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Development of Gymnasia and Graeco-Roman Cityscapes

1 Introduction

This publication is based on an international Topoi conference that was held in Berlin from the 4th to 6th February 2016 and emerged from the research group C-6 on Cityscaping, notably the project C-6-8 on *Bathing Culture and the Development of Urban Space: Case Study Pompeii*. The term ‘cityscaping’ denotes the process by which urban spaces were actively shaped, modeled, and appropriated in ancient cultures. Cityscaping embraces two perspectives: physical modeling and functionalizing of urban spaces through their architectural and urban-planning configurations (physical cityscaping), as well as literary modeling and functionalizing of urban spaces in texts that either concern the human actors and agents within these spaces or are composed by them (literary cityscaping).¹

The project in Pompeii investigates two public baths, the Republican Baths and the Stabian Baths, both built in the 2nd century BC, thus in Hellenistic Samnite Pompeii, and still used after 80 BC, when Pompeii became a Roman colony. While the Stabian Baths from the beginning included a palaestra, explicitly referred to as such in an inscription,² the Republican Baths have been identified as key element of a large complex that re-

sembled Greek gymnasia and included palaestra(e), running tracks and bathing facilities. Therefore, the project is much concerned with the significance of Greek gymnasia or, more generally, sports facilities in different cultural (Samnite, Roman) contexts.³ This, in turn, sparked interest in a wider contextualization and the importance of gymnasia in the western Mediterranean in the Hellenistic/Republican and Roman Imperial periods, which is overall little studied.⁴

An important reference for the phenomenon of physical and intellectual education in the western Mediterranean, for the institution and concept as well as space and building, is the Greek gymnasium in the eastern Mediterranean. While this has received much more attention than institutions and facilities in the west, the Greek gymnasium in the east requires a comprehensive reassessment. Ulrich Mania has recently taken up this challenge and completed a study on Gymnasia in the Hellenistic and Roman Imperial times in the east.⁵

Inspired by the concept of cityscaping, and by the complementary expertise on eastern (Mania) and western (Trümper) gymnasia, the aim of this conference was to examine the development of gymnasia and their impact on cityscapes and urban culture across the Mediterranean world. The gymnasium was one of the key mon-

1 A note on names and ancient terms: this volume includes papers from French-Swiss, German, German-Swiss, Greek, and Italian authors. While all papers are written in English, authors follow different traditions regarding names and ancient terms (e.g. gymnasium vs. gymnasium, palaestra vs. palaestra, Aristoteles vs. Aristotle etc.). These traditions have been respected and no unification has been enforced here. – Abbreviations of corpora correspond to the lists of abbreviations by DAI and BBAW, see: https://www.dainst.org/documents/10180/70593/02_Liste-Abk%C3%BCrzungen_quer.pdf/2c74093b-c8b6-4c6a-8afi-17a155109505 und <http://ig.bbaw.de/abklatsche>.

2 CIL X, 829, inscribed shortly after 80 BC, refers to the restoration of the porticus and palaestra, which therefore both must belong to an earlier phase. The Topoi project C-6-8 has shown that the Stabian Baths were

only built at the end of 2nd century BC; thus, the original building already included a palaestra.

3 Terminology matters, but cannot be discussed in detail here. In the following, gymnasium stands for facilities for physical and intellectual education.

4 The C-6-8 project is complemented by a Topoi project on water management in Sicily, A-3-7, which focuses on bathing facilities, among others in palaestrae/gymnasia. This project inspired the paper on gymnasia in Sicily, see Trümper in this volume.

5 The manuscript ‘Gymnasien zwischen Hellenismus und römischer Kaiserzeit. Zur baugeschichtlichen Entwicklung einer Einrichtung der griechischen Polis. Mit einem Beitrag zu den beiden Gymnasien Prienes’ will be submitted as German Habilitation at the University of Bonn.

uments for the formation of urban space and identity in Greek culture, and its transformation was closely interlinked with changing concepts of cityscaping. Knowledge as well as transfer of knowledge, ideas and concepts were crucial for the spread and long-lasting importance of gymnasia within and beyond the Greek and Roman world.

While the Greek gymnasium has been intensely investigated, the following brief overview reveals important gaps, which motivated the concept and structure of this conference.

2 State of Research

In 1960, J. Delorme published a comprehensive study on the Greek gymnasium, including discussion of all archaeological and written evidence known at this time. In the following decades, little research was carried out, apart from an unpublished PhD dissertation on the architecture of palaestra and gymnasium, written by G. L. Glass in 1981.⁶ From the 1990s onwards scholars started to ask more fundamental and evolutionary questions about the gymnasium. For example, in conference proceedings from 1995 H. von Hesberg published a short paper on the relationship between Greek gymnasium and polis. In the same volume, Ph. Gauthier investigated the institutional role of the gymnasium in the polis state and its significance as a place of sport and education, on the basis of inscriptions.⁷ Individual gymnasia such as those of Delos, Eretria, Messene, and Olympia were reassessed, discussing the relationship between epigraphic testimonies and archaeological evidence or dealing with the development of the buildings and their function in the post Hellenistic era.⁸ An important stimulus for research came from historical investigations like the commented edition of the gymnasia law from Beroia by Ph. Gauthier and M. B. Chatzopoulos, N. M. Kennel's work on the institution of the gymnasium and its user groups, and Ch. Mann's search for the origins of the gymnasium in the nexus of the military, sport and the social elite.⁹

In 2002 and 2007, the Frankfurt research group *Wissenskultur und gesellschaftlicher Wandel* organized two international conferences, on the gymnasium in the Hellenistic and the Roman Imperial periods, respectively. The focus of both conferences was on ancient historical topics and an analysis of written sources, including discussion of military and intellectual training, ephebate, gymnasiarchy and gymnasiarchs, and benefactors.¹⁰ Archaeological remains also played a significant role, however, and new questions were addressed, among these particularly the sculptural decoration of gymnasia.¹¹ The new holistic approach to gymnasia emphasized that the gymnasium gained in public importance and perception in the Hellenistic period which scholars associated with an increasingly bourgeois character of the institution.

The importance and use of the gymnasium in the Roman Imperial period had long been neglected in literature, but received significant attention in the last decade. In the context of his research on Roman bath-gymnasia, M. Steskal focused on the development of gymnasia in this period.¹² He interpreted the bath-gymnasia of Asia Minor in the tradition of the Hellenistic gymnasium. Also M. Trümper studied functional shifts of gymnasia between Hellenistic and Roman times and investigated the examples of Priene, Pergamon and Miletus, focusing on bathing facilities.¹³ Developments of the ephebate as a central part of the Hellenistic-Roman gymnasium were investigated by A. S. Chankowski and U. Wiemer.¹⁴ Wiemer demonstrated that the Athenian ephebate continued in Roman imperial times initially with even higher attendance figures and with the institution acquiring a more private and exclusive character with a high social reputation.

Most recently, C. Trombetti published a monograph on gymnasia in Greece with a special focus on their cultic and religious functions in the Hellenistic era.¹⁵ Another, yet unpublished dissertation on the built space and social dynamics of the gymnasium as a polis institution also focused on the Hellenistic era and did not include later developments.¹⁶

6 Delorme 1960; Glass 1981; Glass 1988.

7 von Hesberg 1995; Gauthier 1995.

8 Wacker 1996; Moretti 1996; Moretti 1997; Moretti 1998; Moretti 2001; Ferruti 1998–2000. Themelis 1999; Themelis 2013 and further papers by the same author since 1994; Mango 2003.

9 Kennel 1995; Kennel 2000; Kennel 2006; Kennel 2009; Gauthier and Chatzopoulos 1993; Mann 1998.

10 Kah and Scholz 2004; Scholz and Wiegandt 2015.

11 von den Hoff 2004; which in turned inspired new research: Kazakidi 2012; Kazakidi 2015; Mathys 2014; Mathys 2016.

12 Steskal 2003a; Steskal 2003b; Steskal 2007.

13 Trümper 2015.

14 Chankowski 2004; Chankowski 2010; Wiemer 2011.

15 Trombetti 2012; Trombetti 2013.

16 Skaltsa 2008.

While research on gymnasia since the 1990s is impressive and rich, significant gaps remain. The distinction between gymnasia in the Classical and Hellenistic ('Greek') periods vs. those of the Roman imperial period is maintained in most publications, as is obvious from recent studies focused on the Greek gymnasia and the concept of the two Frankfurt conferences.¹⁷ This distinction conceals developments, continuities and discontinuities between the Hellenistic and Roman periods. Apart from the recent focus on sculptural decoration, imagery related to the gymnasium has been little studied.¹⁸ Hardly investigated is the significance of the late Archaic and Classical images in vase painting for the early gymnasium.¹⁹ The same is true of many reliefs and especially grave reliefs which show sceneries understandable in the context of gymnasial activities. Finally, there is a lack of studies that focus on gymnasia outside the Greek world in the eastern Mediterranean,²⁰ but most notably in the western Mediterranean.

Finally, archaeological evidence of several important and well-preserved gymnasia remains largely unpublished or requires significant reassessment because of new fieldwork and methods.²¹ This also calls for a new synthesis of gymnasia, which would update Delorme's masterly study, using modern approaches and questions. This is the very aim of Mania's above mentioned comprehensive study.

3 Structure of Conference

Within the overarching framework of cityscaping, the conference tried to address some of the major gaps in research on gymnasia. It brought 26 scholars to Berlin, who gave 22 papers, organized in four thematic sessions that explored recently reassessed case-studies (I); self-perception and self-representation within the context of gymnasia (II); and broader cultural developments from an archaeological (III) and historical (IV) perspective. A particular concern was the inclusion of studies on sports facilities (gymnasium, palaestra, campus) in the western

Mediterranean and of studies that bridge the divide between the Hellenistic/Republican and Roman Imperial periods.

Not all scholars, who presented their research at the conference, could contribute to this volume, however, for various reasons. These papers, some of which will be published elsewhere, include a paper on the gymnasium at Cyrene between the Hellenistic and Late antique periods by Oscar Mei, Eleonora Gasparini and Filippo Venturini; Martin Gallagher's research on the gymnasium of Amphipolis; the study of gymnasia in Spain by Antonio López-García and Jorge García Sánchez; Francesco Ferruti's research on the transition from Greek gymnasium to Roman campus; Kathrin Weber's analysis of representations of the palaestra on Attic Vases; Florian Klauser's study on the statues of athletes in gymnasia; Michael Wörrle's study on female Gymnasiarchoi; and Stella Skaltsa's investigation of social mobility and new political power in the Late Hellenistic and Early Imperial period.

The fourteen papers published in this volume provide major contributions to many, if not all gaps in research, and are organized according to topography and topic. Representing the desired focus on the western Mediterranean, notably Sicily and southern Italy, five papers discuss the debated issue of identification; the layout, architecture and decoration; the significance in different socio-cultural and ethnic contexts (Avagliano and Montalbano; Cannistraci and Olivito; Trümper on Pompeii and on Sicily); as well as the sculptural decoration (Henzel and Trümper).

Seven papers deal with gymnasia in the eastern Mediterranean, discussing the emergence and significance of the palaestra as a building type (Emme); much debated questions of gymnasia in Athenian topography (Caruso, Di Cesare); recent fieldwork and reassessments of important case studies in Eretria (Ackermann and Reber) and Olympia (Mania); and aspects of the sculptural decoration, namely posthumous depictions of youths in Greek gymnasia (Kasakidi) and ruler portraits and ruler cult in Pergamon (von den Hoff).

17 Kah and Scholz 2004; Scholz and Wiegandt 2015; see, in contrast, the above-mentioned approaches and works that try to bridge these periods by M. Steskal, M. Trümper, U. Wiemer.

18 W. Raeck called for increased efforts to include visual studies in the research on gymnasia Raeck 2004, 364.

19 K. Weber tackled this topic in her master thesis submitted in Frank-

furt/Main in 2008 (Weber 2008).

20 See contributions on the importance of gymnasia for Hellenizing the east, Groß-Albenhausen 2004; or of gymnasia and gymnasiarchs in the Roman provinces Syria and Arabia; Daubner 2015.

21 Little published e.g.: palaestrae/gymnasia of Amphipolis and Solunto; new fieldwork and research: e.g. gymnasium of Eretria.

Finally, two papers discuss the important office of the gymnasiarchy in Rhodes (Kah) and more generally in Asia Minor (Vitale) where it was closely linked with the ruler cult.

While some papers focus on the Classical and Hellenistic periods (Ackermann and Reber; Emme; Mania), most papers discuss the Hellenistic and Roman Imperial times, thus providing the much required approach and perspective that bridge these seemingly distinct periods. This is not the space for a comprehensive assessment of cultural continuity and discontinuity of the gymnasium in different regions of the ancient world. Papers in this volume provide important contributions, however, for embarking on such studies in the near future, when yet more archaeological and written evidence of individual sites and regions has been thoroughly investigated.

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