TWO UNPUBLISHED COINS FROM PATRAS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

Obv. COL AV/\(G\). \(\bigcirc\) Bust of Artemis Laphria r. On right shoulder quiver.
Rev. ACH PAT. \(\bigcirc\) 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,


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


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 Patrensia*. 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 (‘Αρόη) 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. But the fact that Patras was Augustus’ only colony in Achaea, 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. 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). 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. The type on the reverse is similar to that on a large denomination of Nero with the legend *DIANAE AVGVSTAE LAPHRIAE C.A.C.*

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


Obv. ANTONINVS PIVS AVG. Laureate head of Caracalla r.
Rev. PONTIF TR P X COS II. Head of Medusa, winged, facing.

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4 See footnote 3 above.


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


The reverse with the head of Medusa and Caracalla’s titles for the year A.D. 207 is included neither in standard works\textsuperscript{10} nor in P. V. Hill’s monograph.\textsuperscript{11} They record only the Medusa head with the legend PROVIDENTIA.\textsuperscript{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.\textsuperscript{13}

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\textsuperscript{10} RIC IV, i; BMCRE V; H. Cohen, Description historique des monnaies frappées sous l’empire romain, 2nd ed., IV, Paris 1884.
\textsuperscript{11} Hill.
\textsuperscript{12} RIC IV, i, p. 235, no. 164; BMCRE V, p. 258, no. + (not in the British Museum); Hill, p. 33, no. 879.
\textsuperscript{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