

PREFACE

This inquiry has impetus in my study of the archeological remains of ancient temples at Corinth, summer 2001. On a hot afternoon, after much searching, I came upon the remains of the Asclepius Temple. Grown over with bush and partially buried with the dust and earth of half a century, the temple in its vestige form captivated me. In New York I had been studying the design and history of the Asclepius temple at Corinth as part of my PhD field examinations. The archaeologist Carl Roebuck studied the site in 1946. The Greeks built the temple in the fourth century BCE, and Julius Caesar rebuilt it about one hundred years after Mummius' sack of Corinth in 146 BCE. The cult drew a lot of attention in the Hellenistic world. As a cult, it represents an intersection between Greek (Roman) and early Christian religion—one which raises questions about heaven and earth, and the tangible and intangible ways human beings relate to and with(in) each. The use and interpretation of dreams as salvific mediums occur as central elements of this intersection. In what follows I have set out to explore that which I see to be the poignancy of this relationship, and to consider the meaning and potency of dreaming for the ancients. My aim has been to work through these ancient dreams, to become familiar with their processes: epiphany, conflict, liminality, revelation, transformation. The specifics of this treatment include working with ancient dream-texts, language, and archaeological sources to gain a better understanding of the socio-cultural and religio-historical context and content of the sources, authors, and communities.

