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WHEN DID THE ISTHMIAN GAMES RETURN TO THE ISTHMUS? (REREADING *CORINTH* 8.3.153)

In 146 B.C.E., in sacking Corinth and the sanctuary of Poseidon on her Isthmus, L. Mummius put a stop to the long and venerable tradition of the celebration, under Corinthian control, of the Isthmian Games at the sanctuary. The festival and its management were transferred to nearby Sicyon.¹ Some generations later, however, the games did return to the Isthmus; my concern is the date and the occasion of the return, and my argument is based in part on an inscription honoring their agonothete at the time of their restoration.

The problem may be summarized briefly. Strabo, who visited Corinth and the Isthmian sanctuary in 29 B.C.E., implies that the games were no longer celebrated there in his time (8.6.22):²

Ἐπὶ δὲ τῇ Ἰσθμῷ καὶ τὸ τοῦ Ἰσθμίου Ποσειδῶνος ἱερὸν ἄλσει πιτυώδει συνηρεφές, ὅπου τὸν ἀγῶνα τῶν Ἰσθμίων Κορίνθιοι συνετέλουν.

On the Isthmus is also the temple of the Isthmian Poseidon, in the shade of a grove of pine-trees, where the Corinthians used to celebrate the Isthmian Games.

His statement must have still been true when he completed the final revision of the book, circa 2 B.C.E.³ Therefore we have a *terminus post quem* for the return of the

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1. Paus. 2.2.2.

2. Trans. H. L. Jones, Loeb edition (1961), vol. 4.

3. Bowersock 1961, 115. Previously the revision had been dated to c. 7 B.C.E.

games to the old sanctuary. We also have a *terminus ante quem* for the restitution of Corinthian control, a list of victors in the games of 3 C.E., whose agonothele was a Corinthian.⁴ It being generally assumed that return to the sanctuary coincided with return to Corinthian control, orthodoxy has been that the Isthmian Games were re-established on the Isthmus after Strabo's final revision of Book 8 and before the victories recorded in 3 C.E. The games being quadrennial, the only possible year would be 2 B.C.E.⁵ We must ask why Strabo, who would have been aware of preparations to restore the athletic facilities, was content to say, circa 2 B.C.E., that the Corinthians *used to organize* the games at the Isthmian sanctuary; his reader would expect some further comment here.

THE INSCRIPTION

The inscription, *Corinth* 8.3.153 (pls. 14 and 62),⁶ found in 1938, and later published by J. H. Kent, seems to have a bearing on the return of the Isthmian Games to the Isthmus. According to Kent, the text is to be dated approximately to 25 C.E. (see below). The following reproduces Kent's reading (only up-to-date diacritic marks are added):⁷

[L. Castricio]
 [f. --- Regulo,]
 [aedili, praef(ecto) i(ure) d(icundo), II]vir(o) et [II]vir(o)]
 [quinquennial(i), a]gonothele Tiþ-
 [ereon Caesar]eon Sebasteon et 5
 [agonothele I]sthmion et Caesar-
 [eon, qui Isthm]ia ad Isthmum egit
 [primus sub cura]m col(oniae) Laud(is) Iul(iae) Cor(inthiensis),
 [carmina ad Iulia]m diva[m Au]g(ustam) virgi-
 [numque certame]n insti[tu]it [e]t omnib- 10
 [us aedificiis Cae]sareon novatis co-
 [---]to peregit epulumq(ue)
 [omnibus co]lonis dedit,
 [fil(ius) L. Castri]cius Regulus
 [pat]ri, 15
 [d(ecreto)] d(ecurionum).

Though some letters could be punctuated in a different way (and note also that the A of *agonothele* in line 4 is entirely visible), there is only one important point where Kent's reading appears to be questionable, that is, the gentile name of Regulus in line 14. While Kent's drawing shows the upper part of a C before IVS, on the good-quality photograph on plate 62, one cannot read more than IVS.⁸

4. Meritt 1931, no. 14 (with *SEG* 11.61.6–7); see the commentary in Kent 1966, no. 152.

5. Kent (1966, no. 152), relying on the opinion of those who have dated the completion of Strabo's work to 7 B.C.E., did not exclude that year as the *terminus post quem*. The year 3 C.E. was rejected by Kent because the agonothele of the games of that year, a certain Dinippus, did not fit his theory, which required that the return to the Isthmus occurred when the honorand of no. 153 served as president of the Isthmia et Caesarea (cf. his commentaries on nos. 152–53).

6. Inv. 1952, now stored in the Corinth Museum.

7. The reading and the restorations proposed by Kent were not rejected by L. Robert in his long review of *Corinth* 8.3: Robert 1966, 743–44 = *Opera minora selecta*, vol. 6 (Amsterdam, 1989), 561–62.

8. Since the letters are engraved accurately and very close to each other, one would expect to be able to decipher the tip of the upper end of the alleged C in the well-preserved space preceding the I. One may also note that the lighting used for the photograph (Kent 1966, pl. 62), coming from the upper right-hand corner, makes all the other Cs clearly visible.

Kent was no doubt inclined to recognize the (in my view nonexistent) JC of JCIVS because he knew of two prominent Corinthians whose names ended in *-cius Regulus*: L. Castricius Regulus, *duovir quinquennalis* in 21/22 C.E. or perhaps somewhat earlier,⁹ and Cn. Publicius Regulus, *duovir* in 50/51.¹⁰ He then assumed that one of them was the honorand and that his son, the dedicant, was his homonym. Of the two, Kent considered the senior L. Castricius Regulus the likelier because he was convinced, on the basis of lines 4–5, that the honorand would have been prominent in Corinth under Tiberius, and he therefore assumed a date circa 23 for this Regulus' *agonothesia*.¹¹

A Tiberian date is problematic because of the reference to *Julia diva Augusta* in line 9. It is difficult to accept that Livia was styled as "Goddess Julia Augusta" circa 25 C.E., well before her deification in 42. It is, of course, well known that Roman emperors, empresses, and other members of the imperial family could be hailed as *theos* or *thea* in the Greek East in their lifetime. Numerous cases show that Livia also received cult honors both before and after her death in 29, often being praised as a goddess by the Greeks.¹² However, the situation was very different not only in Rome and the West in general, but also in eastern Roman colonies such as Corinth. This Caesarian colony was tightly connected to Rome and the West in matters of religion and administration, so that, in the words of C. B. Rose, it "monitored developments in the Julio-Claudian family more closely than any other area."¹³ In fact, any divine honors to Goddess Julia Augusta in Corinth would appear unlikely, if not impossible, before the official recognition of her deification by the Roman Senate. So the mention of *Julia diva Augusta* in this inscription strongly points to a date after Livia's deification on 17 January 42.¹⁴ In this context, it also should be underlined that when, rarely, a Greek city decreed something specific in commemoration of Livia's deification, it would probably have been proposed by the agents of the Roman rule. This is simply because, for the Greeks, the deification of the Roman emperor was usually no reason to found a new cult.¹⁵ Therefore, in Livia's case, the dedications in Greek cities post-dating 42 C.E. can mostly be taken as evidence for the mere continuity of earlier cults.

Fortunately, new evidence has come to light that resolves the apparent difficulty. In her recent and most welcome study of both the Corinthian coinage and the archaeological remains of the sanctuary of Poseidon, Elizabeth Gebhard has established that the Isthmian Games returned to Corinthian control shortly after Corinth became a Roman colony in 44 B.C.E.¹⁶ Moreover, she argues convincingly that as soon as Corinth

9. Amandry 1988, 57–59, 165–67; *RPC* 1, nos. 1149–50. The date 16/17 C.E. has been proposed by Howgego (1989, 202). See also Spawforth (1996, p. 177, no. 9), who suggests on p. 172 that Regulus' family may have been Thespian in origin.

10. Amandry 1988, 73–74, 195–97; *RPC* 1, nos. 1182–88; Spawforth 1996, p. 180, no. 23.

11. Kent 1966, no. 153. After his election to the quinquennial duovirate the honorand would have become agonothete of the Tiberea Caesarea Sebastea c. 23, which would be some twenty-five years after his presidency of the first celebration of the Isthmian Games after their return to the Isthmus.

12. *Theos/thea* used of living emperors and imperial family members: Price 1984a. Livia as *thea*: Hahn 1994, 322–26.

13. Rose 1997, 139. See also Alcock 1993, 168–69, and, for a survey of the imperial cult in Julio-Claudian Corinth, Hoskins Walbank 1996, 201–13.

14. Cf. Kent 1966, no. 55, which might refer to Livia after her deification (as Kent himself thought). Unfortunately, however, the inscription is so fragmentary that the proposed restorations remain uncertain.

15. Cf. Robert 1946, 37–42; Price 1984a, 85.

16. Gebhard 1993, 79–82. In fact, this seems to confirm what Pausanias already wrote: the honor of celebrating the games was restored to the Corinthians as soon as the deserted city was rebuilt (ἀλλ' ὅσον

resumed control, the games were held not on the Isthmus but at Corinth itself. This means that Strabo's statement about the Isthmus as the site where the Corinthians *used to celebrate* the Isthmian Games is not relevant to the question of when the games returned to Corinthian control.¹⁷ Finally, the results of the archaeological excavations conducted by the University of Chicago show that repairs at the Isthmian sanctuary of Poseidon were begun by the middle of the first century C.E., but landscaping of the temenos and rebuilding of the theater were not completed until some years later, and there is little evidence of activity in the central area of the site until the time of Nero. Before the mid-first century, the Isthmian Sanctuary would not have been the scene of the festival.¹⁸

Gebhard has now proposed that the honorand may indeed be Cn. Publicius Regulus, whose career within the 50s would fit the new chronology provided by the Chicago excavations. Of course her assignment requires a modification of Kent's restoration in line 5, for if the honorand is Claudian or later, *Caesarjeon* cannot stand; Gebhard therefore alertly and plausibly proposes to read *Claudijeon*,¹⁹ the Tiberea Claudiaea Sebastea having been instituted in honor of Claudius.

Of the two proposals, Gebhard's is obviously preferable chronologically. Yet both are questionable because they rest on the unnecessary assumption that father and son had the same cognomen.

HONORAND AND DATE

The above considerations suggest that *Corinth* 8.3.153 was set up in honor of a Claudian agonothete by his son. What is more, it seems to me that the poetic performance in honor of the deified Livia would have made sense only if instituted as soon as possible after 42 C.E. A delay in such honors would be difficult to explain in a place like Corinth, where the imperial cult was observed with particular piety. Since both the poem to Livia and the *virginum certamen* would have been on the program of the Isthmia et Caesarea, the anonymous honorand would have served as agonothete at the first such festival organized after Livia's deification. In view of what we know about the penteteric celebrations in Claudian Corinth, the year would then be 43, when the agonothete may have been called Cn. Cornelius Pulcher.²⁰ Though Pulcher's presidency cannot be dated with absolute certainty, the period between 41 and 47 usually being taken as possible, it is noteworthy that, according to a Delphic inscription of circa 45,²¹ when this man presided over the Isthmian Games, the festival also included a contest for maidens. My suggestion is that the plausibly restored *virginum certamen* in lines 9–10 is a reference to that very contest (see below). If this is so, the inscription date of 45 provides a *terminus ante quem* for Pulcher's agonothesia, in which he introduced such a contest at the Isthmian festival. Since a victory in the Isthmian Games

μὲν χρόνον ἡρήμωτο ἡ πόλις, Σικυωνίους ἀγεῖν ἐπετέτραπτο τὰ Ἰσθμία, οἰκισθείσης δὲ αὐθις ἐς τοὺς νῦν οἰκήτορας περιῆλθεν ἡ τιμή, 2.2.2). The reference is clearly to the founding of the Caesarian colony.

17. Gebhard 1993, 81.

18. Gebhard 1993, 94; cf. also Marty 1993, 118; Gebhard et al. 1998, 416–33, 445. For later cult activity and the games at the Isthmus, see Rothaus 2000, 84–92.

19. Gebhard 1993, p. 88, n. 44.

20. Pulcher's *agonothesia* was assigned to this year by West (1928, 259, 261, 268–69); thus also Kent 1966, 31.

21. *FD* 3.1.534 = *SIG*³ 802. Cf. n. 34 below.

of 45 would perhaps not have been recorded in the same year at Delphi, and the honors for *Iulia diva Augusta* should have been as close to 42 as possible, the games of 43 seem the logical moment for the honor and for Pulcher's presidency.

If, as I believe, the honorand of *Corinth* 8.3.153 is likely to be identified with Cornelius Pulcher, one may attempt a reconstruction of what happened in Corinth during and after his presidency over the games. This man came from an Epidaurian family with a long tradition in the service of the imperial cult.²² His early career would have been similar to, if not identical with, that already proposed by Kent for L. Castricius Regulus, for in this period the office of agonothete appears to have been considered the highest honor in Corinth, and, when attested, it seems to have regularly followed that of the quinquennial duovirate.²³ Some time after the accession of Claudius, Pulcher would have become the president of the Tiberea Claudiea Sebastea. This festival in honor of the reigning emperor was an addition to the already existing Isthmia et Caesarea, which were celebrated every fourth year. The inscription discussed in this paper was one of the two documents that made Kent believe that the institution was Tiberian. Now it seems that only Kent number 156 can be taken to show that imperial games named after the current emperor existed under Tiberius, the festival being then called Tiberea Augustea Caesarea. Whether such games were held under Augustus is unknown. The program of the imperial games is nowhere recorded, but we may assume that it was modeled upon the Caesarea, which had been celebrated in honor of the emperor and the imperial house from the time of Actium. Poems and encomia, at least, would have been included, and probably also athletic events.²⁴ However, the possibility exists that the program was liable to change not only with the change of emperor, but also with each new president.

Since Pulcher appears to have been agonothete of both the Tiberea Claudiea Sebastea and the Isthmia et Caesarea, it seems as if these were two separate festivals. However, there is later Claudian evidence that has been taken to suggest that the two games could also be celebrated together,²⁵ that is, respectively, the titles Isthmia et Caesarea Sebastea²⁶ and Tiberea Claudiea Caesarea Sebastea.²⁷ A. B. West noted that a change from the simple Caesarea to games with longer names was typical of the Claudian period, a phenomenon that was not confined to Corinth, but is visible in other cities as well.²⁸ So the variation in the titles would testify to changes in the festivals' organization. Be that as it may, if the festival in honor of Claudius was originally autonomous, it is difficult to say precisely when it was celebrated for the first time. Forty-three, the year of the Isthmia et Caesarea, may be too late, for in that case two years would have passed since Claudius' accession. So it seems a reasonable

22. For the background and continuing prominence of Pulcher's family, see n. 45 and the final paragraph below.

23. Kent 1966, p. 30, n. 30.

24. For athletic contests at the Isthmian Caesarea (in 127 C.E.), see Biers and Geagan 1970.

25. Kent 1966, p. 28, n. 25; see, however, Geagan 1968, 73–74, esp. p. 72, n. 14.

26. In 47 or, conceivably, some years later: *Corinth* 8.2.68 (the agonothete, C. Iulius Spartiaticus, was *duovir quinq.* in 46/47). See Spawforth (1994, 219), who suggested that the *agonothesia* might be dated to 54. Kent (1966, 31) opted for 47, whereas West (1931, 52), could not decide between 47 and 51. For Spartiaticus' presidency, see also Geagan 1968, 71.

27. Perhaps in 51 C.E.: West 1931, no. 82 (agonothete: [L.] Rutilius L. f. [---]); for the date see Kent 1966, 31; Spawforth 1996, p. 181, no. 25). According to Geagan 1968, 78, the same president is mentioned in West 1931, no. 84. Moreover, an identical title is restored in West 1931, no. 83.

28. West 1931, 69.

assumption that Cornelius Pulcher was elected as agonothete of the imperial games as soon as possible after January 41, perhaps in that same year.²⁹

In 43 C.E., Cornelius Pulcher would have become president of the Isthmia et Caesarea. The two festivals were normally recorded in this order, as is shown by many inscriptions, and also because otherwise the reference to a Tiberian agonothete as the first to have held the Caesarea before the Isthmia would have been pointless.³⁰ The relationship between the Isthmia and the Caesarea is not quite clear, but I think it is reasonable to agree with the following conclusions of Gebhard:³¹ (1) the two sets of contests were held together; (2) the Isthmia usually preceded the Caesarea; and (3) the Caesarea were often, but not always, celebrated in Corinth. What, then, happened under the presidency of Pulcher? The inscription clearly refers to the Isthmian festival being held *ad Isthmum*, which means that at the time of Pulcher's *agonothesia* these games were held at the sanctuary of Poseidon. Kent's restoration of *primus* in line 8 seems to me apposite, because the phrase *Isthmia ad Isthmum egit* needs to be specified in some way (moreover, *primus* . . . *egit* is paralleled by both West 1931, no. 81, and Kent 1966, no. 154; see n. 30).³² If this is so, the Isthmian Games were celebrated at the Isthmus for the first time in 43. However, the restoration *sub cura* in line 8 is hardly correct, not only because the current expression was *sub cura*, but also because it would be difficult to explain the involvement of colonial sponsorship in this affair (it was normal that a city did or executed something *sub cura* of an officeholder, and not the other way around). Perhaps the games were held in honor of the colony (*in honore* in . . .), though I would very much prefer restoring *qui Isthmia ad Isthmum egit* | [*primus omniu*] *col(onia) Laud(e) Iul(ia) Cor(inthiensi)*.³³ The message would indeed seem to be that the honorand was the very first in the colony's history to have organized the Isthmian Games at the Isthmus. This circumstance was surely worth recording.

The *virginum certamen*, which, at least in this year, must have been a part of the Isthmian Games, would have denoted the armed chariot race (ἐνόπλιον ἄρματι), perhaps an all-female contest, which is known from a Delphic inscription of circa 45 C.E. This honorific text lists the names of three daughters of Hermesianax of Tralles, who all won at various festivals. Significantly, one of them, called Hedeia, won the Isthmian chariot race under the presidency of Cornelius Pulcher.³⁴ This man was certainly experienced in similar races, for he had himself won two chariot contests at the

29. The year 41 C.E. is not made less likely by the possibility that the Isthmian Games presided over by Iuuentius Proculus (FD 3.1.534 = SIG³ 802, cf. West 1928, 258–60) may date to this year. Cf. also Geagan (1968, p. 74, n. 19), who argues that the word *agonotheta* was repeated in Kent 1966, no. 153 because the presidencies of the imperial contests and of the Isthmia et Caesarea were served in different years.

30. Kent 1966, no. 154: *T. Manlio T. f. Col. Iuvenco* . . . *qui primus Caesarea egit ante Isthmia*; similarly West 1931, no. 81. While West (1931, 64) proposed to date Iuvenco's presidency to 35 C.E., Kent (1966, 30) opted for 15 C.E. (with a question mark).

31. Gebhard 1993, 87.

32. Honorific documents relating to municipal or polis life often record that someone was the first to have accomplished something; for Western evidence, cf. Mrozek 1971, 60–69, and for the term *protos* in agonistic inscriptions, see Tod 1949, 111–12.

33. *Primus omniu* in was suggested to me by Silvio Panciera. If it is correct (evidence in Mrozek 1971), it should obviously be taken to refer not to the subsequent items (*carmina* . . . *instituit*) but to the preceding phrase (*Isthmia* . . . *egit*). Besides the locative, *primus (omnium)* is sometimes followed by *ex colonial/municipio*, etc. (cf. Mrozek 1971, 63).

34. FD 3.1.534, col. 2.3–5: Ἡδεῖαν νεικήσασαν Ἴσθμια ἐπὶ ἀγωνολθέτου Κορινθίου Πούλχρου ἐνόπλιον ἄρματι; cf. SIG³ 802; Moretti 1953, 166–67; for a recent discussion (with bibliography), see Ferrandini Troisi 2000, 91–95.

Epidaurian Caesarea some ten years earlier.³⁵ By 43, Hedeia had already won a singing contest for *paides* (at the Athenian Sebasteia of 41), and so she would have been at most in her late teens at the Isthmian festival.³⁶ Regarding, then, the expression *virginum certamen*, one may note that the female participants in the competitions, who are recorded in the Delphic inscription, are styled as παρθέναι. Moreover, the term *certamen* would fit the context provided by the Delphic list, as it was widely used of various types of games in both circus and arena.³⁷ Armed chariot races themselves were not a Claudian novelty at the Isthmian Games, for they are attested in the games of 3 C.E., and they would have been included in the festival program considerably earlier, just as they were in Athens.³⁸

If the hypothesis of the Isthmian Games having been held at the Isthmus in 43 C.E. holds true, it follows that a stadium and hippodrome must have existed there by that year.³⁹ The theater and some other buildings would have been renovated soon after.⁴⁰ As far as I can see, this view is not excessively incongruous with that suggested by the archaeological evidence discussed by Gebhard (who dated the recovery of the Isthmus to circa 50–60). In any case, the inscription seems to suggest that the Isthmian Games alone were celebrated at the sanctuary of Poseidon in 43. The Caesarea were still held in Corinth, and, in fact, they continued to be held there until at least the second century.⁴¹ However, the return of the Isthmian Games to the Isthmus should not be taken to mean that the whole area around the sanctuary was an abandoned place before 43, for the repairs must have begun early enough to make sure that the athletic facilities were ready for the games of that year. Moreover, a federal vote from 37, which prescribed the erection at the Isthmus of more statues to the emperor than he was ready to accept, implies that the sanctuary was considered important before the time of Claudius.⁴²

The program of the Caesarea in 43 C.E. would have included various honors to the imperial house. The encomiastic poetry, in particular, would surely have been best performed in a theater. In view of the fact that the Isthmian theater seems not to have been redone before the time of Nero, it is best to imagine that the events were held in the city theater of Corinth. Kent's restoration in line 9, [*carmina ad Iulia*]m divam Augustam, is plausible, since a Corinthian list of victors of the Caesarea mentions a

35. IG 4² 101.45 (ἄρματι τελέω), 47/8 (ἄρματι πωλικῶ).

36. FD 3.1.534, col. 2.7–10: ἐνεῖκα δὲ καὶ ἰ παῖδας καθαροῦς Ἀθήνησι Σεβάστεια ἰ ἐπὶ ἀγωνοθέτῳ Νουίου τοῦ Φιλέλβου. The *agonothesia* of Ti. Claudius Novius, a prominent imperial agent in Claudian and Neronian Athens, is attested for 41 C.E. by many inscriptions. For the female competitors' ages, as well as the question of whether the contests were all-female or mixed, see Lee 1988, 103–17; Dillon 2000, 462–63.

37. TLL, s.v. *certamen*. One may compare I.Tarraco 159, which records a procurator of Titus in Alexandria, who was *agonotheta certaminis pentaheterici bis*. Kent (1966, 29), followed by Dillon (2000, p. 463, n. 18), suggested that the *certamen* of no. 153 was a stade.

38. Meritt 1931, no. 14, line 72 (πολεμιστήριον), cf. Moretti 1953, 166–67.

39. As Elizabeth Gebhard informs me, the latter has not been located, and the former is still largely unexcavated and thus cannot give us the needed chronological information.

40. Gebhard 1993, 85–86; above at n. 18.

41. Gebhard 1993, 86–88, on the epigraphic evidence.

42. IG 7.2711 (Acraephia); cf. Oliver 1989, p. 71, no. 18, lines 31–32. According to a letter of Cicero to Atticus (Att. 13.32.3), the latter had visited the Isthmus and seen a statue there of A. Postumius Albinus, one of Mummius' ten commissioners for the reorganization of Achaia after 146 B.C.E. The statue is likely to have been erected not long after the period he was in Greece. Moreover, the Corinth-Isthmus road continued in use during the entire period following the sack of 146 (evidence presented by E. Gebhard and M. Dickie, "The View from the Isthmus, ca. 200–44 B.C.," forthcoming in *Corinth*, vol. 20).

certain Γάιος Κάσσιος Φλάκκος from Syracuse, who won with a poem to *Thea Ioulia Sebaste*.⁴³ The other victor on record, Γάιος Ἰούλιος Ἴων from Corinth (ὁ καὶ Ἀ[ργεῖος ?]), won with an encomium of Augustus, and with another of Tiberius (λογικῶι ἐν-κωμῳῳι). If the list of victors refers to the games of 43 (and not to a later festival), the poetry competition at the Caesarea of that year included not only a poem to the newly deified Livia, but also eulogies in honor of earlier emperors.⁴⁴ It is not surprising that the Caesarea under Pulcher's presidency were characterized by the introduction of new honors to Roman rulers, considering that the Corneli Pulchri are known to have supported the imperial cult for many generations, beginning in the early Empire.⁴⁵

Whether or not the restoration by Kent is correct in lines 10–11, the context requires that something related to the Caesarea was completely renovated by the agonothe (omnib[us] --- Cae[sareon] novatis). If the reference is to the repairs of some buildings used for the Caesarea at the Isthmus, would this explain why the Isthmia alone had been celebrated there in 43 C.E., as if the installation of the equipment for the Caesarea had not yet been completed? I do not think so, because *novatis* implies that something already existing had been restored, whereas no pre-Claudian building at the Isthmus can be associated with the Caesarea. Thus, it is likely that the agonothe had some edifices of the Caesarea renovated in Corinth, where the festival had a history of more than seventy years.⁴⁶ On the other hand, the possibility cannot be excluded that *novatis* refers to the change, alteration, or renewal of the festival's program, its course, or the accompanying rituals (*caerimoniis* or the like).

What follows *novatis* is uncertain. Kent (1966, 72), referring to a proposal by W. E. Blake, who suggested some form of *coeptum*, tentatively proposed a reading of either *co[leptam] stoam ci]to* or *co[leptas] aedes ci]to*. In favor of the former, he cited the late-second-century inscription no. 306 of his own edition, where (in lines 1–2) one may decipher στοᾷς τῆς Ῥήγλ[ο]υ. Understandably, a late reference to a stoa of Regulus seemed relevant to Kent, who identified the agonothe with L. Castricius Regulus (see above).⁴⁷ Since there are many possibilities for restoring the gap, it may be useless to dwell on this point, yet I think that the word beginning with *co* may well have been *Corinthi*. Moreover, since the last item listed is a banquet that the agonothe gave for all the inhabitants of the colony, one may assume that *peregit* refers to something that was completed contemporaneously with, or rather immediately before, the feast (. . . *peregit epulumque* . . . *dedit*). Considering that banquets were normally

43. Meritt 1931, no. 19. Another Cassius Flaccus from Syracuse (whose praenomen is lost) is attested as a poet in 3 C.E. (Meritt 1931, no. 14, line 85). If the two are one and the same man, then this poet must have been relatively young in 3 C.E. to be still active forty years later.

44. As for hymns being sung in honor of earlier rulers, one may remember what happened in Ephesus, where a Claudian governor announced that the choir of the deified Livia should be given the same status as that of Augustus: *I. Ephesos* 17, lines 63–66; Price 1984b, 70.

45. West 1928, 268. Cf. also below at nn. 50–52.

46. If the reference is to *aedificia* or the like, it is difficult to think of buildings other than the theater and odeum that would have been related to the Caesarea, unless the program included *venationes* and gladiatorial events staged in the Corinthian amphitheater (for such entertainment in Corinth, see Spawforth 1994, 217). It is probably best to leave the question open.

47. Robert (1940, 52–53), had already suggested that Castricius Regulus may have financed the erection of a new stoa. For a modified reading of Kent 1966, no. 306 (and for the restoration of the stoa), see Geagan 1989, 351–54 (= *SEG* 39.340). In his edition, the stoa of Regulus figures in lines 15–16 (after a new, joining piece). Let it be noted also that a recently published (second-century?) inscription from Corinth records a stoa, possibly associated with a temple of Pluto, either in Corinth or at the Isthmus (Dixon 2000, 335–42).

preceded or accompanied by sacrifices and other rites, perhaps one could restore *Co[rin]thi sacra vo[]to peregit*.⁴⁸ Therefore, a logical sequence of events would offer: (1) the Caesarea were completely renewed (in some specific regard); (2) in Corinth (where the Caesarea were held), sacrifices were offered and apposite rituals performed; and (3) a public banquet was given. In fact, the impression is that the whole inscription is a summary of how the agonothete contributed to the reorganization of the Isthmia et Caesarea, and so a reference to something different in lines 11–12 (*co[]to peregit*) would break with the general tenor of the text.⁴⁹ The inscription itself was set up, with the decree of the city council, by the son Regulus, perhaps, but not necessarily, after the death of his father. We have no means of telling when the text was inscribed: it may be Claudian or Neronian, but hardly later.

As I have argued above, the person who set up the inscription was not the son of L. Castricius Regulus. However, it is possible that the cognomen Regulus goes back to this man. The honorand, with the full name Cn. Cornelius Cn. f. Pulcher, came from a prominent Epidaurian family,⁵⁰ which, together with some other powerful Greek families from the neighboring cities, began to be interested in high Corinthian offices under Claudius. As Antony Spawforth has suggested,⁵¹ this might be explained by assuming that colonial Corinth, as an important provincial center, attracted the type of capable men who had ambitions for Roman office. As a direct channel to Roman administration and society, Corinth was a place where a prominent outsider could hope to have a successful career. With the creation of the separate province of Achaëa in 44 C.E., more and more opportunities were offered to Greek notables. I would suggest that when the Epidaurian Cornelius Pulcher came to Corinth, he not only successfully aspired to high posts, but also married a Corinthian woman. This would have happened soon after his victories at the Epidaurian Caesarea (c. 32/33), probably when he was in his early twenties. Judging from the name of his son (cf. n. 52), the bride may have been the daughter of the quinquennial duovir L. Castricius Regulus (see at n. 9), or of another notable Regulus. It was not an uncommon phenomenon for a son to have a cognomen from his mother's family; in fact, this was an effective means of manifesting political and social links between upper-class families, not only in senatorial or equestrian circles, but also among the municipal and provincial elites. Such a marriage might have partly contributed to the later success of the Corneli Pulchri in Corinth: a homonymous grandson of the agonothete, and a friend of Plutarch, held high municipal and provincial offices and is known as a prominent Roman knight under Trajan and Hadrian. He was also a patron of Corinth.⁵²

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48. This restoration would fit the gap which, according to Kent 1966, 72, requires approximately 12 letters (see the drawing in Kent 1966, 71). It seems to me, however, that there would be space for even 14 or 15 letters. For *peragere* in reference to sacrifices, rituals, etc., see *TLL*, s.v. *perago*.

49. Restorations like *complura opera . . . peregit* or *concilium . . . peregit* do not seem plausible. *Corin-thi ea* (i.e., *Caesarea*) *voto peregit* could perhaps be considered.

50. For Pulcher, cf. the Epidaurian inscriptions *IG* 4².653 (as a four-year-old boy); 101, lines 45, 47–48 (as a victor at the Epidaurian Caesarea in c. 32–33 C.E.). Stemma: *IG* 4², p. XXV.

51. Spawforth 1996, 174.

52. *PIR*² C 1424; Puech 1983, 17–21; Hoskins Walbank 1989, 82–83. Patronage: West 1931, no. 71. This man would have been a nephew of Cornelius Regulus, the dedicant of the inscription, his otherwise unknown father being called Ti. Cornelius Pulcher (cf. Meritt 1931, nos. 80–81; Kent 1966, nos. 140–41; *IG* 4.795 [Troezen]).

APPENDIX

The following proposes a new reading for *Corinth* 8.3.153. Needless to say, some of the restorations remain hypothetical (for details, see the above discussion). The abbreviations and supplements are given with an eye on the estimated number of letters in each line (cf. also Kent's drawing [1966, 71]).⁵³

| | |
|--|----|
| [Cn. Cornelio] | |
| [Cn.f. --- ? Pulchro,] | |
| [aedili, praef(ecto) i(ure) d(icundo), II]vīr(o) et II[vir(o)] | |
| [quinquennali.] agonothete Tib- | |
| [ereon Claudi]eon Sebasteon et | 5 |
| [agonothete I]sthmiōn et Caesar- | |
| [eon, qui Isthm]ia ad Isthmum egit | |
| [primus omniu]m col(onia) Laud(e) Iul(ia) Cor(inthiensi), | |
| [carmina ad Iulia]m diva[m Au]g(ustam) virgi- | |
| [numque certame]n instī[t]u[it] e[st] omniū- | 10 |
| [us caerimoniis ? Cae]sareon novatis Co- | |
| [rinthi sacra vo?]to peregit epulumq(ue) | |
| [omnibus co]lonis dedit, | |
| [fil(ius) ? . Cornel]ius Regulus | |
| [pat]ri, | 15 |
| [d(ecreto)] d(ecurionum). | |

53. Whether the tribe was recorded in line 2 remains unknown. The *Fabia* is otherwise attested for the Cornelii Pulchri.

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VELLEIUS PATERCULUS AND L. MUNATIUS PLANCUS

Lucius Munatius Plancus, traditionally viewed as one of the great scoundrels of Roman politics, has recently been the subject of a major reappraisal. Thomas H. Watkins' detailed and unabashedly speculative monograph on the career of Plancus mounts

This paper developed out of a wider survey of the career of Plancus, delivered at the University of Sydney colloquium *Roman Crossings, Interdisciplinary Approaches to Rome* in September 1999. The writer would like to thank Ms. Léonie Hayne, Dr. Patrick Tansey, Dr. Trevor Evans, and the anonymous readers for *CP* for reading various versions of the paper, and providing much in the way of helpful comment and criticism.