DEFINING REGIONAL STYLES
IN ARCHAIC GREEK ARCHITECTURAL TERRACOTTAS

(Plates 1, 2)

TWO MAIN SYSTEMS of tiled roofs have long been known to have dominated the architecture of the ancient Greek world: they are called Laconian and Corinthian, names which are documented in epigraphical sources of Classical and Hellenistic date.1 Laconian roofs (Figs. 1, 2) are characterized by large, concave pan tiles which drain rainwater from the slopes and narrower, convex cover tiles, so called because they cover the spaces between pan tiles. Corinthian roofs (Figs. 3, 4) have relatively flat pan tiles and pitched cover tiles. This simple and straightforward distinction between the two systems has long been accepted as providing a clear picture of the tiled roofs of ancient Greece, and every roof with curved tiles has been labeled as Laconian, while those with flat and pitched tiles are called Corinthian. I would like to suggest, however, that the picture during the Archaic period is considerably more complex and that various regions evolved their own roofing systems which are characterized both by technical and by decorative features. The situation has been obscured by the fact that many roofs are found outside their originating city or region. In order to clarify the picture, one must determine the features that characterize each roof within a given city and then associate the roofs of identical type which occur elsewhere. In general a regional picture emerges, except for the examples found further afield in international sanctuaries or in places with political ties to the originating center. In sanctuaries, small buildings such as treasuries often used roof decoration characteristic of the dedicating city, probably so that it would be readily identifiable.

The Laconian system is well documented in the numerous fragments found in the excavations of the sanctuary of Artemis Orthia at Sparta, many of them stratigraphically datable thanks to the flooding of the near-by river, an event which was probably greeted by the ancient Spartans with less enthusiasm than by modern archaeologists. These fragments demonstrate that Laconian-system roofs, as known at Sparta, have a limited range of elements. The pan tiles are large and concave, the cover tiles narrower and convex, the ridge

1 First identified by W. Dörpfeld, “Die Skeutothek des Philon,” AM 8, 1883 (pp. 147–164), p. 162; Martin, pp. 67, 70–72; Orlandos, pp. 82–83.

I would like to thank Kostis Iliakis, who made the drawings published here. In no case is the entire roof preserved, and so the reconstructions have been made according to the available information. Most often lacking are the plain tiles and the full widths of the raking simas and eaves tiles.

Frequently cited works are abbreviated as follows:

Daux = G. Daux, Guide de Thasos, Paris 1968
Dawkins = The Sanctuary of Artemis Orthia at Sparta (JHS, Suppl. 5), R. M. Dawkins, ed., London 1929
Launey = M. Launey, Études thasiennes, I, Le Sanctuaire et le culte d’Hérakles à Thasos, Paris 1944
tiles convex with openings for the cover tiles; all are painted with black or red glaze. At the apex of the pediment, capping the end of the ridge tile, sat disk akroteria with numerous molded elements; the earlier examples are monochrome black, the later ones polychrome,

2 Dawkins, pp. 142–143 (pan and cover tiles), no. 37, p. 141, fig. 100 (ridge tile).
Fig. 2. Roof of the Heraion at Olympia. Drawing by K. Iliakis
and they carry many of the same patterns found on Laconian pottery, a fact which helps in dating them (Pl. 39:a).\(^3\) Along the edges of the pediment ran a colorful raking sima.\(^4\) The bottommost row of cover tiles along the eaves consisted of curved antefixes with painted designs of primarily geometric patterns (Pl. 1:a); molded toruses were eventually added to an otherwise flat, painted face.\(^5\) Occasionally antefixes were covered by a lateral sima, an

\(^3\) Dawkins, nos. 15–19, p. 137, fig. 90 (monochrome akroteria); nos. 1–14, pp. 135–137, figs. 87, 88, pls. XXII–XXIV (polychrome akroteria).

\(^4\) Dawkins, nos. 30–33, pp. 139–140, pl. XXVI.

\(^5\) Dawkins, nos. 20–28, pp. 137–139, figs. 92–94, pl. XXV.
Fig. 4. Roof of the second Temple of Apollo at Corinth. Drawing by K. Iliakis
unusual concept. Geison tiles seem never to have been an essential part of the canonical Laconian roof, as only one fragment has been published from the Orthia excavations.

Sparta has produced close to half the known examples of disk akroteria and is thought to have manufactured most of the similar examples found elsewhere, at near-by Amyklaion and the Menelaion, and further afield at Kynouria, Bassai, and Olympia (Pl. 39:b, c). Antefixes with crescent patterns, the earliest style of Laconian antefix, occur only fairly close to Sparta, at the Menelaion, Amyklaion, and Epidauros Limera in Lakonia, and just north of Lakonia at Kynouria and Bigla near Tegea.

Other types of decoration not documented in Sparta, however, occur on roofs with Laconian-style tiles. Should these be considered a manifestation of the same system, which an accident of history has left unrecorded in Sparta itself? I think not. A series of small disk akroteria with proportionately heavy molded decoration, often thought to be antefixes because of their scale, are found on roofs in Arkadia, for example, and may indicate a regional variation. They occur at Bigla and Methydrion, with an archaizing version from Lusoi. An Arkadian regional system may also favor curved antefixes with molded figural decoration, not documented at Sparta, such as the heraldic sphinxes from Bassai discussed by Nancy Cooper (pp. 87, 89 below, figs. 19, 20), and the Gorgoneia from Alipheira. Another feature of the Arkadian system may be a geison tile with a cavetto profile and painted tongue pattern, examples of which have been found at Bigla, at Alipheira along with the Gorgoneion antefixes just mentioned, and at Olympia, where they occur on the Bouleuterion together with semicircular antefixes also decorated with Gorgoneia.

The same approach to the Corinthian system produces even clearer results. I will give here only the most general outline of Corinthian roofs at Corinth, as Mrs. Roebuck discusses these pieces in greater detail (pp. 47–49 below). Terracotta roofs at Corinth down

6 Dawkins, no. 33 A, B, p. 140, fig. 98.
7 Dawkins, no. 36, p. 141, fig. 99, shown upside down. This fact might indicate, however, that geison tiles were not recognized as such and therefore were not saved.
9 Menelaion: Dawkins, p. 122, fig. 95. The Amyklaion examples are more canonical, though also larger than most of the Sparta antefixes: W. von Massow, “Vom Amyklaion,” AM 52, 1927 (pp. 34–63), p. 43, fig. 22; Dawkins, no. 11, p. 122. Epidauros Limera: Koch, p. 95, fig. 46. Kynouria: K. A. Rhomaios, «Περιοδεία κατὰ τὴν Κυνουρίαν», Πρακτικά 1953 (pp. 250–257), p. 253, fig. 2. Bigla: Koch, pp. 87–88; Rhomaios, 1957, pp. 117–118, fig. 3; N. D. Papahatzis, Πανεπιστήμιο Αθηνών 1980, p. 382, fig. 419. The same fragments are published as being from Pallantion: BCH 83, 1959, pp. 626–628, fig. 18.
13 The generalizations given here refer to the overall pattern presented by the majority of pieces at Corinth. Exceptions to the pattern are the antefixes of two roofs which I would classify as part of the Argive system (see
Fig. 5. Roof 9 from Delphi. Drawings by K. Iliakis
to the third quarter of the 6th century B.C., if I am correct, are characterized by the use of combination tiles, that is, tiles in which the pan and cover elements are formed as one piece. As mentioned before, Corinthian pan tiles are relatively flat, while the cover tiles rise to a peak at the center. During the first half of the 6th century B.C. (Fig. 5:b), the decoration below, Fig. 9:a, b, and Pl. 5, FA 547 and FA 24). The first of these antefixes was found in the Demeter Sanctuary and so could represent the dedication of a building by a pious Argive. The second type comes from later fill in the city site and cannot be associated with a specific building or sanctuary, but virtually identical examples come from Argos, Delphi, and the Athenian Akropolis, so that Corinth does not have exclusive claim to the type.
Fig. 7. Roof of the Megarian Treasury at Olympia. Drawing by K. Iliakis
along the slopes of the pediment consists of a raking sima with a cavetto profile, on which is painted a tongue pattern above a single or double guilloche. Along the eaves of the roof run pentagonal antefixes with floral motifs molded in relief and painted, joined to eaves tiles carrying a painted guilloche (Pl. 5, FA 101). There is no decoration along the ridge. During the second half of the 6th century (Fig. 4), a new style of raking sima consists of an ovolo molding above a flat fascia; the face of the sima is decorated with a double chain of palmettes and lotus flowers, rendered in paint only (Pl. 6, FS 101). At the lower corners of the pediment, akroterion bases are attached to the back of the sima, with drainage from the slope provided through lion’s head spouts. Along the eaves are antefixes whose plaques project above the cover tile and take the form of a lotus and palmette (Pl. 7, FA 3) or palmette and double volute (Pl. 6, FA 16), molded in relief. These antefixes are attached to eaves tiles decorated with a painted guilloche (Pl. 6, FT 231) or, later, a maeander. The
ridge cover tile is now surmounted by a plaque painted on both faces with a palmette and double volute (Pl. 6, FR 3). By the Late Archaic period (Figs. 6, 7), the plain tiles of the slope are separately made pan tiles and cover tiles, but the pieces at the ridge and eaves continue to be made as combination tiles. Therefore, these combination tiles are a consistent feature of roofs in the pure Corinthian system.

The Corinthian system as it is documented at Corinth thus shows a coherent style. Enough material is preserved there to suggest that it is representative of the Archaic production of this very important center. Many examples of roofs consistent with the style found at Corinth are found outside the Corinthia, primarily at sanctuaries such as Delphi and Olympia. Once again I would suggest that the roofs found outside Corinth which do not conform to the style as seen in Corinth itself should not be considered part of the Corinthian system proper. In some cases similar clays have been used, and the roofs were possibly even executed by workmen trained at Corinth, but the designs and concepts are foreign to those of the pure Corinthian system produced at Corinth.

The roofs of Aitolia, from its famous sanctuaries at Thermon and Kalydon, have long been considered to represent stages in the development of the Corinthian system, stages which, by chance, are not documented in Corinth itself. Dr. Madeleine Mertens-Horn has disputed this interpretation. I too prefer to see the Aitolian roofs as examples of a regional roofing system with its own characteristics. The pan and cover tiles are in most cases separately made, even at the ridge and eaves, a complete divergence from the practice at Corinth. In addition, the region shows a distinct preference for figural decoration in the form of human heads applied to the front of the antefix and lion's heads used as spouts all along the eaves. The close grouping of antefixes and waterspouts on the two successive roofs from Thermon creates the effect of a continuous sima along the eaves, a concept which is formalized into the only known Archaic lateral sima from Greece, at Kalydon. Not only is this concept different from that of roofs in the pure Corinthian system, but most important, no similar pieces exist at Corinth.

I would also separate from the Corinthian system the roofs from the Argolid. Dr. Nancy Cooper first suggested in her master's thesis on the Halieis roofs that a special regional system existed in the Argolid and on Aigina, an island with political ties to Argos, but later in her doctoral dissertation she viewed the style as part of the Corinthian system. I agree with her earlier assessment. Typical of this Argive system, as she had noted, are the separately made pan and cover tiles, including the elements of the ridge and eaves. The tiles consist of flat pan tiles and pitched cover tiles similar to those of the Corinthian system, but the fact that they are always separately made precludes their belonging to the Corinthian

---

15 See especially G. Kawerau and G. Sotiriades, "Der Apollotempel zu Thermos," AntDenk 2, 1902–1908, pp. 1–8, pls. 49, 53, 53A.
Fig. 9. Typology of Argive system antefixes. Drawing by K. Iliakis
system. The earliest roofs of this system, examples of which are found in the Argolid at Halieis (Pl. 9:b), Mases, and the Argive Heraion (discussed by Mr. Pfaff [pp. 149–156 below, Pl. 12]), and at the sanctuary of Aphaia on Aigina (Fig. 8), with similar pieces at Delphi and Olympia, have simple undecorated antefixes which rise at the top to three peaks. Unlike the Corinthian system, a nearly contemporary example of which is shown in Figure 5, the antefixes are not attached to the eaves tile but instead sit on top of the upward-curving side edges of the underlying eaves tiles and thus have a finished bottom edge with a characteristic double curve. This same technical feature can be observed on a series of antefixes (Fig. 9:b) from Delphi, the Athenian Akropolis (Vlassopoulou, nos. 5, 6), Corinth (Pl. 5, FA 24), and Argos (Billot, p. 105 below, fig. 2, Pl. 10:e, f), where the three peaks have now been enlarged to carry a stamped design. A terracotta model of a roof of this type comes from the Athenian Akropolis (see Vlassopoulou, no. 10 bis); it has a hipped end like that of the early Temple of Zeus at Nemea which carried a similar series of antefixes (Fig. 9:c). A further stage in the development of this regional style occurs both at Nemea and at Tiryns (Fig. 9:d). Dr. Billot (pp. 105–107 below) describes these and other examples of this system which preserve the three peaks at the top and the double curve along the bottom, even when the decoration on the plaque face changes. Equally characteristic may be the raking simas, which prefer a flat vertical face to the cavetto of the Corinthian sima, as noted by both N. Cooper (p. 68 below) and Billot (p. 130 below, fig. 7, and Pl. 10:d).

18 For references, see the papers by C. Pfaff (pp. 149–156 below), N. Cooper (pp. 65–93 below), and J. Heiden (pp. 41–46 below). Note that some of the tiles from the Olympia roof are dated by context no later than the third quarter of the 7th century B.C.
Fig. 11. Roof 12 from Delphi. Drawings by K. Iliakis
Another regional system with some of the same technical features found in the Argolid, but with a different decorative vocabulary, occurs in Central Greece in the areas of Thessaly, Phthiotis, Lokris, Boiotia, and possibly Euboea. Connections between these areas and Aigina, which shares the early Argive system, have already been shown by Dr. Felsch’s publication of tile stamps, and so this similarity in roofing systems should not come as a surprise. As in the Argive system, the plain tiles are separately made, flat pan tiles with pitched cover tiles, and the antefixes have a double curve along their bottom edge. The earliest example of this system thus far known occurs at Kalapodi; it is discussed below by Dr. Hübner (pp. 167–174). Although the antefixes have a decoration which is unparalleled in the Argolid, they rise at the top to three peaks and have the double curve along their bottom edge which allows them to straddle two eaves tiles (Fig. 10). One of the raking simas from this site (Pl. 16:c) also has a flat vertical profile like some found in the Argolid.

Two nearly identical roofs from Delphi (Fig. 11) and the Athenian Akropolis® may also belong to this Central Greek system, although they bear resemblances to both the

---

19 Felsch, 1979, pp. 1–40.
Corinthian and Argive systems. Both have a raking sima with a cavetto profile and painted tongue pattern (Vlassopoulou, nos. 21–23), characteristic of Corinthian-system roofs of the first half of the 6th century B.C. Both also have palmette and double-volute antefixes (Vlassopoulou, no. 20a–b) which can be paralleled in the Corinthian system. The Delphi antefix, however, preserves the double curve along the bottom edge that indicates that the tiles of the slopes and eaves edge were separately made. A comparison between the Delphi roof and the nearly contemporary Temple of Apollo at Corinth (Figs. 3, 4) demonstrates the differences between the two systems. I would suggest that the same Greek city dedicated both Treasury XV at Delphi, around which the fragments of this roof were found, and the small building on the Akropolis.

The suggestion that this city might be located in Central Greece is based on the existence of some very similar roofs of later date from that area, the best preserved of which comes from Halai in Lokris (Figs. 12, 13, Pl. 1:b–d), dated ca. 490 B.C. Although the raking sima, ridge palmettes, palmette and double-volute antefixes, and eaves tiles with a painted guilloche again resemble those of the Corinthian system, the plain tiles and the ridge and eaves tiles are separately made and so cannot form part of the Corinthian system. Two examples of the antefix, it must be admitted, are attached to eaves tiles, which would qualify them as being part of the Corinthian system; both the width of the antefix and the height of the eaves tiles differ from those of the other examples, and so these pieces cannot be part of the original roof. I would view this roof as the continuation of the system encountered half a century earlier at Delphi and Athens, and even earlier at Kalapodi. Very similar antefixes have also been found at Theotokou in Thessaly and on Skyros, where separately made pan and cover tiles were also excavated. A ridge palmette from Kyparissi in Lokris can also be considered an element of this Late Archaic regional system.

Attica, apart from the Athenian Akropolis, has produced surprisingly few examples of Archaic architectural terracottas. Although the Akropolis material may not be characteristic of Attica in general, it does display some peculiarities which might indicate a local system. The earliest examples belong to the pure Corinthian and Argive systems respectively (Vlassopoulou, nos. 1–4 and 5–7), after which time the roofs show a more distinctive style, not

---


22 Goldman, op. cit., p. 440, no. 3, fig. 103.

23 These attached antefixes are very similar to those of the stoa from Opous, discussed below by Mrs. Dakoronia (pp. 175–180); perhaps they decorated a stoa in the sanctuary at Halai, somewhere near the temple.

24 Theotokou: A. J. B. Wace and J. P. Droop, “Excavations at Theotokou, Thessaly,” BSA 13, 1906–1907 (pp. 309–327), p. 314, fig. 5; GFR, p. 148, no. 17. The pieces described and illustrated in GFR, pp. 147–149, nos. 16 and 21, figs. 101 and 102, are identical to the fragments from Theotokou and either are mistakenly said to be from Gonnoi or the wrong photographs have been substituted for the Gonnoi examples. Skyros: D. Euangelides, «Ἀνασκαφαὶ καὶ ἔρευναι ἐν Σκυρῷ», Δελτ 4, 1918 (1921), Παράρτημα (pp. 34–45), pp. 36–37, figs. 4, 5.

Fig. 13. Roof of the temple at Halai. Drawing by K. Iliakis
represented elsewhere. The cavetto raking simas with painted tongue and guilloche (Vlassopoulou, nos. 11–15) have long been recognized to be under Corinthian influence, but they possess some individual traits, such as the use of corner akroteria attached to the top edge (Vlassopoulou, no. 13), which is a divergence from canonical Corinthian-system practice but may be typical for Athens: several corner-sima fragments have insets along the back edge for the insertion of another element, now missing (Vlassopoulou, nos. 11 and 14). Note that the so-called Olive Tree Pediment from the Akropolis shows a small building with a roof hipped at both ends and corner akroteria. More distinctly local are some of the antefix types. Buschor’s Antefix II (Vlassopoulou, no. 8), for instance, recalls the three-peaked antefixes from Kalapodi, but, unlike the antefixes of the Central Greek system, it is attached to the eaves tile rather than having the double curve on the bottom edge.

One final regional system is thus far documented at only a few sites of northeastern Greece. Both in forms and in decoration this system draws mainly upon East Greece. One roof (Figs. 14, 15), from the Polygonal Building in the Herakleion on Thasos, features figural decoration unparalleled in any of the other regional styles of mainland Greece: a raking sima with horse-riders (Pl. 2:a) and, along the eaves, the well-known antefixes with relief decoration of Bellerophon on Pegasos (Pl. 2:b) which alternated with ones showing the Chimaira (Pl. 2:c).26 Figural terracotta friezes, such as chariot races, are common in

Fig. 15. Roof of the Polygonal Building in the sanctuary of Herakles on Thasos. Drawing by K. Iliakis
East Greece, especially at Larisa on the Hermos, while pentagonal antefixes with figural decoration occur at several sites of Asia Minor, such as Didyma and Miletos, as well as on the island of Lesbos. Other examples from Thasos include a marvelous fragment of a raking sima with centaurs and antefixes with gorgoneia (Pl. 2:d).\(^\text{27}\) The Gorgon heads are East Greek in style, their closest parallels being the gorgoneion antefixes from Miletos and from the near-by sanctuary discussed by P. Schneider (pp. 211–222 below) which have the same placement of the fangs, close to either side of the tongue, and disk earrings.\(^\text{29}\) A Gorgon antefix has also been found at Torone in the Chalkidiki.\(^\text{30}\)

There may be even more regional roofing systems, or further refinements of the ones I have proposed, still to be recognized. The overall picture which emerges is far more complex than a simple distinction between buildings which use Laconian-style roof tiles and those which use Corinthian. Scholars have long recognized that each Greek city-state had a political identity and character of its own, and often its own regional style of pottery and sculpture. To these I would add regional styles of architectural terracottas.

NANCY A. WINTER

AMERICAN SCHOOL OF CLASSICAL STUDIES
54 Souidias Street
GR-106 76, Athens, Greece

\(^{27}\) Figural friezes from Larisa on the Hermos: \textit{ATK}, pls. 19, 21–25. Pentagonal antefixes with figural decoration: \textit{ATK}, pls. 12 (Mytilene), 53 (Miletos), 56, 57 (Didyma).


\(^{29}\) Gorgon antefixes: C. Picard and C. Avezou, “Les fouilles de Thasos (1913),” \textit{CRAI} 1914 (pp. 276–305), p. 295, fig. 6; Launey, pp. 44–45, pl. X:3; Daux, p. 101, fig. 49.

a. Antefix from Sparta, Sparta Museum (no number). (Photograph G. Georgiadis)

b. Raking sima from Halai, Thebes Museum. (Photograph ASCS Archive)

c. Antefix and eaves tiles from Halai, Thebes Museum. (Photograph ASCS Archive)

d. Ridge palmette from Halai, Thebes Museum. (Photograph ASCS Archive)

Nancy A. Winter: Defining Regional Styles in Archaic Greek Architectural Terracottas
Nancy A. Winter: Defining Regional Styles in Archaic Greek Architectural Terracottas