

EDITORIAL NOTE

The following communication, concerned with Corinth, is printed in an "Agora Number" of *Hesperia* for the purpose of giving prompt publication to material connected with an article in the preceding number of this Journal.

NOTE ON A CIRCULAR MONUMENT IN THE CORINTHIAN AGORA

In his interesting study of the "Hero Cults in the Corinthian Agora," Oscar Broneer includes a brief description of the circular monument of which a single poros column drum now survives, 2.15 m. in diameter, encircled by a podium about 9 m. in diameter.¹ He proposes to identify this with the tall column monument shown on Corinthian coins of Marcus Aurelius, Lucius Verus, Septimius Severus, and Caracalla, previously interpreted as a representation of part of a stadium or hippodrome.² And he mentions, as additional evidence for its lofty original form, the discovery of fragments of a second drum found built into a modern garden wall in the vicinity. If this combination were accepted, we should obviously restore the monument in the form of a column at least as high, perhaps even higher than the diameter of the entire podium, with a surmounting colossal statue.

At this distance from Corinth and from my Corinthian notebooks it is difficult to give exact facts regarding this circular monument; yet it seems advisable to mention the general facts now, deferring the actual measurements for the final publication. When this monument, or at least the single poros column drum, was brought to light during the excavations of 1892 and 1896 below the southeast corner of the Tsellios yard and outbuildings,³ the inhabitants of the village recalled that there had been another drum above this, and that it had been removed and broken up for old stone within their own time.⁴ It was natural that this should suggest the restoration of a

¹ Broneer, *supra*, pp. 145, 153-154, figs. 4, 6; cf. *A.J.A.*, XXXVII, 1933, p. 554, pl. LXI 1; XLI, 1937, pls. XV 2, XVI, XVIII 1.

² Broneer, *op. cit.*, p. 154, fig. 9; Imhoof-Blumer and Gardner, *J.H.S.*, VI, 1885, p. 64, pl. LI (C), no. XLVIII = *Numismatic Commentary on Pausanias*, p. 15, pl. C, no. XLVIII.

³ Skias, *Πρακ.*, 1892, p. 122; Richardson, *A.J.A.*, I, 1897, p. 469, fig. 3, pl. XVII (the original trench VII).

⁴ As a matter of fact, with the usual 100% of exaggeration, the natives spoke of *two* drums removed.

column built up with many poros drums, towering above the Agora much in the manner of the column represented on the above-mentioned coins. It was with considerable surprise, therefore, that I found in 1912 among the Elgin manuscripts in the British Museum a drawing of this very monument as uncovered and measured by Sebastiano Ittar, the Catanian architect on the archaeological staff of the Earl of Elgin in 1799-1803.⁵ Ittar had been in Corinth for three visits, aggregating thirty-seven days, in 1802; and in his time the monument still retained the second drum which was removed and broken up only two generations ago. From his drawing we ascertain that this second drum was the top one; ⁶ around its upper edge and cut in the same stone was a projecting crowning cornice. In other words, the monument was a comparatively low cylindrical pedestal, its height hardly more than its diameter, and composed of only two drums.⁷ It is possible that, with the demolition of modern houses and foundations in recent years, some yet unrecognized fragments of these pedestal mouldings may have been brought to light. It is very clear in any case that, while the exact function and occasion of the monument remain to be ascertained, its form is definitely known. The coins ranging from Marcus Aurelius to Caracalla must refer to something quite different,⁸ and so are hardly to be utilized as evidence for the hero cults in the Agora; and, conversely, we have no evidence on the basis of coins for associating the circular monument with any hero cults or racing festivals, nor, indeed, for a survival of these cults in the time of the Roman colony.

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⁵ Concerning Ittar, see Hasluck, *B.S.A.*, XVIII, 1911/12, pp. 272, 275; Smith, *J.H.S.*, XXXVI, 1916, pp. 172-173, 212, 219, 254; Paton, *The Erechtheum*, p. 617. It will be necessary to discuss him at greater length in my study of *The Propylaea*.

⁶ The Ittar drawings are in five volumes in the Department of Greek and Roman Antiquities of the British Museum; the Corinth drawings are in vols. II and V. See also the lists in Kinnard, *Antiquities of Athens*, 2nd ed., IV, part 3, p. 28, note a; also Madden, *Catalogue of the Manuscript Maps, Charts, and Topographical Drawings in the British Museum*, III, pp. 79, 84-85.

⁷ This moderate height is more satisfactory for the very inadequate foundations.

⁸ It should be noted also that the equestrian statues on low pedestals appearing at either side of the column but still on the podium, according to the coins, seem incompatible with the extant remains.