

TWO UNPUBLISHED COINS FROM PATRAS AND THE NAME OF THE ROMAN COLONY

(PLATE 82)

ABOUT HALF A CENTURY AGO, Oscar Broneer recovered the real name of Caesar's colony at Corinth by a slight modification of the one hitherto accepted.¹ The opportunity has now arisen to propose an alteration to the established name of Augustus' colony at Patras. In the course of preparing a publication of Greek and Roman Imperial coins from recent excavations at Patras, I have singled out an important piece from the Patras mint and a denarius of the mint of Rome for special treatment here.

1 (Pl. 82:a). "Pseudo-autonomous" Imperial. Mint of Patras

2.94 gr. ↑ Found on November 2, 1977, during a rescue excavation in a private plot on 39–41 Favierou St.: Δελτ 33, 1978, B' 1 (1985), p. 97.

Obv. COL AV[G]. ☉ Bust of Artemis Laphria r. On right shoulder quiver.

Rev. ACH PAT. ☉ Tripod. Below ? globe.

The name of the Roman colony of Patras, founded by Augustus in 14 B.C., appears in abbreviated form on coins minted by the city from Augustus to Caracalla. In a few cases only the initials CAAP are given; more common are the extended forms COL A A PATR or COL A A PATRENS.² These were expanded long ago as *Colonia Augusta Aroe Patrensis*, and this form became the accepted name of the colony.³ The new Greek Imperial,

¹ O. Broneer, "Colonia Laus Iulia Corinthiensis," *Hesperia* 10, 1941, pp. 388–390: *Colonia Laus Iulia Corinthiensis* for *Colonia Laus Iulia Corinthus*.

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Works frequently cited are abbreviated as follows:

BMCRE V = H. Mattingly, *Coins of the Roman Empire in the British Museum, V, Pertinax to Elagabalus*, London 1950

Hill = P. V. Hill, *The Coinage of Septimius Severus and his Family of the Mint of Rome, A.D. 193–217*, London 1964

RIC IV, i = H. Mattingly and E. A. Sydenham, *The Roman Imperial Coinage, IV, i, Pertinax to Geta*, London 1936

² P. Gardner, *A Catalogue of the Greek Coins in the British Museum, Peloponnesus*, London 1887, pp. 24–30, nos. 16–54; *Sylloge Nummorum Graecorum, The Royal Collection of Coins and Medals, Danish National Museum, Phlasiā–Laconia*, Copenhagen 1944, nos. 165–208; L. Forrer, *The Weber Collection II*, London 1924, pp. 432–435, nos. 3963–3975; S. W. Grose, *Fitzwilliam Museum, Catalogue of the McClean Collection of Greek Coins II*, Cambridge 1926, pp. 407–409, nos. 6335–6345; G. MacDonald, *Catalogue of Greek Coins in the Hunterian Collection, University of Glasgow II*, Glasgow 1901, pp. 126–128, nos. 8–24; K. M. Edwards, *Corinth, VI, Coins 1896–1929*, Cambridge, Mass. 1933, pp. 54–56, nos. 329–346. In the time of Nero the name of the colony occurs on coins as COL AA PATR, C P or COL NER PAT. For discussion, see B. E. Levy, "Jupiter Liberator at Patrae and the Boy Zeus of Aigion," *Πρακτικά του XII Διεθνούς Συνεδρίου Κλασικής Αρχαιολογίας, Αθήνα, 4–10 Σεπτεμβρίου 1983, Τόμος Β'*, Athens 1988 (pp. 131–135), pp. 133–134, pl. 26.

³ J. Eckhel, *Doctrina Numorum Veterum II*, Vienna 1794, p. 256; *CIL III 1*, p. 95; E. Kornemann, *s.v. Coloniae*, *RE IV*, 1901, col. 549; M. Grant *From Imperium to Auctoritas*, Cambridge 1946, p. 265;

however, inscribed COL AVG ACH PAT, shows that the official name of the colony was *Colonia Augusta Achaica Patrensis*. So far as I know, this is the first instance of the appearance on a Patras issue of more than the initials A A for the middle words of the city's name. This expanded form is made possible by the fact that the inscription runs from the obverse to the reverse die of the coin.

Aroe (Ἀρόη) was the name of the oldest and most important of the three towns traditionally brought together by Patreus at the synoecism of Patras (Pausanias, VII.18.2–5). Hence the supposition that it formed part of the name of the Roman colony founded on the original site of Aroe.⁴ But the fact that Patras was Augustus' only colony in Achaea,⁵ founded on a select site of his own choice (Pausanias, VII.18.7; Strabo, VIII.387 C), can readily account for the appearance of the word *Achaica* in the name of the dynamic new Roman colony.⁶ The word *Achaica* underlines the uniqueness of Patras in the colonization scheme of Augustus, the significance of which now becomes more obvious.

The bust of Artemis Laphria on the obverse derives from the celebrated cult statue of the goddess seen by Pausanias on the acropolis of Patras (Pausanias, VII.18.8–10).⁷ The bust itself assigns the coin to the Antonine period, for although the hairstyle is reminiscent of Artemis Laphria, the general appearance of the figure can be paralleled on coin portraits of Faustina II.⁸ The type on the reverse is similar to that on a large denomination of Nero with the legend DIANAЕ AVGVSTAE LAPHRIAE C.A.C.⁹

2 (Pl. 82:b). Denarius of Caracalla, struck under Severus. Mint of Rome

2.72 gr. ↓ Found on August 11, 1980, during a rescue excavation in a private plot at the corner of 207 Kanakari St. and Miaouli St.: Δελαρ 35, 1980, B' 1 (1988), p. 182.

Obv. ANTONINVS PIVS AVG. Laureate head of Caracalla r.

Rev. PONTIF TR P X COS II. Head of Medusa, winged, facing.

E. Meyer, *s.v.* Patrai, *RE* XVIII, iv, 1949, col. 2209; F. Vittinghoff, *Römische Kolonisation und Bürgerrechtspolitik unter Caesar und Augustus*, Wiesbaden 1952, p. 127; P. A. Brunt, *Italian Manpower 225 B.C.–A.D. 14*, Oxford 1971, p. 599, *et al.* Brunt (*loc. cit.*) reads the initials A A of the name of the colony as *Augusta Arae*.

⁴ See footnote 3 above.

⁵ M. Amandry, *Le monnayage des duovirs corinthiens*, *BCH-Suppl.* XV, 1988, pp. 5–6.

⁶ On the economic and military importance of Patras see G. W. Bowersock, *Augustus and the Greek World*, Oxford 1965, pp. 92–95 and D. Kienast, *Augustus, Prinzeps und Monarch*, Darmstadt 1982, p. 398.

⁷ J. Herbillon, *Les cultes de Patras avec une prosopographie patréenne*, Baltimore 1929, pp. 55–74. For the type of the Laphria see *LIMC* II.1, pp. 641–642, *s.v.* Artemis.

⁸ Cf. H. Mattingly, *Coins of the Roman Empire in the British Museum*, IV, *Antoninus Pius to Commodus*, London 1940, pp. 396–408, 487–491, pls. 54:19–56:15, 67:12–68:5; A. S. Robertson, *Roman Imperial Coins in the Hunter Coin Cabinet*, University of Glasgow, II, *Trajan to Commodus*, Oxford 1971, pp. 350–366, pls. 96:1–102:37. See also K. Fittschen, *Die Bildnistypen der Faustina Minor und die Fecunditas Augustae*, Göttingen 1982, pp. 34–43, pl. 5. The “pseudo-autonomous” issues of the *Colonia Patrensis* were discussed by the present author in the “International Symposium on Ancient Achaea and Elis,” held in Athens in May 1989.

⁹ B. E. Levy, “Nero’s Liberation of Achaea: Some Numismatic Evidence from Patrae,” *The Nickle Numismatic Papers*, Waterloo, Ontario 1984 (pp. 165–185), pp. 181–182, note 51.

The reverse with the head of Medusa and Caracalla's titles for the year A.D. 207 is included neither in standard works¹⁰ nor in P. V. Hill's monograph.¹¹ They record only the Medusa head with the legend PROVIDENTIA.¹² Among the parallel types of Septimius Severus, however, the Medusa head is recorded with both PROVIDENTIA and Severus' titles for the year A.D. 207.¹³

PENELOPE AGALLOPOULOU

SECOND EPHORATE OF ANTIQUITIES
13 Polygnotou Street
GR-105 55 Athens, Greece

¹⁰ *RIC* IV, i; *BMCRE* V; H. Cohen, *Description historique des monnaies frappées sous l'empire romain*, 2nd ed., IV, Paris 1884.

¹¹ Hill.

¹² *RIC* IV, i, p. 235, no. 164; *BMCRE* V, p. 258, no. † (not in the British Museum); Hill, p. 33, no. 879.

¹³ *RIC* IV, i, p. 118, no. 205A (dated) and p. 127, no. 285a–b (undated); *BMCRE* V, p. 262, no. ‡ (dated, not in the British Museum) and p. 221, nos. 355 and 356 (undated); Hill, pp. 33–34, no. 882 (dated) and nos. 874 and 883 (undated). The dated coin is an aureus.



a. Excavations at Patras, “Pseudo-autonomous” Imperial, mint of Patras



b. Excavations at Patras, denarius of Caracalla, mint of Rome