

THE LOST CLASSICAL PALAIMONION FOUND?

(PLATE 18)

OSCAR BRONEER'S excavations between 1956 and 1958 at the Isthmian sanctuary revealed the location of the precinct of Palaimon directly to the southwest of the temenos of the Temple of Poseidon in the area of the starting lines of the Earlier Stadium (Pl. 18).¹ The poorly preserved remains indicate that three sacrificial pits of different dates each surrounded by a peribolos wall are associated with the earliest phases of this precinct.² A circular monopteros set within a more elaborate peribolos wall represents the final architectural phase.³ Broneer dates these remains between the early 1st century after Christ and the 2nd century or later.⁴

Despite the apparent lack of archaeological evidence for an earlier pre-Roman cult, Broneer believes that "it would doubtless be wrong to infer from (this) . . . that no cult of Palaimon had existed at Isthmia prior to the Roman era."⁵ This argument is based on the assumption that "the hero cult would not have originated at so late a date" and that "mythology ascribes the origin of the worship of Melikertes/Palaimon to Sisyphos, whose statue was later erected in the Palaimonion."⁶ Broneer then postulates that "somewhere in the area of the Earlier Stadium there was probably an earlier cult place, consisting of perhaps only an altar or a minor monument marking the traditional burial place of the boy hero."⁷ This "hypothetical but necessary" precinct would have survived either physically in some form or, if destroyed by Mummius in 146 B.C., in the memory of the Corinthians until the revival of the sanctuary and the cult of Palaimon at the end of the 1st century B.C.⁸

¹ Oscar Broneer, *Isthmia*, II, *Topography and Architecture*, Princeton 1973, pp. 98-112 (= *Isthmia* II) and *idem*, "The Isthmian Sanctuary of Poseidon" in *Neue Forschungen in griechischen Heiligtümern*, Tübingen 1976, pp. 50-62.

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² *Isthmia* II, pp. 100-106.

³ *Isthmia* II, pp. 106-112.

⁴ *Isthmia* II, pp. 100-112.

⁵ *Isthmia* II, p. 99 and note 3; cf. p. 4. Edouard Will, *Korinthiaka*, Paris 1955, pp. 168-180 and 210-212 argued a similar point of view prior to Broneer's discoveries.

⁶ *Isthmia* II, p. 99.

⁷ *Ibid.*; cf. p. 4.

⁸ *Isthmia* II, p. 100. It should be noted that Pausanias (II.2.2) states that the Sikyonians were given control of the Isthmian Games after 146 B.C. and supervised them until Corinth was refounded as a Roman colony. If the sanctuary was used during this period for the celebration of the games then one would assume that a certain degree of continuity of cult and tradition would have resulted.

The antiquity of the cult has been challenged by John Hawthorne.⁹ His arguments are based on a number of points. First, he attempts to show that the majority of the various versions of the Melikertes/Palaimon myth are of late date.¹⁰ Second, he argues that while "it may be justifiable to assume that the localization of the sea-plunge [of Leukothea and her son Palaimon] near the Isthmus of Corinth antedated Ovid, but the literary evidence up to and including him indicates no other connection between the central figures of the myth and the Isthmus. . . . there has been no mention of any home or cult of [Palaimon] on the Isthmus."¹¹ And finally, Hawthorne finds the lack of archaeological evidence for a pre-Augustan cult of Palaimon a serious shortcoming in Broneer's argument. He concludes, therefore, that the Augustan revival of Corinth and the Isthmian sanctuary would have been the most likely period for the establishment of the cult of Palaimon.¹²

Palaimon was one of a variety of Greek deities thought to provide calm waters and safety from offshore tempests. According to Hawthorne¹³ Palaimon rose from the obscure ranks of these minor deities in the Augustan era through identification with the Roman Portunus.¹⁴ Portunus, the old prophylactic deity of doors,¹⁵ who became a god of harbors, achieved prominence under Augustus, for with his help Augustus had guided the Roman ship of state through the tempestuous seas of civil war to safety in the harbor of peace.¹⁶ Palaimon/Portunus is a symbol of the Augustan restoration.¹⁷ Indeed Hawthorne suggests that Ovid¹⁸ is the first author to localize the sea-plunge of Melikertes/Palaimon off the coast of the Isthmus and it is only in the 1st century after Christ that Melikertes/Palaimon/Portunus becomes associated with the Sanctuary of Poseidon and the Isthmian Games.

On account of the paucity of remains, however, for the period lasting from 146 B.C. to the beginning of the 1st century after Christ, Broneer speculates that the games might have been held in Sikyon. See *Isthmia* II, p. 4.

⁹ John G. Hawthorne, "The Myth of Palaemon," *TAPA* 89, 1958, pp. 92-98.

¹⁰ *Op. cit.*, pp. 92-95 and note 5; cf. *Isthmia* II, p. 99 and note 5.

¹¹ Hawthorne, *op. cit.* (footnote 9 above), p. 95.

¹² *Op. cit.*, pp. 95-96.

¹³ *Op. cit.* (footnote 9 above), pp. 93-94.

¹⁴ This assimilation of Portunus and Melikertes/Palaimon was related to the similar assimilation of Melikertes/Palaimon's mother Ino/Leukothea with Mater Matuta which probably occurred sometime during the 2nd century B.C. See Giovanni Becatti, "Ninfe e divinita marine. Ricerche mitologiche, iconografiche e stilistiche," *Studi Miscellanei* 17, Rome 1970-71, pp. 37-50.

¹⁵ H. W. Parke, "Portunus," *Oxford Classical Dictionary*, 2nd ed., p. 866; Kurt Latte, "Römische Religionsgeschichte," *Handbuch der Altertumswissenschaft*, V, iv, 2nd rev. ed., Munich 1967, pp. 89, 132, and 416, note 4. Louise Adams Holland argues that Portunus was originally the ferry god who protected those crossing the Tiber at the point of the Portus Tiberinus. See "The Attribute of Portunus, and the Verona Scholion on Aeneid 5, 241," in *Hommage à Albert Grenier (Collection Latomus LVIII)*, Bruxelles 1962, pp. 817-823. This line of argument is rejected by Becatti (*op. cit.* [footnote 14 above], pp. 47-48) who thinks that Portunus gradually acquired the function of guardian of the ports and harbors during Rome's first period of expansion in Italy in the second half of the 4th century to 3rd century B.C.

¹⁶ Horace, *Carmina* 1.14.

¹⁷ Hawthorne, *op. cit.* (footnote 9 above), p. 98.

¹⁸ *Fasti*, 6.473-562; and *Metamorphoses*, 4.416-562.

Hawthorne's views run counter to general belief. Wilamowitz-Moellendorff,¹⁹ Nilsson,²⁰ and Burkert²¹ agree that the foundation of the cult of Palaimon on the Isthmus must date to the Greek period since the literary evidence²² conclusively connects the Melikertes/Palaimon myth to the Isthmus by at least the end of the 6th, if not the end of the 7th century B.C.²³ This would be roughly contemporary with the official founding of the Isthmian Games ca. 580 B.C.²⁴ In addition, it is even possible that the Corinthian epic poet Eumelos²⁵ in the latter part of the 8th century B.C. mentioned the myth in his works as well. The earliest remains found in the Sanctuary of Poseidon date to this period.²⁶

One can conclude therefore, in agreement with Broneer, that the cult of Palaimon existed prior to the Augustan period. One might expect then to find some remains of this earlier temenos in the vicinity of the Palaimonion of the Roman era. A re-examination of the architectural remains found in this area is in order to determine if this is the case. Broneer indicates that the three foundations, M¹⁴, M¹⁵, and M¹⁶ are from the pre-Roman era.²⁷ These foundations are along the southwest side of the Earlier Stadium immediately adjacent to the Later Starting Line and close to the Temple of Palaimon. Foundation M¹⁴ is a large block approximately one meter square and 0.40 m. high.²⁸ It was found *in situ* with its northeast face parallel to the water channel of the racecourse. The partially preserved II-shaped foundation M¹⁵ lies approximately one meter to the southeast of this block and it is also parallel to the water channel.²⁹ Its restored length is estimated to be ca. 8.0 m.; its width 1.305 m. At each end of the foundation there was a wing 1.60 m. wide which projected 1.065 m. toward the northeast. Foundation M¹⁶ lies 4.35 m. to the southeast of M¹⁵. While only about three meters of this foundation have been exposed because the remainder of it lies beneath the modern road, it appears to have had a rectangular plan.³⁰

No specific date is given for these foundations but construction of the Earlier Stadium at ca. 470/460 B.C.³¹ might provide the *terminus post quem* if they can be

¹⁹ Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, *Der Glaube der Hellenen*, 3rd rev. ed., Darmstadt 1959, pp. 212-214.

²⁰ Martin P. Nilsson, "Geschichte der griechischen Religion," *Handbuch der Altertumswissenschaft*, V, ii, 2, Munich 1961, p. 368 and note 3.

²¹ Walton Burkert, *Homo Necans*, Berlin 1972, pp. 219-221.

²² Pindar, Frs. 5 and 6, see C. M. Bowra, *Pindari Carmina*, 2nd ed., Oxford 1947; Aristotle, Fr. 637 = Schol. in Aristidis Panather.; and Musaios of Ephesos, *FGrHist* 455 F 1 = Schol. Apoll. Rhod. 3, 1240. For further references see Burkert, *op. cit.*, p. 219, note 3.

²³ Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, *op. cit.* (footnote 19 above), p. 213.

²⁴ Lilian H. Jeffery, *Archaic Greece. The City-States, c. 700-500 B.C.*, New York 1976, p. 152.

²⁵ Pausanias, II.2.2 - *FGrHist* 451, note 4. For further references see Burkert, *loc. cit.* (footnote 21 above).

²⁶ Oscar Broneer, "Excavations at Isthmia. Fourth Campaign, 1957-1958," *Hesperia* 28, 1959, pp. 327 f.

²⁷ *Isthmia* II, p. 55.

²⁸ Plate 18; *Isthmia* II, plans IV, VII, pl. 22: c.

²⁹ Plate 18; *Isthmia* II, plans IV, VII, pl. 25: e.

³⁰ Plate 18; *Isthmia* II, p. 55 and note 63; plans IV, VII; pl. 25: e, upper middle.

³¹ *Isthmia* II, p. 65.

interpreted as contemporary. On the other hand, the construction of these foundations may have coincided with that of the Later Starting Line which is thought to be part of the reconstruction program in the sanctuary after the fire of *ca.* 400/390 B.C.³² If these foundations are older, their presence may have helped to determine the location of this new starting line which shortens the earlier racecourse by 10.93 m. The construction of the Later Stadium in the latter portion of the 4th century³³ to replace the Earlier Stadium does give the *terminus ante quem*.

Broneer does not connect these three foundations with the cult of Palaimon. Rather he suggests that block M¹⁴ "may have been the foundation for a single seat of some official or for an altar," that foundation M¹⁵ "may have held the seats of the judges or a proedria for honored guests," and makes the same suggestion for foundation M¹⁶.³⁴ The preserved remains in other sanctuaries, however, do not support all of Broneer's interpretations of the monuments which once rested on these foundations.

Because block M¹⁴'s form is non-diagnostical it is difficult to ascertain its original purpose. Broneer proposes that a small monolithic altar or a stone throne might have rested on a base or plinth which sat on this foundation. The block is not large enough nor does it have the proper dimensions to restore on it a built altar of the type found in the stadium at Olympia, i. e. the so-called Altar of Demeter Chamyne restored in the 2nd century after Christ, as Broneer has suggested.³⁵ The most likely form in the Corinthia for such a hypothetical altar in the Classical and Hellenistic periods would have been a monolithic cylinder which rested on a plinth.³⁶ No such remains, however, were found during the excavations. Stone thrones with solid sides which were most typically used for seats of honor in theaters and stadia are not common until the early Hellenistic period.³⁷ No remains of such a stone throne were found in the excavations.

The position of foundation M¹⁵ might lead one to believe that it supported judges' thrones or seats for honored guests, but a number of points weigh against this hypothesis. The remains of the Hellanodikeion or judges' stand in the late Classical Stadium III at Olympia consist of a rectangular foundation which would have supported twelve thrones.³⁸ In the late 4th-century (*ca.* 330/300 B.C.) stadium in the

³² *Ibid.*

³³ *Isthmia* II, p. 66.

³⁴ *Isthmia* II, p. 55 and notes 61-63.

³⁵ *Isthmia* II, p. 55; Ludwig Drees, *Olympia: Gods, Artists, and Athletes*, New York 1968, p. 95, fig. 22; and Alfred Mallwitz, *Olympia und seine Bauten*, Munich 1972, p. 180.

³⁶ Altars of this type which date to the Classical period have been found at Corinth and Nemea. See David W. Rupp, *Greek Altars of the Northeastern Peloponnese, c. 750/725 B.C. to c. 300/275 B.C.*, (diss. Bryn Mawr College, 1974), pp. 66-70, 318-321, figs. 229-232 and 235-236 (University Microfilms, Inc., Ann Arbor, Michigan: Order no. 75-13,940).

³⁷ Gisela M. A. Richter, *The Furniture of the Greeks, Etruscans, and Romans*, London 1966, pp. 28-31.

³⁸ Drees, *op. cit.* (footnote 35 above), pp. 93 and 95, fig. 21; Mallwitz, *op. cit.* (footnote 35 above), p. 181, fig. 143; and Emil Kunze and H. Schleif, "Berichte über die Ausgrabungen in Olympia (III), Winter 1938/39" (*JdI* 56, 1941), pp. 12-17, pls. 2-4.

Asklepieion at Epidauros there is a narrow rectangular platform on the southern side of the stadium.³⁹ This platform is thought to have served for a judges' stand, for a few stone seats for officials, or for tables for the victors' prizes. At Nemea there is a narrow rectangular foundation on the side of the late Classical (*ca.* 325/300 B.C.) stadium which the excavators think was used as a judges' stand.⁴⁰ In addition, on the west side of the track directly opposite the eastern foundations there are the remains of a similar foundation. This foundation has been postulated as for an auxiliary judges stand.⁴¹ In all of these examples the foundations have a rectangular plan and are located at some distance from the starting lines. Thus the plan of M¹⁵ with its projecting wings and its location in close proximity to the Earlier Starting Line and immediately adjacent to the Later Starting Line does not fit the pattern for a judges' stand or a proedria. The position of M¹⁶, however, and what is known of its plan do appear to fit this pattern.

Thus it can be seen that Broneer's hypotheses regarding the functions of the missing monuments are not entirely supported by the available evidence. At this time I would like to suggest alternative hypotheses for the functions of two of the three foundations, which, in my opinion, are more plausible in light of the evidence at Isthmia and from other sanctuaries.

First, the size and dimensions of block M¹⁴ are quite suitable for a foundation for the base and plinth of a stone or bronze statue.⁴² No such statue or its plinth were found in the excavations which date to the Classical period, but there is an interesting statue from the Archaic period. During the excavation of the fill of the Large Circular Pit *ca.* 60 m. to the west of the Roman Palaimonion a fragmentary poros kouros was found.⁴³ The style of the kouros suggests a date in the mid-6th century B.C. or slightly later.⁴⁴ B. S. Ridgway thinks that the kouros type in Attica and possibly the Peloponnesos as well is closely associated with the cult of Apollo, in particular in a funerary aspect.⁴⁵ The kouros type could represent deceased mortals as heroized and thus be

³⁹ Roberto Patrucco, *Lo stadio di Epidauro*, Firenze 1976, pp. 52, 54, 115-122, figs. 17, 39 and pl. XVI:2; Thomas Boyd, "The Arch and the Vault in Greek Architecture," *AJA* 82, 1978, pp. 90-91, note 32, and p. 100; E. Norman Gardiner, *Athletics of the Ancient World*, Oxford 1930, pp. 129-131, fig. 81; and P. Kavvadias, «Ἀνασκαφαὶ ἐν Ἐπιδαύρῳ», *Πρακτικά*, 1902, pp. 78-97, pl. I.

⁴⁰ Stephen G. Miller, "Excavations at Nemea, 1976," *Hesperia* 46, 1977, pp. 22 and 24-25, fig. 7; "Excavations at Nemea, 1977," *Hesperia* 47, 1978, pp. 86, 88, fig. 7.

⁴¹ Miller, *Hesperia* 47, 1978, p. 86, fig. 7.

⁴² Margrit Jacob-Felsch, *Die Entwicklung griechischer Statuenbasen und die Aufstellung der Statuen*, Waldsassen 1969, pp. 49-51 and 61-63, Kat. I, no. 37 and 43-45, Kat. II, nos. 9, 11, 12, 25-27, 37 and 40. For bases for kouroi, see Gisela M. A. Richter, *Kouroi: Archaic Greek Youths*, London and New York, 3rd ed., 1970, pp. 13-14, 43 and 45; and for a three-step base, see E. I. Mastrokostas, «Εἰς Ἄναξητήσιον ἑλλειπόντων μελῶν ἐπιτυμβίων ἀρχαϊκῶν γλυπτῶν παρὰ τὴν Ἀνάβυσσον. Τὸ κλιμακωτὸν βάθρον τοῦ κούρου Κροίσου», *AAA* 7, 1974, p. 215-225.

⁴³ Isthmia II, pp. 22-24 and 135-136; Brunilde S. Ridgway, "A Poros Kouros from Isthmia," *Hesperia* 44, 1975, pp. 426-430.

⁴⁴ Ridgway, *op. cit.*, p. 427.

⁴⁵ Ridgway, *op. cit.* (footnote 43 above), p. 430; *eadem*, *The Archaic Style in Greek Sculpture*, Princeton 1977, pp. 50-59.

an appropriate commemoration of the dead.⁴⁶ She postulates that this particular kouros might have been set up in honor of Palaimon, the child-hero.⁴⁷

The II-shaped plan of foundation M¹⁵ is very curious and difficult to interpret. Although II-shaped pedestals for statue groups do occur,⁴⁸ a more common monument type with a similar plan is found in sanctuaries throughout the Greek world. These monuments are well documented as altars. The plan of the recently discovered altar of Zeus Eleutherios and Omonoia at Plataia⁴⁹ closely resembles that of foundation M¹⁵. This 5th-century B.C. altar has two wings or antae projecting from each end of the main face. While it is larger than M¹⁵ and has evidence for a central platform or *prothysis* in front of the altar between the wings for the celebrants to stand on, the elongated proportions are similar to those of the Isthmian foundation. In addition, there are a number of built altars that have squat rectangular foundations upon which are set II-shaped superstructures. Included in this category of "Ionian-style" altars are the Altar of the Chians at Delphi, dating to the first quarter of the 5th century;⁵⁰ an altar in the Poseideion on Thasos and an altar of Hera Opilimonia outside the entrance;⁵¹ an altar in front of the choregic monument in the Dionysion also on Thasos;⁵² the altar in front of the "tempietto" to the east of Temple D on the acropolis of Selinus;⁵³ another altar to the northeast of Temple D at Selinus;⁵⁴ and finally, the altar of the temple of Dionysos at Eretria.⁵⁵

Such an interpretation of this foundation can be supported by the fact that in a number of instances altars are found in close proximity to the starting lines of races. First, the starting line for the Panathenaic races in the Athenian Agora during the Classical period is situated immediately to the northeast of the Altar of the Twelve Gods.⁵⁶ Second, the monumental altar in the extramural Sanctuary of

⁴⁶ Ridgway, *The Archaic Style*, pp. 51-53.

⁴⁷ Ridgway, *Hesperia* 44, 1975, p. 430.

⁴⁸ Felix Eckstein, ANAΘHMATA. *Studien zu den Weihgeschenken strengen Stils im Heiligtum von Olympia*, Berlin 1969, no. 4, pp. 33-42.

⁴⁹ Theodore G. Spyropoulos, «Εἰδησεις ἐκ Βωϊωτίας», *AAA* 6, 1973, pp. 376-379 and 394, figs. 1-3, plan 1.

⁵⁰ M. F. Courby, *Fouilles de Delphes*, II, *Topographie et architecture: La terrasse du temple*, Paris 1927, "L'autel de Chios," pp. 119-137, figs. 88-105; J. Replat, "Note sur la restauration partielle de l'autel de Chios à Delphes," *BCH* 44, 1920, pp. 328-383, figs. 1-23; Constantine Yavis, *Greek Altars*, St. Louis 1949, pp. 125-126, no. 21.

⁵¹ Ecole Française d'Athènes, *Guide de Thasos*, 2nd rev. ed., Paris 1968, pp. 46, 104, fig. 14; A. Bon and H. Seyrig, "Le Sanctuaire de Poseidon à Thasos," *BCH* 53, 1929, pp. 328-337, figs. 6-9; Yavis, *op. cit.*, p. 185, no. 5.

⁵² *Guide de Thasos*, pp. 42-43, 104, fig. 13.

⁵³ Ettore Gabrici, "Acropoli di Selinunte, Scavi e Topografia," *MonAnt* 33, 1929, cols. 80-84, pl. III, figs. 7-10; *idem*, "Studi archeologici selinuntini," *MonAnt* 43, 1956, cols. 245-246; Antonino D. Vita, "Per l'architettura e l'urbanistica greca d'eta arcaica: La stoa nel temenos del Tempio C e lo sviluppo programmato di Selinunte," *Palladio* 17, 1967, p. 38.

⁵⁴ Hans Lauter, "Ein monumentaler Säulentalter des 5. Jahrhunderts, v. Chr. in Selinunt," *RömMitt* 83, 1976, pp. 255-256, pl. 76.

⁵⁵ Paul Auberson and Karl Schefold, *Führer durch Eretria*, Bern 1972, pp. 53-56.

⁵⁶ T. Leslie Shear, Jr., "The Athenian Agora: Excavations of 1973-74," *Hesperia* 44, 1975,

Apollo Pythios at Halieis (Porto Cheli) is located to the north of the starting line of the sanctuary's stadium.⁵⁷ Third, northwest of the starting line of the racecourse in the forum area at Corinth in the Sacred Spring Temenos, there was a low crescent-shaped mudbrick altar in Phase 3 (*ca.* 450-375/350 B.C.)⁵⁸ and two rectangular cuttings and one partial rectangular foundation which might have been for built altars in Phase 5 (*ca.* 325-275 B.C.).⁵⁹ The mud altar may have been used in the Classical period in connection with torch races held on the racecourse in honor of Artemis.⁶⁰ And finally, the starting line of the Archaic stadium (Stadium I) at Olympia is thought to have been situated just to the east of the presumed location of the Altar of Zeus.⁶¹

Foundation M¹⁶ fits the criteria for a judges' stand or a proedria very well. Another possibility is that it might have served as the foundation for the base of the original version of the statue group depicting Palaimon on the back of a dolphin.⁶²

This re-examination of the architectural remains in the area of the Roman Palaimonion has produced new interpretations of the functions of M¹⁴ and M¹⁵ and has supported Broneer's original hypothesis for M¹⁶. It seems possible therefore that the area around foundations M¹⁴ and M¹⁵ was considered to be the traditional burial place and heroon of the Bronze Age child-hero Melikertes/Palaimon. These foundations would represent monuments set up to mark his temenos where tradition has it he was first honored with funeral games by Sisyphos.⁶³ Foundation M¹⁵ would have

pp. 362-365; and Homer A. Thompson, *The Athenian Agora: A Guide to the Excavation and Museum*, 3rd. ed., Athens 1976, pp. 104-105, fig. 31.

⁵⁷ Michael H. Jameson, "The Excavation of a Drowned Greek Temple," *Scientific American* 231, no. 4, 1974, pp. 114-119, plan, pp. 113-114; and "Excavations at Porto Cheli and Vicinity, Preliminary Report, I: Halieis, 1962-1968," *Hesperia* 38, 1969, pp. 314, 338-339, fig. 8.

⁵⁸ Charles K. Williams, II, "Corinth, 1969: Forum Area," *Hesperia* 39, 1970, pp. 21-25; Charles K. Williams, II and Joan E. Fisher, "Corinth, 1970: Forum Area," *Hesperia* 40, 1971, pp. 3-16, figs. 5-6; and Rupp, *op. cit.* (footnote 36 above), pp. 29-31, no. 6.

⁵⁹ Charles K. Williams, II, "Excavations at Corinth, 1968," *Hesperia* 38, 1969, pp. 48-49, 57-60; and Rupp, *op. cit.* (footnote 36 above), pp. 43-48; nos. 12-14.

⁶⁰ Sharon Herbert, "The Torch Race at Corinth: Archaeological vs. Literary Sources," paper read at 1972 General Meeting of the Archaeological Institute of America; abstract in *AJA* 77, 1973, pp. 215-216.

⁶¹ Drees, *op. cit.* (footnote 35 above), pp. 88-90.

⁶² For depictions of this statue group on Corinthian coins of the Roman period see Friedrich W. Imhoof-Blumer and Percy Gardner, *Ancient Coins Illustrating Lost Masterpieces of Greek Art; A Numismatic Commentary on Pausanias*, enlarged ed., Chicago 1964, pl. B: nos. I-X, XII, and XIV-XVII; and *Isthmia* II, p. 110 and note 14, pl. 42: a, b. On dolphin riders in general see Brunilde S. Ridgway, "Dolphins and Dolphin-Riders," *Archaeology* 23, 1970, pp. 86-95.

⁶³ Following Pindar, Frs. 5 and 6, Clement of Alexandria, Philostratos (*Imagines* 2.16), and others assign the establishment of the Isthmian Games to Sisyphos, the traditional founder of the Isthmian town of Ephyra, which is sometimes identified with Corinth. He did this to honor his dead nephew Melikertes whose body he found on the seacoast of his territory. The funeral games were held at the place on the Isthmus where Sisyphos buried Melikertes, i.e. the sanctuary of Poseidon. See Edward E. Barthell, Jr., *Gods and Goddesses of Ancient Greece*, Coral Gables 1971, pp. 70, 78 and note 51. Another tradition claims that the games were first instituted in the name

been for an altar dedicated to Melikertes/Palaimon.⁶⁴ A statue would have stood on foundation M¹⁴ possibly set up as Palaimon's cult image,⁶⁵ or one in honor of Poseidon or Leukothea or perhaps even Sisypheos, as is attested in the Roman Palaimonion.⁶⁶ In short, these monuments constitute candidates for the missing Classical Palaimonion which Broneer has postulated.

The non-canonical orientation of foundation M¹⁵ (it faces to the southwest) should pose no problem for this interpretation as there are numerous examples of altars which do not face east, and of religious buildings and altars dedicated to heroes with chthonic rites which face either west or south.⁶⁷ The close proximity of the water channel of the racecourse to foundation M¹⁵ would not impede the use of this monument as an altar since there is sufficient room for the priest(s) to make sacrifices between the channel and the east face of the main section of the monument (approximately two meters) and to move around the east faces of the wings (approximately one meter). The observers of the ceremonies could have stood on the racecourse or on the slope of the stadium's southwestern side.

This proposed small pre-Roman temenos dedicated to Melikertes/Palaimon, which is located to the southeast of the Temple of Poseidon, dates at the latest to the period of remodeling in the sanctuary after the fire of ca. 400/390 B.C. About this time the Later Starting Line was constructed in the Earlier Stadium. I believe that the new position chosen for it was more likely to have been influenced by the position of the monuments marking Palaimon's temenos than vice versa. Although, as was stated above, no specific archaeological evidence has been published to date these foundations very closely, I think it probable that they should be dated to the earliest phase of the Earlier Stadium, that is the second quarter of the 5th century B.C. Thus Palaimon's cult may have had a minor role in the Isthmian sanctuary in the Classical period. Its location was not architecturally emphasized or monumentalized as was that of the nearby temenos of Poseidon. No earlier architectural evidence survives in the general area of the Palaimonion which may be tentatively

of Poseidon and were later identified with this minor child-hero/sea-deity. Similar to this tale is that of the establishment of the Nemean Games which were connected with the fate of the infant Opheltes/Archemoros. He had a fenced-in temenos in the precinct of Zeus in which his grave and altars were located. See Pausanias, II.15.2-4 and VIII.48.2; L. R. Farnell, *Greek Hero Cults and Ideas of Immortality*, Oxford 1921, p. 41; C. Kerényi, *The Heroes of the Greeks*, London 1959, pp. 298-299; and Wilamowitz-Moellendorf, *op. cit.* (footnote 19 above), p. 213.

⁶⁴ Pausanias tells us (II.1.3) that another altar dedicated to Melikertes/Palaimon was set up at the shore near Kromyon where a dolphin brought him ashore after his sea plunge.

⁶⁵ An example of a cult statue situated in the open in close proximity to its altar is found in the Artemision at Ephesos where the remains of a square platform, presumably for the cult statue and its base, stood opposite a ramp and the area for burnt sacrifice. A II-shaped monumental colonnaded wall enclosed this area. See Anton Bammer, "Neue Forschungen am Altar des Artemisions von Ephesos. Archäologische Gesellschaft zu Berlin 1971/72," *JdI* 87, 1972, pp. 714-728, figs. 1-24.

⁶⁶ *Isthmia* II, pp. 99, 110, note 14, 112, pls. 22:d, 23:c; Pausanias, II.2.1.

⁶⁷ J. Charbonneau, "Tholos et Prytanée," *BCH* 49, 1925, p. 176 and note 2; Rupp, *op. cit.* (footnote 36 above), pp. 220-232, nos. 99-104; figs. 107-115, 251.

assigned to an earlier, Archaic, temenos. The fragmentary poros kouros found in the sanctuary and a fragment of a jumping weight with a partially preserved inscription dating to *ca.* 600/550 B.C., which is restored as referring to Melikertes,⁶⁸ may well be our only possible physical evidence for such a temenos.

Towards the end of the 4th century the southeastern half of the Earlier Stadium was destroyed in order to provide fill for the embankments of the Later Stadium.⁶⁹ The surviving northwestern half of the stadium filled up with sand and mud after Mummius' depredations. The entire area of the Sanctuary of Poseidon suffered from neglect until Corinth was re-established as a colony. In the Augustan period Corinth and the Sanctuary of Poseidon benefited from imperial interest and patronage. Both were revived and embellished and the sanctuary became an imperial cult center. The Isthmian Games were resumed under Corinthian control and a new set of games established, the Quinquennial Imperial Caesarea. This imperial attention continued under Claudius with his establishment of yet another set of games.⁷⁰ Nero is also well remembered for the events which occurred at the time of his visit to the games.

When the Romans elevated Palaimon to importance in the Augustan period, the logical place to center his worship would have been his traditional cultic focus, i. e., the area around foundations M¹⁴ and M¹⁵. The archaeological evidence from the general area of these foundations indicates that between the first half of the 1st century after Christ and the later part of the 2nd century a monumental temenos was constructed which was dedicated to Palaimon. It was at this time that Palaimon and his temenos became known throughout the Empire.

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⁶⁸ Broneer, *Neue Forschungen* (footnote 1 above), p. 52.

⁶⁹ *Isthmia* II, pp. 52, 100; and Hawthorne, *op. cit.* (footnote 9 above), p. 96.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 97.

