the same name but different epithets may, but need not, have been perceived as one and the same deity, depending on the supplicant's perceptions.<sup>144</sup> The most important function of the epithet, then, was differentiation.<sup>145</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>146</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 argues that these were often the vaguer ones such as *soter* and *hegemon* whose use often became more frequent in Hellenistic times.<sup>147</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>148</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>149</sup>

ἴδος μοι παρθενίην αἰώνιον, ἄππα, φυλάσσειν, καὶ πολυωνυμίην, ἵνα μὴ μοι Φοῖβος ἐρίζη [...].<sup>150</sup>

141 Xen. *An.* 7.8.3–4.

142 See also Sue. *Aug.* 91 where the Capitoline Jupiter complains to about the fact that people were worshipping at the new temple of Jupiter Tonans instead of at his temple.

143 Versnel (2011) 67.

144 Versnel (2011) 82.

145 Parker (2003) 177.

146 Versnel (2011) 69.

147 Parker (2003) 174.

148 Parker (2003) 174.

149 Stallsmith (2008) 116.

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

Here, 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>151</sup> Minor gods and heroes were often only ever called by their name and the more epithets a deity had, the more powerful he was perceived to be. These divine epithets could refer to specific functions, qualities, rituals, genealogy, places of origin and residence.<sup>152</sup> By listing the various epithets of a deity one could ward off his anger at being wrongly addressed but also honour him by showing how powerful the god was thought to be.<sup>153</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>154</sup>

The most common and earliest epithets were toponymic, as cult centres were visible testimonies of the god's power.<sup>155</sup> When a supplicant called a god by such an epithet, he honoured the deity as well as indicating his power.<sup>156</sup> Brulé highlights some important features of epithets, namely that there was an uneven spread of them among gods. Not all deities 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>157</sup> Pausanias distinguishes in his work between cultic and poetic epithets but also between local and Panhellenic ones:

Ποσειδῶνι δὲ παρέξ ἧ ὀπόσα ὀνόματα ποιηταῖς πεποιημένα ἐστὶν ἐς ἐπῶν κόσμον καὶ ἴδια σφίσιν ἐπιχώρια ὄντα ἕκαστοι τίθενται, τοσαύτῃ ἐς ἅπαντας γεγόνασιν ἐπικλήσεις αὐτῷ, Πελαγαῖος καὶ Ἀσφαλίος τε καὶ Ἴππιος.<sup>158</sup>

151 Parker (2003) 175.

152 Versnel (2011) 61.

153 Pulleyn (1997) 111: who also noted that the idea that names were powerful was a 'phenomenon of post-classical syncretism'.

154 Parker (2003) 177.

155 See Davies (2005) 57.

156 Parker (2003) 176; Versnel (2011) 54.

157 Brulé (1998) 30–31.

158 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.'

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, only 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>159</sup> All three forms occurred on dedications.

### *Asclepius*

Parker argues 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>160</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 period, although his spheres of action grew in the Hellenistic and Roman eras. While it was important for a mortal to identify a god correctly when he appeared to him, in the case of Asclepius this was probably not as difficult as in other cases.<sup>161</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>162</sup> Most early inscriptions are simply to 'Asklepios', for example:

ὑπὲρ τῆς γυναικὸς / εὐξάμενος / Πραξίας Ἀσκληπιῶι.<sup>163</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

<sup>159</sup> Parker (2003) 180.

<sup>160</sup> Parker (2003) 175.

<sup>161</sup> See, for example, Odysseus identifying Nausicaa as Artemis at first: Hom. *Od.* 6.149–153.

<sup>162</sup> Versnel (2011) 412–3.

<sup>163</sup> IG 11<sup>2</sup> 4372: 'Praxias, praying, on behalf of his wife. To Asclepius'.

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 σωτῆρι καὶ Ὑγείᾳ / ε[ὐ]χὴν ν Τερτιανὸς ὑπὲρ τοῦ / υἱοῦ Κορνοῦτου.<sup>164</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 one but was salvation from a specific situation.<sup>165</sup> It mainly indicated bodily salvation which included physical and psychological healing, but also safety, protection, and deliverance.<sup>166</sup> It could also be used for salvation from the sea but did not have any theological implications.<sup>167</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>168</sup>

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>169</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 who appears to have been a local Thracian god. A further case of syncretism may have been Asclepius Culculesenus who also appeared in the Eastern part of the empire

164 IG II<sup>2</sup> 4501: 'To Asclepius Soter and Hygieia, Tertianos on behalf of his son Kornoutos, a votive'.

165 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.

166 Moralee (2004) 17.

167 Moralee (2004) 19.

168 See, for example, inscriptions where Asclepius has saved sailors: *InvP* 8.3.63.

169 Parker (2003) 174. See also Davies (2005) and Chapter 1.

(see Chapter 4).<sup>170</sup> Epithets are a way of 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 a cult to a specific locality. The Zimidrenus discussion will also aim to explore displays of identity and the way in which the dedicators 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 (see Chapter 5).

### 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 work. *LIMC* lists seventeen different 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. 6).<sup>171</sup> There is a complete lack of 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>172</sup> The god is generally shown 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.

The other statue types are all listed in *LIMC* as variations of the Chiaramonti type. Three of these types are the Campana, Este, and Giustiani types. In the Campana 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>173</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>174</sup> In the Giustiani Type, Asclepius' right leg is flexed and his staff is placed under his armpit while his left hand lies on his hip. His mantel covers his entire body

170 See, for example, *IGBulg* 3 1.1229, 1230.

171 *LIMC Asklepios* nos 115–392.

172 For example, his death at Zeus' hands: Holtzmann (1981) 865.

173 Holtzmann (1981) 884.

174 Holtzmann (1981) 886.



FIGURE 6  
Asclepius depicted in the Chiaramonti Type,  
2nd century AD, Rome.  
MUS.NAZ.ROM NO. 8645. FROM *LIMC* VOL. II, 2,  
NO. 116

except the torso and his right shoulder. The edge of this mantel forms a bulge starting at his right armpit, runs down his torso to his left elbow.<sup>175</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, which depicts the god seated with a dog sitting next to the chair. The statue is no longer extant, but is known to us from coins and possibly one Antonine copy.<sup>176</sup> The god rarely appears on ceramics, most notably on the Attic plate discussed above, and also seldom occurs in paintings.<sup>177</sup> Asclepius does appear on a number of reliefs in Athens

<sup>175</sup> Holtzmann (1981) 879.

<sup>176</sup> Prignitz (2014) 214–5; *LIMC Asklepios* no. 84.

<sup>177</sup> Paus. 4.31.12.

but these seem to have been made only for a brief period at the end of the 5th century BC and have an irregular iconography.<sup>178</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>179</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 and Moesia, where Asclepius was depicted in the guise of the Thracian Rider, will 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 demonstrate that there were some further variations to the stock type.

### Incubation and Epiphany

One of the most characteristic Asclepieian rituals was that of incubation, where supplicants visited a sanctuary of the god and spent the night there, having first purified themselves and made prayers and sacrifices.<sup>180</sup> This rite did not just occur within the cult of Asclepius but incubation was practiced within the cults of a wide range of divinities, over a vast geographical area.<sup>181</sup> It should also be noted that not every supplicant who came to Asclepius in search of healing would necessarily have had to spend the night in the sanctuary; it was also possible to perform other kind of rituals and it has not conclusively been shown that it was possible to incubate in every Asclepieion.<sup>182</sup> The earliest evidence for incubation comes from the Archaic and Classical periods though this ritual seems to have been present from early on.<sup>183</sup> There is only

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178 Holtzmann (1981) 866.

179 LIMC *Asklepios* nos 9, 10. See nos 9–40 for catalogue of this type.

180 Harrison (2014) 284.

181 Renberg (2017c) 1.6.

182 LiDonnici (1992) 27; Von Ehrenheim (2015) 13, 38. See also Renberg (2006) for a discussion whether incubation actually took place in the sanctuaries in the Latin West. He concludes (p. 140) that the evidence for this is very scarce and that there is no indication that it occurred at the Asclepieia in Rome either.

183 Harrison (2014) 288.



definite evidence for incubation rooms in about a dozen Asclepieia though there would likely have been many more which had space for the rite in the sanctuary. This was because there was no single structure or particular architectural form which was associated with incubation and literary or epigraphic evidence is needed to conclude definitively whether there was an incubation shrine within a sanctuary.<sup>184</sup> While Pausanias provides clear evidence that incubation was practiced in Epidaurus, as do the *iamata*, there is no such material relating to other important shrines such as the Asclepieion at Aigeai in Cilicia.<sup>185</sup> Similarly, there is nothing directly relating to the cult at Rome though the language used in two inscriptions recalls imagery found in incubation reliefs.<sup>186</sup>

The healing sought through dreams was available to everyone, rich and poor, men and women.<sup>187</sup> Renberg differentiates between two types of incubatory practice, namely 'therapeutic incubation' and 'divinatory incubation'.<sup>188</sup> The latter involved a wide range of deities and was undertaken by people seeking advice or prophecies. Therapeutic incubation, on the other hand, was performed within the cults of a far smaller groups of deities, such as Asclepius, Sarapis and Isis, Amphiaraus, and Imhotep, and was undertaken by people seeking dreams for the purpose of healing, either public or private.<sup>189</sup> It was also customary for incubants to set up a votive offering in thanks for the healing which they had received. These votives were a lasting memorial to Asclepius' power and by erecting these monuments, a worshipper transformed a private act of healing into something public, to be seen by all future supplicants. Out of these numerous testimonies, more than 1,300 Greek and Latin inscriptions record healing dreams.<sup>190</sup> However, more rites than just that of incubation were described in these inscriptions as it was important that future supplicants viewed these testimonies in order to prepare them as to what they could expect within the sanctuary. It also ensured correct conduct on a supplicant's part which prevented the sanctuary from becoming polluted.<sup>191</sup>

184 See, for example, the Sacred Law from Pergamum which mentions the existence of two incubation rooms though these have not definitely been identified architecturally: *HP* 3.161; Renberg (2017c) 1.124, 148, 165.

185 Paus. 2.27; *IG* IV<sup>2</sup> 1.121; Renberg (2017c) 1.209.

186 *IGUR* 1.105, 1.148; Renberg (2017c) 1.206.

187 Renberg (2017c) 1.4.

188 Renberg (2017c) 1.21.

189 Renberg (2017c) 1.21–2.

190 Ahearne-Kroll (2013) 35. These inscriptions were erected between the 5th century BC and the 4th century AD; Renberg (2010) 34.

191 Platt (2011) 31.

These inscriptions would have been prominently placed within the sanctuary, something which is illustrated by a grooved stele base which was found in the Abaton at Epidaurus and the dimensions of which fit Stele A of the *iamata*.<sup>192</sup>

Most of the testimonies related to incubation come from the cult of Asclepius and Harrison claims that more incubation shrines were dedicated to this god than to any other.<sup>193</sup> Similarly, the majority of evidence, especially epigraphic, for divine epiphany is found related to the cult of Asclepius.<sup>194</sup> This is unsurprising as the reason for incubating in a sanctuary was, after all, in order to encourage a god to appear to a supplicant in a dream and there was a belief that sleeping in a sacred place would encourage a god to make himself manifest.<sup>195</sup> There were a number of acts which needed to be undertaken before a worshipper could incubate. The rules for each sanctuary were different but there were certain common elements which were shared by all: the supplicants had to purify themselves, perform a sacrifice, and erect a thank-offering. Sacred laws inform about rules which related to a particular sanctuary and, for example, one from Pergamum dictates that a person had to abstain from sex for three days before entering the sanctuary.<sup>196</sup> Similarly, a law from Yüntdağ, located near to Pergamum, orders that a person should not have been in recent contact with a newly delivered mother or child, or a deceased individual.<sup>197</sup> These rules were in place in order to prevent the pollution of the shrine.

Sacrifice was one of the best ways to ensure the goodwill of the gods and open divine channels of communication.<sup>198</sup> It was common to offer an animal to Asclepius, for example a pig or cock, though some laws do mention the giving of cakes and other bloodless sacrifices.<sup>199</sup> One aspect of the ritual which is unclear is whether the supplicants slept in separate dormitories, divided by gender, or in the temple of the god. This because these sleeping rooms are hard to attest archaeologically without any clear literary testimony concerning them.<sup>200</sup> Pausanias mentions a separate sleeping room in Epidaurus and epigraphic sources also imply that there would have been a special structure

192 LiDonnici (1992) 27–28.

193 Harrison (2014) 288; Von Ehrenheim (2015) 13.

194 Petridou (2014) 298.

195 The god would then send healing dreams to the worshipper: Iambl. *Myst.* 3.3; Philostrat. *V.A.* 4.11; Cic. *Div.* 2.59, 123; Aristid. *Or.* 18.31–5K; Harrison (2014) 289.

196 *InvP* 3.161.

197 Von Ehrenheim catalogue no. 8; Müller (2010) 440 who dates it to between c.200–150 BC.

198 Von Ehrenheim (2015) 48.

199 See, for example, *IK* 2.205.22 and *IG* 11<sup>2</sup> 4962.

200 For sleeping in a temple see Aleshire (1989) 29–30. Von Ehrenheim (2015) 38.

for this.<sup>201</sup> Furthermore, temples tended to get cluttered up with votive offerings, leaving scant room for people also to sleep in them.<sup>202</sup>

Votive offerings were a visual testimony of the healing received from Asclepius but also proof of divine contact. These epiphanies made people feel closer to a god and were also a sign of divine favour. They were not just recorded in inscriptions but were also the subject of reliefs.<sup>203</sup> While a god could take on an amorphous, zoological, or anthropomorphic form during an epiphany, in reliefs these deities were depicted in a way which made them immediately recognisable to the viewer, following established iconographic schema, though it is important to note that the gods are not represented as statues.<sup>204</sup> Many reliefs and also inscriptions, apart from the *iamata*, do not provide much detail about what actually occurred within these dreams as the actuality of divine contact was more important than how it happened. Still these testimonies are a valuable source as they reflect an ordinary supplicant's point of view.<sup>205</sup> Both reliefs and inscriptions showed people how to engage in communication with the god and how to successfully negotiate the relationship between the human and the divine.<sup>206</sup>

## Conclusion

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 work 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.<sup>207</sup> The global Asclepieian culture was probably,

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201 Paus. 2.27.2–3; Von Ehrenheim (2015) 80.

202 Von Ehrenheim (2015) 80.

203 Petridou (2015) 16–17; Platt (2011).

204 Platt (2011) 37; Petridou (2015) 2.

205 Renberg (2010) 34, 57.

206 Platt (2011) 39, 49.

207 See Table 1 no. 3 and Davies (2005) 62 who argues that one of the methods by which a cult spread was through the actions of a specific sanctuary, which actively promoted itself and its god.

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 sanctuary 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 panhellenic 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.<sup>208</sup> 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.

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208 See also Chapter 1.

## Imperial Relations with Asclepius

### 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>1</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 dedicators 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>2</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>3</sup> This was not the case, though, since Asclepius was also supplicated by the elites and cities. The Athenian *demos* worshipped 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>4</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 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 explore the provincial response to these supplications and actions undertaken by emperors, illustrating the top-down effect on cultic transfer as argued by Davies. 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

1 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* II (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.

2 Aleshire (1989) 45.

3 Herod. 4; Ael. *Fragment* 100; See, for example, Sigerist (1961) 2.73; Ferngren and Amundsen (1993) 2959–2960.

4 Livy *Per.* II. See also Table 1.

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>5</sup>

Musa had served as Augustus' physician from the time of Actium onwards but it is not known for how long after 23 BC he remained in the employment of the emperor.<sup>6</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>7</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>8</sup>

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>9</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

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5 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.

6 Wardle (2014) 396.

7 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.

8 Michler (1993) 783.

9 Hurry (1928) 84: the emperor offers incense to the god and is wearing the pharaoh's white crown.

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 influence of his personal physician, Gaius Stertinius Xenophon.<sup>10</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 other studies both into sacred travel, which was especially important and prominent within the cult of Asclepius, and also into regionalism. An imperial visit would greatly boost the standing and economy of a city or sanctuary but only a few emperors travelled and of these only some visited Asia Minor, most notably, Hadrian and Caracalla who worshipped Asclepius at Pergamum.<sup>11</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.<sup>12</sup>

The last theme here is that of the granting of imperial rights and honours and how these factored into civic and cultic competition. This theme will not

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10 *PIR*<sup>2</sup> VII 337–8, no. 913.

11 Dignas (2002) 134.

12 See the discussion in Chaniotis (2009).

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 and Pergamum gained the right of *asylia* and Caracalla granted a third *neocorate* to the Pergamene sanctuary after his visit to the city.<sup>13</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 here with a *polis* deity.<sup>14</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 honour, 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, as has been argued by Chaniotis.<sup>15</sup> 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 and Epidaurus will also provide evidence, forming a cohesive overview of imperial actions within the cult of Asclepius and both provincial and imperial responses to this.

This chapter will show the top-down effects, as argued by Davies, which imperial supplications had upon the cult of Asclepius as well as illustrate how religion was used as a communicative framework during the imperial period, as claimed by Rüpke (see Chapter 1). 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 investigation will take a novel approach to the subject by examining imperial impact not by individual emperor or sanctuary

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13 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.

14 Burrell (2004) 1.

15 Chaniotis (2009) 27.



but by studying the topic thematically, which will show 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 to be shown and how imperial benefactions and regional responses to these changed a cult as well as 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 (see Chapter 1).<sup>16</sup> 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 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.

## The Impact of Courtiers on the Cults of Asclepius

### *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 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>17</sup> This section aims to explore the 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 explored and it will be shown how his presence at court prompted Claudius to bestow honours on the Coan Asclepieion. A study of inscriptions relating to Xenophon, either

<sup>16</sup> Whitmarsh (2010) 2; Chaniotis (2009) 27.

<sup>17</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 4th/3rd centuries BC: Buraselis (2000) 76.

set up by the physician himself, or by people close to him and the *demoi*, will show how Xenophon continuously referred to his Roman past and used it as a basis for continuing his privileged position on Cos.

### *The Coan Cult*

As was mentioned in Chapter 2, no origin myths are known for the Coan sanctuary but the cult was founded there some time before the 3rd century BC as it is from this point on that the sanctuary rose to prominence.<sup>18</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 it and the sanctuary enjoyed the patronage of numerous 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 most of the rulers ratifying the right would be too far away to be of any practical use if the island was threatened.<sup>19</sup> However, Cos also experienced the drawbacks of becoming embroiled in Mediterranean politics.<sup>20</sup> For example, in 88 BC they enthusiastically welcomed Mithridates into Cos and allowed him to take from them Alexander I, the son of Ptolemy IX, 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>21</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. 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.<sup>22</sup> It was firmly under Roman control by 30 BC as is shown by events which took place in the Coan Asclepieion.<sup>23</sup> Cos was allied with Marcus

18 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.

19 Rigsby (1996) 14; Buraselis (2004) 16.

20 Rigsby (1996) 106ff; Joseph. *AJ* 14.112.

21 Joseph. *AJ* 14.112.

22 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: Patriarca 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.

23 Sherwin-White (1978) 140–141.

Antonius during the civil wars but this did not work in its favour.<sup>24</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 4th century BC, he cut down part of the grove in order 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>25</sup> This incident shows Augustus' willingness to adhere to ancient sacred laws and also appease the god and the Coans.<sup>26</sup> However, Dio states that Augustus punished the cities allied with Antonius by levying money and taking away the authority of their assemblies.<sup>27</sup> Therefore, Cos had lost its *libertas* and also its *immunitas* at the start of Augustus' reign.<sup>28</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 by the Coans in 242 BC.<sup>29</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>30</sup> However, even though the island

24 Höghammer (1993) 32.

25 Val. Max. 1.1.19: '*Nec minus efficax ultor contemptae religionis filius quoque eius Aesculapius, qui consecratum templo suo lucum a Turullio praefecto Antonii ad naves ei faciendas magna ex parte succisum <indignatus>, inter ipsum nefarium ministerium devictis partibus Antonii, imperio Caesaris morti destinatum Turullium manifestis numinis sui viribus in eum locum quem violaverat traxit, effecitque ut ibi potissimum a militibus Caesarianis occisus eodem exitio et eversis iam arboribus poenas lueret et adhuc superantibus immunitatem consimilis iniuriae pareret, suamque venerationem, quam apud colentes maximam semper habuerat, bis multiplicavit*'. Cass. Dio 51.8.3; Sherwin-White (1978) 141; *LSCG* 150A (4th century BC), 150B (3rd century BC).

26 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.

27 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.

28 Höghammer (1993) 31.

29 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.

30 '*In insula Coe terrae motu plurima conciderunt*': Euseb. *Chron.* 2.145(i); 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.

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>31</sup> Xenophon was born in Cos and he is the first known doctor and priest, and is also the only identified patron of the Coan Asclepieion.<sup>32</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>33</sup> During his time in Rome, he also assumed a life-long priesthood in Cos of the cult of the Sebastos, which was likely Claudius in this case, the Sebastoi, and also the triad of Asclepius, Hygieia, and Epione.<sup>34</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:

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>35</sup>

31 Buraselis (2000) 137.

32 Sherwin-White (1978) 352.

33 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*.

34 Buraselis (2000) 97.

35 *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 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

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>36</sup> It was likely in AD 23 that Xenophon gained his Roman citizenship as one of the consuls for this year was Gaius Stertinius Maximus who would have dealt with the embassy.<sup>37</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>38</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>39</sup> However, it is certain that he did serve Claudius in this capacity. While Claudius suffered constantly from a variety of illnesses, 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.<sup>40</sup> 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 conservatism and innovation.<sup>41</sup> Suetonius describes how 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>42</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

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the more common formula of *in* + the accusative and that *apud* should be taken here to mean 'in'.

36 Millar (1992) 86; Buraselis (2000) 76.

37 Buraselis (2000) 77.

38 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.

39 Bosnakis and Hallof (2008) 206.

40 See, for example, Sue. *Claud.* 2.1, 3.1, 31.

41 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.

42 Sue. *Claud.* 25.2.

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 accompanied Claudius on his British campaigns, for which the Coan received many honours, some of which were listed above.<sup>43</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 Coeum 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, 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>44</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 likely acted as an intermediary between the Coans and Claudius; if the Coans had a problem, they would approach Xenophon to petition the emperor.<sup>45</sup> The personal nature of the

43 Plin. *HN* 29.5.

44 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 the 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.'

45 Buraselis (2004) 141.

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>46</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 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-class administrator.<sup>47</sup> For a sickly man, Asclepius was the most natural god to worship so the benefits of honouring the deity would probably have seemed clear to Claudius. It would have been Xenophon's influence which drew Claudius' attention to Cos in particular. 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 mentions that Xenophon saved him.<sup>48</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.

### *Xenophon Back in Cos*

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, furthermore, built a library.<sup>49</sup> Xenophon is also depicted on a coin-type struck by the Coan mint with Hygieia

46 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.

47 Benario (2012) 112.

48 Bosnakis and Hallof (2008) 214. The first letter is dated to AD 47–8 and the second and third both to AD 48.

49 Sherwin-White (1978) 283–4; Herzog (1903) 193–4.

on the reverse and another one with Asclepius' snake-staff, clearly indicating deep connections between the physician and the cult on Cos.<sup>50</sup> These coins are also remarkable as the only other individual, apart from 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>51</sup>

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>52</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>53</sup> Combinations of imperial titles, as are listed in *BMusImp* 3 (1932) 22.19, tend to be attested elsewhere for client kingdoms and kings. 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>54</sup> Sherwin-White

50 *ANS* 1944.100.48522 and 1953.171.859; *BMC* Caria 18.214.211 and 214.

51 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.

52 Buraselis (2000) 94.

53 Sherwin-White (1978) 152.

54 For example, see Agrippa I and II of Judea who were called *philokaisar*, *philoromaios*, and *eusebius*: *OGIS* 419–20.



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>55</sup>

Sherwin-White makes another interesting point which fits in with the themes discussed here with regard to relations with Rome and the representation thereof. She mentions 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>56</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>57</sup> Xenophon is also called *archiatros* in another decree which is dated to Nero's reign. The title used by the physicians of Hellenistic kings and its earliest occurrence comes from Ptolemaic Egypt.<sup>58</sup> This title then could have been used by the Coans to signal Xenophon's privileged position as a private physician to Claudius.<sup>59</sup> This also 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>60</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>61</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 *archiatros*

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55 Sherwin-White (1978) 152.

56 *CIL* 6.8905.

57 *Tit. Calymniū* 146. Calymna was under Coan control and regulated by the Coan demos.

58 *ICos* EV 219 (Claudian). See also *ICos* EV 241 (Claudian); *PH* 345 (Claudian); Maiuri *NS* 475 (44–54 AD); 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.

59 Sherwin-White (1978) 283.

60 *PH* 345; *ICos* EV 241, *ICos* EV 245; It is not clear if Xenophon or Claudius favoured this title as both had antiquarian interests: Nutton (1977) 195.

61 *PH* 345; Nutton (1977) 196.

soon became popular and was commonly found on inscriptions at the end of the second century.<sup>62</sup> The title was also used to signal civic physicians.<sup>63</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 long and could take weeks or even months.<sup>64</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, Xenophon is hailed as his physician and friend:

Col III

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 -----  
 NO-----  
 TEI-----  
 MON-----  
 ΕΠΙΣ-----  
 Βουλο-----  
 ΤΑΝΤΑ-----  
 ας και τα-----  
 κομένων-----  
 γείνεσθαι-----

62 Nutton (1977) 196.

63 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.

64 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'.

χειων τούς-----  
 λομένου τη-----  
 τὰς δικαιοτάτ[ας -----μή]  
 ἄλλως ἢ οὕτως-----  
 Τιβέριος Κλαύδιο[ς Καίσαρ Σεβαστός Γερμα]-  
 νικός, ἀρχιερεύς, δη[μαρχυκῆς ἐξουσίας τὸ δῆδο]-  
 ον, ὑπάτος τὸ τέταρ[τον, αὐτοκράτωρ τὸ ἐκ]-  
 καιδέκατον, πατήρ [πατρίδος, τειμητής, Κώι]-  
 ων ἄρχουσι Βουλῆ[ι δῆμ]ωι χαίρειν -----]  
 λον ὑμείν ἔγραψα διὰ -----  
 ας ὑμῶν ἄρας ἀε] νευ-----  
 ἣν παρακληθεῖς ἐπ[-----ὑπὸ Στερ]-  
 τινίου Ξενοφώντος [τοῦ ἱατροῦ μου καὶ φί]-  
 λου αἰεὶ φιλοπάτριδο[ς -----]  
 δείσαντος μήποτ[ε----- ἢ νῦν μάλιστα ἀ]-  
 κμάζοθσα στάσις ἐν [τῆι πόλει ὑμῶν -----]  
 μείζονος κακοῦ αἰτ[ία γένηται, -----]  
 ἀπόρων πάντα Ο-----<sup>65</sup>

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 *polis* which is why they called upon Xenophon's *philopatRIA*, which resulted in an imperial intervention.<sup>66</sup> The forms which this took and also the nature of the *stasis* remain unclear, though it may have had economic motivations. A parallel for this is an Maroneian 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

65 '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 Stertinius 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.

66 This is due to the mention of ἄποροι; Bosnakis and Hallof (2008) 217.

was meant to be read by foreigners at all.<sup>67</sup> The document is concerned with a successful embassy to Claudius in which the Maroneians sought to regain rights which they had lost before.<sup>68</sup> The document informs the reader 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>69</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>70</sup>

The Coans utilised Xenophon's position in the imperial court to bring purely local Coan problems to the attention of the emperor 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* in this inscription, a quality which the emperor seemed to think important to stress as it bridged the distance between imperial centre and periphery.<sup>71</sup> The emperor utilised the term to indicate Xenophon's *patria*, by which he meant Cos. In Xenophon's dedications, erected when he was back in Cos, Xenophon is also called *philopatris*.<sup>72</sup> However, it seems that he used it in order to indicate his loyalty and love for Rome, whereas it is possible that when Claudius utilised the term in his letter to the Coans, this was done in order to indicate 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 *philoromaïos*, *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>73</sup>

67 Clinton (2003) 379. See Clinton (2003) 381–382 for full text (text A); Inv. no. 88.594.

68 Clinton (2003) 384. See lines A.16–17.

69 Clinton (2003) Text C.

70 Clinton (2003) 390, A lines 37–54.

71 Bosnakis and Hallof (2008) col. 3.75; Buraselis (2000) 109.

72 See, for example, *ICos* EV 124.

73 For another example see *ICos* EV 241.

Ἀσκληπιῶι Καίσαρι Σεβαστῶι καὶ Ὑγίαι /καὶ Ἡπιόνη<ι> ὁ ἱερεὺς αὐτῶν διὰ βίου /[Γ]αῖος Στερτίνιος Ἡρακλείτου / υἱός, Κορνηλία<ι> Ξενοφῶν φιλο-/[ρ]ώμαιος [φιλονέρων] φιλό-/καίσαρ, φιλοσέβαστος φιλό-/πατρὶς, δάμου υἱός, εὐσεβής, / εὐεργέτας τῆς πατρίδος, ἥρωος / ἀνέθηκεν.<sup>74</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>75</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):

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

Title	Total frequency of occurrence across the empire
<i>Philoromaios</i>	184
<i>Philoneron</i>	5
<i>Philokaisar</i>	326
<i>Philosebastos</i>	189
<i>Philopatris</i>	658

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>76</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

74 *BMusImp* 3 (1932) 22.19: 'To Asclepius Kaisar Sebastos and Hygieia / 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'.

75 Buraselis (2000) 94.

76 *Damnatio memoriae* should be taken into account here.

of Nero.<sup>77</sup> However, it is likely that the inscription was inscribed sometime around AD 69. The titles listed in the inscription above are most commonly used in either the 1st, 2nd, or 3rd century AD, with no extant inscriptions mentioning these titles from the 4th century AD, though there is a re-occurrence of these titles in the 5th century AD.<sup>78</sup> *Philoneron* occurs four times on Cos 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>79</sup> The inscription erected on Calymna also contains a variety of titles, namely *philokaisar*, *philoneron*, *philoclaudius*, *philosebastos*, *philoromaios*, and *philopatris*:<sup>80</sup>

[ὁ δᾶμο]ς ὁ Κάλυμνίων κα[ὶ] / τοὶ κατοικεῦντες καὶ ἐνε-/κτημένοι πάντες ἀνε-/στησαν τὸν βωμὸν εὐχό-/μενοι τῷ θεῷ Ἀπόλλωνι / ὑπὲρ τὰς ὑγείας καὶ σωτηρί-/ας τοῦ κοινῆ τὰς πατρίδος / καὶ καθ' ἕνα ἐκάστου εὐερ-/γέτα Γαΐου Στερτινίου / Ἡρακλείτου υἱοῦ Ξενοφῶντος / φιλοκαίσαρος, φιλονέρω-/νος, φιλοκλαυδίου, φιλοσε-/βαστοῦ, φιλορωμαίου, φιλο-/πάτριδος, δάμου υἱοῦ, εὐσε-/[[β]οῦς, ἥρωος, εὐεργέτα τὰς / [πα]τρίδος, διὰ τοῦ ἐν ἀρχῇ / [δαμάρχου— — — —] / ιος τ[οῦ] / [δεῖνος— — — — — — — — — —] <sup>81</sup>

Here attention is also 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

77 For a parallel on a grander scale see also the erasure of the monumental inscription to Nero on the Parthenon: Carroll (1982) 30–43.

78 From surveying the *PHT* database for these keywords.

79 *I.Cos* EV 219 (Claudian).

80 A 3rd-century BC decree from Cos requires both Coan and Calymnan 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.Calymni* 9; Thompson (1971) 618.

81 *Tit.Calymni* III. “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 Stertinus / Xenophon, son of Heracleitus, / *philokaisar*, *philoneron*, / *philoclaudius*, *philosebastos*, / *philoromaios*, *philopatris*, / son of the fatherland, pious man, / hero, benefactor of the fatherland, by agency of the damarchos in office, [...]ios / aforementioned [...].”

erasure of Nero's name took place here, unlike at Cos. Xenophon is also again called hero. In fact, Xenophon's titulature here strongly echoes the language used in the Coan inscription. The *PHI* database lists fifty-three occurrences of *philoclaudius*, fifty-two of which occur on Cos and only one from Calymna, which is the inscription mentioned above.<sup>82</sup> Many of these are dedications by or concerning Xenophon, and *philoclaudius* occurs within lists of other titles, such as this one. 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 indicating 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>83</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>84</sup> He also notes that *philosebastos* was more commonly used by larger bodies, such as the *demos*, rather than an individual.<sup>85</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 *philoromaïos* is placed before *philopatria*, showing that loyalty to Rome is placed before loyalty to the fatherland. The dedication was set up 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 his connections with

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82 Accessed 22/2/2014.

83 Buraselis (2000) 102–3.

84 Buraselis (2000) 103.

85 Buraselis (2000) 104.

Rome above all. 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 lessen his Coan links.

Xenophon drew further attention to his Roman past and also his present connections by including 'Κορηγλία<ι>' in the dedication. As he was on Cos, there was no reason for him to mention 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 tribes Palatina (two), Fabia, Falerna, and Quirina. These inscriptions are generally dated to the 1st and 2nd centuries AD.<sup>86</sup> One inscription is noteworthy as it was erected by Claudia Phoebe who was the wife of Tiberius Claudius Cleonymus, Xenophon's brother, and it also mentions the Roman voting-tribe to which he belonged, namely the Quirina.

Τιβέριον Κλαύδιον Ἡρακλείτου / υἱὸν Κυρ(εῖνα) Κλεώνυμον, τὸν ἀ-/δελφὸν  
Γαῖου Στερτινίου / Ξενοφώντος, χειλιαρχή-/σαντα ἐν Γερμανίαι λεγιώ-νος κβ  
Πριμιγενίας δῖς, μο-/ναρχήσαντα καὶ πρεσβεύ-/σαντα πολλάκις ὑπὲρ τῆς / πα-  
τριδος πρὸς τοὺς Σεβασ-/τούς — —Κλαυδία Φοίβη / τὸν ἑαυτῆς ἄνδρα καὶ  
εὐεργέ-/την ἀρετῆς ἔνεκα καὶ εὐνοίας.<sup>87</sup>

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

87 *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 (2007) *I.Cos* EV 233 notes that Paton was wrong in his version of the text as it should be λεγιώνος and not λεγεώνος, 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) 75 n. 45.



Cleonymus held a number of local Coan positions, was the tribune of the twenty-third *legio Primigenia*, and is also recorded to have been a part of many imperial 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>88</sup> By mentioning Cleonymus' brother Xenophon, Claudia Phoebe probably refers to the source of his status, namely his more famous brother. By mentioning his Roman tribe here, Claudia did the same as Xenophon in the previous inscription and explicitly refers to 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.

### *Xenophon and the Roman Court*

Chaniotis argued that the imperial period saw the establishment of new ritual forms of communication between emperor and subject, something which can be seen from the inscriptions analysed here and the titles utilised in them which illustrate the close relationship between emperor and members of his court.<sup>89</sup> 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>90</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>91</sup> Cut off from the emperor, the courtier was powerless and without standing in society.<sup>92</sup> As a result, the bestowal or withholding of favours was a way for the emperor to divide and control his upper classes.<sup>93</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>94</sup> In the case of the Coans, Claudius chose reward and this is probably why he granted the rights to the

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

89 Chaniotis (2009) 6.

90 Wallace-Hadrill (1996) 285; Hopkins (2009) 189.

91 Levick (1993) 53.

92 See the Apelles incident in the court of Philip v of Macedon: Polyb. 4.76ff; Wallace-Hadrill (1996) 288.

93 Wallace-Hadrill (1996) 296.

94 Paterson (2007) 137.

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>95</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>96</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 in the Coan inscription and that Xenophon placed such emphasis on his Roman titles and his closeness with the imperial household both past and present, shows 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.

To prevent the Coans from ever forgetting his actions and the benefit they brought to Cos, Xenophon dedicated a monument to *Asclepius Kaisar Agathos Theos* which identifies Asclepius with the emperor:<sup>97</sup>

Γ[άι]ος Στερτίνι-/ος Ξενοφ[ῶν, εὐ]-/εργέτας τὰς πα-/τρίδος καὶ ἱερεὺς / διὰ βίου, Ἀσκληπι-/ῶ Καίσαρι Ἀγαθῶ / Θεῶ ἀνέθηκε.<sup>98</sup>

Paton and Hicks argue that it was likely Xenophon's own initiative to identify the emperor with Asclepius.<sup>99</sup> The emperor is connected here with local traditions as Agathos Theos seems to have been a very popular deity on the island

95 Paterson (2007) 150.

96 Ma (2011) 531.

97 Buraselis (2000) 93–4; *PH* 92.

98 *PH* 92. The inscription was built into the staircase of a small Turkish house. 'Gaius Stertinius Xenophon, benefactor of the fatherland and priest for life dedicated [this] to Asclepius Kaisar Agathos Theos'. It seems that Agathos Theos was a version of Zeus: Paus. 8.36.5.

99 Paton and Hicks (1891) 130.

and Asclepius was the patron deity of Cos.<sup>100</sup> The emperor had, of course, patronised the Asclepieion but this dedication could be read as another way of promoting Xenophon's closeness with the emperor. This indicates that for Xenophon, there was a direct link between Asclepius, himself, and the emperor. Another inscription, dated to the 1st century AD, illustrates continued connections between the emperor and Asclepius:

[ — — — — — — — — — — ] / τὰν ματέρα Λευκίου Κοσ[σι]-/νίου  
Λευκίου υἱοῦ Βάσσο[υ] / [τ]οῦ Λεριανοῦ δάμου υἱοῦ, / φιλοκαίσαρος, ἱερέως  
Ἄσκληα-/πιοῦ Καίσαρος· Λεύκιος Κοσ-/σίνιος Γνώριμος φιλοκαί-/σαρ τὰν ἑαυ-  
τοῦ ἠρέψασαν / μνάμας καὶ εὐχαριστίας / τᾶς ἐς αὐτάν.<sup>101</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 titlature 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>102</sup> The former title is attested in victory lists, *asylia* decrees, and also foreign decrees mentioning the festival.<sup>103</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 acknowledgements of this right from various kings and *poleis* which were erected in the sanctuary.<sup>104</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>105</sup> The additional title *sebasta*, which was commonly given to festivals in the Imperial period, is attested in

100 Sherwin-White (1978) 361ff.

101 *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, philokaisar, erected this out of the memory of her raising him and thanks for her.' 'δάμου υἱοῦ' is an honorific title.

102 Sherwin-White (1978) 358; *Asklapieia Megala: I.Cos* EV 218 (1st century BC). *Sebasta Asklapieia Megala: NS* 462.12–13 (Claudian or Neronian—after AD 54). This follows what was argued by Whitmarsh (2010) 2 and Woolf (2010) 200.

103 *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.

104 Sherwin-White (1978) 357; Rigsby (2004) 9.

105 Rigsby (2004) 9.

a decree erected on Cos probably shortly after Claudius' death.<sup>106</sup> This honorific decree was set up by the *demos* of Cos for Lucius Nonius Aristocles, son of Aristocles, member of the Cornelian voting-tribe, who is also called *philokaisar*.<sup>107</sup> Nonius participated in numerous embassies to Cos during the reigns of Tiberius and Claudius, and Maiuri argues that he was a member of the embassy seeking the affirmation of the right of *asylia* as well as 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>108</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 that of Claudius, and Asclepius.<sup>109</sup>

### 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 mentioning 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. This follows what was argued by Chaniotis, that the imperial period saw the establishment of a new form of ritual communication between ruler and subject and here Asclepius was used as a vehicle for the articulation of imperial favour.<sup>110</sup> He 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

106 For a parallel see the *Megala Sebasta Heraia* at Samos: *IG* XII.6.312.

107 *NSER* 462: the inscription is on a large honorific base made of white marble.

108 Maiuri (1925) 167.

109 Sherwin-White (1978) 358.

110 Chaniotis (2009) 6.

within cults of Asclepius will be examined further in the next section, which looks at Hadrianic and Caracallan Asclepieian sacred travel.

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

### *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>111</sup> This section will first explore sacred travel in general, after which the Hadrianic impact on Asclepius will be examined. Lastly, Caracalla's interactions with the cult will be investigated. With both of these emperors, their greatest direct impact was on the Pergamene cult, but Hadrian also visited Epidaurus 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.

### *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>112</sup>

111 Antoninus Pius did issue a medallion showing Asclepius' arrival in Rome: Gneccchi (1912) Vol. 2, p. 9, nos 1–3; Baldwin's Auctions Ltd, New York Sale XXV, lot 185.

112 Dillon (1997) xiii–xiv.

Medical sacred travel was especially well attested from the 4th century BC onwards and particularly during the Hellenistic period.<sup>113</sup> In Greek there were two terms used to describe sacred travellers: *theoros* and *hiketes* with the latter being the scarcer term.<sup>114</sup> The term *theoros* is not used in the context of a healing sanctuary. The term used to indicate such a supplicant was *hiketes*, signalling an awareness that healing travel differed from sacred travel to other sanctuaries.<sup>115</sup> Ancient sacred journeys emphasised ritual travel to sacred centres often far away from where the supplicant lived.<sup>116</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>117</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 was 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>118</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>119</sup> Other sanctuaries also sent out similar embassies, inviting cities to send their own ambassadors to attend the various Asclepiadic festivals.

In the ancient world there was no clear demarcation between the sacred and secular, and sacred activities pervaded daily life in many ways.<sup>120</sup> Greek does nevertheless have two distinctive terms separating the two, namely sacred, *hieros*, and profane, *hosia*.<sup>121</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

113 Elsner and Rutherford (2005) 17.

114 Naiden (2005) 73. There was no exact term which could relate to our modern understanding of travel for religious purposes, such as 'pilgrimage'.

115 Rutherford (2000) 133.

116 Coleman and Elsner (1995) 29.

117 Galli (2005) 263.

118 Elsner and Rutherford (2005) 12–13.

119 Rigsby (1996) 109; for the letters see p. 112ff, Rigsby nos 8–13.

120 Coleman and Elsner (1995) 12.

121 Scullion (2005) 113.

the defined sacred area.<sup>122</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>123</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* 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>124</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 pan-hellenic healing cult while not feeling that their local shrine was lesser in terms of healing.<sup>125</sup> A later 4th-century AD source articulated this:

ὁ δὲ ἐνταῦθα παρῆν ἐν τῷ νεῶ καὶ τῇ ἀκροπόλει καὶ παρεῖχεν ἑαυτὸν τοῖς κάμνουσιν, ὥσπερ δῆποτε καὶ λέγεται, πότερον ἦν ἀναγκαῖον εἰς Τρίκακην βαδίζειν καὶ διαπλεῖν εἰς Ἐπίδαυρον κατὰ τὸ παλαιὸν κλέος, ἢ δύο βήματα κινηθέντας ἀπηλλάχθαι τοῦ νοσήματος; τί δὲ εἰ τοῦ πατρὸς αὐτοῦ δεηθέντες ἐτύχομεν ὀλίγου πρότερον χρόνου, ἡνίκα ἐν γειτόνων τὴν μαντικὴν ἐπεδείκνυτο.<sup>126</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. Roman patterns of this travel were based

122 Scullion (2005) 115.

123 Connor (1988) 164.

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

125 Scullion (2005) 128.

126 Them. *Or* 27.333c '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]?' trans. Penella (2000) 166; Scullion (2005) 130. 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.

upon the Greek and Hellenistic ones.<sup>127</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>128</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>129</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>130</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. However, later excavations at Corinth also found body parts of every description, indicating that there was no specialisation here.<sup>131</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>132</sup> Further claims were made that there was a difference in the cures effected in Epidaurus and those in Cos and Pergamum, with the former being more divine and the latter being more medical.<sup>133</sup> However, this was probably not the case. The basis for the claim that the Coan Asclepieion had a 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>134</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>135</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>136</sup> It was the supplicant's own choice then, no doubt influenced by

127 Coleman and Elsner (1995) 22.

128 Adams (2001) 2.

129 Adams (2001) 1.

130 Dillon (1997) 75; Van Straten (1981) 149–50; Ferguson (1989) 101.

131 Dillon (1997) 75; Van Straten (1981) 149–50.

132 *IG IV<sup>2</sup> 1.121.2–7*, 98–102.

133 Talbot (2002) 153.

134 Van Straten (1981) 130. This was also the case with *ex-votos*.

135 *IGUR 1.148*. This inscription is dated to the 3rd century AD, possibly AD 212–217.

136 Dillon (1997) 76.



their wealth and ability to travel, which determined the selection of sanctuary.<sup>137</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>138</sup> Travel for the purpose of gathering knowledge, which 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>139</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 says that: 'ὡς δ' ἀπέπεμπεν ἐπὶ τὸν Αἴσηπον [...]'.<sup>140</sup> Aristides was, of course, a unique supplicant and goes further than most to indicate his personal relationship with the god.<sup>141</sup> This is also shown by a 2nd-century AD dedicatory inscription from Epidaurus in which the dedicator states that:

Ἐπὶ ἱερέως Πο(πλίου) Αἰλ(ίου) Ἀντιόχου.  
 Μ(ἄρος) Ἰούλιος Ἀπελλάς Ἰδριεὺς Μυλατεὺς μετεπέμφθη  
 ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ, πολλάκις εἰς νόσους ἐνπίπτων καὶ ἀπεψί-  
 αις χρώμενος. κατὰ δὴ τὸν πλοῦν ἐν Αἰγείνῃ ἐκέλευσέν-  
 με μὴ πολλὰ ὀργίζεσθαι<sup>142</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

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

138 Lawrence (2001) 169.

139 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.

140 Aristid. *Or.* 50.6 'When the god sent me to the Aeseopus [...]'; Dillon (1997) 77. The *Sacred Tales* were written in the 160s and 170s AD: Trapp (2016) 6.

141 Aristides was born in AD 117 in Mysia and lived into the reign of Commodus: Jones (1998) 64; Trapp (2016) 1. He received the first vision from Asclepius shortly after his return from Rome, a trip which took place in either AD 143 or 144: Trapp (2016) 5.

142 IG IV.955: 'I, Marcus Iulius Apelles, 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.' trans. Galli (2005) 279.

Second Sophistic. These sources aptly indicate the individual nature of a suppliant's relationship with the god, something also likely felt by the emperors.

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

Of all the emperors, Hadrian is best known as a travelling ruler. 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, thereafter it 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 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>143</sup> Before him, emperors had mainly travelled either with the goal of expanding their empire or to keep their existing provinces under control, such as Augustus or Trajan. While these reasons also played a part in Hadrian's voyages, he may also have been motivated by hellenophilia and a love of travel.<sup>144</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>145</sup> Hadrian wished for the equalisation and unification of all of the provinces.<sup>146</sup> This unity of empire allowed Hadrian to be in a stronger position to deal with the provincials.<sup>147</sup> Dio and the *Historia Augusta* remark that no other emperor travelled more than Hadrian did.<sup>148</sup> His presence is documented in over thirty provinces and even in those where it is uncertain that he visited, it is likely that he did actually travel there, with the

143 Speller (2003) 2.

144 Speller (2003) 63–4 calls him a 'roving diplomat'; SHA *Hadr.* 1.5.

145 Boatwright (2008) 167; Speller (2003) 68.

146 See, for example, *RIC* 11 *Hadrian* 327 and SHA *Hadr.* 14.10; Thornton (1975) 433.

147 Mols (2003) 458.

148 SHA *Hadr.* 13; Cass. Dio 69.9ff. Millar (1964) 14, 16 says that Dio started his work shortly after Commodus' death but Sidebottom (2007) 74 mentions that it was also possible that Dio did not start collating his evidence until Septimius Severus' death.

notable exception of Sardinia-Corsica.<sup>149</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 on to Spain via Gaul.<sup>150</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>151</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 builder.<sup>152</sup> He restored and constructed numerous temples and added many amenities to sanctuaries such as at Tarraco, Athens, Cyzicus, Nicomedia, and Antiocheia.<sup>153</sup> He also made many dedications and established new rites and regulations in many sanctuaries or revived forgotten ancient ones, among them at Epidaurus.<sup>154</sup> On coinage, provincial aspects were stressed which were thought to be of the greatest importance to the Empire.<sup>155</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>156</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>157</sup> The temple was constructed on land which had formerly been part of Nero's Domus Aurea, making it very visible monument within the Roman cityscape as well as a counterpoint to the temple of Jupiter Capitolinus which stood at the other end of the Forum Romanum.<sup>158</sup> This was the first temple dedicated to Roma in the city of Rome itself and can, therefore, be seen

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149 Birley (2000) 1.

150 Fraser (2006) 2; Birley (2000) 142; SHA *Hadr.* 12.1–3.

151 SHA *Hadr.* 19.2, 19.9; Cass. Dio 69.10; Fraser (2006) 1. Boatwright (2000) 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.

152 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.

153 SHA *Hadr.* 13.6; Halfmann (1986) 42.

154 Halfmann (1986) 42.

155 Thornton (1975) 449.

156 Cassatella (1999) 121–3.

157 Thornton (1975) 444.

158 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.

as a considerable religious innovation.<sup>159</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 deities for the whole empire.<sup>160</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>161</sup> Cassius Dio and the *Historia Augusta* both comment upon Hadrian's travels, yet the latter source, which is already notoriously 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>162</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>163</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, mentions that the emperor went to Thrace before going into Asia.<sup>164</sup> Hadrian 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 of AD 124 and then further to the Greek mainland.<sup>165</sup> In October he was in Eleusis and then he spent the winter of AD 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.

159 Mols (2003) 462. The Hadrian iconography of the goddess differed greatly from that of the Flavians or Julio-Claudians.

160 Mols (2003) 463–4.

161 See Halfmann (1986).

162 SHA *Hadr.* 13.8.

163 Birley (2000) 151–2.

164 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.

165 *IvEph* 5.1487, 5.1488; Halfmann (1986) 191.

He likely visited Megara, Corinth, Epidaurus, Troizen, Argolis, Mantinea, and Sparta, although no exact dates can be provided.<sup>166</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, passing through Sicily. Importantly, Hadrian visited Pergamum before he went to Epidaurus, the effects of which will be examined below.

### *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>167</sup> There is no definitive evidence that Hadrian actually visited the sanctuary. However, it is very likely that he did so 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>168</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 thank-offering in return for his benefactions.

[Ἀδριανῶι σ]ωτήρι! Ὀλυμπίωι. / [πάντων ἀνθρώπ(?)ων δεσπότης, βασιλεὺς / [τῶν τῆς γῆς χωρ(?)ῶν, ἐπιφανέστατος / [νέ]ος Ἀσκληπιός.<sup>169</sup>

This inscription is notable 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>170</sup> The use of *epiphanestatos* also indicates that it is likely that Hadrian travelled to Pergamum.<sup>171</sup> Epidaurus, which Hadrian visited in the autumn of AD 124, also calls the emperor its saviour and benefactor.<sup>172</sup>

166 Halfmann (1986) 191–2; Megara: Paus. 1.42.5, 1.44.10; Corinth: Paus. 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: Paus. 6.16.4; Mantinea: Paus. 8.1.8, 8.8.12; 8.10.2; Sparta: *IG V* i.486; *IG V*.32A.

167 Hoffman (1998) 43.

168 Birley (2000) 166.

169 *InvP* 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'.

170 Zeus: for example, *SEG* 39.528, 43.343; Dionysus: *IG XIV* 1054; Helios: *IK Erythrai* 513.

171 Birley (2000) 167.

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

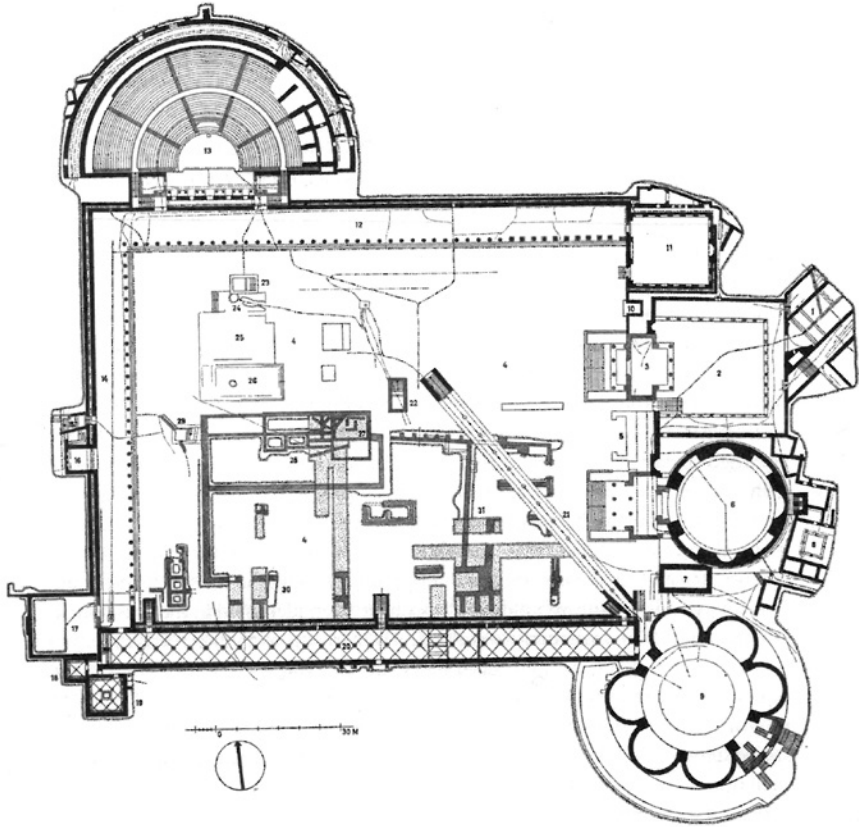


FIGURE 7 Plan of the Pergamene Asclepieion, 2nd century AD.  
FROM PETSALIS-DIOMIDIS (2010) FIGURE 27

There was a remodelling of the Pergamene sanctuary under Hadrian, which was the result of a boom in the cult's popularity at that time.<sup>173</sup> The rebuilding (Fig. 7) 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. 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

173 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*.

whole.<sup>174</sup> Hoffman suggested that the plans for this rebuilding had perhaps first been made at the end of the 1st century AD, following a boom in the popularity of the Asclepieion from Domitianic times onwards.<sup>175</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 era.<sup>176</sup> From the end of the 1st century AD onwards there was also an increase in the number of dedications to Asclepius on site.<sup>177</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>178</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>179</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>180</sup>

A nude statue of Hadrian was erected in a niche in the library which was linked to emperor worship here on account of the divine nudity and inscription to *theos Hadrianos*.<sup>181</sup> The Pergamenes had petitioned Hadrian to set up a

174 Petsalis-Diomidis (2010) 167–9.

175 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.

176 Le Glay (1976) 349.

177 Hoffman (1998) 42 who also suggests that if Hadrian was responsible for the rebuilding then he was merely following a trend.

178 Hoffman (1998) 54.

179 *HP* 3.63: 'Διὶ Σωτήρι Ἀσκληπιῶ / Αἰμ(ἰ)οῖ) Σαβείνος καὶ Ἐ- / ρεννιανὸς ἀπὸ τῆς / ἕξω θαλάσσης καὶ / τῶν ἐκεῖ βαρβάρων / σωθέντες ὑπ' αὐτοῦ'. See also Petsalis-Diomidis (2010) Fig. 53 for an image of the inscription. The inscription was erected in marble and was 34.3×57.5×4.7 cm in size; Jones (1998) 69.

180 *HP* 8.3.13–14, 63.

181 Petsalis-Diomidis (2010) 171; *HP* 8.3.6: 'Θεὸν Ἀδριανὸν, Φλ. Μελίνην'. 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,

new cult of 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>182</sup> Hadrian's response to this petition is set out in a letter from him to the Pergamenes which 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>183</sup> Hadrian praises the Pergamenes in his letter but says 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>184</sup>

It would seem that Hadrian had a definite impact upon the Pergamene sanctuary and this is best articulated by 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>185</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>186</sup>

As with the Pantheon, here there was the innovative combination of *cella* with a *pronaos*.<sup>187</sup> Petsalis-Diomidis points out that while the Pantheon combined traditional religious associations with 'radical aesthetic originality', the conservative 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>188</sup> While there were many buildings connected to the emperor and imperial family in Rome, in Pergamum this was highly unusual. The temple should be

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although the military attributes also indicate the emperor's military and political prowess: Petsalis-Diomidis (2010) 213.

182 Burrell (2004) 27; see Müller (2009).

183 Müller (2009) 371.

184 Müller (2009) 369–70 for full reconstruction.

185 Petsalis-Diomidis (2010) 194.

186 Petsalis-Diomidis (2010) 194.

187 Petsalis-Diomidis (2010) 196.

188 Petsalis-Diomidis (2010) 196–7.



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>189</sup> Hoffman argues that the only conceivable intermediary for this could have been the emperor himself as the Pantheon was closely linked to the imperial family and also because of Hadrian's visit to Pergamum and the presence of his statue in the library.<sup>190</sup> As the temple of Zeus-Asclepius was based upon the Pantheon plan, ideological 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>191</sup> Asclepius would have been chosen as he was one of the main gods in Pergamum and was also a deity 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>192</sup> Hadrian was, of course, especially connected with Olympian Zeus in Athens but also elsewhere as the above inscription, *IVP* 2.365, shows.<sup>193</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>194</sup> This idea of universality in the cult of Zeus-Asclepius is also found in Aelius Aristides' orations where he says that the temple here had many cult-statues, which was befitting of it as a mini-Pantheon:

[...] ἐν <τῷ> χωρίῳ μὲν ἐδόκουν εἶναι οὐπὲρ ἐτράφην, παρεῖναι δὲ Ῥουφίνον, οὐτὰ μέγιστα ἀναθήματα καὶ <ὁ> νεῶς ὁ πολυειδῆς [...]<sup>195</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>196</sup> This universality comes forth again in the fourth *Sacred Tale* where Aristides

189 Petsalis-Diomidis (2010) 197–8.

190 Hoffman (1998) 50; Petsalis-Diomidis (2010) 198.

191 Petsalis-Diomidis (2010) 199.

192 Palmer-Bonz (1998) 252.

193 Le Glay (1976) 353.

194 Versnel (2011) 100.

195 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 the many cult statues.' Trans. Behr (1981) 323.

196 Aristid. *Or.* 42.4: Asclepius possesses all the powers of one who guides and directs the universe.

does not identify the god by name but connects him to the 'τοῦ παντὸς ψυχῆν/ the soul of the universe'.<sup>197</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>198</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 Egypt, to provide a parallel for this, where Asclepius was assimilated with the Egyptian god Imhotep.<sup>199</sup> At Deir el-Bahari, elite priests introduced Asclepius to the site and syncretised him with the existing god worshipped there, 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 inscriptions and on reliefs.<sup>200</sup> In the same pe-

197 Aristid. *Or.* 50.55–6.

198 Petsalis-Diomidis (2010) 203.

199 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.

200 Ptolemy VI ruled from 180–145 BC. Around 300 BC the healing deity Amenhotep was introduced into the upper levels of Hatshepsut's temple in Deir el-Bahari, although no reference is made to Asclepius-Imhotep in any of the inscriptions, which occurred both in Greek and Demotic, during the 3rd century and the first half of the 2nd 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

riod, in the second half of the 2nd century BC, the sanctuary was drastically rebuilt and a new temple was constructed on site for the two gods, probably by Ptolemy VIII.<sup>201</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>202</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. 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.

The new god does not appear on any Hadrianic coins and Pergamum does not seem to have minted any coins commemorating these events.<sup>203</sup> Asclepius does occur on some Hadrianic *cistophori* from the imperial mint, all of which are uniform in appearance.<sup>204</sup> These coins depict Asclepius in his standardised form. The god 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>205</sup> The majority of Hadrian's coinage depicted personifications and

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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 2nd century AD the inscriptions rapidly stop, with the last one being dated to AD 162.

201 Łajtar (2006) 15, 31.

202 Łajtar (2006) 41.

203 Metcalf (1980) 11.

204 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 intended to promote universal deities *per se*.

205 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.

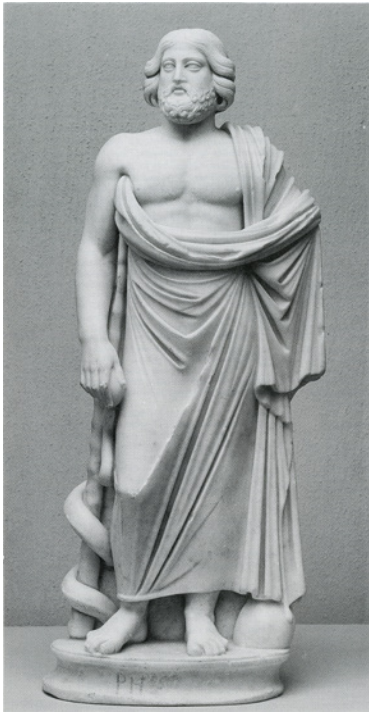
virtues on the reverse, and only a small percentage showed actual deities.<sup>206</sup> Asclepius was rarely depicted on the coinage of the western part of the Roman empire but was represented in multiple guises on both the coinage and especially statuary in Asia Minor from the late Hellenistic period onwards.<sup>207</sup> He is mostly depicted in the so-called Este type or variations thereof (Fig. 8).<sup>208</sup>



FIGURE 8  
Asclepius Este statue type.  
*LIMC* VOL. II, 2, NO. 320

- 206 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. Noreña (2001) 155–6 argues that it was not under Hadrian that this interest in the representation of personifications grew but they were already frequently represented on the coinage of Nerva and Trajan. He also mentions, pp. 152–3, that the lack of canon surrounding the representation and use of personifications on coins makes a study of the specific virtues and personification depicted by emperors on their official coinage so important.
- 207 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.
- 208 Holtzmann (1981) 886: *LIMC* lists sixteen statues or torsos of this type.

Little changed until the late Trajanic/early Hadrianic 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 9–10).<sup>209</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.<sup>210</sup>



FIGURES 9–10 Asclepius Amelung statues.  
FROM GRIMM (1988) FIGURES 1–2

209 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.

210 Holtzmann (1981) 886–887.

The similarities with the Este type are striking but Grimm argues that the Amelung type is actually a variation of the standard Giustiani/Epidaurian type.<sup>211</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>212</sup>

The Amelung type is strongly present on numismatic iconography and is first represented on coinage of Amisos in the early 2nd century AD.<sup>213</sup> However, Kranz notices something noteworthy: that this type, which became the emblem of Pergamum, virtually does not appear on Pergamene coinage, for example the *homonioia* coins (see below), though it does appear on some coins from Pergamum which were issued by Lucius Aelius Verus.<sup>214</sup> The *homonioia* issues still use the older types such as the Epidaurian one. The *cistophori* represent Asclepius in yet another type.<sup>215</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>216</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>217</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>218</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 Abonoteichos and his version of the god, Asclepius-Glycon, where the god, in snake form, was made to hatch from an egg as a

211 Grimm (1988) 168.

212 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 4th century BC.

213 Kranz (1990) 131.

214 Kranz (1990) 133. See table 26.1.2: Galleria Brera in Mailand inv. no. 4829.

215 Kranz (1990) 131; Metcalf (1980) 8, nos 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 hangs at his side.

216 Kranz (1990) 134.

217 Kranz (1990) 137.

218 Gnechchi (1912) Vol. 2, p. 9, nos 1–3, Antoninus Pius nos 1–3+pl. 431–2.

result of the prophet's duplicitous workings.<sup>219</sup> However, Mazzuca, following Sirano, argues that the statue type of Asclepius with an egg actually comes from the Coan Asclepieion.<sup>220</sup> Sirano believed that the statue type came from Temple C on Cos sometime in the 2nd century AD.<sup>221</sup> Mazzuca explains the egg iconography as being a symbol for the Universe and he argues that 'In this way, the iconography states that the entire Universe, represented by the egg, needs the medicine of Asclepius'.<sup>222</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.

### *The Emperor at Epidaurus*

The sanctuary at Epidaurus enjoyed its peak in cultic activity in the 4th and 3rd centuries BC (Fig. 11). The sanctuary was rebuilt in the 4th century BC, after which the cult went into a period of stasis and decline, not unlike many other sanctuaries at this time.<sup>223</sup> The number of inscriptions and dedications drastically diminished from the 2nd century BC onwards which was mainly linked to political events in the 1st century BC, such as the sack of the city by Sulla and by the Cilician pirates.<sup>224</sup> Excavations have shown destruction and abandonment in the hostel, gymnasium, and the water-supply system, which date to the 1st century BC. This decline is also shown by a lack of dedications and healing testimonies from this period.<sup>225</sup>

Melfi argues that the sanctuary was only preserved by traditional benefactions from local elites.<sup>226</sup> During the last quarter of the 1st century BC the sanctuary suddenly became the focus of these elites who erected many dedications and also statues of the imperial family.<sup>227</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 only one dedication was found dating to this period but fifty-three honorific inscriptions were erected in the sanctuary.<sup>228</sup>

219 Grimm (1988) 169.

220 Mazzuca (2014) 291; Sirano (1994) 199–232.

221 Sirano (1994) 226.

222 Mazzuca (2014) 295.

223 Melfi (2007a) 63. See also Melfi (2007a) 31–82 for an overview of the popularity of the sanctuary in the pre-Hadrianic period.

224 Diod. Sic. 38.7; Plut. *Vit. Sull.* 12 and *Vit. Pomp.* 24.

225 Melfi (2010) 330.

226 Melfi (2010) 330.

227 Melfi (2007a) 70.

228 Melfi (2007a) 71.

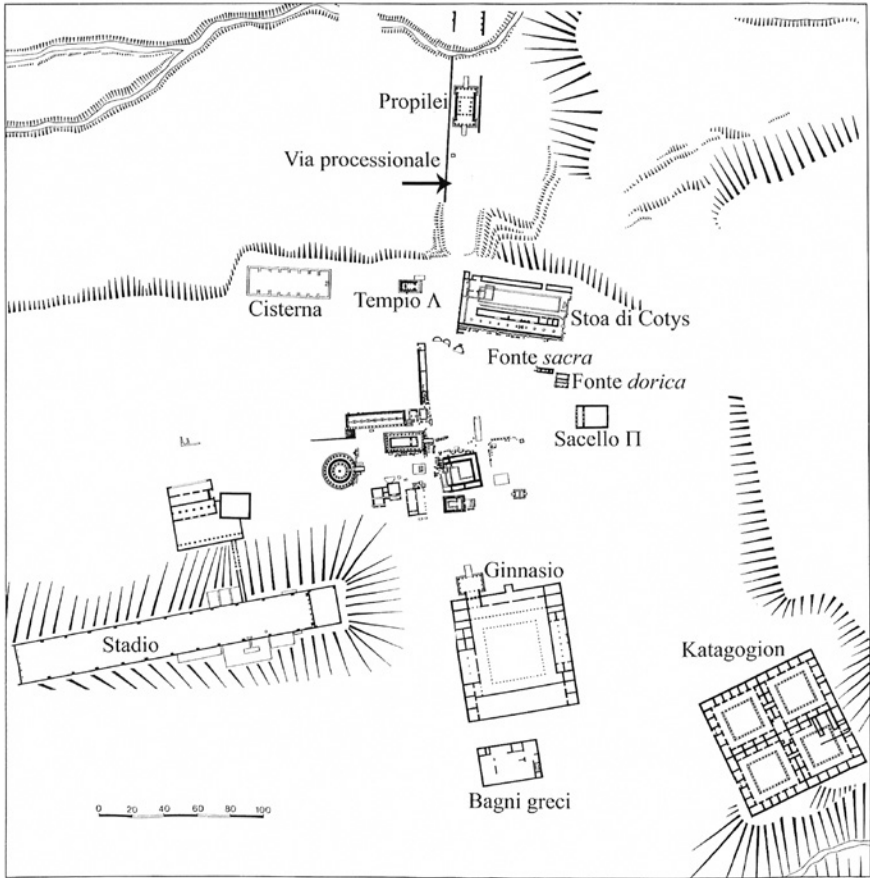


FIGURE 11 Plan of the Asclepieion in Epidaurus in the 3rd century BC.  
FROM MELFI (2007A) FIGURE 9

A new festival called the *Kaisarea* was founded in AD 32/3 and 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>229</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

229 Melfi (2007a) 73; Livia: *IG* IV<sup>2</sup> 593 and 594; Drusus: *PIR*<sup>2</sup> II.857; Melfi table 6, no. 390–1; Lucius Caesar: *PIR*<sup>2</sup> IV.222; Melfi table 6, no. 387; Agrippina Major: Melfi table 6, no. 389; Drusilla: *IG* IV<sup>2</sup> 600; Claudius: Melfi table 6, no. 394; Agrippina Minor: Melfi table 6, no. 397; Messalina: *IG* IV<sup>2</sup> 604; Melfi (2007) 74–5.



states that the 1st century AD was a period of crisis but also of rebirth for the sanctuary, which was the result of imperial interest.<sup>230</sup>

Even though the sanctuary managed to keep on existing as the result of mainly local patronage of 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 2nd 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>231</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>232</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 above). Coins depicting Asclepius' head on the obverse were substituted by Hadrian's head, suggesting an interchangeability between the god and the emperor.<sup>233</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 Hadrian's new universal and syncretic religion had also been introduced here.<sup>234</sup> This importation and syncretism with Asclepius is shown by the identification of Asclepius and Zeus from this time onwards, 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.

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

230 Melfi (2007a) 74.

231 See *IG* IV<sup>2</sup> 89; Melfi (2010) 331–2.

232 Melfi (2007a) 85.

233 For the coins see Amandry (1993); Melfi (2010) 332.

234 Melfi (2010) 333.

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 2nd century AD that the sanctuary was rebuilt and modernised (Fig. 12) by the senator Sextus Iulius Maior Antoninus Pythodorus, as is related in Pausanias.<sup>235</sup> Antoninus came from Nysa and added baths, the so-called portico of Cotys, and the temple of the Egyptian Apollo, Asclepius, and Hygieia 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>236</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 momentum. Imperial supplications of a god, therefore, had more lasting and also further reaching effects than just the immediate benefaction.

#### *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 and was housed in the city Eleusinion while his own sanctuary was being constructed.<sup>237</sup> However, a statue from Eleusis reveals even further connections between the emperor and the two cults (Fig. 13). 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>238</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

235 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.

236 Tomlinson (1983) 31–2.

237 See Wickkiser (2008) 87ff for discussion.

238 Games for Antinous were founded at Eleusis: see *IG* 11<sup>2</sup> 2120, 2201, among others; Galli (2001) 66.

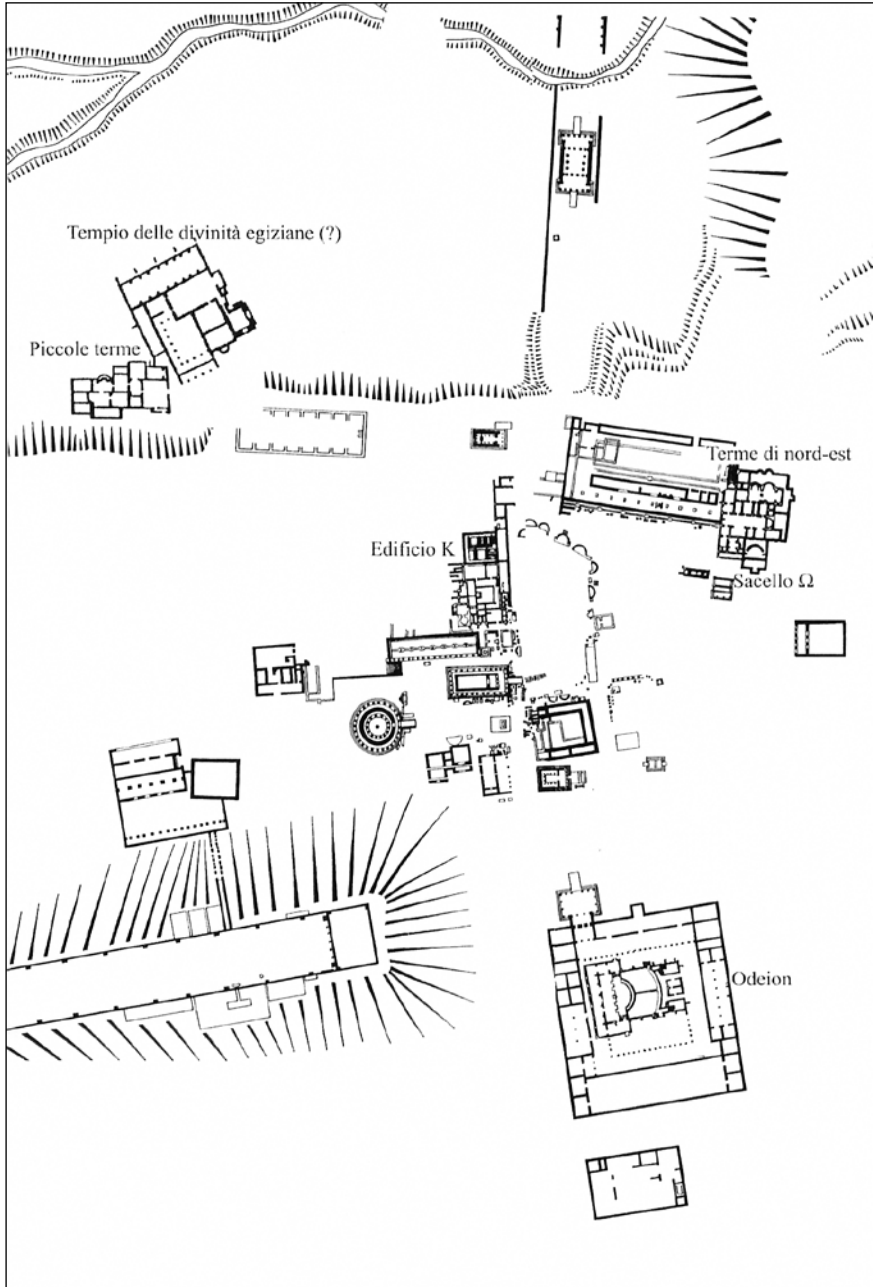


FIGURE 12 Plan of the Asclepieion in Epidaurus in the 2nd century AD.  
 FROM MELFI (2007A) FIGURE 14



FIGURE 13  
 Antinous and the *omphalos*.  
 FROM GALLI (2001) TABLE 10.1;  
 ELEUSIS MUSEUM INV. NO. 5092

guise of either Dionysus, as he was associated elsewhere with this god, or Apollo, because of the presence of the *omphalos*.<sup>239</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 is depicted in the guise of a young Asclepius. Other imagery of Asclepius was found 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>240</sup> Antinous is depicted as some kind of *neos Asclepius*, perhaps echoing Hadrian

239 Clinton (1989) 1523–4.

240 Galli (2001) 66.

as he was granted this title in Pergamum.<sup>241</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 had on the dissemination of his new version of the god in Greece but also, and of equal importance, the local response to imperial benefactions.

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

#### *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 below). 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 Caracalla's 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 explored, as well as other Caracallan worship of the god and the interaction between Rome and the provinces. Provincial responses to Caracalla's grants will also be examined here.

#### *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. The route which the emperor took on this journey is unknown due to mutilation of some sources and lack of interest by others.<sup>242</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>243</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>244</sup> Various modern scholars have tried to provide a definite route for Caracalla

241 Clinton (1989) 1525 argues that there is 'no doubt' that this is some form of *neos* Asclepius.

242 See *CIL* 6.2103b for Caracalla's departure from Nicomedia and then Herodian 4.8.6 for his arrival in Antioch; Levick (1969) 426.

243 Johnston (1983) 58.

244 Levick (1969) 427 says that this was the weakest sign of an imperial visit.

though this is near impossible to state for certain. Halfmann, again, provides the best overview of Caracalla's travels.<sup>245</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>246</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 and Lydia. 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 8th 217, putting a definite end to his travels.<sup>247</sup>

### *Caracalla and the Need for Healing*

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 ἰκετεύσαντι αὐτῷ πολλά δὲ καὶ προσκαρτερήσαντι ὠφέλησεν. ἔπεμψε γὰρ αὐτοῖς καὶ ἀποδημῶν καὶ εὐχὰς καὶ θυσίας καὶ ἀναθήματα, καὶ πολλοὶ καθ' ἑκάστην οἱ

245 Levick (1969) 440–444 tried to reconstruct his path, arguing that Caracalla wished to emulate Alexander the Great's travels through Asia Minor. She states that Caracalla travelled through western Pisidia from south to north, following Alexander's route. Johnston (1983) 60 argued that Levick made several errors in creating this route and that the early numismatic catalogues used by Levick tend to be inaccurate. It is, therefore, impossible to state with any certainty which path Caracalla took through Asia Minor, leading him to and from Pergamum.

246 Levick (2007) 95; Halfmann (1986) 223.

247 All from Halfmann (1986) 223–5. See Halfmann for a complete overview of evidence including inscriptions and literary sources.

τοιούτό τι φέροντες διέθεον: ἦλθε δὲ καὶ αὐτὸς ὡς καὶ τῇ παρουσίᾳ τι ἰσχύσων, καὶ ἔπραξεν πάνθ' ὅσα οἱ θρησκεύωτές τι ποιούσιν, ἔτυχε δ' οὐδενὸς τῶν ἐς ὑγίαιαν τειόντων.<sup>248</sup>

Herodian informs us that:

ταῦτα δ' ποιήσας, τὰ τε ἐν ταῖς πόλεσι διοίκησας ὡς ἐνεδέχετο, ἐπέιθη ἐς Πέργαμον τῆς Ἀσίας, χρῆσασθαι βουλόμενος θεραπείας τοῦ Ἀσκληπιοῦ. ἀφικόμενος δὴ ἐκεῖ, καὶ ἐς ὅσον ἤθελε τῶν ὄνειράτων ἐμφοράτων, ἦκεν ἐς Ἴλιον.<sup>249</sup>

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>250</sup> Dio also mentions that Caracalla sought the help of Apollo Grannus and Sarapis; Caracalla met Apollo Grannus on his northern campaigns in Phoenicia, modern Faimingen.<sup>251</sup> However, while Dio mentions Caracalla also supplicating Apollo Grannus and Sarapis, Herodian only lists Asclepius and also does not say that healing

248 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 possible 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.

249 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'. Whittaker (1969) xiv argues that Herodian likely composed his work after AD 244 but one of the main problems with it are the many omissions which made Sidebottom (1998) 2813 argues that the work is extant in an unrevised and incomplete form.

250 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.

251 Cass. Dio 78.15.6; *IvEph* 3.802; Nollé (2003) 409–10; Haymann (2010) 151.

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 locally important deities to connect with cities in order to legitimise his reign and ensure their loyalty.<sup>252</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 2nd century AD, that meetings between gods and emperors start to become widespread on civic coinages of the Roman east.<sup>253</sup> The rite of *adventus* was the most conspicuous of these and Caracalla's travel 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.

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. Manders notes how Geta's murder and persecution of his followers fit in perfectly with the image of a cruel tyrant which is presented in Dio and that this literary representation of Caracalla dominates and defines his image.<sup>254</sup> 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>255</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, which stressed three aspects, namely military, dynastic, or religious.<sup>256</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>257</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 armour. Divine military figures such as Victoria, Fides, Pax,

252 Rowan (2012) 136. It could also be a combination of both these reasons.

253 Harl (1987) 52: this started during Commodus' reign.

254 Manders (2012) 226.

255 Mennen (2006) 253.

256 Mennen (2006) 253–4.

257 Plautilla was killed shortly after Severus' death. Caracalla did not remarry in order to create heirs: Levick (2007) 93.



and Mars all occur on Caracallan coins.<sup>258</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>259</sup> For Manders this change of imagery shows that during the period of joint rule, Severus was the one in control of imperial numismatic iconography and not Caracalla.<sup>260</sup> Noreña mentions how important the study of imperial coinage is for showing the connection between emperors and virtues as this is the only place where this attachment is systematically depicted and communicated.<sup>261</sup> Asclepius also appears on Severan coins from the Roman mint, struck in AD 207, which Mennen links to a possible sickness of Severus (Fig. 14):<sup>262</sup>



FIGURE 14

Pentassarion showing bust of Severus and Hygieia feeding a snake on the obverse and Asclepius on the reverse from Irenopolis in Cilicia, AD 195–196.

SNG *LEVANTE* 1611. FROM SNG *LEVANTE* PLATE 109, NO. 1611

<sup>258</sup> Mennen (2006) 259.

<sup>259</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. This drop in the representation of personifications is also shown in Noreña (2001) Fig. 1 page 155.

<sup>260</sup> Manders (2012) 232.

<sup>261</sup> Noreña (2001) 153.

<sup>262</sup> *BMCRE* 5,850; Mennen (2006) 263.

During the period of joint rule, Mars, Sol, and Minerva frequently appeared on coinage but it was Liber Pater and Hercules who were especially closely connected to the emperor. However, Liber Pater completely disappeared from coinage shortly after Caracalla's accession and Hercules also vanished two years into his rule.<sup>263</sup> Rowan's quantitative study of Severan coin hoards reveals that a large number of the coins struck during Caracalla's reign show Apollo, Sarapis, or Asclepius, the three gods mentioned in the passage in Dio.<sup>264</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 supplicated the locally important deities which he encountered on his travels.<sup>265</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 power with a local god. For a city, a god was a way to link itself with an emperor.<sup>266</sup> Manders describes this as:

[...] deployment of imperial coinage was probably the most efficient and effective medium by which the centre of power could convey an image of the emperor and his reign.<sup>267</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>268</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>269</sup>

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263 Rowan (2012) 110–11; Manders (2012) 233–4.

264 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.

265 Rowan (2012) 113, 115.

266 Rowan (2012) 154.

267 Manders (2012) 227.

268 Mennen (2006) 263.

269 Rowan (2012) 129.

### *The Cult at Pergamum*

In the Julio-Claudian period Pergamene coinage was dominated by the granting of the first *neorate* to the city and the imperial succession.<sup>270</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>271</sup>

Asclepius was one of the main *polis* deities of Pergamum and, thus, was commonly depicted on Pergamene coinage. The first coin representing 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 occurs on bronze issues.<sup>272</sup> The god appears virtually equally on pre-Roman and Roman coins (see Table 4) and occurred on the coinages struck under various emperors (Table 5 and Fig. 15):<sup>273</sup>

TABLE 4 Coins depicting Asclepius. From *BMC Mysia*, Volume 15

<i>BMC Mysia</i>		Total number of coins (not counting <i>homonoiā</i> issues)
Coins depicting Asclepius		
Pre-Roman Coins	36	204
Roman Coins	37	145
Total	73	349

<sup>270</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>271</sup> Weisser (2005) 135.

<sup>272</sup> First Asclepieian coin: *BMC Mysia* 122.84–5; see *BMC Mysia* 127.129ff.

<sup>273</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.

TABLE 5 Members of Imperial Household depicted on coins from Pergamum with Asclepius. From *BMC Mysia*

<i>BMC Mysia</i>	
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 <sup>a</sup>

a 3 coins struck in the Imperial period are without the emperor's portrait on the obverse (31 of these in total)

These tables and graph show that the largest number of coins with Asclepius on the reverse, as listed in *BMC Mysia*, were minted under Caracalla, showing the cult's popularity at the time. This was probably the result of Caracalla's public supplication of the god and people reacting to this worship. Williamson makes an important point when stating that the reverse of provincial coin types show 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>274</sup>

<sup>274</sup> Williamson (2005) 26.

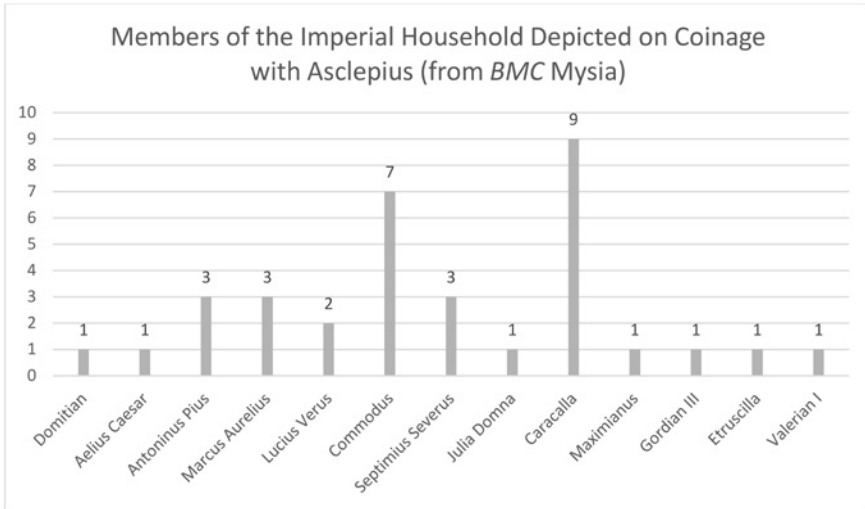


FIGURE 15 Members of Imperial Household depicted on coins from Pergamum with Asclepius.

As a *polis* deity, Asclepius had long been depicted as on the *homonoia* coins issued by Pergamum, Ephesus, and Smyrna.<sup>275</sup> These three cities were constantly battling for the title ‘πρώτη Ἀσίας/first of Asia’, which was granted to the leading city on the basis of tradition, beauty, age, origins, culture, and cults.<sup>276</sup> Based upon these criteria, any change in the status of a city, for example due to imperial benefactions, could alter these dynamics and cause the title to shift to another city. These coins commemorated these changes in status and also alliances between the cities. 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 μεγίστη καὶ πρώτη μητρόπολις καὶ δις νεωκόρος’, Pergamum ‘ἡ μητρόπολις τῆς Ἀσίας καὶ δις νεωκόρος πρώτη Περγαμηνῶν πόλις’, and Smyrna ‘CMYPNAIΩN ΠPOTΩN ACIAC Γ NEΩKOPΩN TΩN CEBACTΩN KAAΛEI KAI MEΓEΘI EΠI CTPATH TI-BEPIOY KA KPHTAPIOY/The First Capital of Asia Concerning her Beauty’.<sup>277</sup>

<sup>275</sup> Kampmann (1998) 378. Nemesis represented Smyrna and Artemis Ephesus. A real explanation for these coins is unknown.

<sup>276</sup> See, for example, *Smyrna* 25; Kampmann (1998) 376.

<sup>277</sup> This from the legend of *BMC Mysia* 405, 406; Kampmann (1998) 379. Ephesus *IvEph* Ia.24: ‘The Greatest and First Capital of Asia’; Pergamum: *IvP* 8.3.157 ‘The capital of Asia, which had as first two provincial temples of the imperial cult’. Kampmann (1998) 31n.255, n.259.



FIGURE 16

Reverse of bronze coin showing *Homonoia* scene with Asclepius standing next to Artemis of Ephesus.

SNG FRANCE 2182. FROM SNG FRANCE PLATE 109, NO. 2182

Under Commodus, Pergamum issued its biggest series of *homonoia* coins (Fig. 16), 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>278</sup> This reflects the increase in Pergamum's status as a result of his visit and benefactions to Asclepius as represented on the coin series discussed here. However, Smyrna also received an additional *neorate* 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 is 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. On provincial emissions struck under Antoninus Pius, the god appears on eighty-five types.

<sup>278</sup> Kampmann (1998) 383. Smyrna also received a *neorate*.

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 *neocoros* and it is only after Caracalla's visit that this new inscription appears on coins. Therefore, the grant should be dated to this time.<sup>279</sup> The first two *neocorates* were of Augustus, who shared a temple with Roma, and Trajan, sharing with Zeus *Philios*. 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>280</sup> The empress appears together with Asclepius on thirteen different coin types listed in the *Catalogue of Greek Coins in the British Museum* corpora from the Peloponnese, Bithynia, Mysia (Pergamum), Caria, Galatia, Cappadocia, Lydia, and Phrygia.<sup>281</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>282</sup> These medallions were issued by the Pergamene local mint and not the Roman imperial one.<sup>283</sup> They were miniature monuments, documenting the emperor's patronage of Asclepius and Pergamum.<sup>284</sup> The first issuing magistrate of these medallions was Marcus Caerelius Attalus, as indicated by the inscription on them. Two other magistrates' names also occur, namely Julius Anthimos and Marcus Aurelius Alexandros. There are slight differences

279 Burrell (2004) 30.

280 *IvP* 8.3.12–16. no. 12 was 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. Nos 13–14 are also statue bases of Caracalla and Nos 15 and 16 concern Julia Domna.

281 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.

282 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.

283 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.

284 Rowan (2012) 136.

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>285</sup> All of these were annual magistracies and indicate that the series of medallions was significant enough for Pergamum to be restruck on two more occasions.<sup>286</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 (see below).<sup>287</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>288</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>289</sup> Provincial coinage gives an insight into the ideologies and cultures of local cities, identifying events and matters which they thought important.<sup>290</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 they 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

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285 Burrell (2004) 31.

286 Nollé (2003) 411; Rowan (2012) 135.

287 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 2nd 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, analysing 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.

288 Johnston (1983) 60.

289 Rowan (2012) 2; Rowan (2014) 111: they were generally presented to the recipient on New Year's Day.

290 Rowan (2012) 3.



and his relations with the city.<sup>291</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 others (see below).<sup>292</sup> Rüpke has argued that the advent of the Empire also created a new religious infrastructure which provided a framework for the analysis of religious acts.<sup>293</sup> These served as a communicative system to other cities as well as the empire as a whole. Here, these medallions were created as a method by which the religious acts of the emperor could be communicated to the empire as well as to neighbouring *poleis* who were in active competition with Pergamum.

The reverse of the first Asclepieian medallion of the series, as listed in *BMC Mysia*, (Fig. 17) shows an equestrian Caracalla wearing military dress standing in front of a turreted female figure, the Tyche of Pergamum, who holds a statue of Asclepius in her hand.<sup>294</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>295</sup> The rite of an imperial advent, among others, has been signalled out by Chaniotis to show how the founding of the principate led to the creation of new religious ways of communication between emperor and subject.<sup>296</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, it was clear from the outset that Asclepius was a *polis*-deity, something which is reinforced by the god's presence at Caracalla's *adventus*. The emperor holds his hand up in greeting, which was a typical image of an advent from the time of Trajan onwards.<sup>297</sup> By greeting these local gods, the emperor was seen as emulating both Germanicus and Hadrian, who had toured the provinces.<sup>298</sup>

291 Weisser (2005) 137; Kádár (1986) 34–5.

292 Albinana (2006) 441.

293 Rüpke (2011) 34–5; See Chaniotis (2009) 27 for more about competition as a way of creating regional cults.

294 *BMC Mysia* 154.319.

295 Harl (1987) 52.

296 Chaniotis (2009) 6.

297 Harl (1987) 53–4: It was also common for an emperor to greet Tyche at this point.

298 Harl (1987) 54.



FIGURE 17  
Coin reverse depicting the Emperor  
on horseback greeting a statue of  
Asclepius.

*BMC MYSIA* 154.319. © THE  
TRUSTEES OF THE BRITISH  
MUSEUM



FIGURE 18  
Caracalla on standing on steps in  
front of Tyche who holds a statue of  
Asclepius.

*BMC MYSIA* 154.320. © THE  
TRUSTEES OF THE BRITISH  
MUSEUM

The second Pergamene medallion (Fig. 18) shows Caracalla in military dress, standing on steps in front of Tyche 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>299</sup>

<sup>299</sup> *BMC Mysia* 154.320.



FIGURE 19 Caracalla on horseback in front of a statue of Asclepius.  
*BMC MYSIA* 155.321. FROM ROWAN (2012) FIGURE 45

The third medallion (Fig. 19) depicts Caracalla who is still on horseback standing in front of a statue of Asclepius on a tall pedestal.<sup>300</sup> A soldier follows the emperor. There are, thus, strong military iconographic themes here.

The fourth medallion (Fig. 20) 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 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 3rd century AD.<sup>301</sup>

The fifth medallion (Fig. 21) in the series shows Caracalla holding a *patera* in his right hand and a globe in his left. He faces Asclepius who is holding his snake-staff. Between them stands a bull.<sup>302</sup>

The sixth medallion (Fig. 22) shows Caracalla holding a *patera* and scroll, standing in front of a temple in which a cult-statue of Asclepius can be seen.<sup>303</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>304</sup>

The seventh medallion (Fig. 23) depicts a togate Caracalla holding a *patera* standing to the left of a temple. Asclepius sits within the temple. Between

300 *BMC Mysia* 155.321.

301 Harl (1987) 57.

302 *BMC Mysia* 155.323.

303 *BMC Mysia* 155.324. It is possible that Caracalla sacrificed a hecatomb to Asclepius: Nollé (2003) 413.

304 Harl (1987) 57.



FIGURE 20  
Asclepius and Caracalla standing  
with an altar between them.  
*BMC MYSIA* 155.322. © THE  
TRUSTEES OF THE BRITISH  
MUSEUM



FIGURE 21  
Asclepius and Caracalla standing  
facing each other with a sacrificial  
animal between them.  
*BMC MYSIA* 155.323. © THE  
TRUSTEES OF THE BRITISH  
MUSEUM

the two, the attendant has a raised axe and is preparing to strike and, thus, sacrifice, the bull.<sup>305</sup> 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>306</sup> The eighth medallion (Fig. 24) shows Caracalla saluting the

305 *BMC Mysia* 156.325.

306 Burrell (2004) 32.



FIGURE 22 Caracalla worshipping in front of a temple in which Asclepius stands.  
*BMC MYZIA* 155.324. FROM ROWAN (2012) FIGURE 44



FIGURE 23  
 Caracalla standing in front of the temple of Asclepius,  
 an attendant stands between them preparing to  
 sacrifice a bull.  
*BMC MYZIA* 155.325 (MUNICH TYPE). FROM BURRELL  
 (2004) FIGURE 58

Asclepian snake which curls around a tree. Telesphorus stands between the tree and the emperor:<sup>307</sup>



FIGURE 24 Caracalla standing in front of a tree around which the Asclepian snake is coiled, with Telesphorus standing between them.

*BMC Mysia* 156.326. FROM CLASSICAL NUMISMATIC GROUP, SALE 75, LOT 813 (WWW.CNGCOINS.COM)

The ninth medallion in the series (Fig. 25) depicts three temples. Asclepius is shown seated, holding a snake in the central temple.<sup>308</sup> Other deities were placed in the two adjacent temples. 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>309</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 ΣΤΡ Μ ΚΑΙΡ]ΕΛ ΑΤΤΑΛΟΥ/ΠΕΡΑΜΗ/ΝΩΝ/ΠΡΩΤΩΝ Γ ΝΕ/  
ΩΚΩΡΩΝ<sup>310</sup>

<sup>307</sup> *BMC Mysia* 156.326.

<sup>308</sup> *BMC Mysia* 156.327.

<sup>309</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>310</sup> *BMC Mysia* 155.324: 'In the magistracy of Marcus Caerelius Attalus, Pergamum, first three times Neokoros'.



FIGURE 25

The three *neorate* temples of Pergamum.

BMC MYSIA 156.327. FROM SNG FRANCE

PLATE 113, NO. 2227

This inscription indicates that Pergamum now had three *neorate* temples and this iconography of the three temples continued on Pergamene coins until the reign of Gallienus.<sup>311</sup> By depicting himself as a protector and rebuilder of sanctuaries, Caracalla is placed in the heavenly company of the emperors who predeceased him.<sup>312</sup> The seventh medallion 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 that it is to that god whom he

311 Harl (1987) 61; 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.

312 Harl (1987) 61.

sacrificed.<sup>313</sup> Temple sharing was the norm in Pergamum so it would not be unusual for Caracalla have a joint temple. It is possible, then, that Caracalla was incorporated into Asclepius' temple at Pergamum during his lifetime.<sup>314</sup> A monumental statue-head of Caracalla was also found at Pergamum.<sup>315</sup> The accompanying inscription 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>316</sup> None of the medallions depict the honour of placing this colossal statue in the temple. The fact that the cult-statue of Asclepius is depicted seated in the ninth medallion 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. The most famous seated cult-statue of Asclepius was that of Epidaurus but the Pergamene cult statue (Fig. 26) may have been based upon the famous Epidaurian one.<sup>317</sup>

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.

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>318</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, making sacrifices, an oracular visit, which culminated 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>319</sup>

313 Burrell (2004) 31.

314 Nock (1930) 43.

315 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.

316 *IvP* 8.3.12; Rowan (2012) 132.

317 Burrell (2004) 33. See also *CNG* 81.2886, a *Diassarion* issued under Septimius Severus, showing the enthroned cult-statue 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.

318 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.

319 Rowan (2012) 134.





FIGURE 26  
Coin from Pergamum showing the seated cult  
statue of Asclepius.  
SNG FRANCE 2173. FROM SNG FRANCE PLATE 109,  
NO. 2173

### *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. 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>320</sup> The other cities of Asia Minor wished to please the emperor by appearing to honour a god he favoured and also wanted to emulate and copy the pre-eminence of the Pergamene shrine.<sup>321</sup> 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 coin types from over 500 cities.<sup>322</sup> Religion, in the form of *polis* deities and local temples and shrines, was a common way of expressing identity on these coins.<sup>323</sup> The other *poleis* in Asia Minor

320 Nollé (2003) 414–416.

321 Chaniotis (2009) 27 notes this phenomenon in general (see Chapter 1) and how this could cause or promote the existence of a regional cult.

322 Howgego (2005) 1–2.

323 Heuchert (2005) 44; Howgego (2005) 2, 4.

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>324</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.<sup>325</sup>

Caracalla spent the rest of AD 214 travelling around 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 23rd 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>326</sup> However, this seems unlikely as there was no reason for Caracalla to have returned to the city. There was a surge in the worship of Asclepius in Asia Minor during Caracalla's reign: 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>327</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 Titus Flavius Gaianus, an equestrian and priest of the *koinon*, 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 Antoninea Isopythia* was founded. A temple to Asclepius Soter, the popular Pergamene version of the god, was built. The festival included athletic competitions which

324 See above on Epidaurus and Chaniotis (2009) 28.

325 This was also argued by Nederveen Pieterse (2015) 215 who states that Rome was globalised by globalising.

326 Nollé (2003) 414.

327 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.

were probably first held in Caracalla's presence. A coin series was again struck to commemorate this.<sup>328</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>329</sup> The emperor visited the famous temple of the god at some time after his visit to Pergamum and the city added *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>330</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>331</sup> This is the first time that the temple of Asclepius was depicted on civic coinage from Aigeai.<sup>332</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>333</sup> Caracalla was now closely associated with the god, which had its basis in his worship of Asclepius at Pergamum. Further Caracallan coins depicting Asclepius and Telesphorus were issued in Aigeai between November 215 and November 216.<sup>334</sup> Severus Alexander and Valerian are also depicted worshipping Asclepius on coins from Aigeai (Fig. 27) and both emperors likely visited the city.<sup>335</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 a ruler, 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>336</sup> This is the same staff which occurs on the Caracallan silver issue discussed above and on the coin struck under Valerian.

328 Nollé (2003) 416; *BMC Galatia* 12–13, nos 22–26 and 28; *SNG von Aulock* 6164–66.

329 Haymann (2010) 145.

330 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.

331 Haymann (2010) 153 Fig. 4.

332 Haymann (2010) 154. Other cities had done so from the Hadrianic period onwards.

333 Haymann (2010) 157.

334 See Bloesch (1965) 307; Haymann (2010) 154.

335 Severus Alexander: *SNG Levante* 1771, 1772, 1774, 1775; Ziegler *Sammlungen* 1394. Valerian: *SNG Levante* 1801.

336 *CNG* 94 lot 899; *SNG Levante* 1772.



FIGURE 27  
 Severus Alexander depicted as a priest of  
 Asclepius, Aigeai.  
 SNG *LEVANTE* 1772. FROM SNG *LEVANTE*  
 PLATE 119, NO. 1772

The legend of Severus Alexander's coin reads: 'Imperator Severus Alexander the architect of the newly repaired temple of Asclepius'.<sup>337</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]'.<sup>338</sup> Burrell suggests that it is likely that the city of Aigeai made Severus Alexander chief priest of Asclepius and that it received a *neocorate*,

337 Harl (1987) 60–1; Severus Alexander: SNG von Aulock 5495 dated to AD 230/1; Valerian: SNG Levante 1801; Burrell (2004) 231.

338 Levante (SNG Levante 1801) reconstructs the legend as: 'APX[IEPEA] ME[ΓICTON] OIK[OVMEHC] K[AI] ACK[AEΠIOV]'. See also CNG 94 lot 899.

its first, in return for this honour.<sup>339</sup> It is possible that Valerian, like Severus Alexander, received a priesthood of Asclepius at Aigeai.<sup>340</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>341</sup> The second coin in the series shows the emperor sacrificing in front of the temple of Asclepius in an iconography, which resembled that of Caracalla worshiping at the temple of Asclepius in Pergamum.<sup>342</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>343</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, the Severans, and Asclepius is also shown by an inscription from Aigeai:

Αὐτοκράτορι Καίσαρι Μάρκῳ Ἄντωνιῳ Γορδιανῶ εὐσεβεῖ εὐτυχεῖ  
 Σεβαστῶ δημαρχικῆς ἐξουσίας καὶ θεοῖς Γορδιανοῖς προγόνοις  
 τοῦ κυρίου Αὐτοκράτορος Γορδιανοῦ Σεβ(αστοῦ) καὶ Θεοῖς Σεβαστοῖς  
                   νν                                          νν  
 Ἄλεξάνδρῳ καὶ Σεύηρῳ καὶ Ἄντωνεινῳ καὶ Δόμνῃ  
 καὶ τοῖς Σεβαστοῖς  
 καὶ Ἀσκληπιῶ  
 καὶ Ὑγείᾳ  
 καὶ Θεοῖς Σεβαστοῖς<sup>344</sup>

339 Burrell (2004) 231.

340 Burrell (2004) 232.

341 Bloesch (1965) 311.

342 Burrell (2004) 231–2; *SNG Levante* 1771 and 1774.

343 *SNG Levante* 1771; Ziegler Sammlungen 1394; Burrell (2004) 232.

344 Weiss (1982) 192: 'To Emperor Caesar Marcus Antonius Gordian Pius Felix Augustus. Having tribunician power and to the divine Gordian ancestors of the Emperor Gordian Augustus and to the Divi Augusti. (Dedicated) to Alexander and Severus and Antoninus and Domna. And to the Sebastoi. And to Asclepius. And Hygieia. And the Divi Augusti'.

The inscription is dated to AD 238 on the basis of Gordian III's titulature and is noteworthy as it was not erected just for the emperor for himself but to a group of six emperors.<sup>345</sup> The presence of the Severans here is remarkable but should be seen as a reflection of the strong connections the city had with these emperors, especially Severus Alexander, and the *neocorate* he granted the city. This grant would have elevated the city to be on equal standing to its rival *poleis* of Tarsos and Anazarbos who had already been granted *neocorates*.<sup>346</sup>

Soloi-Pompeopolis, also in Cilicia, struck coins depicting Caracalla standing in Asclepius' presence.<sup>347</sup> Nicaea issued coins depicting Caracalla sacrificing to Asclepius and Hadrianotherai in Mysia shows Caracalla shaking hands with Asclepius while being crowned by Tyche.<sup>348</sup> This iconography again shows Caracalla and Asclepius as equals, as also occurred on the Pergamene coins. A decision was taken by all of these cities specifically to link this god, Asclepius, and this emperor, Caracalla.<sup>349</sup>

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 where they god was frequently accompanied by Telesphorus (Fig. 28).

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>350</sup> The globe was a representation of the *omphalos*, which had been connected to the Pergamene cult since the pre-Imperial era as 2nd- and 1st-century BC coins depict Asclepius standing with his snake-staff and the *omphalos* (Fig. 29).<sup>351</sup>

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345 Weiss (1982) 193, 195.

346 Weiss (1982) 197.

347 Rowan (2012) 160.

348 *SNG* von Aulock 2992; Rowan (2012) 161.

349 Rowan (2012) 162.

350 Kampmann (1992/3) 39–40. Following Nederveen Pieterse (2015) 233, this clearly shows how peripheries influenced the centre of empire and that this was not a mono-directional cultural exchange.

351 *SNG* von Aulock 1372; Kampmann (1992/3) 42.



FIGURE 28

*Denarius* from the Roman mint showing Asclepius with the globe on the reverse, AD 215.

*RIC IV.1 CARACALLA* 103. FROM ROBERTSON (1977) PLATE 29, NO. 103

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 depicted on coins from the 2nd half of the 5th century BC onwards.<sup>352</sup> Lacroix suggests that this iconography may have been chosen by the Attalid kings in the 2nd century BC as part of their campaign to be on friendly terms with Delphi and Pythian Apollo.<sup>353</sup> Asclepius, as the god's son, would have been a way to create and stress these connections. The symbol was clearly connected with Asclepius in Pergamum, though, as a *homonioia* coin with Ephesus from Commodus' time, representing the civic deities of both *poleis*, depicts the *omphalos* at Asclepius' feet.<sup>354</sup> 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

352 Lacroix (1951) 6–7.

353 Lacroix (1951) 12.

354 *BMC Mysia* 164.354.



FIGURE 29

Bronze coin from Pergamum showing the Asclepieian snake coiled around the *omphalos* on reverse.

SNF FRANCE 1808. FROM SNF FRANCE PLATE 92, NO. 1808

which was specific to Pergamum, namely the *omphalos* and also the figure of Telesphorus.<sup>355</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 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.<sup>356</sup> An Antoninianus was struck in the Cologne mint between AD 260 and 269 and depicts the radiate emperor Postumus.<sup>357</sup> 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).

355 Kampmann (1992/3) 46.

356 For example, see *RIC V.II Carausius* 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. This also illustrates what has been argued by Rüpke (2011) 22–3 that the temporal and spatial restrictive nature of religious observances is overcome by memorialising it. Via representation, these actions become permanent.

357 *RIC V.II Postumus* 327.



TABLE 6 Occurrences of Asclepius on Roman imperial coinage post-Caracalla

Emperor	Quantity	Mint
Postumus	6	Lugdunum Cologne Cologne Cologne Cologne Mediolanum
Tetricus I	1	Irregular
Carausius	2	Londinium Unattributed

Telesphorus' origins are unclear but he was a particular Pergamene deity and, in one version of events, was the founder of the city.<sup>358</sup> His cult is not attested much before the time of Trajan, although his worship did spread to Epidaurus and Athens in the 2nd and 3rd centuries AD.<sup>359</sup> He is also found as far away from Pergamum as Batkun in Thrace, where there was a major sanctuary of Asclepius.<sup>360</sup> The earliest representation of Telesphorus is on a Hadrianic coin from Pergamum.<sup>361</sup> His main area of influence was in the eastern part of the empire, his place of origin.<sup>362</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>363</sup> His presence is also a reoccurring motif on imperial coins (Figs 30–1):

358 Nollé (2003) 412; Harl (1987) 57. He is represented on a frieze on the inside of the Great Altar of Pergamum.

359 Metcalf (2008) 133; Albinana (2006) 445.

360 Noll (1953) 186.

361 *BMC Mysia* 143.270.

362 Noll (1953) 186.

363 Metcalf (2008) 134.



FIGURE 30  
Caracallan Sestertius showing  
Asclepius with Telesphorus and  
*omphalos*.  
RIC IV.1 CARACALLA 238. FROM  
ROWAN (2012) FIGURE 43



FIGURE 31  
Hadrianic Cistophori from Pergamum depicting  
Telesphorus.  
RPC NO. 1325. FROM RPC PLATE 56 NO. 1325

### *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. However, only a few coin types are known and all of these were found in the Roman provinces of Phrygia and Moesia Inferior.<sup>364</sup> The use of the god's iconography on his coinage is surprising as Macrinus was particularly harsh in his measures

<sup>364</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.

against Pergamum and the cult of Asclepius after 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>365</sup> Due to Caracalla's patronage of Asclepius and Pergamum, which was 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>366</sup> He presented himself as Caracalla's successor while subtly undermining his image.<sup>367</sup> One of the honours which was taken away by Macrinus was the third *neocorate* but after his death and the erasure of his memory, this honour reappears on Pergamene coins, although only a few coins recall the specific temples they were associated with.<sup>368</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>369</sup> The positive aspects of such imperial benefactions are, thus, quite clear, as are the possible negative ramifications.

### Conclusion

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.

365 Cass. Dio 79.20.4.

366 Levick (2007) 105; Cass. Dio 79.20.5, 79.23.2; Scott (2012) 16.

367 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 argues that both accounts were coloured by the author's personal and historical views: Scott (2012) 28.

368 Burrell (2004) 35.

369 Burrell (2004) 35.

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.<sup>370</sup>

This chapter has, thus, shown the practical application of a number of theories laid out in Chapter 1. Following Davies, who argues that cults could be transferred as a result of a top-down influence, the great impact which emperors had upon the cult has been shown and also how rulers could influence for the popularity of cults, transfer of cultic elements, and the introduction or revival of cults of Asclepius.<sup>371</sup> The latter has also been argued by Chaniotis as being one of the ways in which regional cults could be created, as local people founded or revived their own specific cults in response to coming into contact with a global cult.<sup>372</sup> Regional cults could also increase in prominence, which was also argued by Chaniotis, as a response to civic competition, something which has been shown here to be particularly prevalent in Asia Minor.<sup>373</sup> Lastly, the multi-directional spread of cultic elements between the provinces, as well as to Rome and back, following Nederveen Pieterse, has been shown here, focussing especially upon the Asclepius Amelung iconography.<sup>374</sup>

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, Hygieia, 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 epigraphic data is overwhelming and shows that Xenophon gave as much importance to

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370 As argued by Chaniotis (2009) 6 who states that new forms of communication between ruler and subject were created as the result of the creation of the Empire.

371 Davies (2005) 62 no. 1. See also Table 1, no. 1.

372 Chaniotis (2009) 28.

373 Chaniotis (2009) 27.

374 Nederveen Pieterse (2015) 225.

his Coan connections as to his Roman imperial ones.<sup>375</sup> 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, when Xenophon had returned to Cos he no longer had access to that power but he was represented as still having a good relationship with Nero by being called *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, it could still be the case that he set out with the purpose of supplicating 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 Epidaurus, another sanctuary which was visited by Hadrian. Here, he reorganised the priesthoods and festivals of Asclepius. 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 Epidaurus 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.<sup>376</sup>

Caracalla is depicted on a series of medallions extensively worshipping the Pergamene god. Herodian and Dio inform their readers that he supplicated the

375 Following Whitmarsh (2010) 3 who argues that globalism caused an intensified form of regionalism.

376 Following Rüpke (2011) 23 who argues that a grid of regional networks was created during the Imperial period which connected dedications and inscriptions, but it can be seen from this case-study that the same also occurred with iconography.

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 worship 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.<sup>377</sup> 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 granted 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, 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 coins struck by the Roman mint after his healing at Pergamum, which displayed Asclepius with the globe at his foot, the iconography of the Pergamene Zeus-Asclepius. While not all post-Caracallan depictions of Asclepius 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. This shows the multi-directional exchange of images and religious elements which occurred from Rome to the provinces, the provinces to Rome, and also between the provinces themselves, as argued by Nederveen Pieterse (see Chapter 1).<sup>378</sup> There was, thus, a lasting imperial impact upon the cult of Asclepius. Each individual emperor had an impact upon the god and his cults

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377 See Chaniotis (2009) 27.

378 Nederveen Pieterse (2015) 225.

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 seemed 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 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.

# Asclepius and the Army

## Introduction

Already in the archaic Greek world there was a strong relationship between war and religion, as people worshipped gods of battle, dedicated war booty in sanctuaries, and named warships after gods. Soldiers asked deities for protection and oracles, and offered sacrifices in return.<sup>1</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>2</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>3</sup> The dangers of a soldier's profession meant that he went in search of extra protection, and from as many gods as possible, in order to cover all his bases.<sup>4</sup> Dedications were set up both in thanks for healing already received or prophylactically, to prevent any future harm.<sup>5</sup> The importance of soldiers for the dissemination of religious cults was already noted in Chapter 1 and is given as one of the possible reasons for cultic transfer by Davies (see Table 1) and while the military worshipped the same gods as civilians did, they paid extra attention to those who could protect them.<sup>6</sup> A number of *sacella* dedicated to healing gods have been found in alleged *valetudinaria*, or hospitals, across the empire. A *sacellum* to Asclepius and Hygieia at Novae in Moesia Inferior is the most important of these and will be discussed below.

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>7</sup>

1 Van Wees (2004) 118ff.

2 Chaniotis (2005) 146.

3 Wesch-Klein (2009) 99.

4 Le Bohec (1989b) 237; Wesch-Klein (2009) 101.

5 Wesch-Klein (2009) 107.

6 Davies (2005) 62 no. 7.

7 De Blois (2007) xvii.



It will focus on the cult of Asclepius in the Balkan and Danubian provinces and Thrace 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 because of the number of legions and auxiliaries stationed there.<sup>8</sup> By the end of the 3rd century AD almost half of the Roman legions and nearly a third of auxiliary units were stationed in this region.<sup>9</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 incorporation into the Roman Empire.<sup>10</sup> As such, this region is an excellent case-study to explore the impact of the Roman army on the cult of Asclepius.

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>11</sup> Augustus also placed most of the legions in the provinces, on the frontiers, keeping only about 5% of legions near Rome.<sup>12</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 entrusted with the security of the city, making them a kind of police force.<sup>13</sup> From a political perspective the praetorians were perfectly placed to impact directly upon events in Rome but, as Le Bohec points out, the military nature and the large numbers of the provincial units gave these soldiers a leading position.<sup>14</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>15</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 documents left after Augustus' death in which he detailed the numbers of soldiers and where they were stationed at the end of his reign.<sup>16</sup>

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8 De Blois (2007) xviii.

9 Wilkes (2000) 577.

10 Rüpke (2014) 276.

11 Keppie (1984) 132.

12 Le Bohec (1989b) 19.

13 Le Bohec (1989b) 21–2.

14 Le Bohec (1989b) 24.

15 Speidel (2012) 603.

16 Sue. *Vit. Aug.* 101.4; Tac. *Ann.* 1.11.

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>17</sup> This is best shown by the calendar from Dura-Europos, a frontier town on the Euphrates. Religion could have bridged the gap between civilians and soldiers, if both groups participated in the same cults. However, if they worshipped separate cults, this divide could actually be increased.<sup>18</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 Balkan and Danubian 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, namely the relationship between army medicine and Asclepius, 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 military 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

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17 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. Gradel (2002) 4 argues that emperor worship should not be treated separately from other forms of ancient religion as it was not regarded as distinct in antiquity. 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. Provincials were able to place the emperor in their world, between gods and humans, according to their own wants and needs, resulting in highly individual cults which had traditional elements: Fujii (2013) 157.

18 Pollard (2003) 142, 149: Pollard notes that there is little evidence for civilians and soldiers sharing religious habits in Syria and Mesopotamia.

nature of its mobility and it will be shown here how this also altered how soldiers worshipped Asclepius.

### **Asclepius and the Army in the Balkan and Danube Provinces; Pannonia, Moesia, Dacia, and Thrace**

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 supplicated in different ways and to varying extents by the assorted 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, for example, in the holding of certain types of equipment such as swords and sword belts.<sup>19</sup>

This chapter aims to examine the impact of the Roman army on the cult of Asclepius in the Balkan and Danubian provinces and Thrace 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 carried here by the Romans. Dissemination of other cults to various provinces by the army is known, for example the *Dii Campestres* (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 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.

### **Other Military Cults**

In order to understand better the relationship between soldiers and gods, three 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 below). The origins of this cult are unknown but probably started as a private cult which then became a state one at some point. Many places within a camp

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19 Haynes (1999) 7, 9–10. See also De Blois (2014) and Chapter 1.

had a *genius* such as the armoury or granary.<sup>20</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>21</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 predominantly epigraphic.<sup>22</sup> These cults and rituals could distinguish the various ethnic backgrounds and identities of army units.<sup>23</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.<sup>24</sup>

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 cavalrymen who were enlisted in the Roman army. Most votives were found in Lower Germany, implying that this was their place of origin.<sup>25</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>26</sup> Their worship became strongly linked with the *equites singulares* in Rome and these goddesses were commonly listed as one of their patron deities.<sup>27</sup> Here, they were also associated with *Epona* who was the patron goddess of horses and cavalrymen. Outside of Rome, the dedications were completely different in nature than in Rome, as the *equites* worshipped these goddesses as a unit and they were also often mentioned on discharge papers, but out in the provinces, the dedications were strictly personal in nature.<sup>28</sup> Their worship was disseminated as far away as Africa where they were called the *Dii Campestres* and altars to these gods have been found at *Lambaesis* and *Gemellae*.<sup>29</sup> This is a specifically African

20 Speidel and Dimitrova-Milčeva (1978) 1542–3, 1553.

21 This follows what has been argued by Woolf (2009) 251 (see Chapter 1); Stoll (2011) 464; Fishwick (1988) 351.

22 Haynes (1997) 114.

23 Coulson (2004) 136.

24 See Rüpke (2014) 276 and Chapter 1, section 'Factors of Imperial Change'.

25 Irby-Massie (1996) 293.

26 Irby-Massie (1996) 294.

27 *CIL* 6.31139–42.

28 Irby-Massie (1996) 300.

29 *Lambaesis*: *CIL* 8.2635, 10760. *Gemellae*: see Mallon (1955) 155–162; *AE* 1976 735.

version of their name and these goddesses are worshipped under variations of their names in other provinces.<sup>30</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 army, especially since, as Gordon points out, Cumont's theory of oriental religions depended on this.<sup>31</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>32</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 Romanorum* which came from Nida.<sup>33</sup> Members of this unit had been recruited from among Roman citizens, in contrast to what is found with most auxiliary units. Legions worshipped the god extensively in Britannia, Germania, Rome, 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>34</sup> In Numidia the provincial governors were entered into the cult.<sup>35</sup> Auxiliaries almost never worshipped Mithras, with the exception of those stationed in Britannia.<sup>36</sup> On the other hand they did supplicate gods such as Jupiter Optimus Maximus extensively.<sup>37</sup> Parallels with the cult of Asclepius can be drawn as it will be

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30 Speidel (1991) 117.

31 Cumont (1956b) 38; Clauss (2000) 34; Gordon (2009) 421.

32 Clauss (2000) 33.

33 Clauss (2000) 21. This 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, namely *CIL* 3.4416, 4418, 6128 and 13.7362, only one actually shows this, namely *CIL* 3.4416.

34 Clauss (1992) 262–279; Gordon (2009) 395.

35 Clauss (2000) 35.

36 Gordon (2009) 419.

37 Saddington (2009) 90; See, for example, *RIB* 2062.

shown in this chapter that there was also a high degree of regional differentiation in his cults.

### 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 comprehending the nature of the cult of Asclepius here as well as the differences between provinces. The province of Moesia was located between the Balkan Mountains and the Danube river. Crassus had already brought much of Moesia under Roman control and a *propraetorian* legate was put at the head of the army during Augustus' reign.<sup>38</sup> The actual province was only established under Tiberius and Claudius added further lands called the *ripa Thraciae* to the province.<sup>39</sup> With its long Danubian border a large military presence was needed in the province and one legion was stationed on the Danube and two inland during Tiberius' reign. However, some changes were made during the Claudian period when the *IV Scythica* was permanently replaced by the *VII Claudia*.<sup>40</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>41</sup>

Cults of the emperor were found all across Moesia and the next most popular cult was that of the Capitoline triad with 18% of the known votives erected by soldiers. Of the military dedications, only 2% were set up to Mars, this in contrast to Germania where he was very popular, and 5% of the dedications were to Hercules.<sup>42</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 Hygieia with 7%, 4% were to Silvanus, and 2% to Liber Pater.<sup>43</sup> Dedications to the Thracian Rider, Asclepius, and Hygieia were mainly found away from camps and cities, despite numerous military

38 Matei-Popescu (2013) 207.

39 App. *Ill.* 30.

40 Haynes (2011) 8; Mócsy (1974) 48.

41 Mladenović (2012) 5.

42 Alexandrov (2009) 140.

43 Alexandrov (2009) 142.

worshippers. Important cult sites of Asclepius were at Lilyache, Gaganitsa, Glava Panega, Lyublen, and Draganovets.<sup>44</sup> A sanctuary was also probably located near Dorf Tučeniza, one to Asclepius Heros at Dorf Kalново, and possibly another near Nicopolis ad Istrum which was to the *theoi soteres*.<sup>45</sup> In his catalogue, Riethmüller lists fourteen sites for which there is evidence for cult, two of which are shrines of Asclepius located in sanctuaries of the Thracian Rider.<sup>46</sup> All of the cult evidence here is dated to the Roman period.

Dacia only became a Roman province in AD 106 and was, thus, one of the last regions to be added to the empire. It was only a part of the empire for a relatively short period of time as the region was lost at the end of the 3rd century AD as the result of imperial infighting and an inability to hold the *limes*.<sup>47</sup> The area had been conquered by Trajan for strategic and political purposes and at the end of his campaigning period there were two legions stationed here, the *XIII Gemina* at Apulum and the *IV Flavia Felix* at Berzobis, though the latter was moved to Moesia by Hadrian.<sup>48</sup> The precise borders of this early province are unknown but they were soon redefined by Hadrian in AD 117–8 following a series of attacks by the Sarmatians.<sup>49</sup> Around AD 120, the province was split into three parts, namely Superior, Inferior, and Porolissensis. The sole legion, the *XIII Gemina*, was now stationed in Superior and the provinces of Inferior and Porolissensis only had auxiliary units to defend them. This proved to be insufficient during the Marcomannic Wars and the *v Macedonica* was permanently transferred from Troesmis in Moesia to Potaissa in Dacia.<sup>50</sup> These wars, which took place about fifty years after the division of the province into three, forced another provincial reorganisation into the provinces of Dacia Malvensis, Dacia Apulensis, and Dacia Porolissensis.<sup>51</sup> However, the vast majority of units stationed in Dacia were auxiliaries with military diplomas mentioning fifty-eight different units.<sup>52</sup> The province continued to thrive well

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44 Alexandrov (2009) 143.

45 *IGBulg* 2.684; Velkov and Gerassimova-Tomova (1989) 1356.

46 Riethmüller (2005) 2.328ff.

47 Oltean (2007) 1.

48 Oltean (2007) 56.

49 Cass. Dio 68.14; Hanson and Haynes (2004) 19. Hadrian was forced to give up some lands to the Roxolani under the terms of a peace treaty with them. The loss of this territory resulted in the abandonment of the legionary fort at Berzobis.

50 Hanson and Haynes (2004) 19.

51 Hanson and Haynes (2004) 19.

52 Oltean (2007) 56: she states that most of these were recruited in Dacia and Moesia.

into the 3rd century AD, with the Severan period being especially prosperous, though matters changed mid-century with raids from the Carpi and Goths.<sup>53</sup>

The Roman conquest of Dacia had a significant impact on life in this region as it involved massive urbanisation as well as migration of people to the province.<sup>54</sup> Research on the population of Dacia relies heavily on epigraphic sources and Dacia was exceptional in the density of the number of inscriptions erected here. Varga estimates this at fifty to fifty-five inscriptions set up per 1,000 sq. km.<sup>55</sup> The main towns were populated by migrants with very few people who originally came from Dacia among them. As well as a large civilian population, Dacia also enjoyed a large military population and there were veterans and soldiers who migrated to this region.

Little is known about the religious habits of the Dacians before the conquest as there is scant evidence for this but their main gods appear to have been an underworld deity called Zalmoxis, Bendis, the Ouranian Gebeleisis, and a god similar to Mars.<sup>56</sup> Pre-Roman temples have been found near or inside hillforts though the majority of these were already damaged in the pre-modern era.<sup>57</sup> Various cults, namely those of the emperor, Liber Pater, Silvanus, Mithras, Apollo, Diana, and Nemesis, were located in Sarmizegetusa Ulpica and Liber Pater was generally one of the most popular gods here.<sup>58</sup> An inscription to Aesculapius Pergamenus reveals that there was also a cult of Asclepius here.<sup>59</sup> At Apulum only the temples of Liber Pater and Mithras have been excavated but it is likely that there also would have been those to the Capitoline Triad, Asclepius and Hygieia, Nemesis, Dolichenus and many more.<sup>60</sup> Riethmüller lists seventeen cult sites, all of which are dated to the Roman period. About seventy inscriptions to Asclepius and Hygieia 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>61</sup>

Pannonia bordered on the provinces of Italia, Dalmatia, and Moesia and large sections of its Danubian borders also doubled as frontiers of the Roman

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53 SHA *Aurel.* 39.

54 Oltean (2007) 1; Dio 67.14.1.

55 Varga (2014) 55; this puts it on the same level as Numidia, Gallia Cisalpina, Dalmatia, and some regions in Italy.

56 Gudea and Lobüscher (2006) 11.

57 Oltean (2007) 110.

58 Hanson and Haynes (2004) 23.

59 *CIL* 3.1417a.

60 Oltean (2007) 187.

61 Bodor (1989) 1120.



empire.<sup>62</sup> As such, during the Julio-Claudian period there was one legion stationed in Pannonia on the Danube and two within the province, namely the *VIII Augusta*, *VIII Hispania*, and the *XV Apollinaris*.<sup>63</sup> However, the events of AD 69 prompted a revision of the placement of legions in the area and Vespasian transferred a number of auxiliary forces from Pannonia to the Rhine region. The province was divided into Pannonia Superior and Inferior under Trajan.<sup>64</sup> The province had originally been under the control of a *legatus exercitus* but after this division were put under the control of a governor.<sup>65</sup>

Important cities and fort-sites in Pannonia were at Aquileia, Nauportus, Emona, Vindobona, and Carnuntum. Aquileia was founded as a Latin colony in 181 BC and this city had strong links with Emona as members of many Aquileian families moved to Emona shortly after its foundation.<sup>66</sup> Emona was located on the Nauportus river and, as the city was situated in a key defensive area, it was placed under Italian control.<sup>67</sup> During the earlier period of conquest Emona and Nauportus often served as temporary military bases and after the conquest of the region a veteran colony was founded in here possibly under Tiberius.<sup>68</sup> Under Claudius another colony was founded at Savaria for veterans of the *legio XV Apollinaris* which was stationed at Carnuntum.<sup>69</sup> Vespasian founded colonies at Sirmium and Siscia for veterans from the Ravenna fleet.<sup>70</sup> Trajan changed the military fortress at Poetovio of the *legio XIII Gemina* into a veteran colony and Hadrian founded the last such veteran colony at Mursa. This colony was intended for veterans from the *legio II Adiutrix*.<sup>71</sup> Apart from these military sites there were also a number of *municipia* located in Southern Pannonia.<sup>72</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

62 Šašel Kos (2010) 209.

63 Mócsy (1974) 44.

64 Mócsy (1974) 80–1.

65 Šašel Kos (2010) 221.

66 Šašel Kos (2010) 209; Šašel Kos (2008) 688.

67 Šašel Kos (2010) 210–11.

68 Kovács (2013) 132. Though Šašel Kos has recently argued on the basis of a newly found boundary stone that Emona was actually founded under Augustus and not Tiberius: Šašel Kos (2010) 218.

69 Kovács (2013) 132.

70 *CIL* 16.14; *RMD* 205; Kovács (2013) 132.

71 Poetovio: *CIL* 3.4057; Mursa: *CIL* 3.3280; Kovács (2013) 132; Šašel Kos (2010) 222.

72 Kovács (2013) 132.

deities were supplicated widely across the province and Pan was the main god of the native Illyrian population.<sup>73</sup> The region underwent a drastic urbanisation under the Flavians and, at that time, most cultic monuments were dedicated by Roman officials, especially *beneficarii consularis*.<sup>74</sup> The majority of these were erected to Jupiter Optimus Maximus but other gods such as the Capitoline Triad, Minerva, Venus, and Fortuna were also popular.<sup>75</sup> However, after Jupiter Optimus Maximus, Silvanus was the most popular god in the area.<sup>76</sup> Statues and dedications to, among others, Amor, Neptune, Mars, Apollo, Silenus, the Dioscuri, and Priapus have also been found.<sup>77</sup> Unsurprising for a province with a strong military presence, the cult of the *genii* was popular here and worship of the nymphs was also widespread which was especially linked to thermal spas in the region.<sup>78</sup> With regard to the cult of Asclepius, Riethmüller lists six places in Pannonia Superior and five in Inferior where there is evidence for worship of the god.<sup>79</sup>

Much of the lands incorporated into later province of Thrace had first belonged to the province of Macedonia which was formed in 148 BC and covered the lands between the Rhodope Mountains and the Aegean Sea. The area had been conquered following clashes between the Romans and the Macedonian Antigonids.<sup>80</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. This despite the province being an important military node, as three important roads ran through the province which connected Europe to Asia Minor and the Near East.<sup>81</sup> Josephus states that the military presence here under Nero consisted of about 2,000 men who were either divided into two *cohortes militariae* or four *cohortes quingenariae*.<sup>82</sup> Two auxiliary camps within the province are known, namely

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73 Thomas (1980) 177–8.

74 Rendic-Miocevic and Segvic (1998) 7.

75 Rendic-Miocevic and Segvic (1998) 7–8. Juno by herself does not seem to have been very popular and few altars dedicated to her have been found.

76 Rendic-Miocevic and Segvic (1998) 9.

77 Rendic-Miocevic and Segvic (1998) 8.

78 Rendic-Miocevic and Segvic (1998) 8.

79 Riethmüller (2005) 453–456.

80 Lozanov (2015) 75.

81 Ivanov and von Bülow (2008) 89.

82 Josephus *BJ* 2.368.

Cabyle in the east and Germaneia in the west.<sup>83</sup> Many auxiliary cohorts are attested epigraphically, for example the *cohors II Bracaraugstanorum* and *cohors IIII Gallorum* were mentioned in military diplomas.<sup>84</sup> The *cohors I Claudia Sugambrorum* was stationed in Montana, though this city was moved under the jurisdiction of Moesia Inferior, and the *cohors I Aelia Athoitarum et Bercyntorum* was stationed at Melta under Hadrian.<sup>85</sup> The *cohors II Lucensium* was moved to Germaneia under Commodus and the *cohors II (?) Concordia Severina* was active in the frontier area between the provinces of Thrace and Macedonia. The *cohors I Athoitarum* was stationed at Cabyle under Hadrian but under Antonius this changed to the *cohors I Cisipadensium*. A further cohort, the *cohors II Mattiacorum* is also attested on diplomas under Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus.<sup>86</sup>

The province was very important for providing troops for the army and there were in total thirty-one auxiliary units which had the name *Thracum* which must have come from Thrace.<sup>87</sup> Thracians are found serving in the auxiliary forces in all the other Roman provinces. However, they are still found the most frequently on the Danubian *limes* and in Moesia Inferior. Before AD 212, the majority of these men were peregrines and served in auxiliary units as well as in the praetorian fleets stationed at Misenum and Ravenna.<sup>88</sup> After the Caracallan citizenship law, this changed drastically and Thracians thereafter served especially in the Roman praetorian guard; more praetorians were recruited from Thrace at this time than from any other province.<sup>89</sup> These men commonly returned to their place of origin after they had finished their period of service.<sup>90</sup>

At the time of the formation of the province, the majority of people lived either in villages or in the fortified settlements of the Thracian rulers. However, some larger cities, such as Philippopolis, Cabyle, and Uscudama did exist.<sup>91</sup> Other cities grew after the Roman conquest and settlements on the

83 Ivanov and von Bülow (2008) 28.

84 *RMD* 4.227 for both these cohorts.

85 See *RMD* 5.417, 435, 437, 439–441 for the *cohors I Aelia Athoitarum*; Ivanov and von Bülow (2008) 28.

86 See *RMD* 4.260 for the *cohors II Lucensium* while the *cohors II Mattiacorum* is found on the following diplomas: *RMD* 5.417, 435, 437, 439–441; Ivanov and von Bülow (2008) 28.

87 Haynes (2011) 8.

88 Dana (2015) 255.

89 See Passerini (1939) 174–180 for an overview of the origins of praetorians in the 3rd century and especially p. 177–8 for the Thracians.

90 Dana (2015) 255.

91 Nankov (2015) 401.

banks of the Danube and inland were founded such as Ratiaria, Oescus, Novae, Durostorum, Nicopolis ad Istrum, Marcianopolis, Nicopolis ad Nestrum, and Augusta Traiana. Other settlements developed over time such as Serdica and Pautalia.<sup>92</sup> Many of these cities were made into either *municipia* or *colonia* by Trajan.<sup>93</sup> Further administrative reforms happened at this time, likely in order to be able to cope with an increased number of civic bodies, which probably resulted from the large wave of immigrants who came from the East.<sup>94</sup>

Little is known about the originally Thracian deities though they seem to have been anthropomorphic in nature. Herodotus states that only Ares, Dionysus, and Artemis were worshipped but other gods are known from different sources such as Bendis, Kandaon, and Cotys.<sup>95</sup> Over time, numerous Greek deities were introduced here such as Apollo and Phosphorus in Cabyle, the Theos Megaloi and Dionysus in Seuthopolis, and Artemis in Laskarevo, Levunovo, Polentisa, Slivnitsa, Haskovski Bani, and Serdica.<sup>96</sup> Dionysus was one of the most popular gods in Thrace and enjoyed widespread worship already in the pre-Roman period.<sup>97</sup> Worship of Hercules was extensive but as he was not frequently supplicated here prior to the conquest, it is likely that his cult was introduced by the Romans.<sup>98</sup> Worship of Asclepius and Hygieia was very common with over forty-four cult sites found to this god in the whole of Thrace.<sup>99</sup> Sanctuaries have been found at Dorf Trud, Krän in the territory of Stara Zagora, near Dorf Yavorovo, and Bata, and numismatic evidence indicates that there was also a sanctuary in Serdica.<sup>100</sup>

The Roman conquest of the area influenced religious life in Thrace as now official Roman cults were imported to the region. The Capitoline triad was one of those exported to Thrace though these gods were commonly worshipped under the Greek version of their names and inscriptions to these deities were also commonly erected in Greek.<sup>101</sup> Dea Roma and the cult of the emperor were exported to the provinces and worship of the Capitoline Triad and the

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92 Ivanov (1983) 130.

93 Ivanov (1983) 131.

94 Lozanov (2015) 82.

95 Herodotus 5.7; Kandaon: *Lycoph. Alex.* 2.937–38; Cotys: Aeschylus frag. 57 Radt.

96 *IGBulg* 3.3, 1731; Rabadjiev (2015) 445. Phosphorus is mentioned on another inscription from Helis: *SEG* 56.825.

97 Ivanov and von Bülow (2008) 61.

98 Velkov and Gerassimova-Tomova (1989) 1350. This offers a parallel for Asclepius and signals that cultic transfer via the military was possible.

99 Riethmüller (2005) 2.332–3.

100 Ivanov and von Bülow (2008) 61.

101 Ivanov and von Bülow (2008) 59.

emperor was closely connected here.<sup>102</sup> The army seems to have been especially active in spreading cults, particularly the highly military ones such as that of the Standards, Victoria, Bonus Eventus, Mars, and Hercules.<sup>103</sup> The mid-2nd century migration of people from Asia Minor to Thrace also affected the religious life of this province as after this Egyptian and oriental deities were now worshipped in Thrace with Anubis, Isis, and Sarapis being the most popular Egyptian deities and Jupiter Dolichenus, Dea Syria, and Cybele coming from Syria. Worship of Mithras also spread through the province.<sup>104</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 military mobility. Units were mobilised not for a specific campaign, as they had been during the Republic, 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 work aims to show that the permanent 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 that this cult was disseminated via army officer networks as these men were more mobile than lower ranking soldiers (see Chapter 1).<sup>105</sup> The inscriptions presented in this chapter will be shown to have been predominantly 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. It will look at 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 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.

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102 Rabadjiev (2015) 447; Ivanov and von Bülow (2008) 59.

103 Rabadjiev (2015) 447.

104 Ivanov and von Bülow (2008) 61.

105 Collar (2011) 226–7. See also Chapter 1.

### 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 military was created under Augustus.<sup>106</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>107</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>108</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>109</sup> This is also shown in the epigraphic evidence as the first named army medic in an inscription was Sextius Titus Alexander who belonged to the *v Praetoria*, which is dated to AD 82.<sup>110</sup> The first distinct army medical units appeared from the time of Caesar onwards.<sup>111</sup> The army was expensive in its upkeep so it made sense for the emperor to want to create a corps dedicated to its wellbeing, part of whose job was also preventative medicine such as averting and controlling infectious diseases and finding salubrious places to found army camps.<sup>112</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>113</sup> Most of these 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>114</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

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106 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.

107 For Republican military healthcare see Livy 2.47.12, Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 5.36.3, Tacitus *Ann.* 4.63; Nutton (2005) 524.

108 Polyb. 3.66.9; Plut. *Vit. Crass.* 25.5.

109 Cic. *Tusc.* 2.16.38.

110 *CIL* 6.20.

111 Aparaschivei (2012) 103.

112 Tac. *Ann.* 4.63; Jackson (1988) 129.

113 Israelowitz (2015) 96.

114 Celsus, *Med.* 7.5.3; Jackson (1988) 128.

that this was better for the legionaries than it was for auxiliaries.<sup>115</sup> Wilmanns has done an in-depth study of the spread of doctors across the troops, leading her to conclude that there were more physicians among the legions while there might only be one doctor or some minor health care workers for a whole auxiliary unit.<sup>116</sup> She argues that if there was one physician per 500 troops that would mean that in the middle of the 2nd 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>117</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 units.<sup>118</sup> It is likely 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>119</sup> Dedications concerning *medici* were generally either set up by someone else for the *medicus*, or by the physician for another person; for example, an inscription from Vinovia (Binchester) (Fig. 32) shows a *medicus* dedicating for the wellbeing of the wing to which he belonged. This illustrates a collective army mentality which apparently also included the medical staff. 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] ocomas me/[dicus v(otum) s(olvit)]  
l(ibens) m(erito)<sup>120</sup>

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>121</sup>

115 This is due to a lack of sources: Penso (1984) 119; Baker (2004) 13.

116 Wilmanns (1995).

117 Wilmanns (1995) 173.

118 Jackson (1988) 134. *Medicus Chirurgus*: Gaius Terentius Symphorus *AE* 1945 62; *Medicus Clinicus*: Tiberius Claudius Iulianus *ILS* 2093.

119 Allason-Jones (1999) 134: an *ordinatus* would have had a rank equal to that of a centurion.

120 *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'.

121 *AE* 2003 1541: 'To Asclepius and Hygieia, Aelius Macedo, medicus, erected this for his own health'.



FIGURE 32 RIB 1028.

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None of the lower medical ranks, such as *capsarii*, are attested epigraphically, which would fit in with general military epigraphic trends where mainly men of officer rank, namely centurion and above, made dedications.<sup>122</sup> This chapter aims to explore how the increased mobility of army officers, made possible due

<sup>122</sup> Allason-Jones (1999) 134.



to the infrastructure of the Roman empire, aided the transmission of cults and elements of cults of Asclepius, following ideas laid out by Collar.

Further inscriptions were set up by physicians across the Balkan and Danube provinces, for example at Emona in Pannonia. Asclepius and Hygieia 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:

Sacr(um) / Aesculapio / L(ucius) Peticius Techni(cus) / med(icus)<sup>123</sup>

The altar was found *in situ*, in an area which corresponded to the north-east part of the ancient city, immediately east of the forum.<sup>124</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 (see above).<sup>125</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, Hygieia, 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>126</sup> In this way, religious life at Emona might actually echo that of Aquileia as it had the second largest cult centre of Asclepius in Italy apart from Rome.<sup>127</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 Hygieia were found in the Roman baths, the second of which was dedicated by a junior

123 *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.

124 Tiussi (1999) 89.

125 *CIL* 9:3895; Tiussi (1999) 90, 156–7 no. II.A.5.

126 Šašel Kos (2008) 690: she notes especially the dominance of Aecorna here as being out of the ordinary.

127 Šašel Kos (2008) 694.

*decurio* called Marcus Foviacious Verus.<sup>128</sup> It is possible that the baths were connected to the *valetudinarium* and that soldiers used the facilities as a result. Aquincum 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:

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>129</sup>

Here Asclepius is dedicated to by a *medicus* again. These inscriptions indicate a strong cooperative bond between Asclepius and physicians and, similarly, the Athenian Asclepieion Inventories list dedications made by physicians.<sup>130</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. These inscriptions should be taken as evidence that doctors and the gods worked side by side which made worship of the gods within military camps and hospitals possible. 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:

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>131</sup>

128 Vindobona: *AE* 1957 114: '[I(ovi)] O(ptimo) M(aximo) / Apollini / et Sirona[e] / [Ae]sculapi[o] / P(ublus) 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) Foviacious / 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)'.  
129 *AE* 1937 180. 'To Asclepius, Tiberius Martius Castrensis, medicus of the legion II Adiutrix under Quintus Fuficius Cornutus, consul designate, set this up'. The inscription was set up between AD 146–7.

130 See, for example, *IG* II<sup>2</sup> 1534A.84a, 1534B+1535.155c, 161c. See also Aleshire (1989) 44.

131 *AE* 1937 181: 'Sacred to Asclepius Augustus and Hygieia 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 27th September'.

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>132</sup> Secondly, the inscription was set up in Aquincum but the dedicator held his position elsewhere, namely 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 to which legion he belonged so it is not possible to 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 would move between legions.<sup>133</sup> 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. It may be possible that Venusius 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 Hygieia 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>134</sup> Kádár argues that it is likely that Asclepius had multiple sanctuaries in Pannonia but none have been found.<sup>135</sup>

132 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 in the form 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 ideals concerning hospitals. 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 *veteranarium* which could be found among the courtyard rooms. Israelowitz (2015) 100 does believe in the existence of these structures and mentions that Baker's arguments are focused solely on the physical shape of the *valetudinarium* and not their existence.

133 See Collar (2011) 226–7 and Chapter 1.

134 *AE* 1937 182.

135 Kádár (1989) 1059.

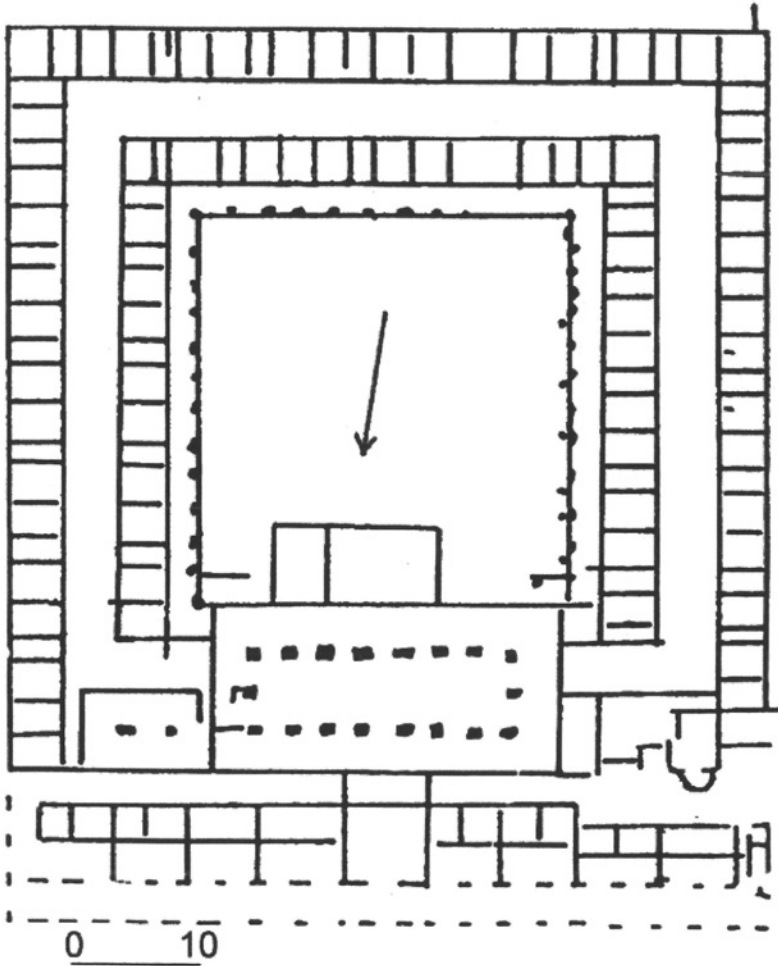


FIGURE 33 Plan of the hospital at Vetera I.  
FROM BAKER (2004) FIGURE 34

### *Camp Medicine*

The inscriptions mentioning *valetudinaria* 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 discovered but the one in the Teutoburger Wald is the oldest known, dating to AD 9.<sup>136</sup> They are generally thought to have consisted of two rectangular hallways with a courtyard in the middle (See Fig. 33).<sup>137</sup>

<sup>136</sup> Künzl (2005) 55.

<sup>137</sup> Baker (2002) 71.

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 shows the impact of Empire on the cult, where existing practices were adapted to suit the reality of Empire. The empire and its provinces necessitated 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 Chapter 3), 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 Hygieia and Asclepius by the *legatus Augusti pro praetore* Titus Vitrasius Pollio, which can be dated to around AD 157 (Fig. 34):<sup>138</sup>

[templum or sacellum Aesculapii et Hy]giae leg(io) [1 Italica ---]  
[dedic(atum) per T(itum) Vitrasium Po]llionem l[eg(atum) Aug(usti)  
pr(o) pr(aetore)]<sup>139</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 not, therefore, just 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 it was set up by the imperial legate making the connection with the *legio 1 Italica* very probable. The corpus editors state that there is no doubt about Asclepius' reconstructed name here because of the presence of Hygieia's name

138 Dyczek (1995) 127; *AE* 1937 247 shows that Vitrasius was legate of the province in AD 157.

139 'A temple or *sacellum* of Asclepius and Hygieia dedicated by the *1 legio Italica* by Titus Vitrasius Pollio, Augustan propraeorian legate'. *ILNovae* 9. Pollio is known from thirteen inscriptions from Moesia Inferior: Kolendo and Božilova, (1997) 57.



FIGURE 34 *ILNovae* 9.

FROM BOŽILOVA, KOLENDO AND MROZEWICZ (1992) FIGURE 9

and she generally did not receive cult by herself.<sup>140</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>141</sup> Vitrasius Pollio is known to have made another dedication to Asclepius and Hygieia in Odessus:

Aesculapio et / [Hy]giae T(itus) Vitra/sius Pollio co(n)s(ul) pon/tifex,  
proco(n)sul [Asiae]/leg(atus) Aug(usti) pr(o) pr(aetore) e[x voto posuit].<sup>142</sup>

140 Božilova, Kolendo and Mrozewicz (1992) 25.

141 Božilova, Kolendo and Mrozewicz (1992) 25.

142 *IGBulg* 1<sup>2</sup> ad 86 bis: 'To Asclepius and Hygieia, 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.

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>143</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>144</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>145</sup> Jerome describes how severe the plague was as, according to him, nearly 10,000 people died at Rome alone.<sup>146</sup> Bruun has conducted an investigation into the source material and methodology used by scholars to make claims about the severity of the plague and has shown them to be erroneous. He argues that while there was definitely an epidemic, no one knows how catastrophic it really was and the impact it had.<sup>147</sup> Duncan-Jones believes that it was a literary trope to call each plague the worst ever.<sup>148</sup> Thus, 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, there is no conclusive evidence that the plague even reached the Balkan provinces.<sup>149</sup> However, there are possible parallels for dedications to gods being made apotropaically in order to ward off the Antonine plague. Dedications containing the formula '*Diis deabusque seccundum interpretationem oraculi Clari Apollinis*' were found across the empire apparently as the result of an oracle which had been sought from the Clarian Apollo in order to stave off the plague.<sup>150</sup> Renberg has argued that reliefs erected to the Twelve Gods fulfilled a similar function and mentions that another parallel for warding off the plague comes from the cult of Glycon.<sup>151</sup> It is, therefore, possible that the inscriptions and dedications set up to Asclepius had a similar apotropaic function and role.

143 Dyczek (1999) 497.

144 Šašel Kos (2012) 110.

145 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.

146 Jer. *Chron.* 188h.

147 Bruun (2007) 210.

148 Duncan-Jones (1996) 115.

149 Mitrofan (2014) 12.

150 See, among others, *RIB* 1579 '*Diis deabusque se|cundum interpre|tationem oracu|li Clari Apollinis | coh(ors) I Tungrorum*' and *CIL* 8.8351; Jones (2005) 293–301. Though, it should be noted that the precise dating of these inscriptions is unclear.

151 Lucian *Alex.* 36; Renberg (2014) 12; Renberg (2017a) 166.

The connection with the *legio I Italica* seems very likely here, which would mean that the cult was connected to the military from the start. Another inscription 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 all the men:

Aescula/pio sacrum / leg(io) I Ital(ica)<sup>152</sup>

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 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 *praetentura* of the fortress of the *I Italica*.<sup>153</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>154</sup> The hospital's plan is similar to those of the *valetudinaria* mentioned above (Fig. 35). This hospital is one of the largest excavated, with only those at Bonn and Lotschitz being bigger.<sup>155</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 space for a villa, the so-called Building of the Porticoes. This building was abandoned simultaneously with the *valetudinarium* and the fort during Caracalla's reign at which point the locals reused materials.<sup>156</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 Hygieia were found in three places in the Building of the Porticoes.<sup>157</sup> One is a dedication of a silver statuette of Hygieia made by the legate Marcus Clodius Laetas, which has been dated to the 2nd century AD and is possibly connected to the Marcomannic wars.<sup>158</sup>

152 AE 1998 1130: 'Sacred to Asclepius, [erected by the] I Italic legion'.

153 See Press (1986) 529–35 for full archaeological and architectural details of the site.

154 Press (1994) 93–4.

155 Dyczek (1995) 125.

156 Dyczek (1999) 495.

157 Dyczek (1995) 126.

158 Dyczek (1995) 126.



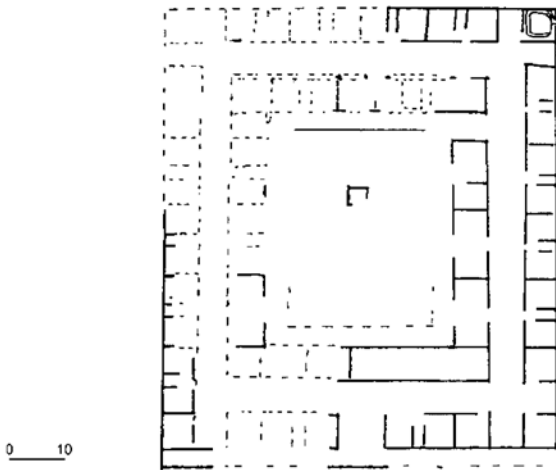


FIGURE 35 Plan of the *valetudinarium* at Novae.  
FROM BAKER (2004) FIGURE 40

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>159</sup>

An inscription to Asclepius was found in Greek:

Ἀσκλη[πι]-/ῶ θεῶ σω[τῆ]-/ρη +++ Διό[δω]-/ρος<sup>160</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. It has been suggested that Aurelius Diodorus was a physician as one of the other inscriptions found in the hospital was set up by a doctor and also because this dedication was set up in Greek.<sup>161</sup>

Another inscription was erected to Asclepius Saorus:

159 *ILNovae* 7: 'Out of the gift of silver weighing 4 pounds and 7 ounces Marcus Clodius Laetus Augustan legate undertook the creation of Hygieia'. 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.

160 *IGLNovae* 176: 'Dedicated to Asclepius, saviour god by [Aurelius] Diodorus'.

161 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>162</sup>

The editors for *L'Année Epigraphique* state that that there is no clear explanation for this epithet. They mention 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>163</sup> There is another possible explanation which comes from Pausanias, who mentions that there was a shrine to Asclepius in Arcadia forty stades from Saurus.<sup>164</sup> These inscriptions were all found close to the building. All of the inscriptions from this site are dated to the 2nd half of the 2nd century and the early 3rd century AD.

In total there were ten dedications to healing deities from this area and only two to other gods. The inscriptions to Asclepius and Hygieia 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 (one of which is 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>165</sup>

It is noteworthy that both this inscription and the one to Hygieia 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 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>166</sup>

162 *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.

163 See *AE* 1998 p. 421–422 no. 1133.

164 Paus. 6.21.4.

165 *AE* 1999.93b: 'Asclepius out of the gift of silver of five pounds and 5 ounces, Gaius Mansuanus Severus Augustan legate undertook its creation'.

166 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. See, for example, *AE* 1989 127 from Ostia '*Iuliae Aug(ustae) / matr(i) castro(rum) / C(aius) Cipiis Corin/thianus q(uin)q(uennalis) p(er)p(etuus) / ex argenti p(ondo) II / d(ono) d(edit) Claudia / Secundina / ob dedicatio/nem dedit epu/lum et* [']'.

Thus, there is definite evidence for a cult of Asclepius and Hygieia 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>167</sup> It would make sense for a specially demarcated area to have been dedicated to curing the sick in order 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 *medici* commonly supplicated the gods for their own health and for that of others. This strong relationship between doctors and the god meant that they brought Asclepius with them when they were moved into the provinces and 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 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 but now the cult was spread further across the empire and was worshipped in new contexts such as the *valetudinaria*. 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. This fits in with what was argued by Rüpke (see Chapter 1) that the Imperial period saw the creation of a new religious infrastructure. In a military context, this meant that Asclepius' worship was disseminated further than before, but also that

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167 Künzl (2005) 61.

his cult was introduced into new places for worship.<sup>168</sup> The next section will briefly look at the occurrence of vows in military dedications to Asclepius 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 the next sections will build upon.

### Vows

The process of supplicating a god involved a bargain being struck, the *do ut des* principle. A human would pray to a deity 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 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 deity 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>169</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>170</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 work. 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. 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>171</sup> It should also be noted that often a sacrifice preceded the erection of an inscription and that this sacrifice was frequently the actual votive offering, which was then followed by a lasting monument for the votive.<sup>172</sup> This public display of the fact that a vow had been

168 Rüpke (2011) 34–5.

169 Derks (1998) 218.

170 *AE* 1987 888: 'To Asclepius and Hygieia, Publius Aelius Fronto centurion of the XI Claudian legion fulfilled his vow'.

171 Beard, North and Price (1998) 1.32, 1.34.

172 Derks (1998) 221.

fulfilled and a votive given could then become an object for competition.<sup>173</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) Ulpius 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>174</sup>

The inscription was set up by a decurion on behalf of a *medicus* who, together with Asclepius and Hygieia, cured him from either an illness or a wound as 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>175</sup> However, Scheid does not believe this and points out that study of certain 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>176</sup> The Roman vow had a 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 which the dedications 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 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.

173 Derks (1998) 231.

174 *CIL* 6.19: 'To Asclepius and Hygieia, Marcus Ulpius 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 in Rome: *AE* 1954 83. See above for similar dedications.

175 Kiernan (2004) 104–14.

176 See also the trilingual inscription to Asclepius discussed in Chapter 5: *SEG* 50.1030. Scheid (2012) 182–3. See the temple of Palmyrene gods in Trastevere.



FIGURE 36  
The Thracian rider,  
*IGBulg* 5,5806.  
*IGBULG* VOLUME 5,  
PLATE 119

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.

### The Thracian Rider

The Thracian Rider was one of the most important gods in Thrace. Both Apollo and Asclepius were identified with this god (Fig. 36) and while the earliest of the dedications to the Rider are dated to the Hellenistic period, most come from the Roman era.<sup>177</sup> In the south-eastern area of modern Bulgaria the Rider is mainly assimilated with Apollo but in the western Philippopolitan area

<sup>177</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, Silvanus, Hades, Hephaistos, and the Dioscuri were also represented in this type.



FIGURE 37 Map of Philippopolis.  
FROM IGBULG VOLUME 5, LOOSE PLATES

the Rider is twinned more often with Asclepius (Fig. 37).<sup>178</sup> In the area controlled by Philippopolis, the sanctuary at Batkun was the most important and about 250 reliefs and statues were found in this area.<sup>179</sup> The Rider is commonly

178 Oppermann (2005) 351.

179 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;

depicted as Asclepius and bears the epithet Zimidrenus, or a variation of this name.<sup>180</sup> An inscription from Rome was set up by Thracian members of the praetorian cohorts to Asclepius Zimidrenus (discussed below) which will illustrate the impact of Empire on the cult via increased mobility which 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.

The Thracian Rider was a popular god for people to worship and inscriptions found dedicated to him in Thrace were mainly set up by people of local origin. The god 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>181</sup> At the sanctuary in Glava Panega Asclepius was represented alone or with Hygieia or Telesphorus in the Classical style in twenty-one of the extant statues 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>182</sup> There was a joint sanctuary of Asclepius and the Rider at Dolna Dikanja.<sup>183</sup> There were five sanctuaries of both the Thracian Rider and Asclepius in the territory belonging to Philippopolis, namely at Malko Belovo, Malo Konare, Novosel, Pastuša, and Perustica.<sup>184</sup>

Recent excavations and discoveries have shown that Asclepius was worshipped all across Thrace, often together with Hygieia and Telesphorus. All the cult evidence for the forty-four sites in Thrace dates from the Roman period. It is remarkable that Asclepius was worshipped under so many epithets in Thrace, which were likely the names of local gods such as Zimidrenus, Koulkoussenos, and Zudeono.<sup>185</sup> The best-preserved sanctuary is the one at Pernik but all seem to have a similar architecture which is particular to this region.<sup>186</sup> There appears to have been another sanctuary of Asclepius Keilaidenos in Pernik, where 122 votives to the Thracian Rider have been found and twenty-two to

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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.

180 Oppermann (2005) 351.

181 Dimitrova (2002) 211.

182 Chirassi Colombo (1973) 106–7.

183 Dimitrova (2002) 213, see also p. 213 Fig. 2; *IGBulg* 4.2134.

184 Riethmüller (2005) 2.332–3.

185 Koulkoussenos: *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.

186 Szubert (1990) 410.



Asclepius, Hygieia, and Telemachus.<sup>187</sup> Near Dorf Varvara there was a sanctuary of Asclepius Heros, who could also have been Asclepius Zimidrenus/Zydenos.<sup>188</sup> One inscription here was set up by a soldier called Aurelius Moucatralis:

Ἀὐρ(ήλιος) Μουκατραλῖς στρατιώτης κυρίῳ / Ἀσκληπιῶ.<sup>189</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, Greek was the more commonly used in Thrace and in the area belonging to Hellenistic Macedonia.<sup>190</sup> With the widespread recruitment of Thracians into the Roman army, a local origin is even more likely.<sup>191</sup> It appears that for many soldiers Latin was the language of choice as the majority of epitaphs found for soldiers in Thrace were erected in Latin.<sup>192</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>193</sup> The majority of these were erected in Latin but there were also seven dedications to Asclepius, all in Greek, and were set up by soldiers holding a variety of military posts, namely one equestrian, two *beneficarii*, one praetorian, two soldiers, and one unknown post.<sup>194</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 38–40) which could potentially have military connections as an *ordinatus* is mentioned, which was apparently a special position, with the sole purpose of capturing brigands:

187 Velkov and Gerassimova-Tomova (1989) 1355.

188 *IGBulg* 3.1101–1108, see especially 1108; Velkov and Gerassimova-Tomova (1989) 1356.

189 *IGBulg* 3.1103: 'Aurelius Moucatralis, soldier, to Lord Asclepius'. His name clearly indicates that he was a Roman citizen.

190 Wilkes (2000) 602.

191 Zahariade (2009) 59; Strabo 7.47–8.

192 This from a study done by Slawish (2007) 169 who shows that of the thirty-seven extant inscriptions, twenty-five are in Latin and only seven in Greek. Three are bilingual; Dana (2015) 255.

193 Boteva (2005) 199.

194 *IGBulg* 2.529, 541; 5.5798, 5717, 5818, 5704, 5856.



FIGURES 38–39 *IGBulg* 3.1126.

FROM *IGBULG* VOLUME 3, PLATE 87

Ἐπιφανε-/στάτω θε-ῶ Ζυμου-ζῶρηνω / Αὐρ(ήλιος) Διονυ-σόδωρος / ὠρδ(ινάτος)  
 λη-/στολογή-σας εὐαξά-/μενος ἄ-/νέθηχα.<sup>195</sup>

195 *IGBulg* 3.1126: 'To the most manifest god Asclepius Zimidrenus, Aurelius Dionysodorus, *ordinatus* and *Leistologein* praying, set up this up'.



FIGURE 40  
*IGBulg* 3.1127.  
 FROM *IGBULG* VOLUME 3, PLATE 86

Μ(ἄρκος) Αἰλ(ιος) Σέμνος / ὠρδινᾶτος / γενόμενος / κὲ εὐξάμενος / ἀνέθηκα.<sup>196</sup>

Mihailov also points out that the word *Leistologeîn* is a novelty for the Greek lexicon and may be an abbreviated term with *leistai* which would indicate an

<sup>196</sup> *IGBulg* 3.1127: 'Marcus Aelius Semnos, being an *ordinatus* and having come to pray, set this up'.

administrative position in the army.<sup>197</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>198</sup> These epithets are very different from the ones discussed before (see Chapter 2). A number of offerings were also dedicated here by soldiers (Figs 41–42):

Αἴλιος Μεστριανος στρατιω[τ]ης ἀνε vac [θήκεν]<sup>199</sup>

Κυριφ Σαλδοουγηνω /.....ος Δεινας στρ(α)τιώ[της]<sup>200</sup>

[κυρι]φ Ἀσκληπιω / Διληζονζου στρατιώτου<sup>201</sup>

The formulae used in these inscriptions are very simple and generally only state the fact that these men were *strategoī* 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 *Inscriptiones Graeca in Bulgaria Repertae* volumes also include extensive photo plates and examination of the iconography of these dedications leaves no doubt that they were set up to Asclepius as they show the god holding his snake-staff, depicted in his traditional iconographic pose, accompanied by Hygieia. The second inscription (*IGBulg* 2.521) also uses a particular Pergamene iconography as it shows an orb (see Chapter 3). 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

197 Mihailov (1961) 123 = *IGBulg* 3.1126.

198 *SEG* 45.891.

199 *IGBulg* 2.518: 'Aelius Mestrianos soldier set this up'.

200 *IGBulg* 2.521: 'To Lord Saldoousenos ... os Deinas soldier [set this up]'.

201 *IGBulg* 2.541: 'To Lord Asclepius Dilesonsos soldier [set this up]'.



FIGURE 41  
*IGBulg* 2.518.  
FROM *IGBULG* VOLUME 2, PLATE 12



FIGURE 42 *IGBulg* 2.521.  
FROM *IGBULG* VOLUME 2, PLATE 12

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 dedicators 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, a phenomenon 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.

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 soldiers. While some of these dedications were placed in the temples to the god which were located in the city, most were actually dedicated in shrines located within military camps and stations which were scattered around Rome, or in *valetudinaria* in forts in the provinces.<sup>202</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*:

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(jico)

202 Renberg (2006/7) 115–6. He lists forty-one dedications in his catalogue which he believes come from various sites in Rome and of these nine were set up by soldiers.

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) F[l(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 Philippop[oli vico] Diiesure / [|](centuria) Quintiani M(arcus) Aur(elius) M(arci) f(ilius) Fl(avia) Mucianu[s Phil]ippopol(i) vico Lisenon / dedicat(a) VI Kal(endas) Iul(ias) / Albino et Maximo co(n)s(ulibus).<sup>203</sup>

203 *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 Cuntiegurus. 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 Cuntiegurus. 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[...].menos. From the cohort VIII praetoria, the centuria of

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, Hygieia, and Telesphorus. Here, there is only the Latin text. The Thracian origin of these men must have been very important to them as they took great care to mention the place and also the *vicus* where they came from. The Digest mentions 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>204</sup>

It is also very remarkable that 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 the dedicators were members of the first praetorian cohort who all originally came from Philippopolis.

The nature of the inscription as well as its physical form, thus, differs 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 which they received under Caracalla. Salway has

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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, 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 26th of June. When Albinus and Maximus were consuls'. Salway (1994) 134 dates this inscription to June 227. See also Tsontchev (1941) 11–12.

204 Dig. 50.1.30.



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>205</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 and 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 mentions of such tribes are found widespread in inscriptions which were set up by praetorians who were recruited from the Danubian provinces after AD 212.<sup>206</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>207</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(arcus) f(ilius) Fl(avia) Diza Philippopoli 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.<sup>208</sup> The soldiers did so in a way in which they appeared Roman 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 of the god found on Tiber Island. This choosing of one version

205 Salway (1994) 134.

206 Salway (1994) 134. He also mentions the existence of Aelia, Aurelia, Antonia, Augusta, Iulia, Septimia, and Ulpia as other fictitious voting tribes: Salway (1994) 134n.60; *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.

207 Salway (1994) 134.

208 See Whitmarsh (2010) 2 and Chapter 1.

of a god over another will be explored in greater detail in Chapter 5. Woolf has argued that freed from Rome, soldiers were able to transport with them whatever religious cults they wished, leading to the creation of regional cults.<sup>209</sup> However, here soldiers worshipped a regional version of Asclepius in Rome and not the god found in the Tiber Island sanctuary. This follows what was argued by Davies (see Table 1) whereby local gods could be transported as signs of local identity.<sup>210</sup> For the praetorians, the fact that Asclepius Zimidrenus was a local deity of especial importance in Philippopolis mattered more than worshipping a purely Roman version of this god.

Another inscription which connected Asclepius to the deity Sindrinus, though this time indirectly, 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>211</sup>

Numini sancti dei Aescul[api] / Sindrinae reg(inae) Philippopolitanae  
 Aur(elius) Mucianus sacerdos mi/l(es) coh(ortis) x pr(aetoriae) 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>212</sup>

The city of Philippopolis was located in an area where votives to the Thracian rider were especially numerous.<sup>213</sup> This inscription from Rome explicitly

209 Woolf (2009) 251.

210 Davies (2005) 62.

211 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 / Sex(tus) 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)'. *CIL* 6.2, 9, 14 are also military inscriptions which were found in Rome but no find spot for these has been recorded.

212 *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'.

213 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.

mentions Sindrina, connecting worship with that 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. 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, illustrating 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 following Nederveen Pieterse, where the Roman Empire was globalised by globalising and that the Romans brought their culture, along with that of other peripheries, to the newly conquered regions.<sup>214</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.

### 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:<sup>215</sup>

<sup>214</sup> Nederveen Pieterse (2015) 233–4.

<sup>215</sup> Oltean (2007) 187.

Dis Penatibus Lari/bus Militaribus 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>216</sup>

Asclepius was worshipped with the salubrious gods of the place and in another inscription 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>217</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<sup>218</sup>

The *genii* were some of the most important military cults (see above) and during the Severan period it became a popular habit for senators to add the *genius* of their place of origin, as well as that of the place where they were currently stationed, to their dedications.<sup>219</sup> The addition of the *genius* of Carthage, thus, indicates that Uttedianus originally came from Carthage. Dea Caelestis was the

216 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.

217 CIL 3.987: 'To Asclepius and Hygieia 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.

218 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.

219 Várhelyi (2010) 143.

Roman name for the African goddess Tanit and Carthage was also the centre of her cult in Africa. She was the patron goddess of the city and was assimilated with Juno and Venus here.<sup>220</sup> In Africa Asclepius appears to have been twinned with Eshmun who was sometimes worshipped in conjunction with Caelestis (see Chapter 5) which could explain the presence of the goddess here.<sup>221</sup>

Thus, the dedicator, Olus Terentius Pudens Uttedianus, was of African origin.<sup>222</sup> As with the Thracians and Asclepius Zimidrenus, Uttedianus 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 familiarly popular deities with the gods which he found there. It seems that these strongly regional inscriptions, which take a different shape depending on where they were dedicated, 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 ones 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>223</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:

Glyconi / M(arcus) Ant(onius) / Onesas / iusso dei / l(ibens) p(osuit)<sup>224</sup>

Glycon is mentioned in another inscription, now lost.<sup>225</sup> Both these dedicators have Greek *cognomina* and were likely from Asia Minor.<sup>226</sup> Glycon here shows one of the clearest examples of the impact of the Rome on the cult of Asclepius, namely cross-provincial contacts, just as the inscription concerning the *genii*

220 Piso (1993) 224; Rives (1995) 65ff; Rantala (2017) 148.

221 Cadotte (2006) 170n.30.

222 Condurachi (1975) 190; Rives (1995) 70. Olus would be Aulus.

223 Schäfer (2001) 259, 261, 268.

224 *CIL* 3.1021. 'To Glycon, Marcus Antonius Onesas, by command of the god, freely placed this'.

225 *CIL* 3.1022: 'G[ly]co(ni) / M(arcus) Aur(elius) / Theodo- / tus ius- / so dei p(osuit)'.

226 Schäfer (2004) 183.

does. The cult of Glycon was established in Abonoteichos in Paphlagonia in the middle of the 2nd 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 Glycon'. 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, and this has influenced scholarship on worship of Glycon, despite it being a serious and real cult. Lucian's work aims to ridicule epiphany and pilgrimage and the cult of Glycon bore the brunt of that.<sup>227</sup> This inscription from Dacia shows the effects which the migration of these people from Asia Minor had upon the empire, people who 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 such as occur in this inscription from Sarmizegetusa Ulpica in Dacia to Asclepius Pergamenes:

Aesculapio Pergam(eno) / et Hygiae / sacrum / C(aius) Spedius Hermias / flamen col(oniae) Sarm(izegetusae) / pos(uit).<sup>228</sup>

This in itself is remarkable, as locational epithets such as these, and others like Apollo Didymeus or Claros, did not spread far from their primary sanctuary in general.<sup>229</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 are found in Pausanias.<sup>230</sup> These inscriptions clearly show how local gods were foci of regional identities and were disseminated as such (see Table 1 no. 2).<sup>231</sup> Another example of adherence to a god from another location occurs in an inscription from Bad Gotesburg:

Fortunis / Salutaribu[s] / Aesculapio / Hyg[iae] / Q(uintus) Venidius Ruf[us] / Mariu[s] Maxim[us] / [L(ucius)] Calvinianu[s] / [le]g(atus) leg(ionis) I Min(erviae) / leg(atus) Aug(usti) pr(o) [pr(aetore)] / provinc(iae) Cilic[iae] / d(onum) [d(edit)]<sup>232</sup>

227 Petsalis-Diomidis (2010) 12–3.

228 *CIL* 3.1417a. 'Sacred to Asclepius Pergamos and Hygieia. Gaius Spedius Hermias, flamen of the colony of Sarmizegetusa, set this up'.

229 Davies (2013) 57. See also Chapter 1.

230 For example, see Paus. 3.14.2 and 4.36.7. Also, Strabo 8.4.4.

231 Davies (2005) 62.

232 *CIL* 13.7994 from Bad Godesburg in Germania Inferior. 'To the Salutare Fortunes, Asclepius and Hygieia, Quintus Venidius Rufus Marius Maximus Lucius Calvinianus

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>233</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 Chapter 3). 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.

### 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, 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 is remarkable. Although Asclepius was worshipped extensively here by a large body of worshippers, relatively few sanctuaries to the god are known.<sup>234</sup> Thrace possibly has the largest amount 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 supplicating 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.

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legate of the *legio* 1 Minerva, *propraetorian Augustan legate* of the province Cilicia gave as a gift'.

233 Riethmüller (2005) 2.382–5 nos 346–361. For Aigeai see no. 346.

234 This appears to have been a regional phenomenon as Laurence and Trifilò (2015) 110 (see Chapter 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.<sup>235</sup> The majority of Asclepieian dedicators were officials and while low-ranking 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 supplications 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 Thrace and was twinned with the Thracian Rider. Yet, there was greater variation in 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 choose. 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>236</sup> This global culture shared similar characteristics but had a different identity in each locality as it took on forms which were significant to that region.<sup>237</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 the empire. 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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235 Following Davies (2005) 62.

236 Hodos (2015) 242.

237 Hodos (2015) 246. See also Chapter 1.



## The Cult(s) of Asclepius in Roman North Africa

### Introduction

Worship of Asclepius was spread to the provinces via a variety of methods which boosted and altered his cult. 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>1</sup> In Africa legionaries played an important role in the cult, as Asclepius was so popular with the Third Augustan Legion that it built and dedicated the temple at Lambaesis to him. Originally there had been a small cult here but the legion's involvement advanced it as the soldiers constructed a temple on site. This temple was built in the name of Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus and was called an Asclepieion.<sup>2</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 4th century AD.<sup>3</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 which the cults in Africa originated, which would make it logical for the Epidaurian and Greek spelling of Asclepius' name also to be transferred across.

The majority of Asclepius' worshippers 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>4</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 below).<sup>5</sup> The second group is the local aristocracy who served as priests of the god; many of the Asclepieian priests were

1 Davies (2005) 62; Benseddik (2010a) 1.49.

2 *CIL* 8.2579a-c (p 954); Benseddik (2010a) 1.93.

3 Benseddik (2010a) 1.148.

4 Benseddik (2010a) 1.138.

5 This illustrates the top-down spread of cults as argued by Davies (2005) 62 no. 1/Table 1.

also priests of the cults of the emperor.<sup>6</sup> A more modest group of worshippers were slaves and freedmen who would have aided in the cult's diffusion.<sup>7</sup> Connections with the imperial household were also present in Africa as three cities dedicated to Asclepius for the emperor's good health; Musti dedicated statues to Asclepius for Hadrian's well-being; Thibicae dedicated a temple for Antoninus and his heirs; Caesarea offered land for the Severan dynasty's health.<sup>8</sup> As well as being an indication of the cities' concerns, this is also a sign 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 Hygieia spread from east to west: there were eighteen temples dedicated to the gods in Africa Proconsularis and three in Numidia, three in Mauretania Caesariensis, but none in Mauretania Tingitana. It also seems that Asclepius was mostly worshipped alone in Africa Proconsularis but was often supplicated in conjunction with Hygieia in Numidia. According to her, sixty-eight inscriptions relating directly to the cult were found in Africa and twenty-nine in Numidia.<sup>9</sup> Benseddik states that there is a clearly decreasing number of 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 *legio III Augusta* moved from east to west, so did the god.<sup>10</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 Benseddik passes over regional differences which occurred within the cult in the various provinces. It will be examined here how the cult of Asclepius in Numidia varied in nature from that in Proconsularis. This chapter will look at different groups of supplicants as it will examine the ways in which the military and officials worshipped Asclepius, but also how civilians such as merchants supplicated a version of the god here. This chapter aims to look at 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

6 Benseddik (2010a) 1.196.

7 Following Davies (2005) 62 no. 7/Table 1.

8 Benseddik (2010a) 1.194; Musti: *AE* 1968 586; Thibicae *CIL* 8.765; Caesarea: *CIL* 8.9320.

9 Benseddik (2010a) 1.120.

10 Benseddik (2010a) 1.120–1, 123.

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 first to understand the history of the cult of Eshmun-Asclepius and that of the *legio III Augusta* in Africa. Only when all of the above is known can the syncretic cult of Asclepius be compared with other cults of Asclepius and conclusions as to their nature be drawn, which will be done in the penultimate section (see Chapter 1 for a discussion of the term syncretism). 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 from the Hellenistic period onwards and his cult was, thus, imported prior to the coming of the Roman army. The study of the history of the *legio III Augusta* in this area 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: How does syncretism play a role within the cult of Asclepius in Africa? 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?

### Eshmun-Asclepius

In Africa, Asclepius was assimilated with the god Eshmun. This deity had also been identified with Apollo but this was the Apollo Medicus of Rome and not the later mantic version of this god.<sup>11</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

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<sup>11</sup> Lipinski (1994) 20.

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 located in Numidia and around Lambaesis, which appears to have been different in various ways.

### *Eshmun and the Cult at Sidon*

The cult of Eshmun was first attested in the 8th 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>12</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>13</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>14</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>15</sup> In texts, Eshmun appears as one of the greater gods of the Phoenician pantheon. Royal inscriptions from Sidon from the end of the 6th to 5th 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>16</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>17</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 been lost in the Lebanese civil wars.<sup>18</sup> Eshmun was worshipped as healing god here and in Amrit from the 5th century BC onwards as they were thought

12 Benseddik (2010a) 1.27.

13 Baumgarten (1981) 230.

14 Benseddik (2010b) 11.

15 Benseddik (2010a) 1.28.

16 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 Chapter 2).

17 Benseddik (2010a) 1.30.

18 Fischer-Genz (2008) 621.

to be especially salubrious places due to their water sources.<sup>19</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>20</sup> The temple was expanded between the 6th and 4th centuries BC and some inscriptions to Asclepius were found here.<sup>21</sup> This temple is generally considered to be the cultic centre of the cult of Eshmun.<sup>22</sup>

However, two main friezes in the temple at Sidon depict Apollo and personal names with derivations of Apollo were also common here.<sup>23</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' Ζωσᾶς Ζήνωνος νικήσας ἀνέθηκεν Ἀσκληπιῷ<sup>24</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>25</sup> There are a few Hellenistic dedications to Asclepius in Phoenicia which indicate that 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 Chapter 3).<sup>26</sup>

19 Lipinski (1994) 22.

20 *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 and the text states: '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 5th century BC.

21 Stucky (2005) 15.

22 Benseddik (2010a) 1.33.

23 Rigsby (2007) 148.

24 'On account of having won this year, Zosas Zenonos erected this to Asclepius'; Rigsby (2007) 147; *SEG* 26 1646.

25 Rigsby (2007) 148.

26 Rigsby (2007) 148–9.

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>27</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>28</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 43–44).<sup>29</sup> The hair style indicates that this was of the Giustini type (see Chapter 2).<sup>30</sup> A torso belonging to the Asclepius Este or Epidaurus type was also found here, showing typical Asclepieian drapery of the *himation* (Fig. 8).<sup>31</sup> A fragmentary votive relief depicting Asclepius and Hygieia 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>32</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 era 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>33</sup> This, combined with the evidence from an inscription from Sardinia discussed below and iconographic evidence, makes the connections between the two gods clear.<sup>34</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>35</sup> Amongst these are four dedications which are clearly set up to

27 Benseddik (2010a) 1.30. See p. 31 for drawings of the reliefs; Pl. *Cri.* n8a.

28 See Catalogue in Stucky (1993) 68ff.

29 Stucky (1993) 76 no. 69, Inv. no. E75.

30 Stucky (1993) 26.

31 Stucky (1993) 76 no. 70; Inv. no. E1920.

32 Stucky (1993) 26, Catalogue no. 249.

33 Stucky (1993) 26.

34 Stucky (1993) 76–8 lists four Graeco-Roman statue-fragments of Asclepius at Sidon and eight statue fragments of Hygieia.

35 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.



FIGURE 43  
Head of Eshmun-Asclepius from Sidon.  
FROM STUCKY (1993) TABLE 17,  
NO. 69. INV. NO. E75



FIGURE 44  
Torso of Eshmun-Asclepius.  
FROM STUCKY (1993) TABLE 17, NO. 70

Asclepius.<sup>36</sup> Apart from a single inscription to Dionysus Kademeios, Asclepius is the only god mentioned in the Greek inscriptions. One was erected by a

36 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.

priest of Mithras, indicating that the cult must have continued to prosper for a long time here:

Θεῶι Ἀγίωι / Ἀσκληπιῶι / Θεόδοτος / ἱερεὺς Μίθρα / ἀωέθηκεν / L ANC<sup>37</sup>

Roman coins were found in Sidon depicting Eshmun-Asclepius on the reverse, wearing a *himation* and boots. 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>38</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>39</sup> The river close to the sanctuary at Bostan esh-Sheikh, the Nahr el-Awali, was also called the *Asclepius fluvius*.<sup>40</sup> Strabo also mentions a sacred grove of Asclepius here, one of the few ancient sources to comment on the sanctuary.<sup>41</sup>

### *Assimilation*

It is likely that Asclepius and Eshmun were assimilated in the 5th 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>42</sup> The cult was seemingly very popular as the name Eshmun occurs a

37 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.

38 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.

39 Stucky (2005) 15: There was the ‘*piscine du trone du Astarte*’ at the sanctuary of Eshmun in Sidon which is dated to the Hellenistic period; Cadotte (2006) 192–4.

40 Antonin de Plaisance *Itineraire s.v.* ‘fluvius Asclepius’; Stucky (2005) 14.

41 Strabo 16.2.22. Strabo only mentions Sidon and the grove of Asclepius in passing and is more interested in moving on to Tyre.

42 *CIS* 1.6066; Xella (1993) 487; Benseddik (2010a) 1.34.



lot in Carthaginian onomastics.<sup>43</sup> However, only a few inscriptions to Eshmun were found around Carthage, one of which mentions his priest and another 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>44</sup> Apuleius also refers to Asclepius' role as protector:

Nunc quoque igitur principium mihi apud vestras auris auspicatissimum ab Aesculapio deo capiam, qui arcem nostrae Carthaginis indubitabili numine propitius respicit.<sup>45</sup>

The temple of Eshmun in Carthage was circular in shape and located on the Acropolis, showing the preeminent place this god held in the civic pantheon. This temple was, according to Appian, the richest and most important of all.<sup>46</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>47</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>48</sup> Benseddik argues that there was also a circular temple to Asclepius-Eshmun in Thugga.<sup>49</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>50</sup>

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43 Priest of Eshmun: *CIS* 1.2362; Priest of Eshmun-Astarte: *CIS* 1.245; Cadotte (2006) 165. The Capitoline triad had also been installed on the Byrsa: Rives (1995) 42 and other popular gods here were Venus and Ceres. 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.

44 Benseddik (2010a) 1.35.

45 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'.

46 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.

47 App. *Bel. Civ* 8.130–131.

48 Xella (1993) 487.

49 Benseddik (2010a) 1.92.

50 Xella (1993) 481.

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>51</sup> He is also the only literary author who mentions the cult. However, there are a number of inscriptions which do so and the most important of these is an inscription from Sardinia which shows the assimilation between the two gods:<sup>52</sup>

This inscription was found in the area of Santuiaci, northeast of Cagliari in Sardinia.<sup>53</sup> It is now thought to date to the 1st century BC and not the 2nd as was previously thought.<sup>54</sup> The Greek and Latin texts have a similar context and are dedicated to Asclepius but the Punic text is dedicated to Eshmun:

Cleon salari(orum) soc(iorum) s(ervus) Aescolapio Merre donum dedit  
lubens

merito merente vacat Ἀσκληπιῶι Μηρρη ἀνάθεμα βωμὸν ἔστη-  
σε Κλέων ὁ ἐπὶ τῶν ἀλῶν κατὰ πρόσταγμα  
*l'dn l šmn m r'ḥ mzbḥ nḥšt mšql lṭrm m t 100 š ndr 'klyn š*  
*ḥsgm š bmmhlt šm[*  
*q]l' rpy ' bšt špṭm ḥmlkt wbd šmn bn ḥmlk<sup>55</sup>*

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- 51 Dam. *Isid. Fragment* 348; Rigsby (2007) 148. Damascius was the last scholarch of the School at Athens and lived between c. AD 458 and 538. He was persecuted by Justinian in the early 6th century AD.
- 52 *SEG* 50.1030. The inscription is dedicated to Eshmun Merre though the origin and meaning of this epithet is unclear.
- 53 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.
- 54 Chaniotis, Stroud and Strubbe (2014) argue for the 1st century; Xella (1993) 482 for the 2nd century.
- 55 *SEG* 50.1030: '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 Abdeshmun, sons of Himilk.' Phoenician text trans. Moscatti (1973) 261. Greek and Latin are the author's own. See Xella (1993) 482 for a German translation of the Phoenician.

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>56</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>57</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>58</sup> There were connections between Phoenicians and Sardinia as the Carthaginians established themselves in Sardinia from about 500 BC where they controlled trade and settled especially in coastal towns.<sup>59</sup> Even after the Roman occupation of Sardinia, Phoenician religion maintained a strong hold of the island as is attested by numerous Punic and Neo-Punic inscriptions to Punic gods such as Baal and Astarte.<sup>60</sup> Inscriptions in Phoenician and Punic were erected here from the end of the 9th century BC to the 2nd century AD.<sup>61</sup> Unfortunately, there is no explanation for the epithet Merre. The dedicator is a *servus sociorum* and salt mining was an important industry in the local area. A votive terracotta hand with the inscription 'Eshmun listens' was found near Cagliari. Xella suggests that this could be an *ex-voto* similar to those found within the cult of Asclepius.<sup>62</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>63</sup>

From Carthage the cult of Eshmun-Asclepius seemed to spread to the immediate area under Carthaginian influence, especially Thugga and Thuburbo Maius.<sup>64</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>65</sup> The presence of this god in Carthage explains the occurrence of Eshmun-Asclepius in the Carthaginian lands and his prominence on the Byrsa.<sup>66</sup> A further point of note

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56 Chaniotis, Stroud and Strubbe (2014).

57 Adams (2008) 211.

58 For example, see *KAI* 172.

59 Strabo 5.2.7; Adams (2008) 209.

60 Moscati (1973) 280–1.

61 Adams (2008) 209.

62 Xella (1993) 483.

63 *ICo Sard.* Npu 4, 129; Xella (1993) 483.

64 Cadotte (2006) 170.

65 Cadotte (2006) 170 n30.

66 Cadotte (2006) 171.

is that Asclepius was connected with Cybele sometimes in Africa, something which does not commonly occur 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.<sup>67</sup>

The cult of Eshmun, thus, had a rich history of its own, dating back to the 8th century BC. At some point 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 Byrsa and also this seems to have been the point from which the cult was further disseminated. 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. 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. 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. Then, 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.

### 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. The next section 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 (Fig. 45) to properly understand the nature of the cults in this region.

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67 Benseddik (2010a) 1.53.

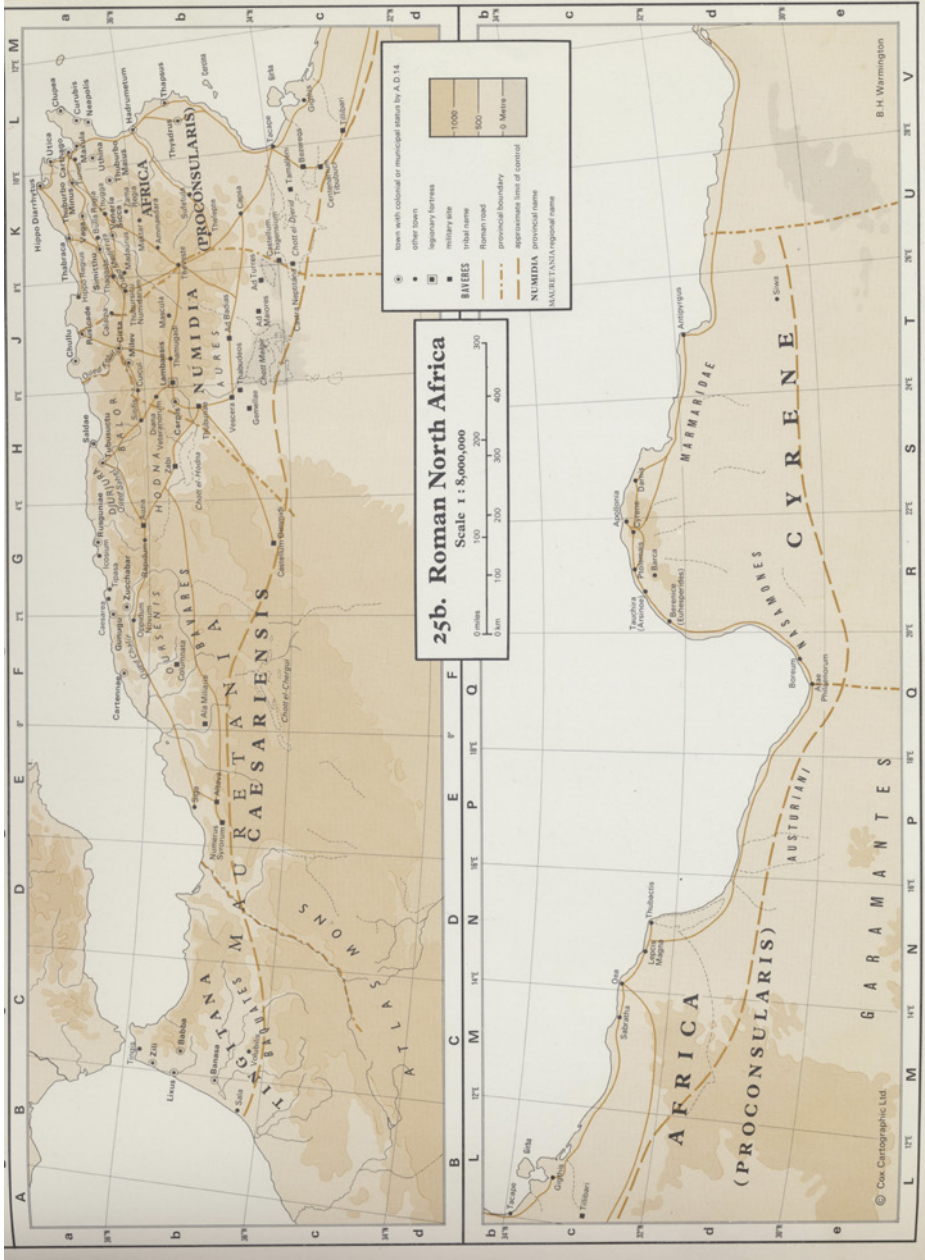


FIGURE 45 Map of Roman North Africa.  
FROM HAMMOND (1981) MAP 25B

### Asclepius in Africa

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>68</sup> However, Chapter 4 of this work 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 Fig. 46 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>69</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>70</sup>

An especially large number of statues of Asclepius and Hygieia 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>71</sup> Most of these statues belong to either the Tunis or Campana type.<sup>72</sup> Asclepius and Hygieia

68 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.

69 Benseddik (2005) 273.

70 Benseddik (1995) 17.

71 Manderscheid (1981) 31: Manderscheid takes data from both Africa Proconsularis and Numidia to reach this figure, which was accurate at time of publication.

72 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 (Thurburbo 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

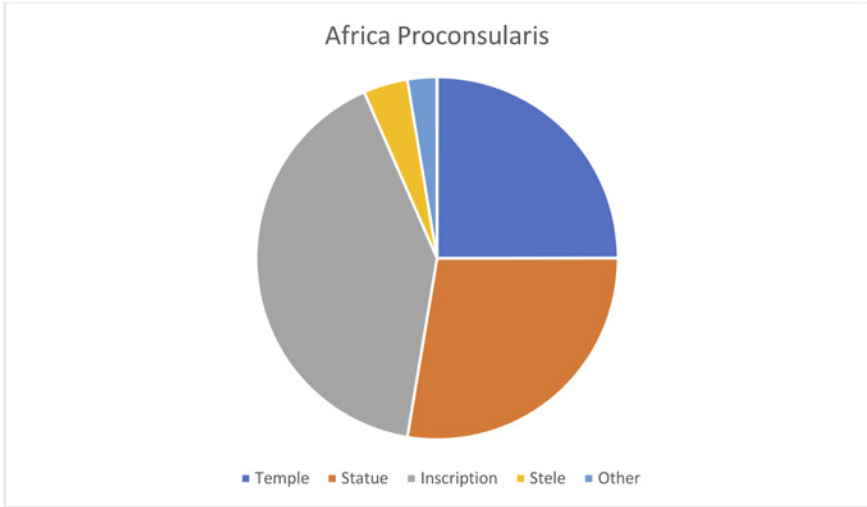


FIGURE 46 Evidence for cult from sites in Africa Proconsularis.

TABLE 7 Evidence for cult from sites in Africa Proconsularis. With data from Benseddik (2010a) Vol. 2 map of Proconsular Africa p. 9<sup>a</sup>

	Temple	Statue	Inscription	Stele	Other
Total Sites	19	21	31	3	3

a There were temples at: Carthage, Ammaedara, Aradi, Belalis Maior, Bulla Regia, Gammarth, Gigthis, Hr Bib el Afu, Maxula, Musti, Thanae, Theveste, Thibicaae, Thisduo, Thuburbo Maius, Thugga, Vazi Sarra, and Uchi Maius. Statues at: Carthage, Ammaedara, Aquae Aptuccensium, Bulla Regia, Calama, Curubis, Gammarth, Gigthis, Hadrumentum, Hippo Regis, Lepcis Magna, Mactaris, Madauros, Musti, Naraggara, Theveste, Thuburbo Maius, Thuburisicu Numidarum, Thugga, and Utica. Inscriptions at: Carthage, Ammaedara, Aquae Aptuccensium, Aquae Persianae, Aradi, Belalis Maior, Bulla Regia, Calama, Chidibbia, Furnos Maius, Gammarth, Gholaiia, Hr Berjeb, Hr Bib el Afu, Lepcis Magna, Mactaris, Madauros, Maxula, Musti, Theveste, Thibaris, Thibicaae, Thisduo, Thizika, Thuburbo Maius, Thuburisicu Numidarum, Thugga, Thysdrus, Tignica, Vazi Sarra, Uchi Maius. Stelae at: Althiburos, Lepcis Magna, and Vaga. Other cult paraphernalia at: Carthage, Althiburos, and Thysdrus.

were commonly associated with bathing and their iconography in thermal complexes served to underscore the healthiness of the act of bathing.<sup>73</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>74</sup> Baths were places to refresh the body and attain good health. Statues of healing gods such as Asclepius and Hygieia, and also gods who could be involved with healing such as Venus and Cupid, Bacchus and Hercules, were common.<sup>75</sup> Health-related inscriptions and statues of these healing deities would complement the message that bathing was good for a person.<sup>76</sup> The god found in these bathing centres had a strong Graeco-Roman iconography and cultic nature. This indicates that the god depicted was probably not the syncretic deity of Eshmun-Asclepius but one which had been brought to Africa by members of the military, something which will be explored in greater detail below. 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.

Worship of Asclepius differed in each of the African provinces. His main military cult-centre in Africa was at Lambaesis in Numidia but in this province there was also a temple at Castellum Tidditanorum where ruins of a rectangular complex and a bearded head of Asclepius were 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. 47).<sup>77</sup>

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>78</sup> Temples, after all, were not a prerequisite for cult on a site and all that was needed was an altar. In some cases it is possible that only a statue was 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 or

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statues of Asclepius in baths. Neither of these types occurs in *LIMC* and the Tunis type does not occur in baths outside of Africa.

73 Fagan (2002) 88–89.

74 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.

75 Cooley (2013) 193.

76 Cooley (2013) 195.

77 Benseddik (2010a) 2.143ff.

78 Laurence and Trifilò (2015) 110.



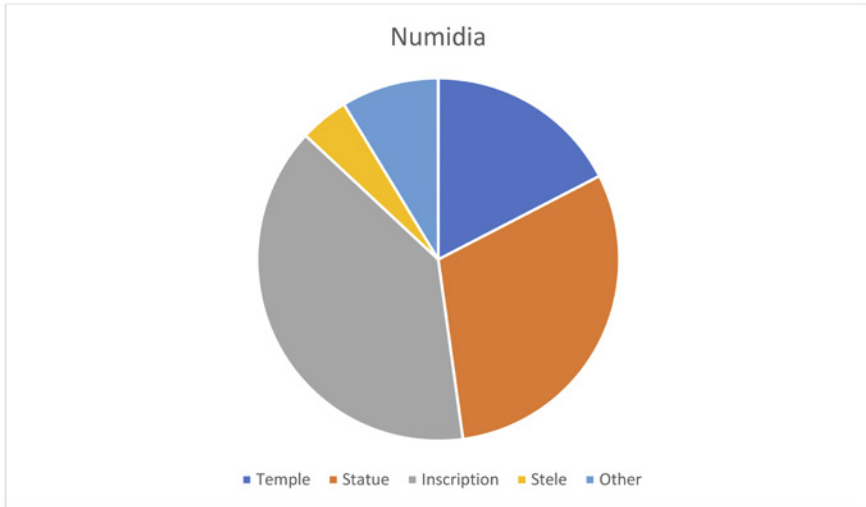


FIGURE 47 Evidence for cult from sites in Numidia.

TABLE 8 Evidence for cult from sites in Numidia. With data from Benseddik (2010a) Vol 2 map of Numidia p. 105<sup>a</sup>

	Temple	Statue	Inscription	Stele	Other
Total Sites	4	7	9	1	2

a There were temples at: Lambaesis, Castellum Tidditanorum, Cirta, and Thamugadi. Statues at: Lambaesis, Aquae Flaviana, Castellum Dimmidi, Cuicul, Mascula, Rusicade, and Thamugadi. Inscriptions at: Lambaesis, Aquae Flaviana, Castellum Dimmidi, Cuicul, El Gahra, Rusicade, Sila, Thamugadi, and Zarai. A stele was found at: Castellum Tidditanorum. Other cult paraphernalia at: Cirta and Lambirdi.

a reminder of the salubrious nature of the environs. In Numidia most cult sites seem to be clustered around military sites even though civilian settlements did also grow out of these places.<sup>79</sup> The gap between the military and civilian religious lives is, therefore, not completely clear and there must have been a certain level of contact between these groups. However, it could be possible that a cult located within an army camp would have been for the sole use of

79 This phenomenon can also be noted in regard to the cult of Asclepius in Roman Britain. See also Table 1/Davies (2005) 62.

its members as, for example, 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 only used by soldiers.<sup>80</sup> 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.

### *Epithets*

Contacts between cultures produced new situations where gods were created to whom both locals and Romans could relate. In doing so, this also increased religious diversity. Asclepius was worshipped under numerous epithets in Africa (see Chapter 2 for general discussion). He is called *Augustus* in various inscriptions from Africa and a few from Numidia:<sup>81</sup>

Aesculapio / Augusto / sacrum / M(arcus) Orbius / Felix / votum / solvit / cum suis<sup>82</sup>

Another epithet which occurs is *Dominus*; it occurs three times, once in Carthage, Thisduo, and Thuburbo Maius:<sup>83</sup>

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/neo custodi/ at triduo / cancellos / calciatus / intrare no/lito<sup>84</sup>

This stele was set up by a Lucius Numisius Vitalis and is dated between AD 117 and 138.<sup>85</sup> The Numisii were known civic benefactors and also erected a temple

80 Downey (2007) 109; Fink, Hoey and Snyder (1940) 11.

81 Africa Proconsularis: *CIL* 8.765, 1476, 15446, 27356; *CILPCart* 1; *AE* 1999 1823; *AE* 1999 1826; *IL Afr* 545; *ILAlg* 01.1220; *ILAlg* 01.2031; *AE* 1937 72; *AE* 1938 42. Numidia: *ILAlg* 02–01.3584; *ILAlg* 02–03.7634; *ILAlg* 2–03.7635; *AE* 2000 1792; *AE* 2010 1839; *AE* 2010 1819.

82 *AE* 1999 1826: ‘Sacred to Asclepius Augustus, Marcus Orbius Felix and associates repaid his vow’. See also Chapter 4 and *AE* 1937 181 and *CIL* 3.993.

83 Carthage: *AE* 1949 56; Thisduo: *CIL* 8.1267; Thuburbo Maius: *IL Afr* 225.

84 *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’.

85 Benseddik (2010a): 2.86.

to Mercury Augustus.<sup>86</sup> As the inscription mentions that the podium was built by order of the god, this could indicate that Vitalis had previously been a suppliant of Asclepius and may have been cured of an illness.<sup>87</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>88</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>89</sup> *Sanctus* is only found in Numidia in a dedication by Marcus Porcius Iustus, an officer of the Third Augustan Legion:

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>90</sup>

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>91</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. Asclepius is also called *Soter* in an inscription from Lepcis Magna (see below).<sup>92</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>93</sup> In Belalis Maior in Africa, Asclepius is hailed as *Repentinus*:

86 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.

87 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.

88 CIL 8.1267.

89 Benseddik (2010a) 1.58.

90 CIL 8.2587: 'To Asclepius Sanctus, Marcus Porcius Iustrus, 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'.

91 Benseddik (2010a) 1.60: in Semitic *sr qds* means holy prince.

92 IRT 265.

93 Benseddik (2010a) 1.167.

Deo / Aesculapio / Repentino / C(aius) Cornelius / Afranius / Felix posuit.<sup>94</sup>

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>95</sup> Asclepius was worshipped here not only as a healing god but also as a saviour deity. 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.

### *African Iconography*

It has been shown that the syncretism between Eshmun and Asclepius had a rich history in Africa which was specifically connected with Carthage 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 (Fig. 48):

A statue of Asclepius excavated in the sanctuary of Apollo in Bulla Regia was the first version of this type to be found.<sup>96</sup> *LIMC* lists five occurrences of this statue, four of which come from Africa and the fifth is held in Florence.<sup>97</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 Chapter 2).<sup>98</sup> The Tunis type, according to *LIMC*, has the same drapery though Asclepius holds his short snake-staff in his left

94 *AE* 2010 1804: 'To the God Asclepius Repentinus, Gaius Cornelius Afranius Felix erected this'.

95 Benseddik (2010a) 1.62.

96 Janon (1985) 72.

97 *LIMC* 2 nos 276–280.

98 Benseddik (2007) 205.



FIGURE 48 Tunis type statue of Asclepius from Lambaesis.  
FROM BENSEDDIK (1997) FIGURE 4

hand instead.<sup>99</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 Hygieia known in Africa. Only in the east of Africa Proconsularis was there any variety in iconographic types of Asclepius

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99 Holtzmann (1981) 884.

but not so much in those of Hygieia.<sup>100</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:

Aquae Flavianae 1, Timgad 4, Lambaesis 2.<sup>101</sup>

In general, fewer statues were found in Numidia than in Proconsularis. 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>102</sup> Both this statue and one from Carthage are also accompanied by a statue of Telesphorus. Telesphorus grew in popularity in Pergamum from the Trajanic period onwards and his worship was disseminated from there across the empire. Hadrian visited the province of Africa in AD 128 after he had visited Pergamum in AD 124 and, thus, it may be that this iconography was added to the Asclepieian one 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>103</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 short staff around which

100 Benseddik (1997) 145.

101 Benseddik (1997) 145.

102 Benseddik (1997) 145–6.

103 Holtzmann (1981) 863–890.

a snake coils in his left hand and the right lies on his knee shaking a *volumen*.<sup>104</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, who was commonly depicted wearing such crowns, and statues of this god were also found in Sidon. 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 staff. This is possibly Dionysus' Thyrsus, which was always topped with a pine cone and was a symbol of prosperity and fertility:<sup>105</sup>

a

(On the pediment.)

ἀγαθῆ τύχῃ [τῶν κυ]ρίων / Ἀσκληπιάδης θεῶ / Ἀσκληπιῶ εὐχαριστήρ[ι]ον

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>106</sup>

Asclepius is worshipped here by a marble merchant. One word in particular stands out, namely *aretēs*. The word is Greek but has been code-switched to Latin here.<sup>107</sup> This was perhaps done as the dedicator felt that the meaning of the word had no suitable equivalent to what he wished to convey.<sup>108</sup>

104 Benseddik (1997) 143–4.

105 Eur. *Bacch.* 23–25.

106 *IRT* 264: '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'. The dedication is dated to the 3rd century AD on the basis of its lettering.

107 Code-switching is a 'switch from one language into another within one person's utterance or piece of writing': Adams (2008) 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: Peltari (2011) 461.

108 Adams (2008) 23.

Code-switching often expressed social meanings where the dedicator sought to present a specific image of himself to the reader.<sup>109</sup>

Only three other inscriptions mentioning Asclepius come from Roman Tripolitania, all of which come from Lepcis Magna and are dated to the 2nd–3rd 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 the above inscription.<sup>110</sup> This matters, as it shows the non-military nature of the cult in Roman Tripolitania where none of the worshippers were connected with the army. 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 such inscriptions, one which was 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>111</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. 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.

### The Roman Army in Numidia

The first section 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 time onwards. From Carthage the cult of Eshmun-Asclepius spread to the rest of Africa Proconsularis and also other lands which were under Carthaginian control. This chapter has also explored an Asclepieian iconography which was unique to Africa and has highlighted several aspects of the cult which were seemingly 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

109 Adams (2008) 300.

110 *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.

111 *CIL* 8.24535, 8.26185.



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.

### *The legio III Augusta in Africa*

For most of the Imperial era the only legion which was stationed in North Africa was the *legio III Augusta*.<sup>112</sup> It is not known when this legion was created but Le Bohec suggests that it is probable that it 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>113</sup> However, there is no evidence relating to the Third Augustan before AD 5.<sup>114</sup> It is also not known with any certainty when the *III Augusta* arrived in Africa, although it was first attested between 6 BC to 9 AD when the legion participated in the African wars.<sup>115</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>116</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>117</sup> However,

112 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.

113 Le Bohec (1989a) 337.

114 Cass. Dio 55.23.

115 Le Bohec (2000) 373.

116 Le Bohec (1989a) 335; Le Bohec (2000) 373. Haïdra is the modern settlement built around Ammardara. 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.

117 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.

from AD 6 the *III Augusta* was the only legion in Africa. Its main task appears to have been surveying the Tunisian mountain ridge from the Tell Atlas to the Oued Medjerda, forming a defensive line, Le Bohec's '*système défensif*'.<sup>118</sup> The earliest epigraphic evidence connected to the Third Augustan, which were victory commemorations, dates to the Augustan era and the latest is dated to AD 244/5, namely religious dedications.<sup>119</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>120</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>121</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>122</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>123</sup> This transfer 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>124</sup>

The legion moved to Lambaesis where it remained until the end of the 3rd century AD.<sup>125</sup> It is not known when exactly the legion was transferred here but Le Bohec suggests between AD 115 and 120.<sup>126</sup> Theveste also became a colony at the end of Trajan's reign and, as with Ammaedara, this may have been connected to the legion's departure.<sup>127</sup> Hadrian himself visited Africa and Lambaesis, the then general quarters of the legion, in AD 128.<sup>128</sup> During its period in Africa

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118 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.

119 See Le Bohec (1989a) 58 Table '*Contexte épigraphique (inscriptions militaires africaines)*'.

120 Le Bohec (1989a) 341.

121 Le Bohec (2000) 374.

122 Le Bohec (1989a) 341, 357.

123 Le Bohec (1989a) 361–2.

124 Le Bohec (2000) 374–5.

125 *CIL* 8.2534; Cagnat (1908) 10.

126 Le Bohec (2003) 45.

127 Le Bohec (1989a) 362.

128 Wolff (2003) 53.

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>129</sup> From the Trajanic era the Eurasian 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>130</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>131</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 Medaina, Remada, and Si Aoun. The military frontiers moved further into Africa under Severus and garrisons were established at Zella, Waddan, Tagrfit, Bu Njem, Gasr Zerzi, the two Gheriats, Aïn el-Avenia, and Ghademes.<sup>132</sup> In the Hadrianic period, there were numerous posts occupied by soldiers, but few are now known and only two with any certainty, namely Carthage and Gemellae, as no legionaries are attested to the south-west of the Aures in the pre-Hadrianic period.<sup>133</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>134</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

129 See Le Bohec (1989a) 335–365 for a full overview of military actions during this period; Le Bohec (2007) 242.

130 Le Bohec (2000) 376.

131 Le Bohec (2000) 377.

132 Le Bohec (2000) 377. Bu Njem may also have been called Chol, Chosol, Golas or Gholana. Ghademes may also have had the name Cydamus.

133 Le Bohec (2003) 42. A cohort was stationed in Carthage and there was a fort in Gemellae.

134 Le Bohec (1989a) 395; Le Bohec (2000) 375n.40: 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, Gheriat, and Ghadames show.

to in various ways such as *exercitus Africae*.<sup>135</sup> The legion was disbanded for political reasons in AD 238 and re-founded in AD 253.<sup>136</sup>

### *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>137</sup> In the course of the 2nd century AD other localities sprang up around Lambaesis, adapting to the presence of the legion in the area. Originally the legion may have comprised of 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>138</sup> From the moment of settlement, religious space was created for the traditional Roman military 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, Hygieia, Venus, Mars, Isis, and Sarapis were all worshipped in Africa.<sup>139</sup> This follows what has been argued by Woolf, that freed from Rome, soldiers were able to take with them whatever gods they wished to worship as well as choose which cultic elements they wished to retain in a new locale.<sup>140</sup>

*Pro Salute* dedications were also very common and are attested from the early principate to the late 2nd–early 3rd century AD.<sup>141</sup> These are found together with most deities, for example Jupiter Dolichenus and Asclepius and Victory.<sup>142</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 threatened the emperor and, therefore, the stability of the Empire.<sup>143</sup> Fishwick also comments that *pro salute* dedications in Roman Africa often invoked gods with an African character, for example Pluto

135 *CIL* 5.531; Le Bohec (2003) 41.

136 *ILS* 531/*CIL* 8.2482.

137 *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.

138 Hilali (2007) 481.

139 Benseddik (2009) 240–241.

140 Woolf (2009) 251.

141 Le Bohec (1989a) 563; Fishwick (2004) 352.

142 Jupiter Dolichenus: *CIL* 8.2680; Asclepius and Victory: *CIL* 8.17726.

143 Fishwick (2004) 353, 355.

Augustus, together with gods such as Jupiter Optimus Maximus, which he argues shows a realisation on the dedicator's part that he was a member of an Empire and, thus, should express loyalty to the emperor, as the stability of the *orbis Romanus* depended on the emperor's wellbeing.<sup>144</sup> Dedicators were here, therefore, 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 worshipped by the legion.<sup>145</sup> Deities with connections to Africa such as Neptune, Ceres, and Saturn were also supplicated by the *legio*, which consisted mainly of locally recruited troops later on.<sup>146</sup> However, the officers were predominantly of a non-African origin and it was precisely this group which was the most mobile and facilitated the spread of cults.<sup>147</sup> Archaeological and epigraphic evidence indicates that Lambaesis grew to be the administrative, military, and religious centre of North Africa.<sup>148</sup> Benseddik states that Asclepius and Hygieia dominated the pantheon here because of the importance of the sanctuary and the number of dedications.<sup>149</sup> Dedications were made to the gods here, amongst others, by legates and provincial governors further attesting to their prominence.<sup>150</sup> The Asclepieion became an important

144 Fishwick (2004) 357. Pluto was imported together with the Cereres to North Africa in the 4th century BC: Cadotte (2007) 325. Cadotte (2007) 329–332 table 17 lists seventy-one inscriptions set up to this god in North Africa between the 1st and 3rd centuries AD where they are possible to date.

145 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.

146 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 fifty-one inscriptions dedicated to the god. The cult of the Cereres was founded early on in Africa in the 4th century BC as Dio. Sic. 14.70.77 narrates that the Carthaginians introduced the cult to Carthage in order to atone to the goddesses after they sacked their sanctuary in Syracuse in 396 BC. Cadotte (2007) 348–352 table 18 lists eighty-eight 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 5th century BC in Africa. In table 1, p. 30–37, Cadotte lists 129 inscriptions dedicated to Saturn dating to between the 1st century BC to the 4th AD; Benseddik (2009) 253.

147 Mann (1983) 12; Le Bohec (2000) 378; Collar (2011) 8. See also Davies' reasons for cultic transfer in Table 1 in Chapter 1 where there can be both a top-down spread and cults can also be disseminated by soldiers (nos 1 and 7).

148 Hilali (2007) 486.

149 Benseddik (2005) 275.

150 *AE* 1973 630.

healing centre with soldiers from all across the province dedicating there and seeking the god's help.<sup>151</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>152</sup> These deities were not chosen by chance as Jupiter Hammon protected travellers and caravans, upon whom Bu Njem was dependant for economy and trade.<sup>153</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>154</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, which were a mixture of private and group, and also to both Roman and oriental gods.<sup>155</sup>

Having examined religion in the Roman army generally (see Chapter 4), 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.

### *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 set up by groups and not just by individuals.<sup>156</sup> Asclepius would have been a natural god for soldiers to worship but they also supplicated long lists of deities, and often dedicated to All

151 Benseddik (2005) 277.

152 Hilali (2007) 488.

153 Hilali (2007) 487–8.

154 *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(arc) Aureli Severi [[Alexandri]] In/victi Pii Felicis Aug(usti) pontificis / maximi trib(uniciae) potestatis IIII co(n)s(ulis) / p(atris) p(atriciae) et Iuliae [[Mamm(a)ae]] 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'.*

155 Hilali (2007) 488–9.

156 Le Bohec (1989b) 236–7.

the Gods, adding to the efficiency of their prayers and protecting themselves in many ways.<sup>157</sup> The Third Augustan Legion was, in general, prolific in erecting dedications, as can be shown from a table from Le Bohec's study.<sup>158</sup> The table shows that there was a peak in erecting inscriptions in the 3rd and 4th centuries but also that governors were the most prolific in setting up dedications here. 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>159</sup>

### *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>160</sup> The *III Augusta* moved its headquarters here from Theveste to Lambaesis though is not known precisely when this transfer took place. Le Bohec 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>161</sup> There was already a military outpost in place here prior to the official move of the headquarters, as the camp in Lambaesis, the so-called camp of Titus, was built between 1st July and 13th September AD 81 and the camp site was chosen by the propraetorian legate Lucius Tettius Iulianus.<sup>162</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

157 Le Bohec (1989b) 237, 248.

158 Le Bohec (1989a) p. 549.

159 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 to be a sufficient quantity 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.

160 Benseddik (2010a) 2.107.

161 Le Bohec (1989a) 362; Ptol. *Geog.* 4.3.

162 *AE* 1954 137: *Imp(eratore) T(ito) Caesare divi Ves(pasiani f(ilio) Aug(usto) pon(tifice) max(imo) / trib(unicia) pot(estate) Aug(ustae) / muros et castra a solo / fecit*.

few coins featuring Numidian kings found in the area.<sup>163</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>164</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>165</sup>

The city of Lambaesis grew around the camp and became a *municipium* at the end of the 2nd century AD before it became a *colonia* between AD 246 and 252.<sup>166</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>167</sup> The best known structures in the upper city were the Capitoline temple and a temple to an unknown god, which Janon argues can be securely identified as a temple of the cult of the emperor on the basis of an unpublished inscription.<sup>168</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>169</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>170</sup> Surprisingly, the earliest evidence for a healing cult in Lambaesis is not for that of Asclepius, but two altars were found which were dedicated to Apollo Salutifer, dated to AD 123.<sup>171</sup> Between AD 143 and 146 Asclepius replaced his father as healing god on this site. The first evidence for the cult of Asclepius was a dedication by a Gaius Prastina Messalinus who dedicated a pool to Asclepius and Hygieia between AD 143 and 146:

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163 Janon (1977) 3–4; Benseddik (2010a) 2.108.

164 Janon (1977) 4.

165 Benseddik (2010a) 2.107.

166 Janon (1977) 9.

167 Janon (1977) 5.

168 Janon (1977) 13.

169 Christol and Janon (2002) 73.

170 Janon (1985) 38.

171 *AE* 1920 37: 'Apollini / Salutifero / iussu ipsius / P(ublius) Metilius Secundus / leg(atus) Aug(usti) pr(o) pr(aetore)' and *CIL* 8.2591.



C(aius) Prastina / Messalinus / cum suis conse/cravit piscinam /  
Aesculapio / et Hygiae<sup>172</sup>

Messalinus was a *legatus* who was attested in Lambaesis, Timgad, and Aquae Flavianae where he dedicated to the nymphs.<sup>173</sup> This inscription has long been taken as a sign of the introduction of the cult here.<sup>174</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 (Fig. 49): The temple is divided into three parts, of which the central structure was dedicated to Asclepius and Salus, the Latin version of Hygieia. The two side chapels were dedicated to Jupiter Valens and Silvanus Pegasianus.<sup>175</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, as at Bu Njem, where a *vexillium* had been sent, where the temple architecture combined other orders with African elements (see above).<sup>176</sup> The use of the Doric order could have been either to connect the god here to the Epidaurian version of Asclepius, or maybe to distinguish Asclepius from local healing gods.<sup>177</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>178</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>179</sup>

172 *AE* 1989.870: 'Gaius Prastina Messalinus and associates consecrated a pool to Asclepius and Hygieia'.

173 *CIL* 8.2535–2541, 18044, 17851, 17893, 17723.

174 Benseddik (2010a) 2.120; Benseddik (2007) 197.

175 Janon (1977) 15; Pegasus was one of the symbols of the legion.

176 Hilali (2007) 488–9.

177 Janon (1985) 86.

178 Janon (1985) 84–5.

179 Benseddik (2007) 195.

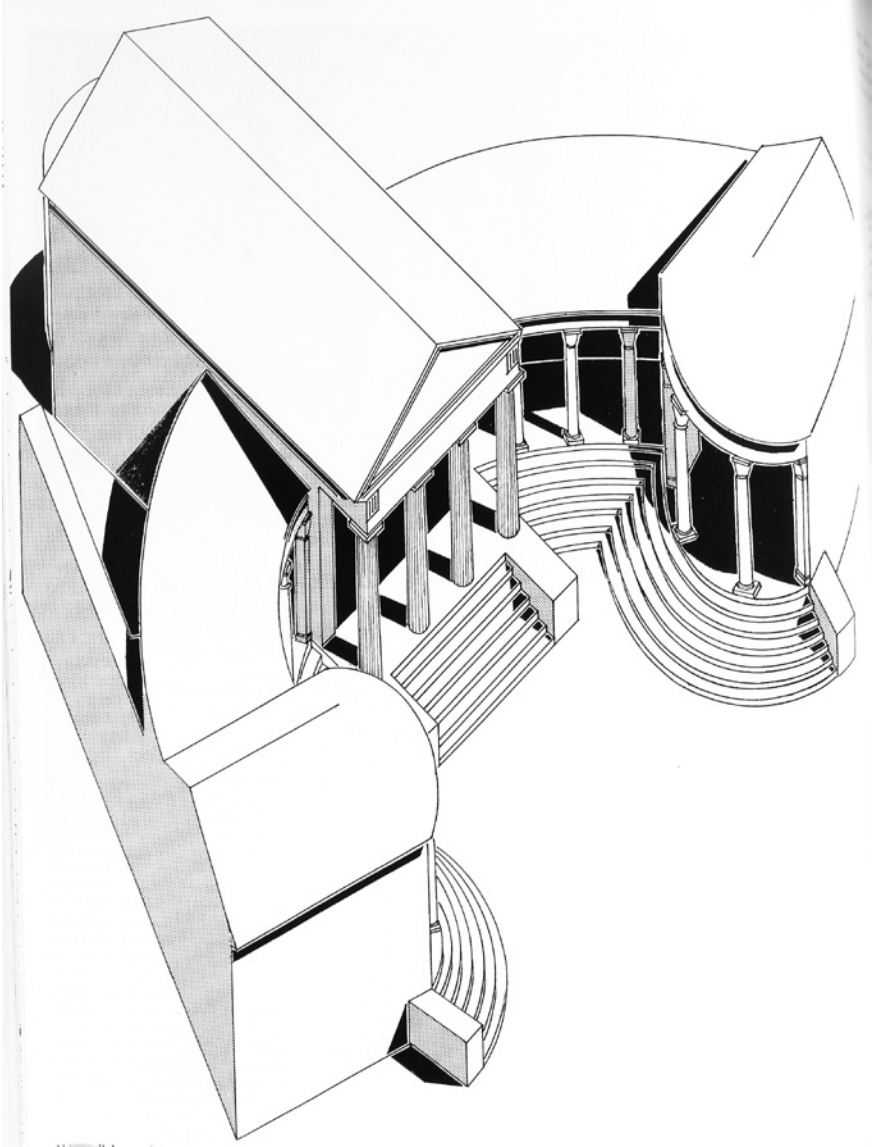


FIGURE 49 Reconstructed drawing of the Asclepieion at Lambaesis.  
FROM JANON (1977) FIGURE 14

The temple has four columns which supported an inscribed architrave, identifying the temple (Fig. 50):

Iovi Valenti / has aedes // Aesculapio et Saluti / Imp(erator) Caes(ar)  
M(arcus) Aurelius Antoninus Aug(ustus) pont(ifex) max(imus) et /



FIGURE 50 Temple of Asclepius at Lambaesis.  
FROM JANON (1977) FIGURE 13

Imp(erator) Caes(ar) L(ucius) Aurelius Verus Augustus // Silvano / per  
[[leg(ionem) III]] Aug(ustam) fecerunt<sup>180</sup>

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>181</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 Antonine plague which spread through

180 *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.

181 *CIL* 8.18089; Janon (1985) 83; *PIR*<sup>2</sup> A.472 p. 199. He was perhaps consul in AD 162 or 163.

the empire at this time.<sup>182</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>183</sup> Janon gives the following schema to understand the layout of the inscription with regard to the temple:

IOVI VALENTI	AESCULAPIO ET SALUTI	SILVANO
	IMP. CAES. M. AURELIUS	
	AUG. PONT. MAX. ET	
	IMP. CAES. L. AURELIUS	
	VERUS AUGUSTUS	
HAS AEDES		PER LEG III FECERUNT

The name of the god would thus correspond to the physical placement of his temple.<sup>184</sup>

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 there was a small temple to Aquae Sinuessanae to the south, next to the chapel of Jupiter Valens.<sup>185</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.<sup>186</sup> In Egypt, the god Imhotep-Asclepius specialised in fertility and was thanked by Ptolemy VI Philopater and Cleopatra for granting them a son.<sup>187</sup> The salubrious nature of the water 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

182 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.

183 Benseddik (2010a) 2.121.

184 Janon (1985) 69.

185 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.

186 Pliny *HN* 31.8.

187 Hurry (1928) 95–96.

Maximus, Jupiter Heliopolitanus, Caelestis, Mercury, Dii Mauri, Neptune and many others.<sup>188</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:

Religiosi / qui stipem / ad Aescula/pium pone/re volunt / in thes/  
aurarium / mittant / ex quibus / aliquod / donum / Aescula/pio fiat.<sup>189</sup>

This inscription was found in a cistern in the camp and is undated. It 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>190</sup> This is a collective military dedication and the terminology used in this dedication is important. Christol and Janon have pointed out that the term *stips* was also used in a dedication to Asclepius from Rome.<sup>191</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, 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 dedication.<sup>192</sup> The inscription, thus, shows a very exclusive group of worshippers in this case.

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

188 Janon (1977) 16.

189 *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.

190 Le Bohec (1989b) 237.

191 This building inscription, *CIL* 6.7, states that *stipes* were used to fund the refurbishment of the temple of Asclepius in Rome during the 1st century BC: '[V]al[eriu]s L(uci)f(ilius) Flaccus / a<e>I>d(iles) d(e) stipe Aesculapi / faciundum locavere / eidem(que) pr(aetores) probavere'. Christol and Janon (2002) 77; Bendlin (2000) 133.

192 Christol and Janon (2002) 78; Cicero *De Nat* 2.72 states that the *religiosi* are the most pious of worshippers.

cult at Lambaesis. Yet, an inscription has also been found here 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 Chapter 4).<sup>193</sup> This dedication does not mention a specific god to whom the soldiers dedicated it, making it possible that they were worshipping Asclepius, as it was located in the temple of Asclepius, or that it might be to the *domus divina*, as argued by Fishwick.<sup>194</sup>

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)  
 Aquileiense 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) /

193 *CIL* 6.2799.

194 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.

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>195</sup>

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 regard to officers making dedications, it is useful to examine the cult of Jupiter Dolichenus 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.<sup>196</sup> It is possible that the same happened here with Asclepius, as most of the dedicators listed in the Table 9 (see below) were officers or officials. However, Asclepius' openness

195 *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, *quaestonarii*, 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 *sexmestris* 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. *Quaestonarii* were legal staff, responsible for policing and questioning people: Adkins and Adkins (2004) 87.

196 Collar (2011) 226–7. See also Table 1 no. 1.

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>197</sup> The temple was used frequently and for a long period of time by legionaries, officers, and *legati* as is attested by the great number of epigraphic sources which were set up here.<sup>198</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>199</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 9). *Legati* most frequently dedicated to the gods but other titles also occur. It is sometimes hard to identify which structures were civilian and which military in Lambaesis. However, the cult here had strong military overtones:

TABLE 9 Inscriptions found in the area of the Asclepieion. With data from Benseddik (2010)

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	Hygieia
Altar	<i>Legatus</i>	<i>AE</i> 1960 107	Bonae Deae
Altar	<i>Centurion—primus pilus</i>	<i>CIL</i> 8.2624	Asclepius and Hygieia
Altar	<i>Pelusii—members of a college</i>	<i>CIL</i> 8.2590	Asclepius and Hygieia
Altar	<i>Legatus</i>	<i>CIL</i> 8.2589	Asclepius and Hygieia
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 Hygieia
Dedication		<i>CIL</i> 8.18218	Hygieia
Three fragments	<i>Legatus/propraetor/consul designate</i>	<i>CIL</i> 8.2585	Jupiter Valens, Asclepius and Silvanus Pegasianus

197 Benseddik (2010a) 2.113. See also Chapter 2.

198 Christol and Janon (2002) 73.

199 Benseddik (2010a) 2.115. The lack of anatomical *ex-votos* is unsurprising as this dedicatory habit fell out of practice in the late 2nd century BC.



One dedication from the above Table 9 stands out from the others as the spelling Escolapio is used, something very rare and seemingly unique:<sup>200</sup>

Di{i}s Salu(tari)/bus Escolapio / et Hygiae quo(rum) ope aduer/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 / Curet(i).<sup>201</sup>

There is no clear explanation for why this spelling was used but it was maybe 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>202</sup> Zenofilus is also attested as proconsul of Africa, signalling the high status of this dedicator.<sup>203</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>204</sup>

The Curetii were trying to honour their erstwhile administrator Zenofilus. Perhaps with the inscription from Lambaesis they added Asclepius as he was the most popular god locally, or Zenofilus had suffered from an illness from

200 This spelling has been overlooked and 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.

201 *AE* 2003 2022/*AE* 2010 88: 'To the healing gods Asclepius and Hygieia 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 4th 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* 1885.108, 1888.30, 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.

202 *CIL* 10.7234.

203 *CIL* 8.1408; Christol and Janon (2002) 81–82.

204 *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'.

which the Curetii hoped he would get better 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 lastly the one in Africa.<sup>205</sup> In doing so, he illustrates the high levels of mobility, similar to what was argued by Collar with regard to officers and which played such an important role in the dissemination of Asclepius through the Balkan and Danube provinces by the army.<sup>206</sup> 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 Hygieia, 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.

### *Lambaesis and Epidaurus*

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>207</sup> This notion is unsurprising as Epidaurus had managed to situate itself as one of the main Asclepieia in the Mediterranean as well as the primary sanctuary from which other cult sites were founded. This follows what has been argued by Davies (see Chapter 1) that cultic transfer could take place through the active promotion by a sanctuary of itself and its god.<sup>208</sup> However, while Epidaurus might have been the epicentre for the cult of Asclepius in Numidia this was maybe not the case 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

205 *PLRE* 1.993.

206 Collar (2011) 226–7. See Chapter 1.

207 Benseddik (1995) 17.

208 Davies (2005) 62.

found, the only such representation to be recovered in Africa.<sup>209</sup> This Asclepieian iconography was especially linked to the Epidaurian cult-statue of the god by Phrasymedes.<sup>210</sup> However, the statue at Lambaesis was lost soon after it was excavated and there are no extant images of it.<sup>211</sup> There is only a short comment about 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, furthermore, an inscription on the entrance to Chapel C which reads '*bonus intra, melior exi*'.<sup>212</sup> Benseddik believes that this 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>213</sup>

The mosaic and inscription would connect the two sanctuaries across the Mediterranean with their expressed 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 global nature. It is curious that there would be such an emphasis on the Epidaurian origins of the cult here, as was mentioned in an inscription from Carthage, when the *legio III Augusta* 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 one which could have also given it an extra sense of authenticity.<sup>214</sup> 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>215</sup> Whitmarsh has argued that provincials reacted to the global Roman Empire by becoming more regional.<sup>216</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,

209 Benseddik (1995) 19.

210 Paus. 2.27.2.

211 Benseddik (1997) 148.

212 *CIL* 8. 2584.

213 Porphyrius *De Abstinētia* 11.19 trans. Edelstein and Edelstein (1998) 1.318.

214 Following the pericentric model of empire: Nederveen Pieterse (2015) 233.

215 Mann (1983) 12; 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.

216 Whitmarsh (2010) 3.

for the original legionaries Africa would also have been a foreign place and it is possible that the legionaries sought to come to terms with their new reality of Empire by resuscitating ancient customs (see also Chapter 1).<sup>217</sup> 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 which were presented in Chapter 1, both by Chaniotis on the resuscitation of ancient rites, and those on the pericentric Empire, 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>218</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 mixed with elements from Greece. This would indicate a more multifaceted 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 was adapted to suit local needs and preferences. This cult would keep the global aspects which made Asclepius who he was but people were free to choose which elements of the cult were best suited for that region. Following Whitmarsh (see Chapter 1), it was the introduction of the global god Asclepius which seemed to have prompted the creation of a regional version of

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217 Following Chaniotis (2009) 28; Stek (2015) 9.

218 Nederveen Pieterse (2015) 233.

this god, as he argues that regionalism needs globalism to define itself against.<sup>219</sup> 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.

### 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 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 stronghold was Carthage and the Carthaginian lands, whereas the military Asclepius was located more in Numidia. The former cult could 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 was 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 generally 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 is 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

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219 Whitmarsh (2010) 2.

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.

### 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 deities 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 deity 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 Hygieia 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. While 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 Hygieia but is not found worshipped with other gods. Even in Lambaesis where a temple was set up to Asclepius and Hygieia, 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>220</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 more statues set up in Numidia, indicating further regional differences between the two provinces. This also would argue against Benseddik's statement as it does not fully take the regional differences within the cult into account. The cult of Asclepius in Africa differs in general 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 Hygieia 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>221</sup> Each Zeus was perceived to be a different Zeus.<sup>222</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. Chapter 2 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 name but

<sup>220</sup> Laurence and Trifilò (2015) 110.

<sup>221</sup> Xen. *An.* 7.8.3–4.

<sup>222</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.

different epithets may, but need not, have been perceived as one and the same deity depending on the supplicant's perceptions.<sup>223</sup> The most important function of the name or epithet was then differentiation.<sup>224</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 worshippers, 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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223 Versnel (2011) 82.

224 Parker (2003) 177.



## 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 an investigation of several factors which were carefully analysed and chosen as they showed the greatest impact on the cult, namely Roman emperors, courtiers, cross-provincial mobility and connectivity, and the creation of a permanent army. Emperors and the army were a direct result of the advent of the Empire as before the founding of the principate these did not exist.

This work has shown 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, this 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 also have created an atmosphere in which the cult could flourish. The second and third aims of this work build on the first as it sought 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 has shown 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 during the Roman Imperial period. A fourth aim is to reject outdated notions of the Empire in terms of 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 cult in Rome was also changed by coming into contact with the cults in the provinces, which, in turn, had already been altered by prior contact with Rome; by globalising the Roman cult was also globalised. The final aim of this work is to show the role which individual choice and agency played within worship of Asclepius and how individual actors could have a great impact on the cult.

Chapter 1 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 4th century AD. This provides a rich cache of evidence from which studies into the cult can be undertaken. The cult also enjoyed a wide geographical dissemination. The chapter, furthermore, provided the theoretical framework in which this examination has been set and 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 work has examined how the cult was affected by coming into contact with the global Roman Empire and it is by exploring and identifying these characteristics that this is possible. Of the three main theories as to why regionalism occurred, the first, following Whitmarsh, argues that the idea of the local was only created when people came into contact with the global; that an individual only became aware of their regional identity when a global one had become clear.<sup>1</sup> This contact with global identity then led to a readdressing of regional identity. A second explanation for globalism comes from Chaniotis 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.<sup>2</sup> By coming into contact with their neighbours' cultures, their own became more important and prominent. A third explanation, following Chaniotis again 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.<sup>3</sup> 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

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1 Whitmarsh (2010) 2. See Chapter 1, section 'Identity and Regionalism'.

2 Chaniotis (2009) 27. See Chapter 1, section 'Competition and Connectivity'.

3 Chaniotis (2009) 28. See Chapter 1, 'Conquest and Regionalism'.

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 work as only when one culture comes into contact with another are these elements shown.

The chapters in this work 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 here. The core sanctuaries of cult of Asclepius did not remain unaffected by the founding of new cult sites and the adaption of others but the nature of these sites also changed as a result of increased mobility. This multi-directional religious mobility is articulated by Nederveen Pieterse 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.<sup>4</sup> 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 one should expect to find aspects of the cult transcending a single 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 2, 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 this point and that the cult of the god Asclepius did not flourish until the 5th century BC. His main sanctuary was that of Epidaurus, although his true place of origin may have been Tricca in Thrace. However, as the sanctuary 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. The chapter also looked at 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

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4 Nederveen Pieterse (2015). See Chapter 1.

main heartland of his cult lay in the Peloponnese, with the largest number of sanctuaries being present there.

The chapter focussed on presenting a brief history of the main sanctuaries of the god, providing a foundation for research presented in Chapters 3, 4, and 5. The same was done with a brief analysis of the iconography of Asclepius, the use of epithets, and incubation and epiphany within the cult. It was ascertained that epithets do not frequently 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 the new or increased needs of people at this time as Asclepius appears to grow more powerful during the Roman period and became active in further spheres of influence. Another important point which came from the analysis of the early dissemination of the cult was that if no need was felt by local people for a healing cult, worship of 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 2, Chapter 3 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 occasionally. 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 Stertinius Xenophon. Xenophon had trained as a doctor on Cos and came 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. 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 which 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 used 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>5</sup> Xenophon was trained

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5 Tac. *Ann.* 12.61.

in the arts of Asclepius, which gave him his position at court, and Xenophon used this situation in order 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 shown in inscriptions 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 remained as Claudius continued to take part, to a certain extent, in Coan regional affairs. The importance of this imperial relationship is visible from titles in dedications set up for Xenophon as his Roman connections are continuously alluded to, as are his Coan ones, leading to the creation of both a global and regional identity on his part which both illustrate the 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 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 1. 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 1), 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 was given a priesthood of Asclepius for which he granted a *neocorate* in return. This worship could have been part of creating dynastic links between Severus Alexander 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 Roman mint and also others across the empire. From the time of Caracalla onwards, Asclepius was depicted on coinages across the provinces, but also those issued by the Roman mint, showing the *omphalos* at his feet. This iconography was adopted as a way to show Caracalla's worship of the Pergamene god across the empire. While not all depictions of Asclepius show the *omphalos*, it did frequently occur on coinage, indicating 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 4, which looked at the Roman army and how it worshipped and

disseminated the cult in the Balkan and Danubian provinces. 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 has argued that it was army officers who were the most mobile members of the military and that they were responsible for the dissemination of cults.<sup>6</sup> Infantry men were the more static group and could often expect to be stationed in the same location for their entire term of service. Officers, on the other hand, 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, illustrating Davies' top-down patterns of cultic dissemination (see Table 1).<sup>7</sup>

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>8</sup> As was shown in Chapter 3, 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 and 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 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. 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 *valetudinaria* 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

6 Collar (2011) 226–7. See Chapter 1.

7 Davies (2005) 62 no. 1.

8 *CIL* 13.7994.

evidence were found concerning worship of the god here. The inscriptions attest the existence of a *sacellum* within the hospital which was erected by the legion stationed there. Military worship of Asclepius did not just introduce him to new regions but also brought him into new contexts in which the god was supplicated. This illustrates a new way of communicating with the divine, as argued by Rüpke (see Chapter 1).<sup>9</sup> 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 in Moesia. These dedications were all set up in Greek and were often accompanied by a relief. Inscriptions 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 cohort to the god Asclepius Zimidrenus. These praetorians 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.<sup>10</sup> 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 *vici* to which they belonged are 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 5 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 choose 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 the god. A cult of Asclepius had long been present in North Africa before the Roman

9 Rüpke (2011) 34–5.

10 This follows what was argued by Davies (2005) 62 no. 7 whereby cultic transfer was facilitated by groups such as soldiers but also no. 2 whereby local gods were disseminated as symbols of local identity.



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 the 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, as 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 Hygieia 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 earlier on, 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 legate who introduced the cult of the god at Lambaesis and the temple was built for the wellbeing of the legion.<sup>11</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 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

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11 *CIL* 8.18089a–c.

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 ties in with the theory argued by Chaniotis (see Chapter 1).<sup>12</sup> 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 worshippers 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 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>13</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

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12 Chaniotis (2009) 28. See Chapter 1.

13 Sue. *Claud.* 25.2.

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 particular 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.

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 because of the advent 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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# Index of Modern Authors

- Adams, Colin 1  
Adams, James N. 225  
Ahearne-Kroll, Stephen 16  
Albinana, Carmen Herrero 143  
Aston, Emma 15, 49
- Beard, Mary 10, 14  
Benario, Herbert W. 93  
Bendlin, Andreas 6, 8, 9, 10  
Benseddik, Nacera 16, 215, 216, 217, 223,  
228, 235, 236, 243, 249, 256, 257, 258,  
260, 261  
Birley, Anthony 114  
Bloesch, Hansjörg 155  
Bosnakis, Dimitris 97  
Boteva, Dilyana 199  
Broodbank, Cyprian 31  
Brulé, Pierre 73  
Bruun, Christer 19–20, 189  
Buraselis, Kostas 88, 94, 99, 101, 103  
Burkert, Walter 71  
Burrell, Barbara 149, 154
- Chaniotis, Angelos 20, 28, 29, 71, 86, 103, 106,  
143, 162, 258, 264, 268, 272  
Chirassi-Colombo, Ileana 39  
Christol, Michel 251  
Clauss, Manfred 171  
Collar, Anna 36, 179, 183, 253, 256, 269  
Connor, Walter R. 109  
Coulson, Jon 18  
Cumont, Franz 38–39, 171
- Davies, John K. 33–35, 53, 58, 83, 86, 162,  
166, 208, 256, 269  
De Blois, Lukas 18, 20  
Derks, Ton 35, 43–44  
Dimitrova, Nora 198  
Duncan-Jones, Richard P. 189  
Dyczek, Piotr 190
- Edelstein, Emma J. 51  
Edelstein, Ludwig 51
- Fishwick, Duncan 242, 252
- Gordon, Richard 171  
Guarducci, Margherita 59
- Halfmann, Helmut 114, 132  
Halof, Klaus 97  
Harl, Kenneth W. 143  
Harrisson, Juliette 80  
Haymann, Florian 17  
Hicks, Edward L. 104  
Hilali, Arbia 18  
Hodos, Tamar 23  
Hoffman, Adolf 115, 117, 119  
Hopkins, Keith 9, 13  
Horden, Peregrine 31, 32
- Interdonato, Elisabetta 59, 60
- Janon, Michel 246, 247, 249, 250, 251
- Kádár, Zoltan 185  
Kranz, Peter 17, 124  
Künzl, Ernst 16, 193
- Lacroix, Léon 157  
Le Bohec, Yann 167, 239, 240, 241, 245, 251  
Le Glay, Marcel 41–42  
Lichtenberger, Achim 20  
LiDonnici, Lynn R. 15  
Lo Cascio, Elio 18
- Maiuri, Amedeo 106  
Malkin, Irad 32–33  
Manders, Erika 19, 134, 135, 136  
Mazzuca, Vito 125  
Melfi, Milena 16, 125, 126  
Mennen, Inge 18–19, 134, 135  
Mihailov, Georgius 201  
Millar, Fergus 11, 12  
Mitchell-Boyask, Robin 16  
Müller, Helmut 118
- Naerebout, Frederick 20–21  
Nederveen Pieterse, Jan 21, 24, 162, 164, 209,  
258, 265, 268, 272  
Nollé, Johannes 152

- Noreña, Carlos F. 135  
 North, John A. 10, 14
- Orlin, Eric M. 24
- Parker, Robin 72, 73, 74  
 Paton, William R. 104  
 Petridou, Georgia 17–18  
 Petsalis-Diomidis, Alexia 17, 118, 119  
 Pitts, Martin 23  
 Platt, Verity 18  
 Potter, Tim W. 68  
 Prignitz, Sebastian 16  
 Price, Simon 10, 14  
 Purcell, Nicholas 31, 32
- Renberg, Gil 15, 17, 79, 189, 204  
 Riethmüller, Jürgen 15, 48, 50, 51, 64, 173, 174,  
 176, 265  
 Rigsby, Kenneth J. 88, 108, 219  
 Rowan, Clare 17, 135, 136, 150  
 Rüpke, Jörg 13, 14, 28–29, 86, 143, 193, 264,  
 270
- Salway, Benet 206, 207  
 Schazmann, Paul 62  
 Scheid, John 195  
 Shaw, Brent D. 31
- Shaw, Rosalind 39  
 Sherwin-White, Susan M. 59, 94, 95  
 Sioumpara, Elisavet 16  
 Sirano, Francesco 125  
 Stallsmith, Allaire B. 72  
 Stek, Tesse 8  
 Stewart, Charles 39  
 Stucky, Rolf 220
- Tiussi, Cristiano 183  
 Tomlinson, Richard A. 52, 128
- Varga, Rada 174  
 Vernant, Jean-Pierre 71  
 Versluys, Miguel J. 23, 41  
 Versnel, Henk S. 70, 71–72, 261  
 Von Ehrenheim, Hedvig 17
- Webster, Jane 39–40  
 Whitmarsh, Tim 21, 26–27, 28, 33, 257, 258,  
 264, 268  
 Wickkiser, Bronwyn L. 15, 16  
 Williamson, George 138  
 Wilmanns, Juliane C. 181  
 Woolf, Greg 9, 20, 37, 208, 242
- Xella, Paolo 225

# Index of Ancient Authors

- Aelius Aristides 17, 27, 111, 117, 119  
Appian 223  
Apuleius 223  
Aristophanes 50
- Caesar 43  
Callimachus 73  
Cassius Dio 89, 112, 114, 132, 133, 134, 136,  
150n318, 161, 163  
Celsus 180  
Cicero 70, 180
- Damascius 224
- Herodas 60  
Herodian 133, 150n318, 161n367, 163  
Herodotus 38, 178  
Hesiod 48  
Historia Augusta 112, 113, 114, 134  
Homer 46–50, 70, 265
- Isyllus 52
- Jerome 189
- Josephus 176
- Livy 64, 65  
Lucian 212
- Ovid 49
- Pausanias 27, 50, 52, 60, 63, 73, 79, 80, 128,  
192, 212  
Pindar 48  
Pliny 60, 250  
Plutarch 38  
Polemo 114  
Pseudo-Hyginus 185n132  
Ptolemy 245
- Scribonius Largus 90n33  
Strabo 49, 59, 60, 222  
Suetonius 91
- Tacitus 39, 40, 87, 91, 93, 162, 239, 266
- Xenophon 71, 261

# Index of Subjects

- Abonoteichos 212  
Acculturation 39  
Achaean League 53  
Achilles 49  
Acragas 50, 68, 218n16, 226  
    Acropolis 68  
    Ex-Votos 68  
    Foundation Myths 68  
Actium, Battle of 84, 89, 94n51, 183n123  
Ad Maiores 241  
*Adventus* 134, 142, 143  
Aecorna 183  
Aegean Islands 88  
Aegean Sea 62, 176  
Aegina 50, 57, 58, 111  
    Battle of Thyrea 57  
Aesepus 111  
Africa Proconsularis 216, 217, 226, 228, 230,  
    232, 234, 235, 236, 238, 239, 241, 256,  
    258, 259, 260, 261, 271  
Agamemnon 50  
Agathos Theos 104  
Agrippa I of Judea 94n54  
Agrippa II of Judea 94n54  
Agrippina Maior 126  
Agrippina Minor 93, 126  
Aigeai 17, 79, 153–155, 164, 213, 268, 269  
    Alexandroupolis 153  
    Antoninupolis 153  
    Severus Alexander 153–154  
    Temple of Asclepius 153  
    Theophilous 153  
    Ain Drinn 246  
Ain el-Avenia 241  
Ain Phua 240  
Ain Rich 241  
Alcis 39  
Alexander I of Egypt 88  
Alexander of Abonoteichos 124, 212  
Alexandria 132, 247  
Alexander, Sextius Titus 180  
Alexandros, Marcus Aurelius 141  
All the Gods 127, 244  
Ammaedara 239, 240  
Amenhotep 120–121  
Amisos 124  
Amor 176  
Amphiaraus 51, 79  
Amrit 218  
Anaxilas of Rhegium 50n22  
Anazarbos 156  
Ancyra 152  
    Asklepieia Soteria Antonineia Isopythia  
    Festival 152  
Anthimos, Julius 141, 142, 152  
Antigonus Doson 53  
Antoninus Pius, the emperor 107n111, 117,  
    124, 139, 140, 216  
Antinous 128, 130–131, 163  
Antonius, Marcus 88–89, 94n51  
Antonius Musa 84  
Antigonids 62n90, 176  
Antioch 131  
Antiochia 113, 132  
Antiochus I of Commagene 40  
Antium 66  
Antonine Plague 19–20, 189, 191n159, 202,  
    213, 249  
Anubis 179  
Apelles 103n26  
Apelles, Marcus Iulius 111  
Aphrodisias 11  
Aphrodite 57n58, 75, 89n26  
Apollo 6, 33–35, 43, 46, 50, 51, 57n58, 60, 70,  
    100, 128, 130, 136, 157, 172, 174, 176, 178,  
    210, 212, 219, 223, 234, 245, 261  
    Clarian 189, 212  
    *Didymeus* 212  
    *Epicures* 247  
    *Grannus* 44, 132, 133, 136  
    *Grannus* and *Sirona* 44, 183, 211  
    *Maleatas* 48, 52  
    *Medicus* 217  
    *Paeon* 60  
    *Pythion* 33–35  
    *Pythios* 33–35  
    *Salutifer* 246  
    and the Thracian Rider 44, 196  
Apulum 173, 174, 209, 211  
Aquae Flavianae 236, 241, 247

- Aquae Sinessanae 250  
 Aquae Sulis 230  
 Aquileia 175, 183  
 Aquincum 183, 184–185, 270  
 Arabia 215  
 Archias son of Aristaichmis 63  
*Archiatros* 90, 95  
 Ares 73, 178  
 Argives 92  
 Argolis 115  
 Aristocles, Lucius Nonius 106  
 Artagenes Heracles Ares 40  
 Artemis 57n58, 73, 139n275, 178  
     Artemis Azzanathkona 232  
 Asclepiad 60, 85, 87, 162, 266  
 Asclepiades 237, 238  
 Asclepius Augustus 174, 184, 210  
 Asclepius Culculesenus/Koulkoussenos 75, 198  
 Asclepius-Glycon 124  
 Asclepius Heros 173, 199  
 Asclepius, Hygiea, and Epione 90, 99, 162  
 Asclepius-Imhotep 75, 79, 84, 120–121, 250  
 Asclepius Kaiser 99, 105  
 Asclepius Kaiser Agathos Theos 104, 105  
 Asclepius Kaiser Sebastos 99  
 Asclepius Keilaidenos 198  
 Asclepius Limenos 198n185  
 Asclepius Merre 224–225  
 Asclepius Pergamenus 174, 212  
 Asclepius Saorus 191–192  
 Asclepius Soter 63, 75, 117, 118, 120, 121, 152, 233, 271  
 Asclepius Zimidrenus/ Zudeono/  
     Zydeno 37, 75, 76, 197n179, 198, 199, 200, 206, 207, 208, 209, 211, 214, 252, 270, 271.  
     *See also* 'Epithets' for more about epithets  
 Asia Minor 5, 17, 27, 28, 63, 64, 85, 90, 107, 114, 122, 123, 131, 132, 133, 134, 141, 151–156, 162, 164, 176, 188, 211, 228, 268  
     Cities 27, 86  
     *Koinon* 11, 149n311, 152, 161  
     Migration to Dacia 179, 211, 212  
 Assurnirari v of Assyria 218  
 Astarte 222, 223, 225, 226, 261  
 Asyilia 62, 64, 86, 88, 90, 105, 106, 108, 266  
 Athens 3, 113, 114, 159, 220, 247  
     Asclepieia Festival 56  
     Asclepieion 15–16, 47, 50, 51, 52, 54–59, 77, 82, 110, 265  
     Athena Parthenos 114  
     *Boule* 22, 58  
     Connection with Epidaurus 55, 56, 57, 58  
     *Demos* 58, 83  
     Eleusinion 54, 128  
     Epidauria Festival 56  
     Hadrian's Library 117  
     Inventories 51, 58–59, 83, 184, 192  
     Olympian Zeus 119  
     Plays 16  
     Plague 16, 52, 57, 58  
     State Cult 58  
     Theatre of Dionysus 16  
     Zea 54  
 Attalids 62n90  
 Attalus I of Pergamum 63  
 Attalus III of Pergamum 63  
 Attalus, Marcus Caerelius 141, 142  
 Attica 58  
 Attis 91  
 Augusta Traiana 178  
 Augustus, the emperor 11, 84, 89, 101, 112, 141, 148, 167, 168, 172, 179, 180, 193, 239, 269  
  
 Baal 218, 222, 225, 233, 243n146  
 Bacchus 230  
 Bad Gotesburg 212, 269  
 Balagrae 50, 52  
 Balkan Mountains 172  
 Balkan Provinces 4, 5, 22, 37, 132, 165, 167, 168, 169, 183, 189, 194, 213, 228, 256, 263, 269  
 Bassae 247  
 Bata 178  
 Batavi 43  
     *Summus Magistratus* 43  
 Bathing Complexes 228, 230, 261  
 Batkun 159, 197, 198, 199  
 Beja 236  
 Bel 232  
 Belalis Maior 233  
 Bendis 174, 178  
 Berzobis 173  
 Bithynia 114, 132  
 Boeotia 51, 68, 82, 266, 267

- Bonn 190  
 Bonus Eventus 179  
 Bostan esh-Sheikh 218, 222  
     Nawr el-Awali/Asclepius Fluvius 222  
 Bracara Augusta 228  
 Britannia 168, 171, 228  
 Bulgaria 16, 196  
 Bulla Regia 234  
 Bu Njem 18, 241, 244, 247  
 Busenberg 44  
  
 Cabyle 177, 178  
 ad Calceum Herculis 241  
 Caesarea 216  
 Caesar, Julius 64, 88, 94n51, 180, 265  
 Caesar, Lucius 126  
 Calama 236  
 Campania 64, 67  
 Campestres 170–171  
 Capsarii 182  
 Caligula 91, 240  
 Calixtus, Georg 38  
 Calymna 95, 100, 101, 102, 104  
 Capitoline Triad 172, 174, 176, 178, 223n43,  
     246  
 Cappadocia 141, 153  
 Caracalla, the emperor 4, 17, 31, 83, 85, 86,  
     106, 112, 119, 120, 124, 131–159, 164, 266,  
     267–268, 270  
     Asia Minor 131–161, 213  
     Iconography 19  
     Ideology 19  
     Legitimation of Rule 134, 158, 164  
 Carnuntum 175  
 Carpi 174  
 Carrhae 132  
 Carthage 211, 217, 222, 223, 225, 226, 232, 234,  
     236, 238, 240, 241, 243n146, 247, 257,  
     258, 259, 260, 271  
     Acropolis 223, 225, 226  
     Temple of Eshmun 223, 260  
 Casae 241  
 Castellum Dimmidi 241  
 Castellum Tidditanorum 230  
 Castor and Pollux 39  
 Castrensium, Tiberius Martius 184  
 Celtic Gods 43, 44, 170  
 Ceres 183, 223n43, 243  
 Cilicia 17, 79, 153, 156, 213, 269  
 Cirta 240  
 Civic Dynamics 86, 87  
 Civic Emulation 86, 87, 152  
 Civic Self-Aggrandisement 84, 268  
 Code-Switching 237–238  
 Competition 41  
 Civic 5, 27–29, 30, 72, 85, 86, 87, 143, 162,  
     264, 268  
     First of Asia 139  
 Citizenship 27, 84, 91, 102, 177, 183, 206, 207  
*Chaos* 71  
 Chryse 57n58  
 Claudia Phoebe 102–103  
 Claudius, the emperor 62, 83, 85, 87–107,  
     126, 162, 172, 175, 176, 256, 266–267  
     British Campaigns 92  
     Death 93  
     Letters 93, 96–97  
     Religious Practices 91  
 Cleon 224–225  
 Cleonymus, Tiberius Claudius 91n38,  
     102–103, 104, 106  
     *Monarchos* 102  
 Cleopatra III of Egypt 88  
 Coccale 61n85  
 Coeus 92  
 Colonisation 33  
 Commagene 40  
 Commodus 112n148, 140, 177  
 Communal Identity 138  
 Communication 1, 14, 19, 28, 31–33, 80–81,  
     110, 135, 256, 265  
     Communicative System 1, 28, 36, 143,  
     264, 270  
     Connectivity 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 23, 24, 27,  
     28–29, 31–32, 179, 211, 212, 263, 264, 265,  
     268, 270, 271, 272, 273  
 Corinth 11, 16, 46, 50, 110, 115, 220  
 Corinthian Temple Order 247  
 Coronis 46, 49, 60  
 Cos  
     *Archiatros* 90, 95  
     Asclepieion 3, 25, 47, 51, 59–63, 85, 86,  
     87–107, 110, 125, 127, 162–163, 247,  
     266–267  
     Asklapieia Megala 105  
     *Asylia* 86, 62, 64, 88, 90, 105, 106, 108, 266

- Cos (cont.)
- Attaleia Festival 62
  - Cult of Sebastos 90
  - Demos 88, 101, 106
  - Festival 108
  - Foundation Myths 59, 88
  - Immunitas* 87, 89, 92, 93, 98, 106, 162, 266
  - Jewish Treasures 88
  - Libertas 89
  - Medical Instruments 110
  - Monarchos* 90, 102
  - Patron 90
  - Sacred Grove 25, 89
  - Sebasta Asklapeiiai Megala 105, 106
  - Stasis* 97
  - Xenophon's Improvements 93
- Cotys 178
- Court 12, 62, 85, 87–107, 266–267
- Courtiers 7, 8, 9, 10, 12–13, 87–107, 163, 263
- Crassus, Marcus Licinius 172
- Creolisation 39
- Crete 16, 38, 114
- Cuicul 228, 240
- Cult of the Emperor 10, 86, 118, 148, 101, 106, 155, 168, 172, 178, 216, 242, 246
- Cult: Global 2, 6, 7, 8, 22, 34, 38, 45, 47, 71, 76, 81, 87, 179, 207, 209, 254, 257, 258, 263, 264, 265, 267, 272, 273
- Cult: Regional 2, 6, 7, 8, 22, 34, 38, 45, 47, 71, 76, 81, 87, 179, 162, 207, 209, 257, 258, 263, 265, 267, 272, 273
- Cult of the Standards 179
- Cures 255–256
- Curetii* 255–256
- Cybele 179, 222, 226, 242, 259, 261
- Cycladic Islands 51
- Cydilla 61n85
- Cyllene 50
- Cynno 61n85
- Cyprus 223
- Cyrenaica 114
- Cyrene 52, 114
- Cyzicus 113, 114
- Dacia 4, 132, 168, 173–174, 209, 211, 212, 213, 228
- Danube 16, 172, 175, 178, 199
- Dalmatia 171, 174, 228
- Damnatio Memoriae* 99
- Danubian Provinces 4, 5, 22, 37, 165, 167, 168, 169, 183, 194, 207, 213, 228, 256, 263, 269
- Dea Africa 230, 246
- Dea Caelestis 210–211, 223n43, 225, 251, 271
- Dea Roma 178
- Dea Syria 179
- Decius 19
- Deinas 202
- Deir el-Bahari 120–121, 219
- Temple of Hatshepshut 120n200
- Delos 51
- Inventories 51n32
- Delphi 46, 157
- Oracle 46, 48, 52, 61, 265
- Demeter 242
- Diana 172, 174, 183, 242, 245
- Dii Campestres 169, 170
- Dii Mauri 251
- Dii Patrii 20, 250
- Dilesonsos 202
- Diocletian, the emperor 18
- Diodorus, Aurelius 191
- Dionysodorus, Aurelius 200
- Dionysus 16, 57n58, 115, 130, 178, 237, 259
- Dionysus Kademeios 221
- Thyrsus 237
- Dioscuri 176, 196n177
- Disciplina 242
- Dissemination 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 15, 22, 32, 33–35, 37, 46–47, 50–52, 53, 56, 81, 82, 131, 164, 166, 169, 170, 171, 213, 214, 216, 217, 256, 258, 260, 262, 263, 265, 266, 268, 269, 270
- Djebel Asker 250
- Dolna Dikanja 198
- Domitian, the emperor 117n175, 137, 172
- Domus Caesaris 171
- Domus Divina 252
- Dorf Kalново 173
- Dorf Trud 178
- Dorf Tučeniza 173
- Dorf Varvara 199
- Dorf Yavorovo 178
- Doric Temple Order 247, 259
- Dotian Plane 48



- Draganovets 173  
 Drusilla, Julia 126  
 Drusus 126  
 Dura-Europos 168, 232  
 Durostorum 178
- Earinus 117n175  
 Ebla 218  
 Edessa 132  
 Egypt 11, 20, 75, 84, 95, 120–121, 219, 250  
 El-Gahra 241  
 Elites 9, 10, 12, 18–19, 22, 29, 44, 62, 83,  
 87–107, 120, 125, 128, 162, 163, 215  
 Eleusis 112, 114, 128–131, 163, 267  
 Eleusinian Goddesses 128  
 Eleusinian Mysteries 128  
 Embassies 11, 62, 64, 90, 91, 98, 103, 107, 108,  
 266  
 Emona 175, 183  
 Emperors 2, 3, 4, 7, 8, 9–13, 18, 19, 29, 30–31,  
 83–165, 167, 243, 263, 266, 267, 272, 273  
   Communication with Subjects 19, 30,  
   143  
   Contact with Provincials 11, 12  
   Legitimation of Rule 19, 134, 158, 164  
   Relations with Elites 18–19, 87–107  
   *See also* 'Travel: Emperors'  
 Epidaurus  
   Asclepieion 3, 16, 46, 47, 52–53, 55–59,  
   60, 63, 64, 70, 77, 79, 80, 81, 82, 85, 86,  
   107, 109, 110, 111, 112, 115, 131, 134, 150, 159,  
   163, 164, 215, 229, 247, 256, 257, 258, 259,  
   260, 265, 267  
   Hadrian's Visit 125–128  
   *lamata* 15, 53, 79, 80, 81, 109, 110, 254  
   Kaisarea Festival 126  
   Mnemosyne 16  
   Mount Kynortion 48  
   Revival of Rites 127, 163, 164  
   Sanctuary Reorganisation 127–128  
   Sullan Sack 125  
 Epiphany 3, 18, 58, 80–81, 212, 266  
 Epirus 50  
 Epithets 3, 22, 30, 33–35, 42, 43, 49, 60,  
   70–76, 166, 174, 192, 198, 202, 209, 223,  
   232–234, 261–262, 266, 271  
   *Adon* 233  
   Asclepius 74–76  
   *Augustus* 174, 184, 210, 232  
   *Deus* 174  
   *Dominus* 174, 225, 232, 233  
   Functional 72  
   *Hegemon* 72  
   *Kurios* 174, 197n179, 202, 271  
   *Numen* 174, 208  
   *Repentinus* 233, 234  
   *Saldaecaputenus* 202  
   *Saltecaputenus* 202  
   *Sanctus* 233  
   *Soter* 72, 233, 271  
   Topographic 72, 73, 212  
   Trans-God 72  
   *See also* 'Asclepius' for individual epithets  
 Ephesus 27, 114, 139, 157  
 Epona 170  
*Equites Singulares* 170  
 Erasmus 38  
 Eshmun-Asclepius 4, 38, 211, 217–226, 230,  
   233, 234, 236, 237, 238, 239, 259, 260,  
   261, 262, 271  
 Eshmunazar of Sidon 219  
 Etruria 67, 68  
 Euboea 50  
 Eumenes II of Pergamum 62, 63  
 Euphrates 114, 168  
*Ex-voto* Dedications 25, 58–59, 66, 67, 68,  
   110, 225, 254
- Fabrica* 185n132  
*Fasti Praenestini* 66  
 Felix, Caius Cornelius Africanus 234  
 Felix, Marcus Orbius 232  
 Festival 52, 56, 62, 83, 105–107, 108, 126, 127,  
   143, 151, 163, 166, 219, 268  
   Antonina Asklepieia 152  
   Asklepieia Soteria Antonineia  
   Isopythia 152  
   Pythia Asklepieia 152  
 Fides 134  
 Fimbra, Gaius Flavius 64  
 Flamen Dialis 37  
 Fortuna 176, 210, 244  
 Fregellae 66–68, 110  
   Anatomical Ex-Votos 66, 110  
   Origin Myths 66  
 Fronto, Publius Aelius 194

- Frontonianus, Caius Iulius 210  
 Fucino 183
- Gaganitsa 173  
 Gaianus, Titus Flavianus 152  
 Gallia Cisalpina 174n55  
 Gallienus 19, 137, 149, 161  
 Gallus, Quintus Ogulnius 64  
 Gammarth 236  
 Gasr Zerzi 241  
 Gaul 43, 113, 132, 171  
 Gebeleisis 174  
 Gemellae 170, 241  
*Genii* 169–170, 176, 210, 211, 242  
   Genius of Carthage 210  
   Genius of Colonia Cirta 250  
   Genius of Dacia 210  
   Genius Vici 250  
 Germaneia 177  
 Germania 132, 168, 170, 171, 172  
 Germanicus, Julius Caesar 143  
 Gerouville 44  
 Geta, the emperor 133, 134, 141, 164  
 Ghadames 241  
 Gheriat 241  
 Glava Panega 173, 198, 202  
 Globalism 21, 23–31, 51, 258, 259, 264, 272  
 Glycon 189, 211–12  
 Gordian III, the emperor 155, 156, 208  
 Gortys 50  
 Goths 174  
 Governors 96, 171, 215, 243, 245  
 Greece 1, 5, 6, 15–17, 21, 23, 27, 50, 51, 67,  
   114–115, 247, 258, 263, 266, 267  
 Gyaros 11
- Hades 49n16, 196n177  
 Hadrian, the emperor 4, 19, 83, 85, 112–131,  
   143, 156, 163, 173, 175, 177, 216, 236, 266,  
   267  
   *Hadrian Soter Olympios Ephiphanestatos*  
     *Neos Asklepios* 115  
   Pergamum 115–125  
   Religious Policies 113–114, 119, 124  
   Religious Universality 112, 114, 119, 120,  
     127, 163, 267  
   *Theos Hadrianos* 117  
   Travels 112–115, 240
- Hadrianotheari 156  
 Hadrumentum 236  
 Haemus Mountains 199  
 Haidra 239n16  
 Halieis 50  
 Hamman Djedid 236  
 Hammam du Charef 241  
 Hasdrubal 223  
 Haskovski Bani 178  
 Hellenistic Courts 104, 105, 108  
 Hellenistic Kings 47, 53, 62, 88, 95  
 Hellespont 132  
 Helios 115  
 Henchir el-Hammam 240  
 Henchir Medeina 241  
 Henchir Mgarine 241  
 Henchir Sellaouine 241  
 Hercules 20, 136, 172, 178, 179, 183, 230, 242  
   Hercules Magusanus 43, 211  
 Hermias, Caius Spedius 212  
 Heros 202  
 Hero Cult 15, 49  
 Hephaistos 196n177  
*Hieros* 108–109  
*Hiketes* 108  
 Hippocrates 60  
 Hippocratic School 60, 88  
 Hippo Regis 236  
 Hispania 171  
 Hittites 36  
 Homogenisation 21, 30, 45, 71  
 Homonoia 27, 124, 139, 140, 157  
*Horrea* 185n132  
 Horus 192  
*Hosia* 108–109  
 Hybridisation 40  
 Hygieia 16, 50, 93, 155, 166, 172, 174, 178, 183,  
   185, 187, 188, 190, 192, 193, 195, 198, 199,  
   202, 206, 212, 216, 220, 228, 230, 236,  
   242, 243, 246, 255, 256, 260, 261, 271
- Iatros* 95  
 Iberia 223, 228  
 Iconography 3, 5, 17, 42, 47, 70, 76–78, 131,  
   142, 149, 155, 156, 160, 216, 220, 226,  
   234–239, 257, 259, 266, 267, 268, 272  
 Amelung 78, 112, 123–125, 156, 162, 164  
 Campana 76, 228, 234, 261

- Chiaramonti 44, 76, 77  
 Dog 69, 77, 256  
 Este 76, 122–124, 220  
 Epidaurian 124, 220  
 Giustiani 76, 124, 220  
*Omphalos* 123, 128, 130–131, 156, 157, 158,  
 163, 164, 267, 268  
 Pergamene 107, 131, 156, 157, 163, 164, 202,  
 209, 214  
 Snake-Staff 76, 94, 123, 124, 130, 145, 155,  
 156, 202, 222, 234, 238  
 Tunis 228, 234, 236, 261  
 Ilium 132, 133  
 Illyrians 175–176  
 Iulianus, Iulius 185  
 Iulianus, Lucius Tettius 245  
 Iustus, Marcus Porcius 233  
*Immunitas* 84, 87, 89, 92, 93, 98, 106, 162,  
 266  
*Impact of Empire Network* 3, 8, 18–21  
 Imperial Cult: See 'Cult of the Emperor'  
 Imperial Family 118, 119, 125–126  
 Imperial Household 126, 206, 216  
 Imperial Titles 94, 93–103, 267  
   *Eusebius* 94n54  
   *Ephiphanestatos* 115  
   *Philoclaudius* 95, 100, 101  
   *Philokaisar* 94n54, 95, 98, 99, 100, 101,  
   105, 106  
   *Philoneron* 95, 98, 99, 100, 104, 163  
   *Philopatris* 97, 98, 99, 100, 101  
   *Philoromaïos* 94n54, 98, 99, 100, 101  
   *Philosebastos* 98, 99, 100, 101  
*Imperium Romanum* 1n8  
 Incubation 3, 17–18, 25, 47, 53, 78–81, 254,  
 266  
   Divinatory 79  
   Therapeutic 79  
 Infrastructure  
   Physical 1, 3, 6, 12, 14, 22, 110, 183, 242  
   Religious 28, 143, 193  
 Integration 13, 20–21  
*Interpretatio Romana* 35, 39, 40, 42, 44, 234  
 Ionia 132  
 Isauricus, Publius Servilius 64  
 Isis 41, 79, 179, 242, 246  
 Italy  
   General 5, 8, 47, 174, 183, 223, 228  
   Italian Sanctuaries 3, 64–70, 110  
 Ithome 47  
 Julia Domna 132, 141, 161  
 Jupiter 43, 183, 242, 244, 250  
   Bazocenus 250  
   Depulsor 42, 183  
   Dilectator 42  
   Dolichenus 35–37, 38, 174, 179, 242, 243,  
   253  
   Hammon 244  
   Heliopolitanus 251  
   Optimus Maximus 42, 171, 176, 183,  
   196n177, 243, 250  
   Stator 42  
   Valens 42, 247, 248, 249, 250, 259, 260  
 Juno 90, 176n75, 211, 242  
 Kandaon 178  
 Khanget 236  
*Kosmos* 71  
 Krän 178  
 Laburus 183  
 Laetas, Marcus Clodius 190  
 Lambaesis 18, 42, 170, 190, 215, 218, 228, 230,  
 236, 240, 241, 242, 245–259, 260, 271  
   Camp of Titus 245  
   Sacella 250  
   Temple 215, 245, 247–250, 252, 259  
 Lambiodi 246  
 Lamigig 246  
 Lamsorti 246  
 Laodikeia 152  
   Antonina Asklepieia Festival 152  
   Pythia Asklepieia Festival 152  
 Lares 183  
 Larisa 48  
 Laskarevo 178  
 Latium 66, 67  
 Latona 92  
 Lebaseia 51n31  
 Lebena 16, 50, 220  
*Leistai* 201  
*Leistologeïn* 200–201  
 Lepcis Magna 20, 42, 233, 234, 237, 238  
 Lepidus, Marcus Aemilius 239  
 Levunovo 178

- Liber Pater 20, 136, 172, 174, 209  
 Lilyache 173  
 Lilybaeum 255–256  
 Lissos 220  
 Livia 126  
 Locris 50  
 Lotschitz 190  
 Lottum 43n211  
 Lucius, Publius Aelius 183  
 Ludi Saeculares 20  
 Lydia 132  
 Lyublen 173
- Macedo, Aelius 181  
 Macedonia 176, 177, 199  
 Macedonian Antigonids 176  
 Machaon 47, 49  
 Macrinus, the emperor 86, 131, 142, 160–161  
 Madaure 236  
 Magna Graecia 247  
 Magna Mater 41, 183  
 Malko Belovo 198  
 Malo Konare 198  
 Mantinea 50, 115  
 Marcianopolis 132, 178  
 Marcomannic Wars 173, 189, 190, 202, 213  
 Marcurgum 236  
 Marcus Aurelius, the emperor 78, 140, 177,  
 215, 233, 249  
 Maroneia 97–98  
 Mars 43, 135, 136, 172, 174, 176, 179, 242  
     Mars Camulus 211  
     Mars Canaphar 244  
     Mars Halamardus 43  
 Mascula 240, 241  
 Mati'el King of Arpad 218  
 Matres 170, 211  
 Mauretania Caesariensis 216, 241  
 Mauretania Tingitania 216, 241  
 Maximus, Gaius Stertinius 91  
 Mchaieb 241  
 Medaurus 250  
*Medicus* 95, 183, 184, 192, 193, 195, 214  
     *Medicus Castrensis/Castrorum* 181  
     *Medicus Clinicus* 181  
     *Medicus Chirurgus* 181, 183  
     *Medicus Ordinarius* 181  
 Mediterranean Sea 31–33
- Megara 115  
 Meidias Painter 56  
 Melta 177  
 Menelaus 49  
 Mercury 42–44, 183, 242, 251  
     Mercury Augustus 233  
     Mercurius Silvanus 42, 234  
     Mercury/Hermes 42  
     Mercury and Rosmerta 44, 211  
 Messalina 126  
 Messalinus, Gaius Prastine 246–247  
 Messene 16, 247  
 Mesopotamia 168n18, 218  
 Miccythus of Rhegium 50  
 Mikylos 52n36  
 Minerva 43, 136, 176, 242, 250  
 Misenum 64, 177  
 Mithra 41  
 Mithras 41, 171, 174, 179, 183, 209, 222, 232,  
 243, 246, 250, 253  
 Mithridates 63, 64, 88, 90  
 Mobility  
     Army 13, 169, 179, 182, 185, 198, 214, 260,  
     269, 270  
     General 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 12, 14, 22, 31, 32,  
     212, 216, 256, 260, 263, 264, 265, 273  
     Cross-provincial 2, 7, 24, 211, 263, 264,  
     268, 269  
 Moesia 78, 132, 160, 166, 168, 171, 172–173, 174,  
 177, 202, 206, 207, 213, 270  
*Monarchos* 90, 102  
 Montana 177  
 Moucatralis, Aurelius 199  
 Mucianus, Aurelius 208  
 Multi-directional Exchange 4, 162, 164, 209,  
 264, 265, 268, 273  
 Mummius, Lucius 66  
 Musti 216  
 Mylasa 111  
 Mysia 156  
 Mystery Cult 107
- Narbonensis 258  
 Narhanarvali 39  
 Naupactus 50  
 Nauportus 175  
 Nemesis 139n275, 174, 183  
 Nemrud Dağ 40

- Nea Paphos 124  
 Neocorate 86, 131, 137, 140, 141, 143, 148, 149,  
     150, 154, 156, 161, 164, 268  
*Neos Asklepios* 115, 130, 131n241, 155  
*Neos Asklepios Glycon* 212  
 Neptune 42, 176, 183, 243, 251  
     Neptune/Poseidon 42  
 Nero, the emperor 95, 96, 98, 99, 100, 101,  
     104, 113, 163, 176  
     Domus Aurea 113  
 Nerva, the emperor 122n206  
 Nicaea 156  
 Nicomedia 113, 131, 132  
 Nicopolis ad Istrum 173, 178  
 Nicopolis ad Nestrum 178  
 Nida 171  
 Nike 141n282, 144, 150  
 Nikias 94  
*Nomen* 183, 207  
     Aurelius 207  
     Iulius 207  
     Noricum 171  
 Novae 16, 178, 181, 185, 186–194, 213, 269  
     Sacellum 166, 187, 188, 190, 192, 193, 270  
     Temple 187–189  
 Novaesium 186  
 Novosel 198  
 Numidia 171, 174n55, 215, 216, 217, 218, 226,  
     230, 231, 232, 233, 236, 238, 239, 241, 246,  
     255, 256, 258, 259, 260, 261, 271  
 Nymphs 176, 183, 246, 247  
  
 Odessus 188  
 Oechalia 47  
 Oescus 178  
 Oikoumene 119  
 Olympia 50  
 Omphalos 123, 128, 130–131, 156, 157, 158, 163,  
     164, 267, 268  
 Onesas, Marcus Antonius 211  
 Oraea 183  
 Oropus 51n31  
 Ortygia 68  
 Ostia 66, 192  
  
 Pan 176  
 Pannonia 132, 168, 171, 174–176, 183, 185, 213,  
     228  
 Paphlagonia 212  
 Parthians 114  
 Pastuša 198  
 Patria 98  
 Pautalia 178  
 Pax 134  
*Pax Romana* 1, 110  
 Pegasus 42  
 Pelasgiotis 48  
 Peleusion 132  
 Peloponnese 16, 50, 114, 266  
 Peloponnesian War 52, 57  
 Pergamum  
     Asclepieion 3, 17, 27, 31, 47, 51, 52, 63–64,  
         78, 80, 85, 86, 107, 110, 112, 127, 128, 131,  
         152, 153, 155, 157, 159, 161, 162, 163, 164,  
         213, 236, 265, 267, 268  
     Asclepius Soter 63, 117, 118, 120, 121  
     Athena 63  
     Caracalla 132–150  
     Foundation 63  
     Hadrian's Visit 115–125  
     *Homonoia* Coins 124, 139, 140, 157  
     *Megalopolis* 115  
     Temple Sharing 118, 141, 148–150  
 Pericentric Model of Empire 21, 209,  
     257n214, 258, 264, 265, 268, 272  
 Perinthos 132  
 Pernik 198  
 Persia 40–41  
 Pertinax 18  
 Perustica 198  
 Pharsalus 48  
*PHI* Database 99, 101  
 Philae 84, 120  
 Philippopolis 177, 197, 198, 204, 206–209  
 Philip II of Macedon 209n213  
 Philip V of Macedon 53, 103n92  
 Phoebiana 133  
 Phoenicia 218, 219, 220, 223, 224, 225, 226  
 Phosphorus 178  
 Physician 82, 84, 87, 88, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95,  
     96, 104, 184, 187, 192, 193, 195, 266  
     Army 180–196, 214, 269  
 Phrygia 160  
 Phrasymedes 257  
*Pietas* 153  
 Plataea 51n30

- Plautilla, Fulvia 134  
 Pluto Augustus 242–243  
 Podaleirus 48  
 Poetovio 175  
 Polentisa 178  
 Pollio, Titus Pomponius Proculus  
     Vitrasius 187–189  
 Pompeii 64  
 Pompey, Gnaeus Pompeius Magnus 88  
 Ponte di Nona 68  
*Populus* 134, 143  
 Poseidon 73  
     Poseidon Asphaleios 73  
     Poseidon Hippias 73  
     Poseidon Pelasgios 73  
 Postumus, the emperor 158  
 Postumus, Curtius 94n51  
 Potaissa 173  
 Praeneste 66, 185, 270  
 Priapus 176  
*Pro Salute* Dedications 29, 242  
 Proxenia 63  
 Prusias ad Hypium 132  
 Ptolemaic Dynasty 62  
 Ptolemy II Philadelphus of Egypt 61n85, 84,  
     120n199  
 Ptolemy III of Egypt 62n90  
 Ptolemy VI of Egypt 62, 120, 250  
 Ptolemy VIII of Egypt 121  
 Ptolemy IX of Egypt 88  
 Purity 25, 80, 254, 257, 259, 272  
 Puteoli 64  
 Pythodorus, Sextus Iulius Maior Antoninus  
     128  
  
 Raetia 132, 171, 210  
 Ratiaria 178  
 Ravenna Fleet 175, 177  
 Refinus, Decimus Fonteius Frontianus Lucius  
     Sertinius 249  
 Regionalism 21, 23–31, 27, 45, 51, 85, 259,  
     264, 265, 272  
 Religious Choice 3, 5, 6, 14, 57, 70, 74, 110,  
     207, 208, 262, 264, 270, 271, 272  
 Religious Diversity 14, 24, 27, 216, 217, 232,  
     239, 260, 261, 271  
 Religious Revival 4, 30, 45, 127, 162, 164, 258,  
     264, 267, 272, 273  
  
 Remada 241  
 Rhine Region 44, 175, 211  
 Rhodes 114  
 Rhodope Mountains 176  
 Roman Army 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11,  
     13–14, 18, 20, 22, 36, 37, 65, 110, 134, 161,  
     165, 215, 216, 217, 231, 244, 263, 268–269,  
     271, 273  
*Alae* 181  
 Auxiliaries 167, 171, 173, 175, 176, 177, 181,  
     204, 214  
*Beneficii Consularis* 176, 199  
*Cohors I Aelia Athoitarum et*  
     *Berecyntorum* 177  
*Cohors I Athoitorum* 177  
*Cohors I Cispadensium* 177  
*Cohors I Claudia Sugambrorum* 177  
*Cohors I Praetoria* 204–208  
*Cohors II Bracaraugetanorum* 177  
*Cohors II Concordia Severina* 177  
*Cohors II Lucensium* 177  
*Cohors II Mattiacorum* 177  
*Cohors II Gallorum* 177  
*Cohors II Praetoria* 181  
*Cohors X Praetoria* 208  
*Cohors XXXII Voluntariorum Civium*  
     *Romanorum* 171  
*Cohortes Militariae* 176  
*Cohortes Quingenariae* 176  
*Hastatus* 192  
*Legio I Italica* 187, 190, 192  
*Legio I Minerva* 212, 269  
*Legio II Adiutrix* 175, 184  
*Legio III Augusta* 18, 42, 215, 216, 217, 226,  
     228, 233, 239–256, 257, 259, 271–272  
*Legio IV Flavia Felix* 173  
*Legio IV Praetoria* 181  
*Legio IV Scythia* 172  
*Legio VII Claudia* 172  
*Legio V Alaudae* 172  
*Legio V Macedonia* 173, 210  
*Legio V Praetoria* 180  
*Legio VIII Augusta* 175  
*Legio VIII Hispania* 175  
*Legio X Gemina* 183  
*Legio XI Claudia* 194  
*Legio XII Fulminata* 239  
*Legio XIII Gemina* 172, 175, 210, 211

- Legio XV Apollinaris* 175  
 Legate 172, 175, 187, 188, 189, 190, 191, 192,  
 204, 210, 213, 238, 240, 243, 245, 247,  
 249, 254, 259, 269, 271  
 Medicine 11, 168, 179, 180–196, 269  
*Miles* 96, 204  
 Officers 36–37, 82, 168, 179, 182, 214, 233,  
 243, 253, 254, 256, 257, 269  
*Ordinatus* 181, 199, 200, 204  
 Praetorians 167, 177, 195, 198, 199,  
 204–209, 214, 252, 270, 271  
*Primus Pilus* 192  
 Religion 13, 36–37, 43, 166–214  
*Strategos* 202, 204  
 Urban Cohorts 167, 204  
 Veterans 174, 175, 192, 210  
 Vexillation 244, 247  
 Roman North Africa 3, 4, 5, 13, 16, 18 22,  
 41–42, 50, 53n42, 76, 82, 114, 170, 211,  
 270–272  
 Roman Tripolitania 238, 241  
 Roman Voting Tribes 99, 100, 102–103, 106  
   Cornelia 99, 102, 106  
   Esquilina 102  
   Fabia 102  
   Fake Tribes 207, 270  
     Aelia 207n206  
     Antonia 207n206  
     Aurelia 207n206  
     Augusta 207n206  
     Iulia 207n206  
     Flavia 207  
     Septimia 207n206  
     Ulpia 207n206  
   Falernia 102  
   Palatina 102  
   Quirina 102  
   Rome  
     Aventine 36  
     Baths of Caracalla 230  
     Baths of Trajan 66  
     Baths of Diocletian 66n16  
     Caelian 36  
     Castra Praetoria 208  
     Civil Wars 53  
     Client Kings 94  
     Esquiline 17, 36, 66  
     Festival 66  
     Forum Romanum 113  
     Forum Transitorium 117  
     Mithridatic Wars 98  
     Pantheon 118–119, 124  
     Plague 64, 65, 83  
     Pons Milvius 66  
     Porta Flaminia 66  
     Relations with Maroneia 98  
     Temple of Jupiter Capitolinus 113  
     Temple of Venus and Roma 113–114  
     Tiber Island Asclepieion 1, 17, 51, 64–66,  
       84, 91, 107, 124, 156, 193, 207, 208, 265,  
       270, 272  
     Ruimel 43  
     Ruisicade 228  
     Rufus, Quintus Venedius 212, 269  
   Saor 192  
   *Sacellum* 166, 187, 188, 190, 192, 193, 250,  
     270  
   Sacred Laws 25, 60, 80, 89  
   Sacrifices 52, 53, 71, 78, 80, 85, 145, 146, 150,  
     155, 156, 166, 194, 254, 261  
   Salus 181, 210, 244, 247, 248, 250, 259  
   Samians 90  
   Samothrace 97  
   Santuiaci 224  
   Sarapis 79, 132, 133, 136, 179, 242, 246  
   Sardinia 224, 225, 226, 271  
   Sardinia-Corsica 113  
   Sarmatians 173  
   Sarmizegetusa Ulpica 174, 212  
   Saturn 243, 251  
   Saurus 192  
   Savaria 175  
   Scipio Africanus 223  
   Scythians 38  
   *Sebastos -oi* 90, 101, 155  
   Second Sophistic 17, 111–112  
   Seleucus II 62n90  
   Semnos, Marcus Aelius 201  
   Senate 11–13, 134, 162  
   Septimius Severus, the emperor 19, 20,  
     112n148, 133, 135, 241  
     Period of Joint Rule with Caracalla 135,  
     136  
   Serdica 178  
   Severan Dynasty 19, 20, 155, 156, 164, 216, 268

- Severus Alexander, the emperor 153–4, 155,  
     156, 164, 213, 222, 268  
 Seuthopolis 178  
 Si Aoun 241  
 Sibylline Books 6  
 Sicily 51, 68, 70, 115, 226, 255, 256, 259  
 Sicyon 50  
 Sidon 218, 219, 220, 222, 226, 237  
     Apolloneia Festival 219  
 Silenus 176  
 Silvanus 42, 43, 44, 172, 174, 176, 183, 196n177,  
     202, 234, 249  
     Silvanus Pegasianus 247, 259, 260  
 Silvica 198n185  
 Sindrina 208–209  
 Sindrinus 208  
 Sinipher 244  
 Siquates 44  
 Sirmium 132, 175  
 Siscia 175  
 Skopelos 220  
 Slivnitsa 178  
 Small World 32–33  
 Smyrna 27, 139, 140  
 Sol 136  
 Soldiers: See ‘Roman Army’  
 Soloi-Pompeiiopolis 156  
 Sorosberg 51n30  
 Soteriology 134, 166  
 Sparta 115  
 Sulla 53, 64, 125  
 Syncretism 3, 4, 9, 36 37–44, 75, 84, 112, 118,  
     119, 120, 127, 128, 198, 204, 211, 217, 218,  
     222, 223, 226, 230, 234, 237, 238, 244,  
     252, 259, 261, 262, 267, 271  
     Imperial 39  
 Syracuse 68, 70  
 Syria 36, 114, 168n18, 215  
  
 Tacape 240  
 Tagrifit 241  
 Tanagra 51n30  
 Tanit 211  
     Tanit Pene Baal 222  
 Tarentum 50  
 Tarraco 113  
 Tarsos 132, 156  
 Thalassocracy 31  
  
*Theoria* 52, 62, 63, 105, 108  
 Theopompus of Cnidos 88  
 Theos Megaloi 178  
 Theoi Soteres 173  
 The Other 38  
 The Twelve Gods 189  
 Third-Century Crisis 19–20  
 Thrace 5, 37, 44, 78, 114, 132, 159, 167, 168,  
     169, 176–179, 190, 196, 198–204, 206, 207,  
     209, 213, 214, 265, 269, 270  
 Thracian Rider 44, 78, 168, 172, 173, 179,  
     196–209, 213, 214, 270  
 Thrasymedes 77  
 Thespiae 220  
 Thessaly 15, 46, 48–49, 60  
 Theveste 240, 245  
 Thibicaae 216  
 Thisduo 232, 233  
 Thuburbo Maius 225, 232  
 Thubursicu Numidarum 236  
 Thugga 223, 225, 236, 259  
 Thyateira 132  
 Technicus, Lucius Petricus 183  
 Telemachus 58, 199  
 Telemachus monument 54, 55–56  
 Telesphorus 127, 148, 153, 156, 158, 159, 164,  
     198, 206, 236  
 Tfilzi 241  
 Tiberis 238  
 Tiberius, the emperor 84, 90, 91, 106, 107,  
     126, 167, 172, 175, 266  
 Tiberius, Claudius Tiberius 91n38  
 Timgad 228, 230, 236, 247  
 Tisawar 241  
 Titus, the emperor 4  
 Tivoli 66  
 Trajan, the emperor 112, 118, 122n206, 141,  
     148, 173, 175, 178  
 Travel  
     Army 20, 32  
     Emperors 4, 7, 12, 163, 267  
     Land Voyages 1  
     Sacred 25, 32, 35, 52, 53, 85, 106–112  
     Sea Travel 1, 31–33  
 Tricca 46, 47–50, 57, 60, 82, 109, 150n317, 265  
 Trilingual Inscription 195, 224–225  
 Troesmis 173  
 Troizen 50, 115, 132



- Trophonius 51, 82, 266  
 Turullius, Decimus 89  
 Tyana 132  
 Tyche 143, 144, 150, 156  
 Tyre 218, 222n41  
  
 Ugarit 218  
 Uscudama 177  
 Uttedianus, Olus Terentius Pudens 210–211  
  
 Vaga 240  
 Vazaivi 241  
 Valerian, the emperor 153, 155, 160, 213  
 Valetudinarium 16, 166, 184–185, 186–194,  
 204, 269, 270, 273  
 Veii 68  
 Venus 42, 176, 211, 223n43, 230, 242  
     *Adquistris* 42  
     *Augusta* 42n203  
     *Bonifalia* 42n203  
     *Victrix* 42  
 Venusius, Titus 184–185  
 Verres, Gaius 70  
 Verus, Lucius Aelius, the emperor 124, 140,  
 177, 215, 249  
 Verus, Marcus Foviacius 184  
 Vespasian, the emperor 4, 172, 175  
 Vezereos 241  
 Victoria 134, 179, 183, 242  
 Vicus 204–205, 206, 270  
 Vindobona 175, 183, 185, 187  
 Vinovia 181  
  
 Vitalis, Lucius Numisius 232, 233  
     *Volumen* 237  
 Vosegus 44  
 Vows 168, 179, 193, 194–196  
 VSLLM 195  
 VSLM 195  
  
 Waddan 241  
  
 Xenophon, Gaius Stertinius 11, 62, 85,  
 87–107, 162–163, 256, 266–267  
 Xenophon, Tiberius Claudius 91n38  
  
 Yam 42  
 Yüntdağ 80  
  
 Zalmoxis 174  
 Zarai 241  
 Zebaret et Tir 241  
 Zella 241  
 Zenofilius, Domitius 255–256  
     *Corretor Provinciae Siciliae* 255  
 Zenonos, Zosas 219  
 Zeus 40, 72, 73, 75, 104n98, 115, 119, 261  
     Zeus Basileus 72, 261  
     Zeus Meilichios 71, 261  
     Zeus Oromasdes Apollo Mithras Helios  
         Hermes 40  
     Zeus Philios 118, 141  
 Zeus-Asclepius 112, 114, 116, 117, 118–125, 128,  
 156, 163, 267, 268  
 Ziaalas of Bithynia 62n90