

What's New in Hellenistic Athletics?

In order to better understand the framework in which Hellenistic athletes operated, it is necessary to give some preliminary information on new developments in the field of athletics. Unveiling what was new in Hellenistic athletics may also prove a promising way to demonstrate that the Hellenistic age was not only a period of its own right in the history of sport but was very innovative in terms of athletics. This way it may become clear why a history of decline cannot be a reasonable approach to Hellenistic sport.

2.1 Enlarging the Agonistic Landscape: New Athletic Festivals in the Hellenistic Period – An “Agonistic Explosion”?

The most important framework of Hellenistic athletics is constituted by the various Panhellenic, regional, and local games that Greek athletes travelled to in order to take part in competitions. Louis Robert's famous observation of an “agonistic explosion”¹ due to the foundation of numerous new contests has to be subjected to slight modification today, since Thomas Heine Nielsen has shown in great detail that the increase in the number of games was based upon a much broader fundament than previously assumed.² The *agones* represent an aspect of athletic competition in the Hellenistic age that

¹ Robert 1984:38 refers to the third century AD (“explosion agonistique”), but others as Chaniotis 2018a:325 have pointed to a similar dynamic in the third and second centuries BC: “From the Hellenistic period onwards, the number of contests increased tremendously.”

² Nielsen 2018a (see also Nielsen 2014 and Nielsen 2016). Nielsen has shown that there were up to 155, definitely at least some 76 (Nielsen 2018a:230) athletic festivals already in the Archaic and Classical periods, which can only represent a “minimum number” (Nielsen 2018a:230) of the total amount of games because we must take into account a considerable *Dunkelziffer*. Therefore, what happened in the third and second centuries was rather not a second “révolution agonistique,” as Roubineau 2016:23 has recently suggested for the sixth century. Yet, as we will see, it was still a major process.

has been comparatively well studied.³ Yet, previous research has analyzed important, but rather single aspects of the athletic festival culture of the period. A comprehensive study of Hellenistic *agones* as once requested by Angelos Chaniotis⁴ that would start from a list of all existing contests in this period (in the way Thomas Heine Nielsen has collected the material for Archaic and Classical games) still represents a desideratum.⁵

At the current state of research, we can safely assume that the expansion of the Greek world in the Hellenistic period must have brought about an increase in the total number of athletic festivals. Greek contests of varying levels of prestige were held from Olbia⁶ in the North to Alexandria⁷ in the South, from Kentoripa⁸ in the West to Babylon⁹ in the East. Not all of these contests, however, were full-scale *agones* and belonged to the same category. Whereas games like the isolympic Ptolemaia of Alexandria, though not able to challenge the status of the grand four, tried their best at becoming an important part of the agonistic festival culture of the day, the contests in Babylon and Kentoripa, for instance, were rather minor festivals that simply aimed at engaging the local youth in athletic activities held at the local gymnasia. Such “gymnasion contests” clearly flourished during the entire Hellenistic period.¹⁰ Characteristics of these

³ Increase in the number of crown contests: Robert 1984:36–37, Chaniotis 1995, and Parker 2004; categorization of games: Pleket 1975, Remijsen 2011, and Slater 2013; commemoration days: Chaniotis 1991 and Wiemer 2009a; “campaign agones”: Mann 2020a; Hellenistic games as nodes in a network: van Nijf and Williamson 2016; gymnasion contests: Kah 2004. Cf. also Dunand 2003 and Chaniotis 2011.

⁴ Chaniotis 1995:147.

⁵ A Groningen project under the direction of Onno van Nijf and Christina Williamson (“Connected Contests”) is currently working to fill the gap.

⁶ *IAG* 32 (Olbia; fourth century). The place of the contest is not mentioned in this inscription, but it is very likely that it refers to a competition held in Olbia. Due to a private letter from the city dating to 550–510 and mentioning an *agonothetes*, this contest “may even be traced back to the sixth century” (Nielsen 2018a:75). For a victor list from Herakleia Pontike dating to the Roman period, see Kah 2004:86 (*I.Herakl.Pont.* 60).

⁷ See Section 5.4.3.

⁸ Libertini 1949, no. 1; cf. Kah 2004:90.

⁹ Haussoullier 1909, no. 1; cf. Kah 2004:88.

¹⁰ Known examples include contests in Kentoripa (Libertini 1949, no. 1; second century), Athens (Theseia; *IG* II² 956–958; 960–961; 161/ 60–140), Chalkis (Herakleia: *IG* XII 9, 952; late second century; Hermaia [?]: *SEG* XXIX 806; ca. 120–100), Tralleis (*I.Tralleis[und Nysa]* 107; second/first century), Erythrai (*I.Erythrai* I 81; ca. 100 or later), Chios (*CIG* 2214, second century), Samos (*IG* XII 6, 1, 179–183; ca. 200–150), Sestos (*I.Sestos* 1; 133–120), Knidos (*SEG* XLIV 902, Late Hellenistic period), and even Babylon (Haussoullier 1909, no. 1; 109/08); for the classification, still Klee 1918:40–42; 44; see also the very useful catalogue of Kah 2004:82–90 who collected the epigraphic evidence for military education in Hellenistic gymnasia. Other types of *agones* like the funeral contests (Roller 1981a, 1981b) had lost its initially high importance in the Hellenistic period. For “campaign *agones*” as a new fourth category of contests in addition to “competitions at recurrent religious festivals” (Nielsen 2018a:22), gymnasion *agones*, and funeral contests, now Mann 2020a.

competitions were not only a local catchment area but also paramilitary disciplines (e.g., *katapaltes*, *euhoplia*, and *hoplomachia*),¹¹ which appear to have been “a typical phenomenon of the Hellenistic period,”¹² and contests such as *eutaxia*, *euexia*, and *philoponia*, sometimes in the form of team competitions.¹³ The intervals between the respective iterations of these contests could be as short as only one month.¹⁴ The flourishing of “gymnasion contests” is sometimes taken as an indication for the ever-increasing importance of wars in the Hellenistic world, and probably rightly so.¹⁵

Yet apart from such minor and purely local contests which were, above all, an element of state education, some Hellenistic regions developed an especially rich festival culture of full-scale *agones*. Such regional festival cultures can be identified, for instance, in Boiotia and Asia Minor, which both constituted new hotspots in the agonistic landscape of the period.¹⁶

The most well-known example for the aforementioned changes in the agonistic landscape is given by the efforts the citizens of Magnesia on the Maeander undertook in order to raise the status of their local festival, the Leukophryena.¹⁷ In 222/21, they proposed to enhance their status to that of the “holy crown games.” The proposition was rejected,¹⁸ but fourteen years later, the Magnesians tried again, and this time they were successful. They sent envoys across the Hellenistic world and proudly

¹¹ Kah 2004:54–64; Mann 2020a:113. In Samos, even a discipline called *lithobolon* which may have resembled the “stone put” of the “modern” Highland games existed: *IG XII* 6, 1, 183, l. 6; 19 (an explanation as another form of *katapaltes* including large stones [Bugh 1990:33] is less probable [Kah 2004:59]).

¹² Kah 2004:74: “ein typisches Phänomen des Hellenismus.”

¹³ Crowther 1991a; Gauthier and Hatzopoulos 1993; Mann 2020a:113.

¹⁴ *IG XII* 6, 182, l. 2 (Samos, ca. 200); *I.Sestos* 1, l. 35–36 (Sestos, 133–120): καθ’ ἕκαστον μῆνα; l. 67: ἕκαστόν τε μῆνα; Lazaridou 2015 (= *SEG LXV* 420), l. 73–110 (Amphipolis, 24/ 23), l. 75: καθ’ ἕκαστον μῆνα. In Beroia, it took place every four months: *I.Beroia* 1, B, l. 25 (Beroia, first half of the second century): κατὰ τετράμηνον.

¹⁵ Kah 2004. For the significance of the entire phenomenon, see esp. Chaniotis 2005a and Boulay 2014; for a synthesis, Chaniotis 2018c:188–189; for civil wars, see Gray 2015 and Börm 2018. The connection between the increasing importance of wars and paramilitary disciplines at “gymnasion contests” like the Theseia is made by Kah 2004:63–64, 69–74, and Gehrke 2004:415.

¹⁶ For Asia Minor, see Pleket 2014b:365–368 (“The extant evidence points to an upward shift in athletic activity in Asia Minor in the latter decades of the fourth century.” [365]); for Boiotia, Ringwood 1927:34–57 (“center of agonistic competition” [34]), Feyel 1942:251–261 (“mouvement agonistique” [251]), and the respective contributions in Scharff 2024a; for the financial aspects, Migeotte 2006. On Boiotia’s festival culture, see Grigsby 2017.

¹⁷ On the games, see Sumi 2004, Slater and Summa 2006, Thonemann 2007, Sosin 2009, van Nijf and Williamson 2015:100–101, and van Nijf and Williamson 2016:46–48; for the dossier of decrees, Ebert 1982, Rigby 1996:179–279, Chaniotis 1999, Ma 2003a:12–13, 17, and Knäpper 2018:113–130.

¹⁸ Ma 2003a:18; Pleket 2014b:368.

presented the positive responses of more than 100¹⁹ cities, federal states, and kings on inscriptions in the Southwest corner of their *agora*, a very prominent place (*epiphanestatos topos*, as the Greeks would have put it). This spectacular diplomatic initiative was motivated by an epiphany of Artemis Leukophryene and sanctioned by an oracle from Delphi. As Peter Thonemann observed in one of the inscriptions (i.e., the famous foundation document for the Leukophryena),²⁰ the Magnesians explicitly highlighted that “they were the first of those dwelling in Asia in favor of establishing a stephanitic contest.”²¹ The claim is justified and a provocation of Magnesia’s rival city Miletus, which had begun to operate in a similar manner with its own festival, the Didymeia, in the meantime.²²

Despite being the first in Asia Minor to take the initiative for such a Panhellenic enterprise, the Magnesians were certainly not the first Greeks at all to do so. The Koans had already “set the trend”²³ in 242/41, when they sent at least forty-three delegations (*theoriai*) across the Greek world in order to make dozens of cities and kings recognize their local Asklepieia as an *agon stephanites* and to accept the inviolability (*asylia*) of their sanctuary.²⁴ As in Magnesia, the inscriptional letters of acceptance were proudly erected on marble *stelai* in an important place (in the Asklepieion). As John Ma has pointed out, the inscriptions witnessed the world that mattered to Kos.²⁵ They can thus be read as a testimony for “peer polity interaction” in the Hellenistic age and as an indication for what the Groningen project calls “Connecting Contests” in the Hellenistic world.

The foundation of the Leukophryena as well as the establishment of the Asklepieia do not represent isolated cases but are rather part of a general trend.²⁶ Taken as a whole, there can be no doubt that the third and second

¹⁹ More than sixty of these responses have survived and “the space available suggests that another thirty or so acceptances may originally have been inscribed” (Parker 2004:9). All participating states are listed in van Nijf and Williamson 2016: Appendix 1.

²⁰ Thonemann 2007.

²¹ *I. Magnesia* 16, l. 16–18 (cf. *Syll.*³ 557; *SEG* LVI 1231): πρώτ[οι στεφανι]τήν ἀγῶνα θεῖναι τῶν κατοικούντων τὴν Ἀσίαν [ἐψηφίσαν]το; I prefer the reading of Thonemann 2007 to that of Slater and Summa 2006 (see Pleket’s commentary in *SEG* LVI 1231).

²² Cf. Section 3.1.1.3.

²³ Pleket 2014b:367.

²⁴ Both requests were usually combined. For the festival, see still Klee 1918, cf. Parker 2004:19. For the *asylia*, Rigsby 1996:106–153 and Knäpper 2018:87–104.

²⁵ Ma 2003a:20–21, 26: “Kos, Magnesia and Teos all requested recognition of *asylia* from an international network, but, in spite of considerable overlap, did not send to exactly the same places.”

²⁶ Other athletic festivals in Asia Minor and the Eastern Aegean whose status was raised to that of an *agon stephanites* in the third or second centuries include the Halieia of Rhodes (third century?; Kontorini 1989:169–170; Chaniotis 1995:166; Parker 2004:21), the Didymeia of Miletus (218–206; Parker 2004:20, Pleket 2014b:368), the Klaria of Kolophon (ca. 200; Robert and Robert 1989:51,

centuries saw important changes in the structure of the agonistic landscape: Several *agones* were either newly established as crown games or upgraded to that level, a category that was formerly almost exclusively reserved for the grand four at Olympia, Delphi, the Isthmos, and Nemea. The evidence for most of the new crown games has been collected in a seminal article by Angelos Chaniotis.²⁷ According to Louis Robert, the development was triggered by the foundation and splendid first celebration of the Egyptian Ptolemaia in 280/79.²⁸ Robert Parker, however, has shown that there are earlier examples like the Asklepieia of Epidauros and the Hekatomboia/Heraia of Argos – one may also think of the Panathenaia²⁹ – and that it would be too far-fetched to understand the establishment of the Ptolemaia as a turning point, at least with regard to the history of *agones stephanitai* or “Panhellenic’ festivals,” as he calls them.³⁰

But new developments in the agonistic landscape of the period did not only take place in Asia Minor or Egypt. Hellenistic Boiotia is another case in point (Map 2.1). Although most of the Boiotian games such as the Herakleia of Thebes and the Eleutheria of Plataiai had already existed long before the Hellenistic age,³¹ it was no earlier than in this period that “almost every town in Boiotia had its own”³² crown games; and there can be no doubt that these festivals were highly important for the organizing communities themselves.³³ As a third-century poet put it, Plataiai had been quite a boring town in those days and became “a polis only at the festival of the Eleutheria.”³⁴ According to the surviving evidence, Hellenistic Boiotia’s most important festival, however, turned out to be the Basileia of Lebadeia for which we dispose of a very rich

94; Chaniotis 1995:167, Parker 2004:20, Pleket 2014b:368), the Soteria of Kyzikos (second century; Robert 1987:156–162, Parker 2004:20; Pleket 2014b:368), and the Nikephoria of Pergamon (182/81; Musti 2000, Parker 2004:21) – to name just the most famous and important ones. For a list of all contests that were newly founded or re-established in this region, Chaniotis 1995:166–168; for the crown games, see the catalogues of Robert and Robert 1989:20, and Parker 2004:18–22. All in all, at least “13 separate crown games spread between Asia Minor and on two islands, Samos and Kos, off the coast” (Pleket 2014b:368). For the spread of contests in Asia Minor in the Roman Imperial period, see Mitchell 1990 and Leschhorn 1998.

²⁷ Chaniotis 1995:esp. 164–168.

²⁸ Robert 1984.

²⁹ Remijsen 2011:106.

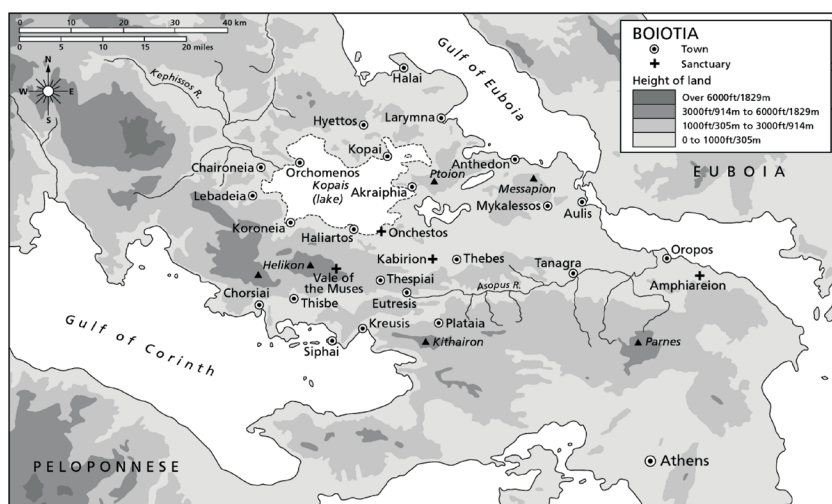
³⁰ Parker 2004. On the high significance of the establishment of the Ptolemaia for the introduction of the new category of iso-games, see Section 5.4.3.

³¹ For the Herakleia, Roesch 1975, Schachter 1986:29, Nielsen 2018a:86–87, 118, and now Ganter 2024; for the Eleutheria, Schachter 1994:138–141, Jung 2006:344–351, Wallace 2011, and Nielsen 2018a:33.

³² Parker 2004:13 referencing Robert 1984; see also Chaniotis 1995:165.

³³ On this particular aspect, see the contributions in Scharff 2024a.

³⁴ Poseidippos, *PCG* fr. 31 (= Herakleides F 1, 11 Pfister); cf. Chaniotis 1995:147.



Map 2.1 Boiotia

epigraphic documentation including prominent victors like a Ptolemaic king.³⁵ In addition, the Trophonia were held as an important athletic festival at the same location.³⁶ Other Boiotian contests founded or newly established as crown games included the Mouseia of Thespiai,³⁷ the Ptoa of Akraiphia,³⁸ the Charitesia of Orchomenos,³⁹ and the Amphiarraia of

³⁵ Hellenistic victors at the Basileia which were established after the battle of Leuktra in 371 and, according to Diod. Sic. 15.53.4 belonged to the category of crown games from the start, can be found in *IG* VII 2532 (Thebes, 338–335); *LAG* 40, l. 2 (Sikyon, ca. 260–220); no. 44, l. 15 (Tegea, end of the third century); no. 45, l. 1–2 (vicinity of Argos, 220–180); Ebert 1972, no. 66 (Thespiai, end of the third century), no. 70 (Thebes, third or second century); *SEG* LIX 417 (Messene, second or first century); *SEG* III 367 (Lebadeia, second century); Manieri 2009, *Leb.* 11 (Lebadeia, 80–51); *AD* 26 A (1971), 34–40 (Lebadeia, 80–51); maybe also *LAG* 54, l. 2 (Kassandreia, ca. 100) refers to these games and not to the homonymous Macedonian contest. For the Ptolemaic victory (probably Ptolemy XII), see Section 6.2.2; for the Basileia in general, Ringwood 1927:35–37, Moretti 1953:105–107, Schachter 1994:115–118, Turner 1996, Parker 2004:20, Fossey 2014:109, and Tufano 2024.

³⁶ *LAG* 51 (= *I.Delos* 1957; ca. 135–130) honors the Athenian Menodoros for his victories “in the circuit and the other sacred games” and lists, among other contests, the Trophonia in Lebadeia; cf. Parker 2004:22.

³⁷ *IG* VII 1735 b (*SEG* LIII 473bis), l. 4–5 (Thespiai, 230–225; for this dating Knoepfler 1996): ταῖς Μοῦσαι[s] | στεφανίτην ἰσοπύθιον. Feyel 1942:88–132, Schachter 1986:154–155, Chaniotis 1995:165, Parker 2004:19. The Mouseia did not include athletic contests though, but were entirely musical and/or dramatic (Schachter 2024).

³⁸ The festival appears to have been reorganized between 226 and 224 (Roesch 1982:229) and raised to the status of crown games some 115 years later (Roesch 1982:219); cf. Chaniotis 1995:165, Parker 2004:19.

³⁹ The festival was probably founded or reestablished in the late fourth century (*IG* VII 3210; Te Riele and Te Riele 1976) and was later raised to the status of crown games in the second century

Oropos,⁴⁰ which took place at a sanctuary that was claimed by both the Athenians and the Boiotians. Games such as the Erotideia of Thespiai,⁴¹ founded probably at the end of the third century,⁴² or the Pamboiotia of Koroneia, a common festival of the Boiotian *koinon* instituted between ca. 285 and 250,⁴³ also turned into an essential part of the athletic festival culture of the Hellenistic world. What is more, a city such as Tanagra organized two known *agones*, the Sarapieia⁴⁴ with contests for performers and the Delia which included athletic disciplines.⁴⁵ Even in a backwater like Akraiphia⁴⁶ a second *agon*, the Soteria, flourished in the first century, probably alongside the more ancient Ptoa.⁴⁷

Taken as a whole, the plurality of the Boiotian games⁴⁸ reflected the diversity of the Boiotian religious landscape, the landscape of an *ethnos*,

(Schachter 1981:142–143); cf. Chaniotis 1995:165. An athlete from Megara won at the Homoloia in the men's boxing between 100 and 50 (*IG VII* 48, row I, wreath 1, l. 3–4).

⁴⁰ Hellenistic victors at the Amphiaraiia are very well attested in a series of victor lists from the Amphiaraiion: *I.Oropos* 520–523, 525–530. The games were reorganized, probably in the second half of the second century (Kalliontzis 2016,; for their catchment area, van Nijf and Williamson 2016:53–56 and the tables in Appendices 4–6). Other athletic victors from the period include *IAG* 45 (vicinity of Argos, ca. 220–180), *IG VII* 48 (Megara, 100–50), *I.Priene* 236–237 (Priene, first century), *IAG* 56 (mid-first century, Halikarnassos).

⁴¹ Schachter 1986:218–219, Chaniotis 1995:165 and now Schachter 2024. In contrast to Thespiai's other even more important *agon*, the Mouseia, the Erotideia were primarily athletic and equestrian. Their surviving victor lists of the first century (*IG VII* 1764–1765, and *I.Thespiai* 186; a victor from Megara in *IG VII* 48 [100–50]), however, show an *agon* with a wide catchment area reaching as far as Asia Minor in the East (Nikaia in Bithynia: *IG VII* 1765, l. 30–31; Kyzikos: *IG VII* 1765, l. 24–25; Smyrna: *IG VII* 1765, l. 12–13; Myndos in Caria: *IG VII* 1765, l. 28–29; Kyme in Aiolia: *I.Thespiai* 186, l. 32–34 [the victor was successful in the four-horse chariot race]), Epidamnos (*I.Thespiai* 186, l. 17–18), and Korkyra (*I.Thespiai* 186, l. 9–12, 19–20) in the North.

⁴² The first attestation of the contest is in a recently published agonistic inscription from Kibyra dating to 197–179 (Meier 2019, no. 9, l. 2).

⁴³ For the Pamboiotia, Tufano 2024. The festival included team competition in the third (*IAG* 39 [Thisbe, ca. 250]) and athletic and equestrian contests in the first centuries (*IG VII* 2871 [Koroneia, first century]). Other *koina* like the Aitolians and the Achaians also introduced what appear to have been common games of the league. Thermika: *IAG* 45, l. 7, Amarieia of Aigion (*SEG LVIII* 816, l. 9 with Strasser 2015:63 and Freitag 2016).

⁴⁴ *SEG XIX* 335; Chaniotis 1995:165.

⁴⁵ In *SEG LVIII* 816 (Rhodes, 185–175), the Rhodian “heavy weight” Python son of Kleuphanes is praised as having been successful at the “Delia in Boiotia,” which could refer to the festival in Tanagra (alternatively we must assume with Strasser 2015:62–63 a hitherto unknown festival, the “Epidalia in Boiotia”). In a victory catalogue of a wrestler and pankratiast from Messene dating back to the Augustan age (*SEG LIX* 411), the Delia in Tanagra are mentioned for the first time (Themelis 2011:143–144).

⁴⁶ On Akraiphia, Ma 2005.

⁴⁷ Chaniotis 1995:165. A fragmentary victor list (*IG VII* 2727 [Akraiphia, first century]) includes, in addition to musical and dramatic performers, the name of at least one athletic victor in a race in armor ἀ[π]ὸ τοῦ τροπαίου (l. 31–32).

⁴⁸ Papazarkadas 2019. A lot of these Boiotian games were revived or reorganized in the third century, as Feyel 1942:251–261 has emphasized, who called this process a “mouvement agonistique” (251); cf. Schachter 1986:28.

which did not dispose of only one federal sanctuary, but of many.⁴⁹ Yet this agonistic landscape was not a permanent constellation but was subject to historical change. In other words, Greek contests clearly had a history, a simple fact that nonetheless sometimes tends to slip our attention when we focus so much on Olympia and the stable-looking *periodos* of the four most important games. In the Hellenistic period, the history of Greek games was very dynamic in that it included innovations in the structure of the festival culture (*iso*-games,⁵⁰ *agones stephanitai*), foundations of new contests but also the end of some festivals or their temporary discontinuation due to wars. The first iteration of the Soteria of Akraiphia that we know of, for instance, was not necessarily the very first one, but only took place as the “first after the war.”⁵¹

However, the discontinuation of an athletic festival as a result of wars is not unique to Boiotia. The most prominent case is known from an inscription that was brought to light in Olympia in 1954 and 1955.⁵² Probably in 216, the Akarnanian League resolved a decree by which the confederacy agreed to accept, among other things, the responsibility for reestablishing the annual contest of the Aktia⁵³ after extensive warfare during the Social War (220–217) had brought the games to an end. The city of Anaktorion that had until then been responsible for the organization of the festival was obviously not able anymore to take on the financial burden.⁵⁴

No doubt, the omnipresence and growing importance of wars in the Hellenistic age had an impact on the Greek athletic festival culture, an observation that holds true especially for the wars of the Roman expansion

⁴⁹ Ganter 2013; Beck and Ganter 2015:155; a good example is the publication clause of a treaty of the Boiotian League *StV* III 463, 3–6.

⁵⁰ As Langenfeld 2009:181–182, Remijsen 2011:104 and others have shown, this new category meant that the hometowns of the respective victors should award their successful athletes with the same rewards and honors as victors in the Olympic, Pythian, or Nemean Games, hence the terms “iso-olympic,” “iso-pythian,” and “iso-nemean.” It does not necessarily mean that the new festival offered the same set of disciplines or age-classes as the respective crown games.

⁵¹ *IG* VII 2727, l. 3–4: τῶν τριετηρίων Σωτηρίων πρῶ[τον] | ἀπὸ τοῦ πολέμου, usually taken to refer to the Mithridatic Wars.

⁵² Habicht 1957; cf. Finley and Pleket 1976:PLATE 27; Meier 2012, no. 22. Note that Olympia had no connection with the Aktia, which were minor local games. Therefore, the erection of the inscription at Olympia can only be explained by the aim of the Akarnanians to get as much publicity as possible in addition to some divine protection for the content of the decree.

⁵³ For this contest that was called an ἀγὼν παλαιός (Hyp. fr. 155 Kenyon [= Harpokr. s.v. Ἄκτια]) already in the fourth century but saw an immense increase in importance including the actual elevation to the status of the games of the *periodos* no earlier than at the very beginning of the Roman Imperial period (right after 31 when Octavian had defeated Antony and Kleopatra at Actium), see Lämmer 1986–1987, Pavlogiannis and Albanidis 2007, and Wacker 2018:esp. 16–17.

⁵⁴ For the shortfall of religious festivals in the Hellenistic age (with special reference to the Aktian case), see Habicht 2006a.

in Greece and Asia Minor. At the Amphiaraiia and Rhomaia in Oropos, for instance, there even was a contest – probably a running event – that was called the “good news of the Roman victory.”⁵⁵ That way a single sporting event served to commemorate the Roman conquest in a positive way. Although this particular discipline certainly constituted a new invention that was not followed elsewhere, the concept itself was part of a larger trend of the period. It was precisely during the Hellenistic age that commemoration days flourished even more than before.⁵⁶ A military victory was the most common reason for the creation of a festival as a commemoration day, and, in the case of the particular event at Oropos, it represented another typical feature of Hellenistic festivals: the discipline, but also the entire games, was celebrated in honor of the Roman people.⁵⁷ For this purpose, the Greater Amphiaraiia of past times became the Amphiaraiia and Rhomaia. Since the first half of the second century, several organizers of Greek games acted accordingly so that the title Rhomaia was attached to already existing contests.⁵⁸ In other cases, several *agones* were simply newly founded as Rhomaia.⁵⁹ Additionally, festivals and contests could also be named after successful Roman generals and politicians. The most opportunistic example is clearly represented by the Sylleia at Athens established after, and in spite of, the siege of the city by Sulla.⁶⁰

Taking into account all the wars of the Roman expansion, the Mithridatic Wars had the most serious impact on Greek festival culture⁶¹: Greece became “a battlefield of foreign ambitions,”⁶² and it was Sulla who

⁵⁵ *I. Oropos* 521, l. 62: [Ω]ρωπιῶν [στ]άδιο[ν ε]ὑαγγέλι[α Ρωμαίων νίκης]; cf. Section 6.3. On *Epinikia* (“victory games”) as a new category of games after the Roman conquest, now Blanco-Pérez 2019.

⁵⁶ For festivals as commemoration days, Chaniotis 1991 is indispensable reading; for commemoration days as an especially important feature of the Hellenistic period, see Chaniotis 1995:151 (with further references); cf. Wiemer 2009a.

⁵⁷ Mellor 1975; Chaniotis 1995:151.

⁵⁸ This happened at Chios (ca. 188, Rhomaia Theophania), Xanthos (167, Rhomaia Letoa of the Lycian League), Mantinea (second century, Rhomaia = Poseidaia), Thespiai (second century, Rhomaia Erotideia), Stratonikeia (81, Rhomaia Hekatesia), Opus (Rhomaia Dia Aianteia [*IAG* 53, l. 7–8; ca. 100]), Megara (Rhomaia Pythacia [*IAG* 53, l. 6–7; ca. 100]); for the evidence, see Chaniotis 1995:149–150n16, 164–168, and add Messene (Rhomaia Asklepieia [*SEG* XXIII 212, Messene, first century]). See now also van Nijf and van Dijk 2020.

⁵⁹ Known examples include Chalkis (after 196), Delphi (189), Alabanda (ca. 170), Delos (167), Lindos (166?), Rhodes (166?), Miletus (ca. 130), Kos (second century), and Magnesia on the Maeander (second century). It is not entirely clear when the Rhomaia of Athens, Aigina, Kibyra, and maybe Paros were established; for the evidence, again Chaniotis 1995:151n32, 164–168, disregard Antigonieia (which is Mantinea [Moretti 1953:141]) and add Rhomaia in Kerkyra (*IAG* 56, l. 7; mid-first century), Thebes (Knoepfler 2004), and Aigion (*SEG* LIX 411; Augustan age) to the list.

⁶⁰ Raubitschek 1951, Habicht 2006:342, 489n49.

⁶¹ Fauconnier 2016:89.

⁶² Chaniotis 2018a:207.

even transferred the historic and venerable Olympic Games to Rome in the year 80. This, however, was a one-time event. It is rather astonishing how the Greek agonistic culture survived the wars of the first century and seems to have flourished even more since the Augustan age. Despite some problems in the first half of the first century,⁶³ the Olympic Games never lost their number-one status as the most prestigious athletic festival.⁶⁴

Finally, some words on the ancient (and modern) classification of *agones*: As Sofie Remijsen has shown, the term *periodos* is first attested for around 180⁶⁵ and was probably triggered by the spread of the label of “crown games” in the third and second centuries.⁶⁶ Nevertheless, the grand four had clearly existed as a group of the most prestigious contests already in the Late Archaic period,⁶⁷ but their distinctive feature had consisted in the wreaths awarded as victory prizes, a feature that was no longer suited to set these games apart when *agones stephanitai* flourished all over the Greek world. So the term “*periodos*” was coined in order to refer to the four games top athletes would not miss on their “circular tours” through Greece. It has to be noted that the stability of the *periodos* is a factor that distinguishes the Hellenistic period from the Roman Imperial age, when the number of the “periodic” games increased due to imperial interventions and when the Aktia and the Italian games of the Roman Kapitolia, Sebasta of Neapolis, and Eusebeia of Puteoli were included as well.⁶⁸

The fact that we cannot find the term “*periodos*” prior to the end of the third/beginning of the second century also means that successful athletes

⁶³ In addition to the difficulties caused by Sulla in 80, the Mithridatic Wars led to an economic crisis in Greece that is mirrored in the Olympic victor lists of the equestrian disciplines which only show Elia victors in the first century.

⁶⁴ See only Cic. *Flac.* 31 (etic perspective): *hoc* (sc. *Olympionices esse*) *est apud Graecos (...) prope maius et gloriosius quam Romae triumphasse* (cf. Scharff 2019:237), and Strab. 8.3.30 (emic perspective): μέγιστον τῶν πάντων (sc. ἀγώνων); cf. Baladié 1980:336–338. No doubt, the Olympic Games did not constitute just a “lokales Sportfest” (Bengtson 21983:86).

⁶⁵ *IAG* 46 (= *IvO* 186; Olympia) – the first literary attestation may actually be found slightly earlier, that is, at the end of the third century (Eratosthenes, *Olympionikai* fr. 8 [= *P.Oxy.* 409]); cf. Moretti 1953:34–35, Miller 2004:205.

⁶⁶ Remijsen 2011:99, Remijsen 2015:28–29, 35 (but see already Golden 1998:34: “It was perhaps this proliferation of crown games which prompted the development of the designation *periodos*, to maintain the special status of the earliest panhellenic festivals.”). Cf. now Nielsen 2018a:12–13.

⁶⁷ Needless to say that the existence of the circuit, yet not of the term “*periodos*,” is clearly mirrored by the fact that these were the contests Pindar and Bacchylides limited their victory odes to. For the formation of the big four as a canonical set of sanctuaries, see Funke 2005.

⁶⁸ Together, these games constituted what was then called the “full circuit” (περίοδος τέλεια); cf. Frisch 1991, Golden 2008:80–81, Gouw 2009:144–146, and Remijsen 2015:36. For imperial interventions, Langenfeld 1975, König 2005:225–234, Spawforth 2012:86, 162 (Augustus), and Heinemann 2014 (Domitian and Nero).

did not call themselves *periodonikai* up to this period.⁶⁹ Other athletic “titles” such as *triestes* (“triple winner” in running events) or “successor of Herakles” that described an athlete who had triumphed in both the wrestling and pankration finals at Olympia in one and the same year equally go back to roughly the same period.⁷⁰ Kapros of Elis, for instance, became the first “successor of Herakles” in 212,⁷¹ and Leonidas of Rhodes even achieved the honor of a four-time *triestes* between 164 and 152.⁷² We do not know how exactly Kapros and Leonidas presented their victories to their fellow citizens because we are lacking the respective victor inscriptions. Yet it is difficult to imagine that “titles” played no role in these inscriptions. Hence “the creation of titles to demonstrate the superiority of a given athlete”⁷³ has been described as a new development of the Hellenistic period (which no doubt increased in the Roman Imperial age)⁷⁴ with good reason. The athletes’ need for setting themselves apart, which manifested itself in the (*monos kai*) *protos*-formula⁷⁵ of victor inscriptions, was at least in part a result of the fact that no records (times and distances) were recorded in antiquity.⁷⁶ When new games flourished all over the Greek world and several contests were raised to the status of crown games, the athletes’ need for distinguishing themselves must have increased. So the emergence of athletic titles in the Hellenistic age reflected the growing agonistic landscape and the elevated status of several *agones*.

To sum up, a new wave of athletic festivals took over in the third and second centuries including several contests that raised their status to that of crown games. Furthermore, the category of iso-games was invented in the third century. Both categories were, above all, introduced to lift the

⁶⁹ Knab 1934 and others are certainly right to identify victors in the ancient equivalent of the “grand slam” as early as for the sixth century (in Knab’s list, the famous Milon from Kroton is the first *periodonikes* [Knab 1934:16]); these athletes, however, did not use the semi-official “title” of a *periodonikes* yet.

⁷⁰ Miller 2004:204–205.

⁷¹ Moretti 1957, no. 587–588; the “title” δεύτερος ἀφ’ Ἡρακλέους is to be found in Euseb. *Chron. Ol.* 142 (cf. Paus. 5.21.9–10; 6.15.10).

⁷² Moretti 1957, no. 618–620, 622–624, 626–628, and 633–635 (cf. Section 3.1.2.1). The “title” *triestes* appears in Euseb. *Chron. Ol.* 154; Leonidas was not the first to win the stadion race, *diaulos*, and race in armor at Olympia in one and the same year. He was actually the third after Phanas of Pellene (Moretti 1957, no. 142–144 [512]) and Astylos of Syracuse/Kroton (Moretti 1957, no. 196–198 [480]) who achieved this goal. Yet he is the first explicitly called so. But note that the three victories are mentioned for Phanas as well, though we might wonder whether Euseb. *Chron. Ol.* 67 (Φανᾶς Πελληνεὺς: πρῶτος ἐτρίσσευσεν, στάδιον, δίαυλον, ὄπλον) might have intentionally avoided referring to the title.

⁷³ Miller 2004:204.

⁷⁴ Wallner 2001; Miller 2004:205–206; Remijsen 2015:119–121.

⁷⁵ Ebert 1972:19; 22; 24; 106–107.

⁷⁶ Tod 1949; cf. Miller 2004:204.

status of the respective festival; yet to really achieve at this goal, it needed the acceptance of other Greek communities willing to recognize this status. This is why the organizing communities sent “sacred embassies” all over the Greek world, a phenomenon that clearly led to more connectivity and to what may be called “peer polity interaction.”⁷⁷ Furthermore, such growing “networks of concrete and symbolical interaction”⁷⁸ also fostered an identity of place, since the athletic festivals, as we have seen in the case of the Eleutheria of Plataiai, clearly mattered a lot to the local communities that organized them. The attempts at raising the status of local games in Asia Minor and in Boiotia to that of crown games might at least in part be interpreted as a response to the growing “agonistic market”⁷⁹ of the Hellenistic period. In other words, the expansion of the Greek world in the last third of the fourth century also triggered changes on the local level of the Greek festival culture. In short, a process of universalization produced a particularizing response. Sociologists call this phenomenon “glocalization.”⁸⁰ Without pushing the idea too far, we can observe that at least in the third century, universal developments and local tendencies mutually affected each other. In Section 2.2, we will analyze in detail how the “universal side” of this process worked.

2.2 Announcing the Games: *Theoroi*, *Theorodokoi*, and the *Epangelia* of Greek Contests

The custom of sending “sacred envoys” (*theoroi*) all over the Greek world in order to announce an upcoming festival (*epangelia*) and of declaring a holy truce (*ekecheiria*)⁸¹ for the time of the event has attracted some scholarly attention for about the last twenty years.⁸² Yet it does not constitute

⁷⁷ Ma 2003a by application of a concept established in Classical Archaeology (Renfrew and Cherry 1986).

⁷⁸ Ma 2003a:23.

⁷⁹ Pleket 2014b:364.

⁸⁰ Robertson 1995. For the use of the concept in Ancient History, see Beck 2020:6, 210 (cf. Beck 2018:26). In a recent paper “Athletics and Glocalization, Ancient and Modern” presented at the conference “Athletics and Identity in Ancient and Modern Cultures” in St Andrews, Paul Christesen was the first to apply the idea to Greek athletics. He precisely used the term to better understand what he sees as a major wave in the history of the foundation of Greek contests in the sixth century but also outlined the third century as a parallel.

⁸¹ Lämmer 1982–1983 has convincingly argued that the measure was intended to protect athletes, coaches, and spectators on their travels to the games and that it must not be misinterpreted as universal peace in Greece. For the Hellenistic period, see Theotikou 2013:261–344.

⁸² Esp. Perlman 2000, Rutherford 2013, and Gehrke 2013 (on Olympia); for the Macedonian cities, see Raynor 2016; for the whole Greek North, see Daubner 2018 (without knowledge of Raynor 2016). Influential older studies include Boesch 1908, Kahrstedt 1936, and Robert 1946.

a new development of the Hellenistic age.⁸³ Still rather new are the lists of *theorodokoi* at the beginning of this period which included the names of individuals appointed by their home state to receive the delegates.⁸⁴ The lists were arranged following geographical criteria and clearly represent our best evidence for the practice of the *epangelia*. They are, however, “not simply transcriptions of actual itineraries, but they also serve the purpose of honoring the participants or advertising the size of the sanctuary’s catchment area.”⁸⁵ Especially the last aspect is of essence, since it was the sanctuaries that provided for the erection of the lists. So there must have been a benefit for the administration of the shrines that prompted them to undertake the effort of recording the local hosts from all over the Greek world in inscriptions which could become as long as 647 lines.⁸⁶

The earliest of these lists stem from Epidauros and date to 360/59 and 356/55 respectively.⁸⁷ They mention *theorodokoi* for the delegates (*theoroi*) of the local Asklepieia in Northwest Greece, Southern Italy, and Sicily.⁸⁸ In combination with Epidaurian decrees honoring *theorodokoi*, the lists show that the Asklepieia were announced in at least eighty-two *poleis* in the fourth century including even the Propontis and Cyprus.⁸⁹ Other Peloponnesian lists and decrees honoring *theorodokoi* come from Argos,⁹⁰ Nemea,⁹¹ Lousoi,⁹² and Hermione.⁹³ The most impressive and complete example, the so-called “great Delphic list,” dates to the year 220, and covers probably seven different routes including Ionia (1), Boiotia and the Peloponnese (2), Thessaly and Macedonia (3), Crete and the Cyrenaica (4), Cyprus and Syria (5), Northwestern Greece (6), and Southern Italy plus Sicily (7).⁹⁴ All in all, it “provides a catalogue of the Hellenistic world”⁹⁵ excluding only the Black Sea region and Egypt which were clearly also part

⁸³ For the Olympic origin of the phenomenon in the Archaic age, see Gehrke 2013.

⁸⁴ Daubner 2018:137 calls the *theorodokoi* “the local entertainers of sacred envoys.”

⁸⁵ Rutherford 2013:73.

⁸⁶ Daubner 2018:138.

⁸⁷ *IG* IV² 1, 94 (= Perlman 2000:E1 [Asklepieion, 360–359]), 95 (= Perlman 2000:E2 [Asklepieion, 356–355]). They include later addenda going down to 316 (Perlman 2000:78–81).

⁸⁸ Rutherford 2013:73. For the share of Northern Greeks in the Epidaurian lists, see Daubner 2018:139–141.

⁸⁹ Perlman 2000:67–97; Nielsen 2018a:44.

⁹⁰ *SEG* XXIII 189 (= Perlman 2000:A1 [Argos, 330–324]); cf. Perlman 2000:100–104, 149–152.

⁹¹ *SEG* XXXVI 331 (= Perlman 2000:N1 [Nemea, 315–313]); cf. Miller 1988, Perlman 2000:105–130.

⁹² *IG* V 2, 389–392 (Lousoi, late fourth/early third century); cf. Perlman 2000:157–160.

⁹³ Perlman 2000:161–166.

⁹⁴ Plassart 1921 (Oulhen 1992 is still unpublished); Daux 1949 is a later list of the mid-second century; cf. Daux 1980, Amandry 1990:288–293, Rutherford 2013:73–76, and Daubner 2018:142–145. For the identification of the routes (which is by no means the only possible one), see Decker 2012:95–96.

⁹⁵ Daubner 2018:138.

of Delphi's *epangelia* system.⁹⁶ According to the list, the "sacred envoys" travelled to at least 300⁹⁷ different cities to announce not only the Pythia but also the Delphic Soteria founded after 277 as a commemoration day for the victory over the Galatians.⁹⁸ What we find here can be best described as "a map of relations in a world of peers."⁹⁹ The agents of these relations were almost exclusively (independent) poleis and the network they joined was based upon mutual recognition. Yet, due to its historical dimension, all of this must not be conceived as a static system because the lists were very sensitive to changing historical situations,¹⁰⁰ for instance, when a city received a new name.

We do not find, however, the same sensitivity in the Delphic lists with regard to new foundations in the Hellenistic East, which do hardly ever appear.¹⁰¹ Although we are far from having a complete set of data here, it seems as if the organizers of the Olympic Games behaved somewhat differently in this respect and deliberately invited Greeks from the fringes of the *oikoumene* already in the Classical period.¹⁰² In any case, as Louis Robert has already shown,¹⁰³ the lists should not simply be interpreted as lodging lists since they "have a political character."¹⁰⁴ The listed poleis represent only a selection of recognized poleis in a world of city-states – the ones that joined the network.¹⁰⁵ This network did not constitute an "imagined community"¹⁰⁶ in the sense of a mere illusion but really connected the poleis of the Hellenistic world.

One last question, then, needs to be addressed, and it is a tough one. In case the Epidaurian list of the year 360 coincided indeed with the onset of the habit of erecting inscribed lists of *theorodokoi* in the respective sanctuaries (as we might reasonably assume), we cannot help but ask whether that change in the epigraphic habit reflected a new mentality or if it was mere chance. In other words, can we find a particular historical reason

⁹⁶ Amandry 1980:292; Decker ²2012:96.

⁹⁷ Decker ²2012:95; Parker 2004:10: "more than 330 places."

⁹⁸ Nachtergaele 1977, no. 2–20; cf. Chaniotis 1995:151n33. The games were reorganized by the Aitolians in 246 (Nachtergaele 1977:435–450 [no. 21–29]; cf. Chaniotis 1995:159n107, 165; Parker 2004:19, Sánchez 2001:306–309).

⁹⁹ Ma 2003a:21.

¹⁰⁰ Daubner 2018:138.

¹⁰¹ Daubner 2018:144–145.

¹⁰² Erskine 2013:355–356. We must tread carefully here since we do not dispose of enough *theorodokoi* lists to be sure about the historical changes in the routes of the delegates of the respective festivals.

¹⁰³ Robert 1946:510.

¹⁰⁴ Daubner 2018:137.

¹⁰⁵ Perlman 1995.

¹⁰⁶ Rutherford 2013:87.

for this new phenomenon? We might at least argue that by the middle of the fourth century, the Greek world had become more connected; and the need for staying connected in the expanding world of Alexander and his successors certainly increased. Therefore, understanding the essence of Greek athletic festivals as “Connecting the Greeks”¹⁰⁷ clearly is a promising approach to the topic, and I tend to interpret the rise of the *theorodokoi* lists as a reflection of this connectedness.¹⁰⁸

2.3 Staging the Games: The Extension of Athletic Facilities in Panhellenic Sanctuaries in the Hellenistic Period

Another aspect of the framework of Greek athletics that underwent some changes in the Hellenistic period concerns the “materiality” of the Hellenistic festivals.¹⁰⁹ It was the athletic facilities of no fewer than three of the four most important Greek athletic contests, namely that of Olympia, Isthmia, and Nemea, that saw increasing building activities in the Hellenistic period.

In Olympia, it is striking that buildings which had been exclusively or primarily used to agonistic ends constituted a main part of the building activities in the sanctuary from the fourth to the second centuries.¹¹⁰ The oldest of these buildings is the probably still late Classical Leonidaion (about 340),¹¹¹ which served as a lodging place for the athletes taking part in the Olympic Games. Following, in chronologic order, were the first *palaistra* (roughly 250)¹¹² and the gymnasium (ca. 180),¹¹³ which were both constructed surprisingly late in Olympia.¹¹⁴ It was also in the second century that Olympia's stadion received its vaulted entranceway.¹¹⁵ In about the middle of the second century, an exclusive facility including an eating

¹⁰⁷ This is the title of the Groningen Project on Greek festivals directed by Onno van Nijf that covers the period roughly from 300 to AD 300.

¹⁰⁸ From the second century onwards, then, “the evidence for sacred envoys announcing festivals decreases” (Daubner 2018:148).

¹⁰⁹ “The Materiality of Greco-Roman Festivals” is precisely what a Warwick project on Greek athletics directed by Zahra Newby is currently studying.

¹¹⁰ For what follows, see also Scharff 2019:235–236.

¹¹¹ Mallwitz 1972:246–252.

¹¹² Mallwitz 1972:278–284, Wacker 1996, Kyrieleis 2011:136.

¹¹³ Kyrieleis 2011:136; others like Mallwitz 1972:106 think it was built “nicht vor der Mitte des 2. Jhs.”

¹¹⁴ Wacker 1997.

¹¹⁵ Kunze 1972:52 with Table 3.2 and Heilmeyer 1984:251 whose research points to the 160s. Mallwitz 1972:193 suggests an earlier date (end of the third/beginning of the second centuries). Lauter 1986:21 considers the second half of the second century. Von Hesberg 1994:154 (ca. 100) and Borrmann 1892 (first century) even support a considerably later date.

place and a modern bathhouse was constructed.¹¹⁶ In the first half of the first century, then, an anonymous patron donated a magnificent entry gate to the area of the *gymnasion*.¹¹⁷ The public bath was renovated in the middle of the first century.¹¹⁸ Probably around the year 40, shortly after the technique was invented, Olympia received a highly modern bath with a system of central heating (hypocaust).¹¹⁹ What is more, a lavish extension of the *theokoleon*¹²⁰ and the construction of building C that replaced the older building G belong to the first century.¹²¹ Taken as a whole, especially the third and second centuries saw the heyday of agonistic building activities in Olympia.¹²²

In Delphi, there seem to have been less building activities at sport facilities in the Hellenistic period than in Olympia. Yet the Southern wall of the stadion bearing the famous fifth-century prohibition that banned wine on the premises¹²³ might actually belong to the time around the year 300.¹²⁴ During this construction phase, a new starting mechanism (*hysplex*) may have been built as well.¹²⁵ Additionally, Delphi's *gymnasion* was constructed in the second half of the fourth century, between 330 and 300.¹²⁶ Its facilities including a *palaistra*, a *paradromis*, and a *xystos* are clearly older than the corresponding ones at Olympia, which is due to the fact that, in contrast to Olympia, there was a polis in its vicinity whose citizens regularly used the athletic facilities in the time between the festivals.

¹¹⁶ Sinn, Leypold and Schauer 2003. The bath was excavated only recently.

¹¹⁷ Sinn 2004:132. It is symptomatic that this entry gate has been dated to the late second century for a long time (Mallwitz 1972:106, 288–289; Rakob and Heilmeyer 1973:26). Gardiner 1925:293, in contrast, thinks it belonged to the Augustan age: “it seems to me more probable that it was built in the latter part of the first century.” Today scholars seem to prefer a median date: Wacker 1996:47–52, for instance, advocates a date in the first half of the first century with good reason.

¹¹⁸ Sinn, Leypold and Schauer 2003:620–621.

¹¹⁹ The dating is according to Georg Ladstätter whose paper “Das sog. ‘Griechische Hypokaustenbad’ im Zeusheligtum von Olympia – eine Neubetrachtung in Verbindung mit der frühen italischen Thermenarchitektur” is unfortunately unpublished. His date is nevertheless broadly accepted among archaeologists (Sinn, Leypold and Schauer 2003:623n2; Lo Monaco 2013:128–129n16). Traditionally, the bath was dated rather to the beginning of the first century (Mallwitz 1972:107, 272–273). For heating systems of Greek baths, see also Fournet and Redon 2013.

¹²⁰ Mallwitz 1972:266–267; Lo Monaco 2004:291–294.

¹²¹ Mallwitz 1972:263–264.

¹²² Lo Monaco 2013:125.

¹²³ *CID* I 3, l. 1–2: τὸν <φ>οῖνον τὸ <ν> νεοῖνον μὲ φάρεν ἔς τοῦ δρομίου. αἱ δὲ κα φάρει, (...). – “Wine is prohibited in the vicinity of the track. If anyone breaks this rule, (...).” (transl. S.G. Miller).

¹²⁴ Maaß 1993:84–85.

¹²⁵ Maaß 1993:85.

¹²⁶ Jannoray 1953; Pentazos 1992; Miller 2004:101; Maaß 2007:101; for the comparison to the *gymnasion* of Delos, see Delorme 1982 and Daux 1984.

In Isthmia, a new stadion was built in the late fourth and early third centuries.¹²⁷ It has not been fully excavated, but it is clear from the test trenches that this later stadion represented a “major project”¹²⁸ of the building activities in the sanctuary in this period. It is also evident that it was built somewhat farther away from the Temple of Poseidon than its predecessor.¹²⁹ We should be careful not to jump to the conclusion that this indicated a “trend toward distancing athletics from their religious center.”¹³⁰ This might have actually been the case, but in order to solve the question of the precise relation between sports and religion in Greek antiquity, it would need a comprehensive analysis. In any case, the athletic facilities at the Isthmos received a proper remodeling at the beginning of the Hellenistic period.

Yet the clearest example for the trend of upgrading the athletic facilities of the most important sanctuaries in the fourth and third centuries certainly stems from Nemea. It was at Nemea that “a major building program”¹³¹ was launched when the games returned from Argos in around 335. In addition to a bath, which included an elaborate hydraulic system and which appears to have been “the first at a festival site,”¹³² the most important part of the remodeling of the athletic facilities of the sanctuary was the construction of the Early Hellenistic stadion complex that was built in around 330–300.¹³³ West of the stadion itself, even a locker room (*apodyterion*) has been excavated as “a simple structure with a three-sided colonnaded court open to the air.”¹³⁴ From this location, the athletes entered the stadion via an impressive vaulted entrance tunnel. It is a fair assumption that some of the graffiti found on the walls inside the entrance tunnel were scratched by athletes waiting for the competitions to begin.¹³⁵ As modern visitors of the site immediately realize, passing through such a tunnel creates a “transforming”¹³⁶ effect. What is more

¹²⁷ Broneer 1973:66 connected the later stadion with the activities of Philip and Alexander for historical reasons, but it could also have been built a little later (Gebhard and Hemans 1998:43–44; cf. Miller 2004:104–105). For the earlier stadion, see Gebhard and Hemans 1998:33–40, Gebhard 1992.

¹²⁸ Gebhard and Hemans 1998:41.

¹²⁹ Gebhard and Hemans 1998:41–44.

¹³⁰ Miller 2004:105.

¹³¹ Miller 2004:108.

¹³² Miller 2004:108.

¹³³ For the entire complex, Miller 2001.

¹³⁴ Miller 2004:109.

¹³⁵ Graffiti of probably Hellenistic athletes include, Miller 2001: *GRAF* 2D, 10, 11B, 12–13, 14C–D, 15B–C, 15D, 16, 19A–B, 21, 25. We should not be too optimistic about the identification of the athletes listed here, but at least in some cases, reasonable conclusions are possible (cf. Section 3.2.2.2).

¹³⁶ Miller 2004:109.

important, however, is the impact it had on the spectators. The existence of the vaulted entranceway (*krypte eisodos*) certainly helped staging the entry of the athletes as a spectacle – an effect that must have been true for Olympia’s stadion tunnel as well.¹³⁷

It is with good reason that Barbara Dimde has recently outlined further characteristic elements of the monumental design of (Early) Hellenistic stadia, including the *hysplex*¹³⁸ as a spectacular technological innovation for the starting line in running events, and the *sphendone* that was integrated into some stadia at one of the narrow sides of the *dromos* as a semicircular bulge as to enlarge the number of seats for the spectators.¹³⁹ The *sphendone*, which may have actually caused a “quasi-amphitheatrical” impression to a part of the audience, was already an element of Nemea’s Early Hellenistic stadion at the time of its construction.¹⁴⁰ The enlargement of the auditorium made sure that the new technology of the stadion tunnel was acknowledged by the entire audience.¹⁴¹

The games of the Hellenistic period grew more and more into spectacles. This is why Cicero called the Olympics a big *mercatus*¹⁴²; it is why Olympia is described as a “tent city” in the ancient sources¹⁴³; and it is also why exceptionally high numbers of spectators are attested for the Olympics of 276 and 208.¹⁴⁴ Such large crowds gathered together in a comparatively small space certainly brought about some ensuing problems in the area of hygiene and crime.¹⁴⁵ Their mere existence, however, can be interpreted as

¹³⁷ Miller 2014:290, Dimde 2016:270–273, 284. Other examples for such tunnels have survived in Athens (Panathenaic stadion [unclear date]; Papanicolaou-Christensen 2003:64) and in Epidaurus (maybe end of the fourth/beginning of the third century, Patrucco 1976:116–119). In Delphi, an “underground” tunnel was impossible due to the natural environment. Instead, there was probably a wooden construction of a similar kind (Decker 1997:85, Dimde 2016:270).

¹³⁸ For *hysplexes*, Valavanis 1999 and Rieger 2004. The operation mode of the *hysplex* included an acoustic signal when the technical barrier came down. An important function of this starting mechanism was to guarantee equal opportunities for the athletes.

¹³⁹ Dimde 2016.

¹⁴⁰ Yet it is not entirely clear when the *sphendone* became fashionable on a larger scale. In Isthmia, for instance, a *sphendone* seem to have already been part of the earlier stadium (470–450), whereas it never existed in Olympia (Dimde 2016:275).

¹⁴¹ In addition to the installation of the *sphendone*, we can sometimes also observe an elevation of the ridges for the spectators (Dimde 2016:284).

¹⁴² Cic. *Tusc.* 5.9; for Cicero’s attitude to Greek athletics, Crowther 2001a.

¹⁴³ Xen. *Hell.* 7.4.32; cf. Sinn 2004:117, 192.

¹⁴⁴ 276: Ebert 1972, no. 59, l. 10; 208: Liv. 27.35.3; cf. Freitag 2011:87.

¹⁴⁵ Hygiene: Sanitation was not easy in Olympia since there was a big summer heat, lots of mosquitos, and insufficient water supply (at least until the Fountain of Herodes Atticus was built in AD 153). So it may not be a coincidence that a Zeus Apomyios (“Zeus who shoos away flies”) is only attested at Olympia (Paus. 5.14.1; see Sinn 2004:121–124). Crime: Chaniotis 2018c:193 especially thinks of crimes committed at night, but *P.Genova* III 107 (nome Arsinoite, 237/36), for example, witnesses the

an indication for the “spectacularization” of the games in this period.¹⁴⁶ Also, the distribution of coins found in Nemea seems to indicate that the preferred way of watching the games was sitting next to one's fellow citizens for most of the spectators, in “fan blocks,” as we might add using an analogy deriving from modern football.¹⁴⁷

Yet this does not mean that the games degenerated in one way or another, since more spectacle does not automatically imply less authenticity.¹⁴⁸ On the contrary, it rather indicates an ever-growing interest in athletic contests in this period.¹⁴⁹ According to the archaeological evidence, Greek games clearly flourished at least from the fourth to the second centuries. Yet, it is also true that the big four suffered to varying degrees during the second and first centuries. The Nemean Games were transferred back and forth from Argos to Nemea,¹⁵⁰ the Isthmian Games could no longer be held at the site after Mummius had destroyed Corinth in 146 – they were relocated to Sikyon – and Delphi was called a “very poor”¹⁵¹ sanctuary by Strabo in the first century. Even the Olympic Games had some problems, even though they never lost their reputation as the most renowned athletic festival in the Greek world.¹⁵² But as we will see, this is ought to be interpreted as an indication for a temporary economic crisis due to wars rather than as a crisis in terms of athletics.

To sum up, the Early Hellenistic period clearly saw increasing building activities in the athletic facilities of the four most important Greek places of festival competition. These building activities continued long into the second century and included technological innovations aiming at an increasing interest in the staging of events, an interest that can similarly be observed in the arrangement of processions as part of

theft of a cloak in broad daylight (during the competition!) even at a minor agonistic festival in Egypt (the Hermaia of the village of Psinachis, Fayum; cf. Sansom 2016:249–252). The situation must have been more confusing at Olympia where tens of thousands of spectators camped in a “tent city.”

¹⁴⁶ This applies to the athletic festivals, their spectators, and “agonistic” monuments. It does not necessarily apply to the role of the athletes who did not become “entertainers” (*pace* Miller 2004:197–199) in the Hellenistic period.

¹⁴⁷ Knapp 2001:233, Knapp 2005:28; cf. Dimde 2016:273–275.

¹⁴⁸ We should also not jump to the conclusion that we see a process of “professionalization” at work here. The term “professionalization” is too strongly connotated with the strict dichotomy of “amateurs” vs. “professionals,” which has no equivalent in the ancient sources and essentially only appears as a retrospect idea that some nineteenth-century humanists wished to find in antiquity (Mann 2016:17, 21–22).

¹⁴⁹ In the third century AD, the most industrious spectator of the Olympics that we know of, the baker Kaikilis from Beroia, actually travelled to the games twelve times (*EKM* I 398).

¹⁵⁰ On Nemea's troublesome history in the Hellenistic period, see Buraselis 2013.

¹⁵¹ Strab. 9.3.8: νυνί γέ τοι πενέστατόν ἐστι τὸ ἐν Δελφοῖς ἱερόν χρημάτων γὰρ χάριν.

¹⁵² Scharff 2019.

Hellenistic festivals¹⁵³ or in the public behavior of Hellenistic kings.¹⁵⁴ Public life was highly staged at that time and this trend was further intensified, either from the side of the kings or from the side of the poleis. Undoubtedly, athletics were part of this process.¹⁵⁵

2.4 **Preparing and Conducting the Games: New Developments in the Program and the Organization of the Contests**

Before the competitions started, the stage had to be set, meaning that the athletic facilities had to be prepared. Such preparatory measures are described at great length in a long Delphic inscription dating back to the year 247/46.¹⁵⁶ In the form of a list, the inscription records the contracts with various workers responsible for the measures.¹⁵⁷ They included digging and leveling the ground of the tracks in the gymnasium as well as the embellishment of the *xystos*, which was also surrounded with fresh white earth. Some minor repairs were done in the boxing room (*sphairisterion*) and the *apodyterion* needed plaster work. Apart from these works in the *gymnasium*, the stadion was prepared as well: The back slope, where the spectators sat, was cleaned and repaired. The race track shone bright with new white sand that was applied to the stadion floor. Moreover, thirty-six wooden *kampteres* were constructed for the runners.¹⁵⁸ We have already seen that a vaulted entrance to the Pythian stadion was constructed out of perishable materials. What is more, the hippodrome had to be cleaned up. Last but not least, in both arenas, the stadion and the hippodrome, the starting mechanisms were installed. All these preparations were certainly undertaken to secure a successful conduct of the games.

There can be hardly any doubt that such measures were not only conducted in 247/46. On the contrary, similar preparations must have taken

¹⁵³ Chaniotis 1995:154–162 (160: “wachsende Interesse an der Inszenierung der Prozession”); Chankowski 2005a:204–206 is somewhat skeptical and rather thinks of an “ideological discourse” which has to be separated from the social practice; but see Wiemer 2009b:117n6. For festivals as civic rituals, see Chaniotis 2013a.

¹⁵⁴ “Theatricality beyond the theatre” (Chaniotis 1997).

¹⁵⁵ Miller 2004:196 calls this “athletics as entertainment” and similarly sees the beginning of the process in the Hellenistic period.

¹⁵⁶ *CID* II 139; cf. Pouilloux 1977, Picard 1989:76–77, Decker 1997, Golden 1998:54, Miller 2004:117, Decker 2012:98–99.

¹⁵⁷ Ο[δ]ε] ἐπρίαντο τὰ Πυθικὰ ἔργα (*CID* II 129, l. 5) is followed by a detailed list of thirty-nine lines including at least thirty-five names of contractors, a definition of the work they were paid for, and the sum they received.

¹⁵⁸ Decker 2012:98 rightly points to the fact that the archaeological evidence only attests for 16 (plus one) slots (see Aubert 1979:172–173).

place every four years when the games were held – and the same is true for Olympia, Isthmia, and Nemea and other important contests as well.¹⁵⁹ We know from vase paintings that these measures were part of the organization of Greek games already in the Late Archaic and Classical periods.¹⁶⁰ So the careful preparation of athletic facilities does not represent a characteristic of the Hellenistic period. It is, however, for the first time attested in the written record of this epoch. It may thus not have constituted a new phenomenon, but it clearly represents a component of the framework of athletics that we do only know little about with respect to earlier periods of Greek history.

However, with regard to another element concerning the organization of athletic contests, we can indeed observe some changes in the Hellenistic period: the traditional year in which each new event was introduced in Olympia. In the entire Hellenistic age, three new disciplines joined the program: the two-horse chariot race (*synoris*) for foals in 264, the single-horse race (*keles*) for colts in 256, and – “after an unconscionable delay”¹⁶¹ – the pankration for boys in 200.¹⁶² After these changes, the program remained the same until the end of athletics in Late Antiquity. Contests for the age class of the “beardless” (*ageneioi*), for instance, were never introduced at Olympia, a fact that reveals to some degree what has reasonably been called “Olympic conservatism.”¹⁶³

According to Pausanias, the same three events “were many years afterwards introduced from Elis”¹⁶⁴ at the Pythian Games. Yet this observation does not correspond to the dates Pausanias himself gives for the first iterations of these events.¹⁶⁵ In fact, the three events actually joined the Pythian program earlier than its Olympic counterpart.¹⁶⁶ As a consequence, the only new event in the Pythian Games of the Hellenistic period was the two-horse chariot race for colts which took place for the first time in 314/13 and was

¹⁵⁹ Of course, in Isthmia and Nemea, the preparations were conducted every two years, respectively.

¹⁶⁰ For an example from the middle of the fifth century, see Miller 2004:118, fig. 205 (ca. 460–450).

¹⁶¹ Philostr. *gym.* 13: ἑκατοστῆ καὶ τεσσαρακοστῆ καὶ πέμπτη Ὀλυμπιάδι παιδὸς παγκρατιαστὴν ἐνέγραψαν <ἀγῶνα> οὐκ οἶδα ἐξ ὅτου βραδέως; cf. Golden 1998:110.

¹⁶² For the program of the Olympics, Lee 1992 and Lee 2001; cf., for example, Finley and Pleket 1976:26–46, Golden 1998:40–41.

¹⁶³ Finley and Pleket 1976:45. For instance, the pentathlon for boys was only introduced in 628 and was never held again after that, although it was part of almost every other contest we know of (cf. Crowther 1988a; Golden 1998:109–110).

¹⁶⁴ Paus. 10.7.8: πολλοὺς ἔτεσιν ὕστερον κατεδέξαντο Ἡλείων.

¹⁶⁵ Boys' pankration: 61st Pythiad (346/45); single-horse race for colts: 63rd Pythiad (338/37); two-horse chariot race for colts: 69th Pythiad (314/13).

¹⁶⁶ The contradiction within Pausanias' account has already been indicated by Klee 1918:261n who proposes to restore the traditional reading πολλοὺς ἔτεσιν ὕστερον of Paus. 10.7.8 by πολλοὺς ἔτεσιν πρότερον.

won by Ptolemy I.¹⁶⁷ The moderate extension of the program of both games goes hand in hand with an overall trend that we find more events for young athletes in the Hellenistic age than in the periods before. At Isthmia and Nemea, contests for the beardless were already part of the program in the fifth century. But it was precisely the local games that often disposed of a perplexing variety of different age classes.¹⁶⁸ At the Asklepieia of Kos, for instance, there were *paides Pythikoi* and *paides Isthmikoi* in addition to the categories of men and the beardless.¹⁶⁹ The Athenian Theseia which were reorganized shortly after 167 “to mark the recovery”¹⁷⁰ of Lemnos, Imbros, and Skyros categorized the boys into three groups: the first (*paides tes proteles helikias*), second (*tes deuteras helikias*), and third age class (*tes trites helikias*). This means that there were five age classes altogether. Furthermore, “the torch race had divisions for *paides*, ephebes, ex-ephebes, *neaniskoi*, and men.”¹⁷¹ In second-century Chios, we find three different divisions of ephebes (*neoteroi*, *mesoi*, and *presbyteroi*) in addition to the competitions for boys and men.¹⁷² The Herakleia on Chalkis had the boys split into *paides pampaides* and *paides epheboi* so that, combined with the events for men and the beardless, there was a total of four age classes.¹⁷³ For the Late Hellenistic Erotideia of Thespiai then, *pampaides* and *paides presbyteroi* are attested.¹⁷⁴

Whatever the reasons for the creation of additional age groups, it is important for the purpose of our study that the variety of age classes increased in the Hellenistic age. Although this certainly had to do with the rise and spread of gymnasium *agones* in this period, it is worth noting that a surge in age classes is also found among contests like the prestigious Asklepieia of Kos or the Erotideia of Thespiai. Taken as whole, I agree with what Mark Golden observed as a motive for the introduction of new age classes: “The expectation was that local boys would win more than their share of these events.”¹⁷⁵

A similar strategy based upon the idea of ensuring that locals won enough prizes without risking to downgrade the status of the entire contest can be seen behind the reform of the Panathenaic Games which, in

¹⁶⁷ Paus. 10.7.8 (cf. Table 5.1); on a possible strategy behind this victory, Howe 2018:173–174.

¹⁶⁸ Robert 1939:239–244; Golden 1998:104–105 (“bewildering array”).

¹⁶⁹ Klee 1918, I A, l. 7–8 (234/ 33?). These categories are also found in Asia Minor (*IG XII 4, 2, 938* [Kos, beginning of the first century AD]); see still Klee 1918:43–46.

¹⁷⁰ Golden 1998:104.

¹⁷¹ Golden 1998:105; for the age classes at the Theseia, Bugh 1990 and Kennell 1999.

¹⁷² *CIG* 2214.

¹⁷³ *IG XII 9, 952* (late second century).

¹⁷⁴ *IG VII 1764–1765* (second/first century).

¹⁷⁵ Golden 1998:110.

addition to events open for all entrants, also included contests that were restricted to Athenian citizens only in the second century.¹⁷⁶

Another strategy to enhance the attractiveness of an athletic festival (in this case for foreign entrants) can be seen in the rare instances where prizes for the runner-ups (*deuteroi*) were awarded, like it was the case in Kos from 174/73 on.¹⁷⁷ In the earlier victor lists of these games, only the victor is mentioned. Since the Greeks were in general rather obsessed with winning, awarding a prize to the second place was certainly not a common technique that can be interpreted as an attempt of making the games more appealing.¹⁷⁸

2.5 Rewarding the Champions and Financing the Games: Athletic Prizes, Hellenistic Poleis, and the Institution of *Agonothesia*

So, apart from the fact that some contests rewarded the runner-up, what kind of victory prizes did Greek athletes receive during the Hellenistic period and what was new about this economic aspect of ancient athletics?¹⁷⁹

It is generally known that victors at the four most important athletic festivals received crowns as prizes, which were of high symbolical value: wreaths of olive branches at Olympia, laurel crowns in Delphi, pine at the Isthmos, and wild celery in Nemea.¹⁸⁰ In opposition to these “botanical rewards,”¹⁸¹ other contests gave cash prizes. This is why – following Louis Robert – a hierarchy of *agones hieroi kai stephanitai* and the less renowned *agones thematikoi* (or *chrematitai*) has been established.¹⁸² Yet, as Harry Pleket has shown, ancient reality was clearly more complex than this strict dichotomy would suggest.¹⁸³ In 247/46, even the famous Pythian Games

¹⁷⁶ See Tracy and Habicht 1991:196–202, Tracy 1991:138–143, and most detailed Shear 2001:231–385.

¹⁷⁷ Klee 1918, II C, l. 24–25, 30–31, 33–34, 41–42, 43–44, 47–48, 51. On second prizes, see Crowther 1992a.

¹⁷⁸ Of course this was not a completely new idea. A local unnamed contest on Salamis already awarded prizes for the second place in the fifth century (*IG I³ 1386* [ca. 450–440]; it is sometimes assumed that the stone had travelled from Athens to Salamis and actually refers to the Panathenaia [Raubitschek 1939:158], but, like Taylor 1997:186–187 and Nielsen 2018a:68–69, 136, I cannot see a compelling reason for this assumption). Even at the fourth-century Panathenaia, the runner-up received a number of amphorae as a prize – one-fifth of the amount of the victor (*IG II² 2311*; ca. 390–375), cf. Johnston 1987, Shear 2003, and Mann 2018a:299–300.

¹⁷⁹ On the economic aspects of Greek festival organization, see most recently Jördens 2018.

¹⁸⁰ But note that the organizers of the Isthmian Games changed the victory crown to dry celery “out of jealous rivalry with the Nemean Games” (Ζήλω τῶν Νεμέηθου [Plut. *Mor.* 676f; cf. Broner 1962, Kyle 2015:137, Bravo 2018:137–138]) probably in the fifth century (Miller 2004:103).

¹⁸¹ Mann 2018a:295.

¹⁸² Robert 1970.

¹⁸³ Pleket 2004a.

added metal objects called *brabeia* to the traditional victory prizes, consisting in wreaths of laurel.¹⁸⁴ At the far less prestigious Hermaia of Beroia, a gymnasium contest, we do not only find weapons as prizes but also wreaths.¹⁸⁵ Other contests rewarded the winners with items of high material value “to lure elite contestants to participate”¹⁸⁶: At the Panathenaic Games, for instance, the winners received an extraordinary amount of amphorae filled with olive oil,¹⁸⁷ in Argos victors were awarded bronze shields,¹⁸⁸ in Pellene, they received coats (*chlainai*),¹⁸⁹ and at a festival in honor of Apollo Triopios near Knidos (as well as at several other games), winners got bronze tripods.¹⁹⁰ Even living animals (*athla empsycha*) or a special share of the sacrificial meat were given as prizes.¹⁹¹

Taken as a whole, the variety of different prizes seems to have grown in proportion to the number of athletic festivals in the Hellenistic period. Therefore, the changes in the “agonistic market”¹⁹² brought about some changes in the nature of athletic prizes as well. Prizes that had been an

¹⁸⁴ SEG XXVII 119. Two hundred years later, we find bronze *brabeia* in Priene. For *brabeia*, see Pleket 2004a:82, Slater and Summa 2006:294–298.

¹⁸⁵ (Heavy) weapons: *I.Beroia* 1, B, l. 46: ὄπλων (for a shield as a prize, see also Themis 2015 [Messenia, first century]); wreaths: *I.Beroia* 1, B, l. 26 (θαλλοῦ στεφάνω); l. 58. Interestingly enough, the victors had to dedicate their prizes within a stipulated period (*I.Beroia* 1, B, l. 67–68: τὰ δὲ ἄθλα, ἃ ἂν λαμβάνωσιν οἱ νικῶντες, | ἀνατιθέτωσαν ἐπὶ τοῦ εἰσιόντος γυμνασιάρχου ἐμ μηνὶ ὀκτώ. For the meaning of a similar regulation at a contest near Knidos, see Mann 2018a:306–308).

¹⁸⁶ Anderson 2003:163; cf. Nielsen 2018a:131n13.

¹⁸⁷ For the prize amphorae of the Late Archaic and Classical periods, see Kyle 1996, and esp. Bentz 1998; cf. Mann 2018a:299–302 who emphasizes the “uncontrollability” (299) of these athletic prizes from the point of view of network theory.

¹⁸⁸ *IG* IV 583 (Argos, after 331) is an exciting epigram honoring the Cypriot ruler Nikokreon of Salamis for sending the bronze material for the prizes. But we also hear of a myrtle wreath (Schol. Pind. *Ol.* 7.152–155), *hydriai*, a *lebes*, and a tripod (for the references, Nielsen 2018a:42 and McAuley 2024:128). In the Roman Imperial period, the Hekatomboia (the former Heraia) were regularly referenced by the prizes and became the “Shield of Argos” (*IG* II² 3145 [second century AD; for the date: Amandry 1980:233, 252]; *IG* IV 591, l. 6–7: ἐξ Ἄργου ἀσπίς [Argos, Roman Imperial period]); cf. still (though in part outdated) Ringwood 1927:67–69 and Ringwood Arnold 1937:437.

¹⁸⁹ Phot. *Bibl. s.v.* Πελληνικά χλαῖναι; Schol. Pind. *Ol.* 7.156; 9.146; cf. Ringwood 1927:99, Golden 1998:76, Pleket 2004:82.

¹⁹⁰ Hdt. 1.144; cf. Mann 2018a:306–308. Tripods as victory prizes are also known, for instance, from Arkadia and Thebes (Pind. *Ol.* 7.155). For other forms of prizes in the Late Archaic and Classical periods, see the respective entries for “prizes” in the General Index of Nielsen 2018a:290.

¹⁹¹ Living animals: *I.Priene* 114, l. 22 (Priene, after 84). According to Wolfgang Blümel’s new restoration of *I.Priene* 112, l. 83 (Priene, after 84), [ἄθλα ἐμψ]υχᾶ must also be read in *I.Priene* (IK) 68, l. 68. In this first honorific decree for the gymnasiarch A. Aemilius Zosimos (on Zosimos, Kah 2012:62–68), we also learn what kind of animals were given as prizes, for it is stated that the victor in *skillomachia* (“squill fight” – probably a contest with boxing gloves instead of the usual *himantes* [Riaño Rufflanhas 2000:95–96] received a young bull (l. 96: μόσχον) as a victory prize. – Special share of the sacrificial meat: *IG* XII 4, 1, 298 (Kos, ca. 250–200), where the victor in the stadion run receives the left thigh of the sacrificial victim.

¹⁹² Pleket 2014b:364.

integral part of athletic festivals right from the beginning became a characteristic element of the games, since they were used to define the status of a contest (*agon stephanites* vs. *thematikos agon*) and sometimes even lent their name to the festival (“Shield of Argos”). That way they became an emblem or – in the case of Argos – even a metaphorical expression for the contest.¹⁹³ In sum, we should keep in mind that ancient reality was more complex than the binary opposition “crown games” vs. “money games” suggests, and that this opposition is based on ancient terminology that implies that the nature of the prize, at least symbolically, mattered greatly at the time.

Yet, the prizes awarded by the organizers of the festivals are only one side of the story. The other is represented by honors and financial rewards the victors received from their hometowns.¹⁹⁴ They included a celebratory entrance into the city, monetary rewards, honorary statues,¹⁹⁵ and privileges such as the *ateleia*, *proedria*, and honorary citizenship or membership of the council. The precise nature of the privileges as well as the amount of the rewards were defined by civic laws of the respective hometowns. Although the mere existence of such laws is already attested for in the Classical period,¹⁹⁶ they seem to have been systematized no earlier than in the Hellenistic period.¹⁹⁷ It is especially the financial rewards for successful athletes given by their hometowns that demonstrate that the symbolic and economic aspects of athletic prizes were inextricably linked. This is yet another indication for the observation that “fame and money” did not “circulate well separated from each other”¹⁹⁸ in the world of Greek athletics.

Generally, the community that organized the games was responsible for awarding the athletes their prizes and for reimbursing them for all other costs at the place of competition. In practice, the funds derived from a variety of sources including not only the civic treasury but also sacred property, endowments, public subscriptions, and contributions of *agonothetai* or other benefactors.¹⁹⁹ For several cities, the obligation to

¹⁹³ The emblematic character of the prizes is evident, for instance, in *IG* II² 3145, where a successful athlete from Rhamnous listed his victories by putting on display images of an amphora inscribed Παναθη|ναϊα for his Panathenaic victory, a shield for his victory in Argos, and the respective crowns for Isthmia (pine) and Nemea (wild celery). A good photo of the stele can be found in Miller 2004:130, fig. 212.

¹⁹⁴ Buhmann 1972:104–136.

¹⁹⁵ On athletic statues as rewards, see Domingo Gyax 2016:114–120.

¹⁹⁶ *IG* I³ 131 (Athens, 440–432?); cf. Pritchard 2012.

¹⁹⁷ Mann 2016:21. Such a civic law is referred to in an inscription from third–third Ephesos (*I.Ephesos* 1415; Ephesos, ca. 300; cf. Robert 1967a:14–16; Brunet 2003:228).

¹⁹⁸ Mann 2018a:296.

¹⁹⁹ In some cases, even the entrants of the contest contributed. For the financing of athletic contests, see Migeotte 2010, Camia 2011, and Papakonstantinou 2016a:98–103.

fund festivals became a financial burden in the Hellenistic period. This is, at least in part, why the institution of the *agonothesia*, together with other forms of private benefaction like the *gymnasiarchia*, spread and flourished in this age.²⁰⁰ However, it seems that the sums that were actually paid by Hellenistic *agonothetai*, as we find them mentioned in honorific decrees and in the benefactors' reports submitted to the civic authorities (*apologiai*), were usually not very high.²⁰¹ It is true that an *agonothetes* like Eurykleides son of Eurykleides from Kephisia spent the exorbitant sum of seven talents for the organization of one or more unknown Athenian festival(s).²⁰² Others like Nikogenes son of Nikon from Philaides and Miltiades son of Zoilos from Marathon likewise invested enormous amounts of money when they had become *agonothetai* of the Theseia of 161/60 (Nikogenes)²⁰³ and 155/54 (Miltiades),²⁰⁴ respectively²⁰⁵; and the same applies to Polemaios and Menippos of Kolophon whose "magnitude of their outlay" for the Klaria of Kolophon "in all probability would have made them stand out even among the most generous public benefactors of Hellenistic cities."²⁰⁶

Yet such expenses seem to have represented an exception rather than the rule in this period, as Zinon Papakonstantinou has recently argued.²⁰⁷ The vast majority of Hellenistic *agonothetai* did not spend much of their own money but rather "acted as financial managers"²⁰⁸

²⁰⁰ Honorific decrees for gymnasiarchs regularly refer to financial problems of the respective political communities (e.g., *I.Sestos* 1, l. 103: διὰ τὴν ὑπάρχουσαν περὶ τὰ κοινὰ στενοχωρίαν [*Sestos*, 133–120]; *I.Priene [IK]* 68, l. 22 [*Priene*, after 84]). For the flourishing of the *agonothesia* in the Hellenistic period, see Papakonstantinou 2016a (esp. 95); cf. also Argyriou-Casmeridis 2016:170–172.

²⁰¹ See, for example, *I.Iasos* 184, 190–191, 196–202 (*Iasos*, second century). These decrees show that an *agonothetes* of the local Dionysia was expected to spend about 200 drachmae. Note that Papakonstantinou 2016a:106 concludes his survey of the evidence for the Hellenistic *agonothesia* by establishing "a few hundred drachmas" as a rule that was followed in most of the cases.

²⁰² *IG* II² 834 (= *IG* II² 1160), l. 4–5 (Athens, after 229): καὶ ἀγωνοθέτης ὑπακούσα[ς ἀνήλω]σεν ἔπι τὰ τέλαντα; see Habicht 1982:118–127; Chaniotis 2018a:138. For the athletic activities of members of Eurykleides' family, see Section 3.2.2.3.

²⁰³ *IG* II² 956, l. 1–24 (Athens, 161/60): 2,690 drachmae.

²⁰⁴ *IG* II² 958, l. 14–16 (Athens, 155/54): καὶ εἰς ταῦτα | ἄπ[αντα] ἀπολογίε[τα] ἱ ἀνηλωκώς ἐκ τῶν ἰδίων ὑπὲρ τὰς τρισχιλ[ί]ας [τ]ριακοσίας ἐνε[ν]ήκοντα δραχμάς (i.e., 3,390 drachmae).

²⁰⁵ On Athenian *agonothetai* of the Hellenistic period, see Papakonstantinou 2016a:104–106 and Argyriou-Casmeridis 2016:170–171.

²⁰⁶ Papakonstantinou 2016a:101. The honorific decrees for Polemaios (who was himself successful as an athlete in his youth [l. 6–7: ἐστεφάνωθη μὲν ἱεροῦς ἀγῶνας]) and Menippos are edited and elaborately commented by Robert and Robert 1989 (*SEG* XXXIX 1243–1244).

²⁰⁷ Papakonstantinou 2016a.

²⁰⁸ Papakonstantinou 2016a:99. Note that mismanagement was severely penalized and sometimes openly censured by means of publicly erected inscriptions (Pleket 2012).

of the funds provided by civic authorities and gave some extra money on top.²⁰⁹ Some of the resources provided for the *agonothetai* actually appeared as what we call today earmarked funds.²¹⁰ In the Roman Imperial period, then, the role of *agonothetai* does not seem to have changed fundamentally.²¹¹

But whatever the general amount Hellenistic *agonothetai* usually paid for, the remaining evidence shows that they did not regularly cover “the entire bill.”²¹² We can see this in cases where an *agonothetes* actually paid for all the expenses of a festival ἐκ τῶν ἰδίων, because such lavishness was proudly emphasized in the honorific decrees²¹³ and thus did not represent common behavior. In most of the cases, however, the best *agonothetes* seems to have been the one who gave the most on top of what he had received from the local authorities. This is where the competitive aspect of the matter comes into play, since the generosity and the success of an *agonothetes* could be measured by contrasting what he “was expected to contribute (...) to how much he ended up actually spending.”²¹⁴ This, in consequence, could be compared to what his predecessors and successors had been and would be ready to invest.

So what kind of activities was funded by the additional money from the *agonothetai*? In addition to the regular victory prizes,²¹⁵ *agonothetai* paid for

²⁰⁹ For instance, the *agonothetes* Damon of Orchomenos received 6,800 drachmae for the organization of the festival in the second century (*SEG* LVII 452A). He gave a detailed report of the amount of expenditures (*SEG* LVII 452A, l. 6–29) and then probably added what he paid from his own pockets in what has unfortunately only survived as a fragment (l. 30–35). According to the report, Damon spent all but five bronze drachmae (l. 28–29) from the money that was given to him. The “close correspondence between costs and spending” actually “suggests that expenditures had been calculated in advance and hence tailored to fit the available budget.” (Papakonstantinou 2016a:99). Other examples include Kleophantos from Amorgos (*IG* XII 7, 22; third century) who gave 500 drachmae on top of what he had received for his *agonothesia* of the Itonia, and Glaukos of Tanagra (Calvet and Roesch 1966 [*SEG* XXV 501], Tanagra, early first century), *agonothetes* of his hometown’s Sarapieia. In Glaukos’ case, most of the money (3,000 drachmae) came from the interest on the capital of the foundation of the Sarapieia given by a certain Charilaos by the end of the second century. He seems to have added something between 500 and 1,000 drachmae (Migeotte 2006; Papakonstantinou 2016a:100).

²¹⁰ Calvet and Roesch 1966 (*SEG* XXV 501 [Tanagra, early first century]).

²¹¹ Remijsen 2015:289–320 (esp. 305). Yet we have to bear in mind that a lot of our knowledge on *agonothetes* and *agonothesia* is at least in part preliminary, since a diachronic study of Greek *agonothesia* clearly remains a desideratum. Christoph Begass is currently preparing a Mannheim habilitation on the topic for publication.

²¹² Papakonstantinou 2016a:102.

²¹³ For a compilation of examples ranging from the late first century BC to the first century AD, see Papakonstantinou 2016a:102n19.

²¹⁴ Papakonstantinou 2016a:97.

²¹⁵ Known examples include Agathinos from Amorgos (*IG* XII Suppl. 30 [Amorgos, second century]), Nikogenes son of Nikon from Philaides (*IG* II² 956, l. 1–24 [Athens, 161/60]), Damon of Orchomenos (*SEG* LVII 452A, l. 30 [Orchomenos, late second century]). We also hear of gymnasiarchs paying for the prizes of gymnasium *agones*: for example, *I.Sestos* 1, l.79; 81 (second prizes [δευτερεῖα θέματα]).

the costs of the sacrificial victims,²¹⁶ or the meals of officials and victorious athletes.²¹⁷ They covered the attendance fees (*symboloi*)²¹⁸ and sponsored the spectators' meals.²¹⁹ Some even paid for everything that was necessary for the conduct of the athletic games.²²⁰ All in all, the growing diversity of athletic contests in the Hellenistic period brought about a striking variety in the duties and responsibilities of Greek *agonothetai* which grew more complex in this age.

Yet, not only did the spectrum of possible expenditures sponsored by an *agonothetes* become more complex; the same is true for the resources of athletic festivals. For a prestigious – and expensive – contest like the third-century Asklepieia of Kos, the enormous amount of 60,000 drachmae was raised by public subscriptions of about 260 individuals.²²¹ In another case, we hear of a board of *agonothetai* which was in charge of a contest collectively organized by several cities.²²² But there was still room for increased complexity in Roman Imperial times: For instance, daily allowances for the spectators of athletic festivals are not attested for before the first century AD. What is more, the emergence of the *agonothesia dia biou* as a notable phenomenon also belongs to this period.²²³

Taken as a whole, the *agonothesia* clearly flourished in this period, even if it did not represent a completely new institution. It thus belongs to the elements of the framework of Greek athletics that did not see a decline, but rather some further development. Being an *agonothetes*, entailed “an opportunity to shine” and included some “political capital”²²⁴ for the

²¹⁶ *IG XII 7*, 241 (Minoa on Amorgos, third century), *IG XII Suppl.* 330 (Amorgos, second century), *IG II² 956*, l. 1–24 (Athens, 161/ 60), Calvet and Roesch 1966 (*SEG XXV 501* [Tanagra, early first century]).

²¹⁷ Calvet and Roesch 1966 (*SEG XXV 501* [Tanagra, early first century]); cf. also Vollgraff 1901, no. 19 (Lebadeia, early first century).

²¹⁸ *IG XII 7*, 22, l. 8–10 (Arkesine on Amorgos, third century), *IG XII 7*, 24, l. 13–14 (Arkesine on Amorgos, third century), *IG XII 7*, 241 (Minoa on Amorgos, third century). In Beroia, in contrast, every spectator had to pay two drachmae as an entrance fee at the local Hermaia (*I. Beroia* 1, B, l. 61–62; Beroia, first half of the second century).

²¹⁹ *IG XII 7*, 22 (Arkesine on Amorgos, third century), *IG XII 7*, 35 (Arkesine on Amorgos, second century), and *IG XII Suppl.* 330 (Amorgos, second century), all three of them for six days. In the Roman Imperial period, an *agonothetes* like Onesiphoros of Argos even fed all free persons at the Nemeian games (and at the Heraia) for two days (*IG IV 597*) and gave them a daily allowance as well.

²²⁰ *IG II² 968*, l. 54–55 (Athens, ca. 140): Panathenaia, Vollgraff 1901, no. 19 (Lebadeia, early first century).

²²¹ Hallof, Hallof and Habicht 1998 (*SEG XLVIII 1098*). On the social ideology of public subscriptions, see Chaniotis 2013b, Ellis-Evans 2013, and Domingo Gyax 2016:19–26.

²²² *I. Ilios* 5 (Ilios, third century); 11 (Ilios, third/second century).

²²³ Some examples are listed by Papakonstantinou 2016a:109n41.

²²⁴ Papakonstantinou 2016a:106.

benefactor. This is why we find some of the most renowned Hellenistic politicians and members of the royal families among the *agonothetai*.²²⁵

2.6 Providing the “Infrastructure” of Hellenistic Athletics: The Hellenistic Gymnasia

In contrast to Hellenistic athletics in general, the Hellenistic gymnasium is comparatively well studied.²²⁶ Recent research has shown that its most prominent aspect is probably how widely the gymnasium spread in the Hellenistic world. We find Hellenistic gymnasia not only in the regions that had already belonged to the Greek world in the Archaic and Classical periods such as the Peloponnese, Central and Northern Greece, the Aegean and Asia Minor, Southern Italy and Sicily, Southern France, the Cyrenaica, and the Black Sea region but also in the newly established Hellenistic settlements of Egypt and the Near East.²²⁷ Even non-Greek settlements such as Jerusalem and Tyriaion in Phrygia had a gymnasium in the Hellenistic period,²²⁸ and we know of a gymnasium contest in Babylon at the end of the second century.²²⁹ Yet it actually is as far East as in Alexandria on the Oxus (Ai Khanoum in modern Afghanistan) that French archaeological excavations brought to light “one of the largest gymnasia.”²³⁰ Thus the spread of the Hellenistic gymnasium reached almost as far as Alexander’s military campaign.²³¹ In sum, it can be stated that the margins of Greek athletics also constituted the margins of the Hellenistic world.

²²⁵ Consequently, some of these men also appeared as equestrian victors: for example, Athenaios (*JG* II² 2314, col. II, l. 90–91); the Athenian politician and Ptolemaic courtier Glaukon (Paus. 6.16.9; *IvO* 178), an anonymous victor from Rhodes (ca. 140–130, *I.Lindos* II 236).

²²⁶ See the volume of Kah and Scholz 2004, esp. the contributions of Gehrke 2004 and Weiler 2004 (the volume’s Roman Imperial counterpart is Scholz and Wiegandt 2015); cf. Delorme 1960:93–230, Gauthier 1995, von Hesberg 1995, von den Hoff 2009, Petermandl 2011–2012, Fröhlich 2013. With Cordiano 1997 and Curty 2015, there are two monographs on Hellenistic gymnasiarchs alone (and there is also the important edition of and commentary on the gymnasiarchic law of Beroia by Gauthier and Hatzopoulos 1993, which has been called a “Meilenstein der Forschung” [Schuler 2004:165] with good reason).

²²⁷ Aegean: for example, Mango 2003 (Eretria), Northern Greece: Daubner 2016:234–239, Asia Minor: Trümper 2015, Sicily: Prag 2007, Mango 2009, Southern France: Cordiano 1997:55–56 (on Massalia), Cyrenaica: Giudice 2006, Luni 2009, Black Sea region: Decker 2012:137, Egypt: for example, Habermann 2004, Paganini 2021, Near East: Mehl 1992, Groß-Albenhausen 2004, and Daubner 2015.

²²⁸ For Jerusalem, see Section 6.4. The case of Tyriaion is comparatively new – the corresponding inscription was published by Lloyd Jonnes and Marijana Riel in 1997 (see also Bringmann 2004:323–324).

²²⁹ Haussoullier 1909, no. 1; see Section 6.4.

²³⁰ Chaniotis 2018a:330.

²³¹ For the gymnasium, Veuve 1987.

The geographical spread of the Hellenistic gymnasium went hand in hand with a monumentalization of the gymnasium as a building type which started in the fourth century²³² and clearly included its sculptural decoration.²³³ Yet the Hellenistic gymnasium did not only spread as a type of building,²³⁴ it also expanded with regard to its significance: In the Hellenistic age, it increasingly became the place of a universal *paideia* of body and mind.²³⁵ That way it turned into “a characteristic institution of Greek political communities”²³⁶ and a marker of Greek identity from an internal as well as from an external point of view. The well-known fact that the Greeks practiced athletics nakedly made them stand out from non-Greeks all the more.²³⁷ In Hellenistic Egypt, a part of the population, the members of the Greco-Macedonian ruling class, even called themselves “the people from the gymnasium” (*hoi apo or ek tou gymnasiou*) at times.

The gymnasium is one of the characteristic places of a Hellenistic polis.²³⁸ According to Plutarch, it does not necessarily appear among the constitutive elements of a Greek polis,²³⁹ but we may wonder whether it wasn't

²³² See esp. Wacker 2004 (“Architektonisierung”); cf. Delorme 1960, von Hesberg 1995 (on the second century), Schuler 2004:173 (“die architektonische Monumentalisierung der Gymnasien, die ebenfalls im 4. Jh. einsetzt”), Raeck 2004:365–366, and von den Hoff 2009.

²³³ This can be seen particularly well in Pergamon or Delos (von den Hoff 2004); on Pergamon, Mathys 2014:45–68 and von den Hoff 2015; on Delos, see Audiat 1970.

²³⁴ Although its roots go back to the late sixth century (for the origins of the gymnasium, Mann 1998 and Christesen 2012a:135–183 present two opposing views), it is no earlier than in the 330s that we find the earliest archaeological remains of Greek gymnasia. The earliest one is the gymnasium of Delphi dating back to 337–327 (Bousquet 1988:170 A; Wacker 1996:245). As a building type, the gymnasium can be separated from the *palaistra* in the sense that a gymnasium included several tracks (δρόμοι) and galleries (περίπτοι) in addition to the “wrestling school” of the *palaistra*. This is why we often find the *palaistra* as a private institution bearing the name of its owner or its principal (e.g., in *I.Delos* 1953 [Delos, 138/ 37]: *palaistra* of Nikias son of Leonidas; for the phenomenon, see Scholz 2004a:13n8). At the Athenian Theseia, successful relays of the *palaistrai* of Antigines (*IG II²* 958, col. I, l. 60–62) and Timeas (*IG II²* 957, col. I, l. 46–48) are recorded in the victor lists.

²³⁵ Scholz 2004b. We should, however, not overestimate the importance of intellectual education in the gymnasium even in the Hellenistic period, as more ancient research has done (Gehrke 2004:416: speaks of “Überbetonungen dieser Bildungselemente”), since there can be no doubt that “das Athletische und Agonale (...) bildet die eigentliche Kontinuitätslinie der Einrichtung Gymnasium” (Gehrke 2004:414).

²³⁶ For example, Scholz 2004a:13.

²³⁷ On the much debated topic of the introduction of athletic nudity, see Christesen 2002 and Christesen 2014a (with further literature).

²³⁸ Paus. 10.4.1, for instance, wonders why the city of Panopeus in Phokis counted as a polis, although it did not dispose of a gymnasium, theatre, or market-place (in this order).

²³⁹ Plut. *Mor.* 1125d–e: εὔροις δ' ἂν ἐπιὼν πόλεις ἀτειχίστους, ἀγραμμάτους, ἀβασιλεύτους, ἀσίκους, ἀχρημάτους, νομισματος μὴ δεομένας, ἀπείρους θεάτρων καὶ γυμνασίων. ἀνιέρου δὲ πόλεως καὶ ἀθέου, μὴ χρωμένης εὐχαίς μηδ' ὄρκοις μηδὲ μαντείας μηδὲ θυσίαις ἐπ' ἀγαθοῖς μηδ' ἀποτροπαῖς κακῶν οὐδὲς ἔστιν οὐδ' ἔσται γεγωνῶς θεατῆς. – “[Y]ou may find towns and cities without walls, without letters, without kings, without houses, without wealth, without money, without theatres and places of exercise; but there was never seen nor shall be seen by man any city without temples

in fact constitutive for a city. From the perspective of the non-Greek inhabitants of Tyriaion and Jerusalem, the (successful) attempt at raising the status of their settlement to that of a polis quite naturally included the construction of a gymnasium.²⁴⁰ The institution was of essence when it came to the question of how to build a polis, and it was therefore essential for the identity of Hellenistic cities.²⁴¹ So it is with good reason that Louis Robert coined the term of the “second agora”²⁴² because it reflects the importance of the gymnasium for the political community so well.²⁴³ Yet there were other aspects to the gymnasium: following Harry Pleket, it primarily represented “the infrastructure of Greek athletics”²⁴⁴ in that it provided “the training ground for athletes, who competed first in local contests held at gymnasia and as part of urban festivals and subsequently, if they had sufficient talent and ambition, in higher level games.”²⁴⁵ Elaborating on this thought, the gymnasium constituted a prerequisite for any advanced level of athletic competition. In terms of athletics, the gymnasium stood for everyday sporting activities and lower-level competition, whereas top-level athletics were found at games with an “international” catchment area.²⁴⁶

Who practiced at a Hellenistic gymnasium then? It is certainly true that we cannot understand the Hellenistic gymnasium as a monolithic block, an institution that was the same in each and every Hellenistic town.²⁴⁷ But there were characteristics Hellenistic gymnasia shared that extended beyond the local particularities. As for the question of who trained in Greek gymnasia, we have to take into account local differences. On a more general level, however, some basic observations are possible.

and gods, or without making use of prayers, oaths, divinations, and sacrifices for the obtaining of blessings and benefits, and the averting of curses and calamities.” (transl. W.W. Goodwin). Yet Plutarch’s intention here is to emphasize the importance of religion. When he argues that a polis does not *necessarily* dispose of a gymnasium or a theatre, this does only mean that people would *usually* expect a polis to have a gymnasium and a theatre.

²⁴⁰ Bringmann 2004 understands these cases as clear examples of “self-Hellenization”; see also Ameling 2004:132.

²⁴¹ Van Nijff 2013.

²⁴² Robert 1960:298n3.

²⁴³ Gymnasia were, for instance, places of political communication (via the erection of inscriptions and monuments), local cult (Aneziri and Damaskos 2004), and communal activities like banquets (Mango 2004).

²⁴⁴ Pleket 1998:153–154 (cf. Pleket 2014b:369).

²⁴⁵ Pleket 2014b:369.

²⁴⁶ The German terms “Breitensport” and “Spitzensport” cover this discrepancy quite well. Obviously, what took place at Hellenistic gymnasia was “Breitensport,” even though top-level athletes also practiced there, of course.

²⁴⁷ Gehrke 2004:413: “Eher könnte man von ‘Hellenistischen Gymnasien’ statt von ‘dem Hellenistischen Gymnasium’ sprechen.”

The main user groups of the gymnasium were the age classes of the ephebes and *neoi* who trained there usually for a year.²⁴⁸ There has been a lively debate on the question of whether “the ideology of the gymnasium”²⁴⁹ represented by disciplines such as *eutaxia*, *eukosmia*,²⁵⁰ and *euan-dria* and values such as *sophrosyne*²⁵¹ and *philagathia* reflected an active role of the practitioners in civic defense.²⁵² If so, the *neoi* might have actually performed “an important civic role by supplying manpower for a city’s citizen army rather than merely being young men between 20–30 years of age”.²⁵³ In my opinion, the fact that the paramilitary disciplines such as *katapaltes* or *hoplomachia* constituted a characteristic phenomenon of the Hellenistic period is a strong argument in support of this view.

But it is also evident that the ephebes and *neoi* were not the only groups present at the gymnasium.²⁵⁴ People of all age groups used it on a regular basis, and there was a long lasting, if not lifelong, close bond between the citizens of a polis and their gymnasium. For Pellene, for instance, we hear of an obligatory participation in the gymnasium for everyone who wanted to be registered in the citizenship lists.²⁵⁵ We can thus confidently assume that usually all male citizens, sometimes foreigners as well,²⁵⁶ practiced athletics in the cities’ gymnasia.

²⁴⁸ On the ephebes, see Chankowski 2011 and the register of Kennell 2006; for the *neoi*, Dreyer 2004 and Kennell 2013. According to Curty 2015:345–349, the *neoi* were the most privileged group in the gymnasium, since they figure particularly prominent in honorific decrees for gymnasiarchs. Yet the term *neoi* “can designate either the specific age grade succeeding the ephebes or the entire community of gymnasium users” (Kennell 2015 referencing Chankowski 2011:259–263). What is more, the ephebes simply appear still more prominently in another type of inscriptions: the lists of graduating ephebes dated by gymnasiarchs.

²⁴⁹ Kennell 2015.

²⁵⁰ On *eukosmia* as a discipline, see now Lazaridou 2015 (= *SEG* LXV 420), l. 36–38 (Amphipolis 24/ 23).

²⁵¹ For *sophrosyne*, see, for instance, the very telling beginning of a third-century verse epitaph about a fallen soldier from Thebes: *IG* VII 2537 (= *GV* 1106), l. 1–2 (279): [σω]φροσύνην ἤσκουν νέος ὦ[ν, ἐφίλει δέ με πᾶσα] | [ῆ] ἐγ γυμνασίου σύντροφ[ος] ἡλικία. – “As a young man, I exercised temperance, and all my companions of the same age, educated with me in the gymnasium, loved me.” (Transl. S. Barbantani). On the concept of *sophrosyne*, North 1966 still is indispensable reading. *Eukosmia* and *eutaxia* were the terms most closely connected to the role of gymnasiarchs; see on *eukosmia*, for instance, *IG* XII 6, 1, 11, l. 25 (Samos [Heraion], after 234/33); on *eutaxia*: *IG* IV 749, l. 5–6 (Troizen, fourth/third century); 753, l. 7–8 (Troizen, fourth century), *IG* XII 9, 234, l. 7; 235, l. 7 (both Eretria on Euboia, ca. 100), *SEG* XLIV 902, l. 5 (Knidos, Late Hellenistic period).

²⁵² Ma 2000; Chaniotis 2007; d’Amore 2007.

²⁵³ Kennell 2015.

²⁵⁴ This appears to be standard knowledge since the study of Forbes 1933 (cf., e.g., Scholz 2004a:21–22).

²⁵⁵ Paus. 7.27.5. Pausanias does not explicitly say which period he is referring to, but he characterizes the gymnasium as “old” and seems to indicate that the practice was still in full swing at his time. So we may reasonably include the Hellenistic age as well.

²⁵⁶ Ma 2008:376.

This, however, does not mean that all male inhabitants of a polis were allowed to exercise there. It is the famous gymnasiarchic law from Beroia that gives us detailed information on social groups that could be excluded from the gymnasium:

οἷς οὐ δεῖ μετεῖ-
ναι τοῦ γυμνασίου· μὴ ἐγδυέσθω δὲ εἰς τὸ γυμνάσιον δ[ο]ῦ[λ]ος μὴδὲ ἀπε-
[λ]εῦθερος μὴδὲ οἱ τούτων υἱοὶ μὴδὲ ἀπάλαιστρος μὴδὲ ἡταιρευκῶς μὴ-
[δ]ὲ τῶν ἀγοραῖαι τέχνη κεχρημένων μὴδὲ μεθύων μὴδὲ μαινόμενος· ἐὰν
[δ]ὲ τίνα ὁ γυμνασίαρχος ἐάσῃ ἀλείφεσθαι τῶν διασαφουμένων εἰδῶς,
[ῆ] ἐμφανίζοντός τινος αὐτῶι καὶ παραδείξαντος, ἀποτινέτω δραχμὰς
χιλίας,

Concerning those who are not to enter the gymnasium: No slave is to disrobe in the gymnasium, nor any freedman, nor their sons, nor cripples, nor prostitutes, nor those engaged in commercial craft, nor drunkards, nor madmen. If the gymnasiarch knowingly allows any of the aforementioned to be oiled, or continues to allow them after having received a report of them, he is to be penalized 1,000 drachmae.²⁵⁷

So the people who had no access to Beroia's gymnasium can be categorized into eight groups: slaves, freedmen and their sons, disabled persons (*apalastroi*), male prostitutes, craftsmen, drunks, and lunatics (*mainomenoi*) were excluded.²⁵⁸ Women would have constituted the eighth group if we consider that only gender-specific (male) terms appear in the law.²⁵⁹ All those groups clearly represented "people on the fringes of Greek sport."²⁶⁰ Yet they were not all necessarily forbidden to enter the gymnasium. Slaves, for instance, although usually excluded from all athletic training and competition except from horse races²⁶¹ where they were hired as jockeys and drivers,²⁶²

²⁵⁷ *I.Beroia* 1, B, l. 26–32 (cf. Cormack 1977 [SEG XXVII 261], Gauthier and Hatzopoulos 1993 [SEG XLIII 381]; first half of the second century; transl. according to S.G. Miller).

²⁵⁸ On the specific intentions behind those single provisions, see Kobes 2004:239–240, cf. also Chaniotis 2018a:330. Whereas the first two groups and the craftsmen were not allowed to train in the gymnasium for the reason of social exclusion alone, *apalastroi*, drunkards and *mainomenoi* did not gain access for another reason: the aim to guarantee a safe conduct of athletic training. This reason also seems to apply to the exclusion of prostitutes (note also that the *neoi* – here referring to all the attendants of the gymnasium – are explicitly not allowed to talk to the *paidai* [*I.Beroia* 1, B, l. 13–14]; gymnasia were "prime pederastic pick-up points" [Golden 1998:75n2 with further references]).

²⁵⁹ Kobes 2004:239.

²⁶⁰ Mann 2014a:276.

²⁶¹ The exclusion of slaves is otherwise well attested for in literary and epigraphic sources (for the references, see Crowther 1992b). In first-century AD Gytheion in Lakonia, however, there was a provision that slaves must have had a share in the oil for six days a year (*IG* V 1208, l. 41).

²⁶² So the depiction of the famous jockey of Cape Artemision (Figure 1.1; second half of the second century) may very well have represented a slave originally.

were always present at the gymnasium, but “they were doing things other than sports,”²⁶³ such as working as *palaistrophylakes* or *paidagogoi*.²⁶⁴ It is interesting to note that not the building itself, but the activity of undressing and practicing athletics divided the free and the unfree parts of the population here, as Christian Mann has rightly pointed out.²⁶⁵

The fact that freedmen and their sons and even “those engaged in commercial craft” were excluded from Beroia’s gymnasium shows that not all citizens were allowed to enter on a regular basis. A similar passage of the recently published ephebachic law from Amphipolis points in the same direction. Here the access to the gymnasium is restricted to “those being worthy” (τοῖς ἐν τοῖς τειμήμασιν οὔσιν).²⁶⁶ Nevertheless, it remains hard to decide to what extent generalizations are possible on the basis of Beroia’s case. For example, it does not seem to be mere chance that the freedmen appear as a category in its own right in a city that had one of the most voluminous collections of manumissions that has survived from Greek antiquity.²⁶⁷ However, this does not imply that freedmen were usually allowed to participate in other Greek gymnasia. We might expect rather the opposite. Whether or not we believe that the provisions cited earlier were representative for the situation in most Hellenistic gymnasia, the law from Beroia provides insight into the world of a Northern Greek gymnasium at the beginning of the second century. Similar laws probably existed in almost all Greek poleis that had a gymnasium.²⁶⁸

²⁶³ Mann 2014a:282.

²⁶⁴ That some of the *paidagogoi* in the gymnasium of Beroia were unfree is explicitly stated in the law (*I.Beroia*, B, l. 22–23; καὶ τῶν παιδαγωγῶν, ὅσοι ἂν μὴ ἐλεύθεροι ᾶσιν, [...]).

²⁶⁵ Mann 2014a:282.

²⁶⁶ Lazaridou 2015 (= *SEG LXV* 420), l. 14–15 (Amphipolis, 24/23). The inscription was already found in 1984 and some of its content circulated among scholars prior to its publication in 2015. The passage in question is, for instance, quoted by Kobes 2004:238n3.

²⁶⁷ Rädle 1972; Voutiras 1986; Zelnick-Abramovitz 2005:93.

²⁶⁸ This is at least what is said in the law from Beroia (*I.Beroia* 1, A, l. 5–8). Another local gymnasiarchic law is mentioned in *IG XII* 7, 515, l. 82–83 (Aigiale on Amorgos; end of the second century). See also the important ephebachic law from Amphipolis (Lazaridou 2015 with Pleket’s commentary on *SEG LXV* 420 [Amphipolis, 24/ 23]; for an English translation, Hatzopoulos 2016) which does not seem to have been written for a single city only because of a reference to an ἐπίνομος ἱερέυς (Lazaridou 2015 [= *SEG LXV* 420], l. 99) and not to the specific eponymous priest of Amphipolis. Therefore, the law must be understood as “a document of general validity” (Chaniotis 2018b:204) for all Macedonian cities. It remains unclear whether the new law originally dates back to the reign of Philip V or if it was only composed after the Roman conquest (Hatzopoulos 2015–2016 [2018]). It is evident, however, that the law does not include the whole set of laws applying to an *ephebarches*, but only a “selection of excerpts from the general law” (Chaniotis 2018b:204), simply because it is much less elaborate. For the idea that the inscription is a “patchwork” Rousset 2017 (but see Hatzopoulos 2015–2016 [2018]). For the present text as a revised and edited version of the original law, see Arnaoutoglou 2019. For a convincing interpretation of the entire document, see now Mann 2022.

Yet it is not only from the law from Beroia that we know about the functions of Hellenistic gymnasiarchs. Honorary decrees for gymnasiarchs are very helpful in this regard as well. We have already seen that the principal of a gymnasium often acted as a rich benefactor. In this capacity, the role could also be assumed by a wealthy woman able to cover the necessary expenses.²⁶⁹ According to Olivier Curty, the main function of a gymnasiarch was to provide the oil for the athletic training, a task that constituted one of his most important duties.²⁷⁰ In a late second-century decree from Sestos, for instance, the Greek citizens of the polis practicing athletics are referenced by the term οἱ μετέχοντες τοῦ ἀλείμματος (“the people who have a share in the oil”).²⁷¹ The fact that the oil used by the athletes in order to anoint themselves prior to the training becomes a metaphor for athletics itself shows how important a task the provision of the oil was. Yet it was certainly not the gymnasiarch's only duty: He also oversaw the administration of the gymnasium, was in charge of its embellishments, and enforced discipline among the epebes and *neoi*.²⁷² He provided the training equipment (including weapons),²⁷³ hired teachers and coaches, and set the curricula.²⁷⁴ He took care of the water supply of the gymnasium and organized and sponsored repairs of the buildings,²⁷⁵ but, most importantly, he oversaw the funds he received from the city. The gymnasiarchic law of Beroia indicates that the gymnasiarch's monetary function was essential. The last part of the inscription is all about money and about the question of what had to be done if the funds were not properly overseen.²⁷⁶ All in all, the variety of the gymnasiarch's functions was exceptionally high even compared to other polis officials.²⁷⁷

However, the gymnasiarch did not do everything on his own, but had several helpers including *paidonomoi* and epebarchs.²⁷⁸ All his functions

²⁶⁹ Chaniotis 2018a:329.

²⁷⁰ Curty 2015 (but note the critique of Kennell 2015). Yet it was no earlier than in the Roman Imperial period that the provision of the oil became the “dominant aspect” (Schuler 2004:164). For the evidence, see, for example, *I.Sestos* 1, l. 77–78: καὶ ξύστρας καὶ ἐπαλείμματα ἔθηκεν (Sestos, 133–120), *I.Priene (IK)* 68, l. 58–66 (Priene, after 84). More examples are to be found in Schuler 2004:180–185 and the collections of Cordiano 1997 (for the western Mediterranean) and Curty 2015.

²⁷¹ *I.Sestos*, 1, l. 65 (Sestos, 133–120); cf. Schuler 2004:174n64.

²⁷² This last aspect concerning the discipline of the epebes and *neoi* is considered the gymnasiarch's most important duty by Schuler 2004:168.

²⁷³ *IG XII Suppl.* 122, l. 18 (Eresos on Lesbos, 209–204); *I.Priene* 112, l. 72–73 (Priene, after 84).

²⁷⁴ Kennell 2015.

²⁷⁵ Water supply: Hepding 1907, no. 10, l. 11 (cf. *I.Pergamon* 252; Pergamon, shortly after 133 [Wörle 2000]); repair work: Schuler 2004:171.

²⁷⁶ *I.Beroia* 1, B, l. 87–109.

²⁷⁷ Schuler 2004:171.

²⁷⁸ Schuler 2004:168. According to the law from Beroia, each gymnasiarch had to appoint three assistants who supervised the *neoi* and who had to swear an oath themselves (*I.Beroia* 1, B, 36–37

were part of a form of *gymnasiarchia* that dominated in the Hellenistic world, although it was not the only one known to the Greeks. As Christof Schuler has shown, we have to distinguish this form of *gymnasiarchia* from an older, rather liturgical one that we know in particular from Athens and which, most of all, included the function of *lampadarchia*.²⁷⁹ A gymnasiarch responsible for the *lampadarchia* primarily organized the training of teams for the torch races of a particular festival and gave the money for this event.²⁸⁰ The dominating form of *gymnasiarchia* in the Hellenistic period, however, was a yearly office.²⁸¹ Gymnasiarchs were elected by the assembly,²⁸² swore an oath²⁸³ when they took on their duty, and had to give account of their actions when their year of office was over.²⁸⁴ The *gymnasiarchia* consequently appears as an ἀρχή in our sources.²⁸⁵ In Beroia, there was even an age requirement for the position: A gymnasiarch had to be between 30 and 60 years old.²⁸⁶

To sum up, the *gymnasiarchia* was another element of the framework of Greek athletics that clearly flourished in the Hellenistic period.²⁸⁷ By developing from a liturgy into an elected office, the *gymnasiarchia* became a "state institution" at the beginning of the Hellenistic age.²⁸⁸ Again, it should not be suggested that the gymnasium and the *gymnasiarchia* remained the same during the Hellenistic period. From the late second century onwards, honorific decrees for Greek benefactors increased in number and became more and more elaborate. The growing number of exceptionally wealthy and generous benefactors²⁸⁹ seems to have brought about a change in the history of the Hellenistic gymnasium. Yet the phenomenon of the great benefactors of the second and first centuries has been

[selection of the assistants]; 55–62 [oath]). He also appointed *lampedarchoi* who had to provide the olive oil (*I.Beroia* 1, B, l. 71–84).

²⁷⁹ Schuler 2004:171 speaks of a "liturgisches Modell" and a "magistratisches Modell."

²⁸⁰ Schuler 2004:166. Such a benefaction could become a financial burden, as we see in the plea for a release from the lampadarchy of a certain Hermon, himself not a gymnasiarch, in a papyrus from Hellenistic Egypt (*BGU* VI 1256; cf. Sansom 2016:258–261).

²⁸¹ Schuler 2004:167 with n26.

²⁸² For example, *I.Beroia* 1, A, l. 23–24.

²⁸³ *I.Beroia* 1, A, l. 26–34.

²⁸⁴ *I.Beroia* 1, B, l. 88–97; 107–109.

²⁸⁵ *IG* XII 5, 818, l. 7; *IG* XII 9, 234, l. 3–6; *IG* XII 9, 235, l. 3; cf. Schuler 2004:166.

²⁸⁶ *I.Beroia* 1, A, l. 22–24.

²⁸⁷ Schuler 2004:164: "Festzuhalten ist aber, daß in der langen Geschichte der Gymnasiarchie die hellenistische Zeit die wichtigste Phase darstellt. Auch wenn das Amt ältere Wurzeln hat, kommt es erst mit Beginn des Hellenismus an die Oberfläche."

²⁸⁸ Ameling 2004:130; Schuler 2004; Gehrke 2004:418: "Erst jetzt wird das Gymnasium eine Institution der Polis, gleichsam 'verstaatlicht'."

²⁸⁹ Ameling 2004.

interpreted very differently by modern research. Whereas some scholars see a change in the epigraphic habit and tend to emphasize the aspect of continuity,²⁹⁰ others do believe that the phenomenon reflected a changing reality in which the number of benefactors, the degree of their honors, and the amount of their expenses increased because Greek city states had become politically dependent and were reliant on an increasing number of rich benefactors who dominated the scene.²⁹¹

As for now, the state of research can be characterized as follows: Although some lavish and politically influential benefactors already belonged to the third century,²⁹² the bulk of evidence actually points to the Late Hellenistic period; and although we should not overemphasize a process of “aristocratization” and must certainly be aware of different developments in the various Greek city states,²⁹³ it nevertheless cannot be denied that the wars of the second and first centuries had an impact on the financial situation and hence on the domestic political life of Late Hellenistic poleis.²⁹⁴

Later in this study, we shall return to the question of how much the athletes were concerned by these new political developments of the Late Hellenistic period. We will try to answer the question whether, from the point of view of the athletes, these changes actually constituted a watershed in Hellenistic athletics or if we must rather emphasize the continuities with the fourth, third, and early second centuries.

2.7 Supporting the Athletes: The Onset of Talent Promotion in the Third Century

Having looked into new developments in the sphere of the Hellenistic gymnasium, let us now turn to another aspect of athletic training in the Hellenistic age. According to the surviving evidence, a stately (and

²⁹⁰ Habicht 1995. Recently, Müller 2018 who argued that we should not be too eager to find a universal process of an overall “aristocratization” in Greek city states of the Late Hellenistic period.

²⁹¹ Gauthier 1985a; Quass 1993 (“Honoratiorenregime”); Wörrle 1995; Gauthier 1996; Ameling 2004:160.

²⁹² We have, for instance, already seen that the most generous *agonothetes* of the Hellenistic period that we know of, the Athenian Eurykleides who had spent seven talents on the organization of Athenian festivals, was already active in this century (*JG* II² 834 [= *IG* II² 1160], l. 4–5 [Athens, after 229]). For the gymnasiarchs, note, for example, the case of Boulagoras from Samos (*JG* XII 6, 1, 11 [Samos, Heraion, after 234/33]).

²⁹³ Müller 2018; cf. with regard to the gymnasium, van Nijf 2013:330: “The rise of the theatre and the gymnasia was not a sign of de-politicization, but of the continuation of politics by other means.”

²⁹⁴ A very good example in this regard is the career of and the honors bestowed on the Pergamene politician and gymnasiarch Diodoros Paspáros (*JGRR* IV 294; cf. *OGIS* 764, Robert 1937:68–72; Meier 2012, no. 48 [Pergamon, first century; the *gymnasiarchia* was held shortly after 69]; on Diodoros, see Jones 1974, Chankowski 1998, Jones 2000, and Ameling 2004:142–145).

sometimes privately) funded talent promotion set in in the third century. This novelty can be observed on three different levels: the level of the kings, the level of the cities, and the level of private patrons.²⁹⁵

The first example known to us is found in the *Histories* of Polybius who tells an interesting story about the Olympic boxing finals of 216. One of the opponents, the famous superstar Kleitomachos of Thebes, had the reputation “of being an invincible athlete.”²⁹⁶ To “put an end to it,” king Ptolemy IV Philopator is said to have trained “Aristonikos the boxer, who was thought to have unusual physical capabilities for that kind of thing (...) with extraordinary care, and sent to Greece.”²⁹⁷ We will deal with this passage in more detail later, but it is already clear that the Ptolemaic king’s “care” for an unknown athlete is striking. The care was part of the vivid interest the dynasty took in athletics in general.²⁹⁸ The intention was to show the Greeks that the Ptolemies, although kings over Egypt, still belonged to the Greek world. The financial support for Aristonikos was part of this strategy. And yet, Ptolemy did not choose the easy way out: Unlike other sole rulers before him, he did not make efforts to attract an already famous and successful athlete.²⁹⁹ His “aim was not to recruit a champion” here, “but to develop a future star.”³⁰⁰

In the same century, a wealthy entrepreneur named Zenon resided in Egypt and had excellent relations to the Ptolemaic court.³⁰¹ His extensive papyrus archive containing more than 1,000 documents includes a letter that is dated to before 5 May 257. After the salutation, the letter sets in as follows:

ἔγραψάς μοι περὶ Πύρρου ὅτι εἰ μέ[ν] ἡμεῖς ἐπιστάμεθα | ἀκριβῶς ὅτι
νικήσει, ἀλείφειν, εἰ δὲ <μή>, μὴ συνβῆι αὐτὸν ἀπὸ τε τῶν γραμ[μάτων]

²⁹⁵ For the emergence of talent promotion in the third century, Mann 2017 is essential reading.

²⁹⁶ Polyb. 27.9.7: ἐκείνου γὰρ ἀνυποστάτου δοκοῦντος εἶναι κατὰ τὴν ἄθλησιν. (Transl. S. Shuckburgh).

²⁹⁷ Polyb. 27.9.7–8: Πτολεμαῖον φασὶ τὸν βασιλέα φιλοδοξήσαντα πρὸς τὸ καταλύσαι τὴν δόξαν αὐτοῦ, παρασκευάσαντα μετὰ πολλῆς φιλοτιμίας Ἀριστόνικον τὸν πύκτην ἔξαποστεῖλαι, δοκοῦντα φύσιν ἔχειν ὑπέρχουσαν ἐπὶ ταύτην τὴν χρεῖαν. παραγενομένου δ' εἰς τὴν Ἑλλάδα τοῦ προειρημένου (...). (Transl. S. Shuckburgh).

²⁹⁸ See Section 5.4.3.

²⁹⁹ The most well-known example is constituted by the sprinter Astylos from Kroton who won at least seven Olympic victories between 488 and 480 (Moretti 1957, no. 178–179, 186–187, 196–198): It was only after Astylos had already become a two-time *olympionikes* in 488 that he appears as a citizen of Syracuse in the Olympic victor lists starting with his third and fourth victories in 484 (Moretti 1957, no. 186–187). Apparently he was paid to compete for Syracuse by the powerful tyrant Gelon (Paus. 6.13.1 with Mann 2001:246–248).

³⁰⁰ Mann 2017:49.

³⁰¹ On Zenon, see, for example, Pestman 1981; Orrioux 1983; Clarysse and Vandorpe 1995.

ἀποσπασθῆναι] | καὶ ἀνήλωμα μάταιον προσπεσεῖν. ἀπὸ μὲν οὖν τῶν γραμμάτων ο[ὐ πᾶν ἀπεσπάσθη], | ἀλλὰ παραβάλλει, καὶ πρὸς τὰ λοιπὰ δὲ μαθήματα. περὶ δὲ τοῦ ἀκριβῶς ἐπί[στασθαι, οἱ θεοὶ μάλιστα]|τ' ἂν εἰδέησαν, τῶν δὲ νῦν ὄντων πολὺ ὑπερέξειν φησὶ Πτολεμαῖος[ς, καίπερ τὸ παρὸν λείπεται] | παρὰ τὸ ἐκείνους μὲν προειληφέναι χρόνον πολὺν, ἡμεῖς δὲ ἄρτι ἔναρ[χόμεθα ἀλείφοντες. καὶ] | ἐπίστω ὅτι Πτολεμαῖος οὐ μισθοὺς ἐπρασεται ὡσπερ οἱ λοιποὶ ἐπιστάτ[αι, ἀπλῶς δ' ἐλπίζει σε] | στεφανῶσαι ἀνθ' ὧν ἀγνώως ὧν αὐτῶι πρότερος ἐβούλου εὐεργετεῖν καὶ [- ca.18 -] | τα ποιεῖς περὶ τῆς παλαιστρας.

You wrote to me about Pyrrhos, that if we know for certain that he will win, to train him, but if not, that it should not happen both that he is distracted from his lessons and that useless expense is incurred. Well, so far from being distracted from his lessons, he is making good progress in them, and in his other studies as well. As for “knowing for certain,” that is in the lap of the gods, but Ptolemaios says that he will be far superior to the existing competitors, despite the fact that at the moment he lags behind them, because they have got a long start and we have only just begun training. You should also know that Ptolemaios does not charge any fees, as do the other trainers, but simply hopes to win you a crown in return for the kindnesses which you, when a complete stranger, volunteered to him, and (...) are doing everything necessary concerning the *palaistra*.³⁰²

At the end of the letter, we find the plea for a mattress (*stromation*),³⁰³ “a trunk for six drachmae”³⁰⁴ and “two jars of honey.”³⁰⁵ In another version of the letter, this plea is complemented by the request for a shirt (*chiton*) and a cloak (*himation*), among other things.³⁰⁶ The letter's sender, a certain Hierokles, was the principal of a *palaistra* in Alexandria. A young athlete called Pyrrhos trained there, and apparently Zenon wanted to hear what Hierokles had to say about the boy's progress. According to the letter, Pyrrhos' coach Ptolemaios was positive about the boy's prospects and stated that Pyrrhos would outrank his training partners in the future.³⁰⁷ The fact that Pyrrhos obviously needed financial and material

³⁰² *P.Lond.* VII 1941, r. l. 2–10 (transl. T.C. Skeat). The letter survived in three different versions. The other two are *P.Cair.Zen.* I 59060 and 59061.

³⁰³ *P.Lond.* VII 1941, r. l. 10; cf. *P.Cair.Zen.* I 59060, r. l. 9.

³⁰⁴ *P.Lond.* VII 1941, r. l. 11: ῥίσκον (...) δραχμῶν ἕξ.

³⁰⁵ *P.Lond.* VII 1941, r. l. 11: [μέλιτος κάδια δύο] which can be read as a combination of *P.Cair.Zen.* I 59060, r. l. 10: τὸ μέλι and *P.Cair.Zen.* I 59061, r. l. 3: κάδια δύο.

³⁰⁶ *P.Cair.Zen.* I 59060, r. l. 9. Note that the same item, again a cloak, was requested of Zenon by the brother of another ambitious youngster who had already received a first cloak (*PSI* IV 364 dating to 29 September 251; cf. Sansom 2016:252–255).

³⁰⁷ It is interesting to note that the boy's progress in his lessons is also mentioned in the letter. Thus, in addition to his athletic performance, general educational achievements figure in the letter as well (see Mann 2017:50).

support shows that he originated from the lower strata of society. He obviously had not regularly attended the gymnasium before because he had developed a training deficit in comparison with other young athletes.³⁰⁸ However, Zenon's motivation to make the boy's training possible was not altruistic. He was not so much interested in athletic training itself.³⁰⁹ He rather aimed at having a share in the athletic glory that Pyrrhos was likely to earn in the time to come by supporting the athlete financially.³¹⁰

It seems that Pyrrhos was not the only youngster who received financial or material support from Zenon: In another letter sent to him by a certain Zenodoros,³¹¹ Zenodoros thanks Zenon for a cloak that his brother Dionysios had received from the wealthy benefactor. Dionysios had recently won in an unnamed contest at the "games of Ptolemy on Sacred Island." Now Zenodoros asks for another, softer, cloak for his brother who wanted to compete at the Arsinoeia. The discipline of Dionysios' victory is not mentioned, but it is clear that he was either an athlete or a performer. Last but not least, there is evidence in Zenon's archive for the existence of "an aspiring musician in need of a new instrument to complete his musical training and compete successfully."³¹² The same musician, Herakleotes, also asked for a monthly stipend of food, wine, and – perhaps – clothing.³¹³ We cannot say for sure whether or not Herakleotes received what he had asked for, but Zenon definitely seemed to have been the right man to address, if you were in need of such a favor.

Yet it was not only Hellenistic kings and private benefactors who took care of the talent promotion of young athletes. A similar case is attested in early third-century Ephesos,³¹⁴ where a fragmentary inscription records an official decree of the polis stating that the city shall finance the training and travelling of a young athlete called Athenodoros son of Semon.³¹⁵ The winning argument of the application submitted by his coach Therippides is that Athenodoros had already been successful and

³⁰⁸ Cf. Mann 2017:51.

³⁰⁹ Sansom 2016:257.

³¹⁰ This hope is explicitly expressed in *P.Cair.Zen.* I 59060, l. 79: ἐλπίζω σε στεφανωθήσεσθαι. – "I hope you (sc. Zenon) will be crowned." Despite this statement, Criboire 2001:52–53 speculates about Zenon being sexually interested in Pyrrhos. Yet, if so, it would actually be strange "to train the boy in distant Alexandria" (Mann 2017:51).

³¹¹ *PSI* IV 364.

³¹² Sansom 2016:255n27. The papyrus in question is *P.Lond.* VII 2017 (cf. Bell 1925; Pestman 1981).

³¹³ *PSI* IX 1011 dating to 244/ 43 (cf. Sansom 2016:255–256).

³¹⁴ Robert 1967a, Pleket 2001:186, Brunet 2003:227–230, Mann 2017:51–52.

³¹⁵ *I.Ephesos* 2005.

that even greater athletic victories were to be expected in the time to come. So the decree explicitly and self-confidently states that “he will win more competitions.”³¹⁶

It is interesting to note that we encounter the name of the coach here, since trainers were not frequently named in the context of Greek athletics – they were considered hirelings.³¹⁷ Yet there were exceptions. Especially in a “technical discipline” like wrestling, coaches were of prevailing importance. Thus it comes as no surprise that it was an Olympic champion in wrestling, a certain Kratinos from Achaian Aigeira, who “asked the Eleans for permission to set up a statue of his trainer at Olympia in addition to his own.”³¹⁸ Such a gesture, however, was an unusual undertaking, and Pausanias, our source of reference for this story, explicitly emphasizes that Kratinos was famous for his superior wrestling technique.³¹⁹ Consequently, Kratinos may have depended on his coach to a degree that was higher than usual. Also, there is additional evidence that the prestige of coaches in the Hellenistic period increased. When Antipatros from Bouthroton won the Olympic stadion race of 136 and was announced by the herald as an Epirotan, “this was so important for the whole community that they honored his trainer from Teos with the proxeny.”³²⁰

However, the growing prominence of athletic coaches in the Hellenistic period cannot be taken as a general rule – it may have had to do with another observation, namely that there were more athletes originating from the lower strata of society in this epoch.³²¹ Although it is true that we do not know much about Athenodoros’ social background, the simple fact that he received financial support from the polis suggests that he did

³¹⁶ *I.Ephesos* 2005, l. 3: [κ]αὶ ἐτέρους νικήσειν ἀγῶνας. We find exactly the same argument in another Ephesian decree promising support for a young and already successful athlete of the third century (*I.Ephesos* 1416, l. 21): καὶ ἐτέρους νικήσειν ἀγῶνα[ς].

³¹⁷ Nicholson 2005:118–210. Pindar, for instance, only mentioned trainers in his odes on “heavy athletes” competing as boys (Golden 1998:83–84). The Greek terms for athletic coaches include παιδοτρίβης, ἀλείπτης, and ἐπιστάτης. Therippides, for instance, is called ἐπιστάτης in *I.Ephesos* 2005, l. 4. The same is true for Pyrrhos’ coach Ptolemaios (*P.Lond.* VII 1941, r, l. 8). Παιδοτρίβαι appear, for example, in *JG XII* 6, l. 179 (Samos, ca. 200) and *Milet I* 3, 124, l. 55 (Miletus, 206/05). As Brunet 2003:224–227 has shown, some coaches oversaw the entire training at a local gymnasium. Others acted as a kind of personal coach for highly talented athletes who participated in first-class contests and accompanied them to the respective *agones*.

³¹⁸ Brunet 2003:224. But note that Kratinos probably already won in 272 (Moretti 1957, no. 541) and not 60 years later, as Brunet 2003:224 assumes.

³¹⁹ Paus. 6.3.6: Κρατίνος δὲ ἐξ Αἰγείρας τῆς Ἀχαιῶν (...) σὺν τέχνῃ μάλιστα ἐπάλασε. – “Kratinos of Aigeira in Achaia was (...) the most skillful wrestler.”

³²⁰ Daubner 2018:148; cf. Robert 1974 and Cabanes 2001.

³²¹ Pleket 1975, 2001, 2014c. On the social identity of Hellenistic athletes, see also Sections 3.1.1.2 (Miletus), 3.1.2.2 (Rhodes), 3.2.2.3 (Athens), 3.3.1.3 (Elis), and 3.3.3.4 (Messene) of this study.

not come from a well-off family. So Athenodoros is awarded no fewer than “a sports scholarship covering the expenses for trainers and for travels to competitions”³²² here. Yet this was not all he received from the polis. As another Ephesian inscription shows, Athenodoros was also officially naturalized in the city and received the same privileges as other Ephesian *nemeonikai*. In the words of the decree:

[ἔδοξε]ν τῆι βουλῆι καὶ τῶι δήμῳ· εἶναι Ἀθηνόδωρον
[Σήμον]ος Ἐφέσιογ καθάπερ ἀνήγγελλται ἐν τῶι ἀγῶνι,
[καὶ ὑπά]ρχειν Ἀθηνοδώρῳι τὰς τιμὰς τὰς τεταγμέ-
νας ἐν τῶι νόμῳι τῶι νικῶντι παῖδας τῶι σώματι
[Ν]έμεα, καὶ ἀναγγεῖλαι αὐτὸν ἐν τῆι ἀγορᾷ καθ[ά]-
περ οἱ ἄλλοι νικῶντες ἀναγγέλλονται·

(...) the people and the council have decided to make Athenodoros son of Semon a citizen of Ephesos – in accordance with the proclamation already made during the competition – and to grant him all the privileges stipulated by law for a boy who has achieved a victory with his body in Nemea. It has also been decided to have his name officially proclaimed in the marketplace, in exactly the same way as for other victors.³²³

It is important to note that Athenodoros' case is not isolated. A certain Timonax son of Dardanos similarly received financial support from Ephesos at about the same time after his father had applied for sponsorship.³²⁴ Therefore, we may actually say that this polis appears as “a pioneer in promoting sports talent.”³²⁵ Yet other cities clearly cared about their athletes as well. As we will see later,³²⁶ the city of Miletus similarly invested in supporting its most promising athletes with coaches who went along when they travelled to competitions.

To conclude, the third century saw manifold activities of Hellenistic kings, private benefactors, and Greek poleis who were invested in financially and materially supporting athletic talents. We cannot say for sure whether such activities had already taken place earlier, but the bulk of our evidence points to this century and shows that talent promotion at least intensified in this time. We have already seen how crucial the third century was in terms of the foundation of new contests and the construction of athletic facilities. With this in mind, it is not surprising to see sports sponsorship intensify as well. Especially the support of penniless,

³²² Mann 2017:52.

³²³ *I.Ephesos* 1415, l. 8–13 (Ephesos, third century).

³²⁴ *I.Ephesos* 1416 (Ephesos, ca. 300); cf. Daux 1978.

³²⁵ Mann 2017:52.

³²⁶ Section 3.1.1.2.

but promising youngsters with good coaches seems to have been a favorite measure of the century. It is interesting to note that, in addition to the aforementioned chronological concentration of the sources, there is a geographical hub in Asia Minor and Egypt. No doubt, "this was where the decisive sporting innovations originated"³²⁷ in the Hellenistic period.³²⁸

2.8 Bribing the Opponents: Corruption at Hellenistic Contests

When in 332 the Athenian pentathlete Kallippos was sentenced by the Elian judges to pay a considerable amount of money because he had bribed his competitors, the Athenians took initiative and sent a diplomatic mission headed by one of their most renowned orators, the famous Hyperides, to convince the Elians to withdraw the fine.³²⁹ Yet, the Elians stood firm, whereupon the Athenians chose to abstain from participating in the Olympic Games until they were virtually compelled by the Delphic oracle to pay the sum. So in the end, the Athenian efforts did not help: six statues of Zeus (called Zanes in the local Elian dialect) were set up at the entrance of the stadion in Olympia in order to remind every athlete that an Olympic victory must not be bought.³³⁰

Kallippos, however, was neither the first nor the only athlete who was convicted for having bribed his competitors at Olympia. Rather, his scandal appears as one case in a series of instances of athletic corruption at Olympia which are reported by Pausanias.³³¹ The earliest of these cases of Olympic fraud was initiated by the Thessalian boxer Eupolos, who had bribed three of his competitors in 388. As a fine, he had to pay a sum high enough for the erection of six Zanes statues.³³² In addition to the Kallippos scandal, Pausanias reports only one other case of Olympic corruption that

³²⁷ Mann 2017:52.

³²⁸ Note that another possibly related innovation can be seen in the tax exemptions for athletes and their coaches in Hellenistic Egypt which were probably granted in order to attract successful athletes (cf. Section 5.4.3).

³²⁹ Paus. 5.21.5–7; [Ps.–]Plut. *Mor.* 850b. On the so-called Kallippos scandal, see Weiler 1991 (cf. Forbes 1952:171, Ebert 1991:231, Harter-Uibopuu 2001–2002:335–336 and Matthews 2007:88–90). For Mann 2001:297–298, the scandal marks a caesura in the history of Greek athletics because the polis clearly identifies with its athlete here: It is the city state that pays the fine, not the athlete himself. What is more, the entire quarrel happened on the polis level and triggered a diplomatic crisis between two city states.

³³⁰ Perry 2007.

³³¹ Paus. 5.21.2–17.

³³² Paus. 5.21.3–4.

happened during the Hellenistic period, when the wrestler Philostratos from Rhodes bribed his opponent Eudelos.³³³

Until at least the middle of the 1970s, classical research has interpreted the Olympic fraud scandals reported by Pausanias as a clear indication of a moral decline of Greek athletics setting in during the Hellenistic period.³³⁴ The idea was that when more athletes from the lower strata of society entered the contests, athletic festivals ceased to be competitions held among aristocrats who were only interested in agonistic glory and who did not care whether there was money to earn. However, this idea is too simplistic a concept and ignores, for instance, that aristocrats remained the driving force for athletic success in most city-states until the Roman period, as Harry W. Pleket has shown.³³⁵ We should also bear in mind that Pausanias reports no more than two single occasions of Olympic bribery for the entire Hellenistic age, one in the year 332 and another probably in 68 – there is no evidence for the third and none for the second century. What is more, Pausanias also mentions epigrams found on each of the six statues set up from the fines paid by Eupolos and for Kallippos.³³⁶ Three of those statues bore inscriptions in praise of the Elians who must have been proud of their severe actions against bribery. In the early Imperial period (in the year 12), they even sentenced one of their own fellow citizens when Damonikos, father of the wrestler Polyktor from Elis, was fined for having bribed the father of his son's opponent.³³⁷

Such incidents were probably the reason why not only the athletes but also their fathers, brothers, and coaches had to swear a solemn oath.³³⁸ This Olympic oath was designed as a countermeasure against athletic malpractice. The idea behind it was to make sure that all athletes abided by the rules.

³³³ Paus. 5.21.8–9; but note that the *periegetes* points to some chronologic confusion regarding the date of this scandal. As it seems, “heavy weights,” and especially wrestlers, were more susceptible for bribing than other athletes (no doubt, it was easier – and cheaper – to bribe just one competitor than, for instance, all the other competitors in a running event). Especially wrestlers had a particularly bad reputation with regards to athletic corruption, which can be best demonstrated by a closer look into Polyb. 29.8.9, a passage that includes an allegation of fixed results in wrestling matches and uses the “typical” behavior of wrestlers as a common metaphor for bribing. On athletic metaphors in Polybius, see Wunderer 1909:55–59; Gibson 2012:273–277.

³³⁴ See, for example, Harris 1972:40.

³³⁵ Pleket 2014c.

³³⁶ Paus. 5.21.4 (Eupolos) and 5.21.6–7 (Kallippos).

³³⁷ Paus. 5.21.16–17. It is disputable whether the Elian authorities were always as impartial as in this case. Yet it seems widely accepted that at least the Hellenic judges did not flagrantly abuse their monopoly on a regular basis (see, e.g., Finley and Pleket 1976:44–45: “By and large, however, the Olympic Games were free from partisan excesses”; cf. Romano 2007).

³³⁸ Paus. 5.24.9. On the Olympic oath, see, for example, Perry 2007, Crowther 2008:44–48, and Scharff 2016a:47–48.

According to its wording and its underlying concept, this oath was one of the most serious ones in the Greek world. Pausanias, who gives the most important testimony of the Olympic oath, is very clear about this aspect:

ὁ δὲ ἐν τῷ βουλευτηρίῳ πάντων ὀπόσα ἀγάλματα Διὸς μάλιστα ἐς ἔκπληξιν ἀδίκων ἀνδρῶν πεποιήται· ἐπὶ κλησὶς μὲν Ὀρκιὸς ἐστὶν αὐτῷ, ἔχει δὲ ἐν ἑκατέρᾳ κεραυνὸν χειρὶ. παρὰ τούτῳ καθέστηκε τοῖς ἀθληταῖς καὶ πατράσιν αὐτῶν καὶ ἀδελφοῖς, ἔτι δὲ γυμνασταῖς ἐπὶ κάρου κατόμυσθαι τομίῳν, μηδὲν ἐς τὸν Ὀλυμπίῳν ἀγῶνα ἔσεσθαι παρ' αὐτῶν κακούργημα.

But the Zeus in the Council Chamber is of all the images of Zeus the one most likely to strike terror into the hearts of sinners. He is surnamed Oath-god, and in each hand he holds a thunderbolt. Beside this image it is the custom for athletes, their fathers and their brothers, as well as their trainers, to swear an oath upon slices of boar's flesh that in nothing will they sin against the Olympic Games.³³⁹

By explicitly stating that Zeus Horkios had two thunderbolts, Pausanias illustrates that this deity cannot simply be understood as “the externalized form of what we call ‘conscience’,”³⁴⁰ as some scholars believe. His main function was to create a severe scenario of serious divine punishment in case of misbehavior, not just to inspire the good in people.³⁴¹

But the seriousness of the punishment was not only emphasized on the divine level, it also played a role in the concrete countermeasures against malpractice on the human level. It is striking that we find a penalty in the field of athletics which was usually reserved for slaves in the Greek world: flogging. The fact that this measure was an accepted punishment for free-born Greeks shows that the issue of malpractice in sport was taken very seriously by the organizing authorities and the Greeks in general.³⁴²

All of these penalties and countermeasures, however, were not able to guarantee that malpractice entirely disappeared from Greek athletics. From the Asklepieia of Epidauros, for instance, we know of another instance of bribery. The respective inscription dating to the second century reads as follows:

ἐπὶ ἀγωνοθέτα τῶν Ἀσκληπιείων Κλεαρχίδα τοῦ
Ἀριστοκλέος κατάδικοι οἱ γενόμενοι τῶν ἀθλη-

³³⁹ Paus. 5.24.9 (transl. W.H.S. Jones and H.A. Ormerod).

³⁴⁰ Finley and Pleket 1976:20.

³⁴¹ Scharff 2016a:47–48. For a depiction of the Olympic Zeus Horkios as a Zeus Dipaltes, that is, in the way he is described by Pausanias, see the bezel of a gold finger ring in the British Museum (Miller 2004:121, fig. 206).

³⁴² On flogging, see Finley and Pleket 1976:66–67, Crowther and Frass 1998, Miller 2004:17–18; for the Roman Imperial period, Fündling 2014.

τᾶν διὰ τὸ φθείρειν τὸν ἀγῶνα ἕκαστον στατήρ-
σι χιλίοις Ταυρίδης Τελεσίου Σολεὺς ἀνὴρ στα-
διαδρόμος, Φίλιστος Καλλισθένους Ἀργεῖος ἀπ’ Ἀ-
χαΐας, ἀνὴρ πένταθλος, Σίμακος Φαλακρίωνος Ἡπει-
ρώτης ἀπὸ Θεσπρωτῶν ἀνὴρ πανκρατιαστής.

During the year of the *agonothetes* of the Asklepieia Kleaichmidas, son of Aristokles. Of the athletes (the following) have been fined 1000 *stateres* each because of corrupting the competition: Taurides son of Telesios from Solos, men’s stadion race; Philistos son of Kallisthenes, Achaian from Argos, men’s pentathlon; Simakos son of Phalakrion, Epeirotes from the Thesprotians, men’s pankration.³⁴³

The expression of “corrupting the competition” (*to phtheirein ton agona*) is the same term that is found in Plutarch’s account of the Kallippos scandal.³⁴⁴ Thus we may deduce from this parallel text that similar malpractices took place at Epidaurus. It is noteworthy that bribery extended to the running events (stadion race) here, in which this form of cheating must have been more complicated since more competitors were involved.³⁴⁵

In any case, it is true that complaints about widespread corruption increase in our evidence in the Roman Imperial period.³⁴⁶ Yet it is also important that we must not “rush to conclude that systematic corruption was therefore a late development in the history of ancient Games.”³⁴⁷

³⁴³ *IG IV*² 1, 99 II (Epidaurus, second century); cf. Harter-Uibopuu 2001–2002:334–337.

³⁴⁴ [Ps.–]Plut. *Mor.* 850b; see Harter-Uibopuu 2001–2002:335.

³⁴⁵ According to *IG IV*² 1, 99 III (Epidaurus, first/second century AD; cf. Harter-Uibopuu 2001–2002:337–338), malpractice extended to the musical contests as well. In this inscription, the performers are fined for not having appeared at Epidaurus, although they had contractually agreed to do so. For similar cases, see *IG IV*² 1, 100 (Epidaurus, second/first century); *IG XII* 9, 207 (Eretria, 294–288).

³⁴⁶ Finley and Pleket 1976:65. The most significant example is Philostr. *Gym.* 45 who, writing in the 220s to 230s AD, complains about bribery in provincial competitions and even gives an illuminating example from the Isthmian Games according to which a boy wrestler who was promised 3,000 drachmae for letting another competitor win publicly accused the other boy of having refused to pay the bribe when he did not receive the money. According to Philostratos, he even swore an oath in the temple that the money should be rightfully his. Classical research (e.g., Harter-Uibopuu 2001–2002:336) has been skeptical about Philostratos’ notion that corruption was very widespread in this period (he only excludes the Olympic Games [Philostr. *gym.* 45]) – and probably rightly so. Nevertheless, a documentary papyrus of the third century AD has been published in 2014 that includes a similar “contract to lose a wrestling match” (*P. Oxy.* LXXIX 5209; 23 February 267 AD). The contract was concluded between the father of a boy wrestler called Nikantinoos and two guarantors of another boy wrestler called Demetrios. Demetrios had agreed with Nikantinoos “to cede the match in return for 3,800 drachmas” (Rathbone 2014:163), the price of a donkey at the time (*P. Stras.* III 139; cf. Rathbone 2014:164). As “the first known papyrological evidence on bribery in an athletic competition” (Rathbone 2014:164), the contract shows that cases as reported by Philostratos actually happened. On *P. Oxy.* LXXIX 5209, see also Decker 2014 (2019).

³⁴⁷ Finley and Pleket 1976:65*.

Bribery and other forms of athletic malpractice must rather be expected to have been part of sporting competition since the early days of athletics.³⁴⁸ The fact that the first Zanes statues were erected in 388 does not mean that they actually witnessed the earliest occasion of athletic bribery at Olympia. Just think of Astylos of Kroton who took money from the tyrant Gelon in order to be announced as a Syracusan citizen some 100 years earlier.³⁴⁹

To sum up, corruption occurred at several athletic contests in the Hellenistic period. In some instances, malefactors became even naughtier in the Roman Imperial age. Yet corruption must have been a problem since the days athletics were invented, and if the problem was actually more widespread in later periods of ancient athletics, this development should be understood first and foremost in geographical terms: The entire agonistic landscape had expanded dramatically, which entailed that the opportunities to cheat increased remarkably. Therefore we should not integrate these cases of athletic corruption into a master narrative of moral decline in ancient athletics. Rather, we need to emphasize that the athletic expansion of the fourth and third centuries also included the invention of new mechanisms developed to publicly expose athletic impostors.

2.9 Summary

To put it in a nutshell, the Hellenistic period saw major developments in the framework of Greek athletics: Athletic contests grew in number and spread all over the Greek world that had vastly expanded as a consequence of Alexander's military campaigns. During the third and second centuries, several contests were able to raise their status to that of an *agon stephanites*, and athletic facilities of the big four and other contests were considerably extended. Such building activities at the places of competition triggered a process due to which athletic festivals developed more and more into a spectacle. Additionally, the field of athletics grew into what we would call today "mass sports": Gymnasia proliferated throughout the Greek world

³⁴⁸ Bribery was not the only kind of malpractice in the field of Hellenistic athletics. For the Asklepieia of Epidauros, for instance, we also hear that the contractor Philon from Corinth who was responsible for work at the *hysplex* had to pay a fine (*IG IV² 1, 98 I*; Epidauros, third century). This chapter concentrates on bribery since it appears as the most frequent form of athletic malpractice in our sources, but we have to bear in mind that a form of athletic foul play like doping did not exist in antiquity because the ancient world did not distinguish licit from illicit medicine (*pace* Baltrusch 1997; Maróti 2004–2005).

³⁴⁹ See Chapter 2, n. 299; see also the case of the Sybarites trying to "convince" Olympic victors with money in order to be announced as champions from Sybaris (*Ath. 12.521f*; cf. Golden 1998:37).

and the gymnasium increasingly “became a symbol of Hellenic culture and one of the most important external features of a *polis*.”³⁵⁰ Following the proliferation of the gymnasium in the Hellenistic period, gymnasium *agones* with new types of athletic contests flourished. In addition to new disciplines, these *agones* also had a broader variety of age classes. What is more, talent promotion set in on a new level in the third century.

All of this, however, is not to say that everything changed in the field of athletics after Alexander’s campaigns. As it is so often the case in history, demarcations between historical periods should not be understood too rigidly. In our case, some important changes were deeply rooted in the first half of the fourth century and had already set in when Alexander started his military expedition. This is, for instance, true for the “athletic” building activities at the places of competition (stone stadia) and for the emergence of new media that served to record the routes sacred envoys (*theoroi*) took when they travelled to announce important games. Nevertheless, there can be no doubt that the general framework of Greek athletics adapted to the changes brought about by the evolution from the comparatively small world of the Late Archaic and Early Classical periods to the enlarged Greek world of the Hellenistic period.

³⁵⁰ Chaniotis 2018a:330.