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## Bringing Women into the Agonistic Sphere

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# Bringing Women into the Agonistic Sphere

## *Sport, Women and Festivals in the Greek World under Rome*

*Onno M. van Nijf*

### 1 Introduction: Women and Sport

A pankratiast dreamt that he had given birth and that he was breastfeeding his own baby. He left that contest and stopped with sport altogether. For it seemed to him that he was taking on not a man's job but that of a woman.

ARTEM. *On.* 5.45<sup>1</sup>

One often-repeated generalisation about the role of women in Greek athletics is that women had no significant role to play in the gymnasia and stadions, as they were confined as much as possible to the domestic sphere, while men dominated outside spaces. This reflects, of course, ideology as much as a social reality. Throughout its history sport has largely been seen as a man's thing: sport is most often carried out by men, watched by men, and talked over by men. As athletic success often depends on physical strength, men often excelled at it, or at any rate, activities in which men excelled were considered (true) sports. And as it were mostly men that were seen to excel in sport, all men would derive part of their identity from sport. The consequence is that sporting success has often been presented as success at being masculine. Greek men internalised this message, as is shown by the Artemidoros quotation: even to dream of taking on a female role was enough to shed doubts on one's masculinity and thereby on one's standing as an athlete. As Mark Golden points out: athletics served as a discourse of difference—and the most striking difference was that between men and women.<sup>2</sup>

And yet, as is well known, some women did enter the agonistic domain. We know about running contests for girls from the classical period and female chariot owners who started to appear in the Hellenistic period. But most of

1 Unless stated otherwise, all translations are my own.

2 Golden 1998, 127–128.

our evidence concerns the Roman period, when women entered major athletic festivals and the *gymnasia*.<sup>3</sup> In quantitative terms this evidence pales in comparison with the evidence for male participation in athletics. This is not surprising: in the climate sketched above women's athletic activities would have gone underreported, or even unreported, or they were framed in various ways, so as to minimise the risk of challenging the dominant masculine perspective.

When discussing women's sport in the ancient world, it is, therefore, not enough to limit ourselves to a simple listing of athletic activities that women engaged in. Rather, we need to understand what was at stake when women were entering into public view with athletic activities: to whom or what were their activities important? What kind of reactions did they generate? What were the implications of these activities? In this paper I shall offer a brief survey of the evidence for women entering the agonistic sphere—both as participants and as officials, organisers and financiers. More specifically, I am interested to find out where and when their presence was publicised and what the implications of this publicity were. We shall see that when women entered the agonistic sphere a simple male versus female dichotomy is intersected by other dimensions such as wealth, status and age. Another observation that we shall have to make time and again, is that the social identity of women entering the agonistic sphere was, and remained, tied up with those of their families, their fathers, their husbands and even their sons. Finally, we shall see that the sudden increase in numbers of women involved in sport in the early Roman period was often connected with the imperial cult and the representation of imperial women.

## 2 A View from the Centre

I admire many of the rules of your training, Sparta, but most of all the great blessings derived from the girls' *gymnasia*, where a girl can exercise her body, naked, without blame, among wrestling men, when the swift-thrown ball eludes the grasp, and the curved rod sounds against the ring, and the woman is left panting at the furthest goal, and suffers bruises in the hard wrestling. Now she fastens near the glove the thongs that her wrists delight in, now whirls the discus' flying weight in a circle, and now,

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3 See Mantas 1995 for the most complete overview. Tsouvala 2014 sheds new light on the role of women in the *gymnasia*; Biemann 1998 discusses women in an organisational role.

her hair sprinkled with hoar frost, she follows her father's dogs over the long ridges of Taygetus, beats the ring with her horses, binds the sword to her white flank, and shields her virgin head with hollow bronze, like the crowd of warlike Amazons who bathe bare-breasted in Thermodon's stream; or like Helen, on the sands of Eurotas, between Castor and Pollux, one to be victor in boxing, the other with horses: with naked breasts she carried weapons, they say, and did not blush with her divine brothers there.

PROP. 3.14.1–34, transl. KLINE

We may start our exploration of the role of women in Greek sport in the imperial age with an image from the centre of the Roman Empire. In his elegy 3.14, the Roman poet Propertius sketches an exciting image of Spartan girls exercising in the nude with the boys. He complains about the social distance that he was forced to keep from his (imaginary?) lover, while in Sparta girls were exercising publicly in the gymnasium. It is possible to see this as a humoristic and perhaps overexcited piece of fantasy, but it has recently been argued that Propertius' poem is representative of contemporary Roman opinions about what had been going on within Spartan education. But to what extent was this image based on Greek reality? And what may have been the reason to thematise this issue?<sup>4</sup>

### 3 Traditional Footraces

*Neai*: women who competed in a sacred footrace

HSCH. S.V. νῆαι'

Greek girls engaged in sport also outside Sparta. One of the ways in which (some) women could enter the world of sport was through contests that formed part of maturation rituals for *parthenoi* (young unmarried women) and girls, mostly in the cult of female deities. Such contests must have originated in the archaic period, but we are best informed for the classical period, even though some of the sources are (much) later. Hesychius, writing in the fifth or sixth century CE, suggests that footraces were even an identifying activity for a category of young women, *neai*, a female equivalent of the *neoi* that are found in so many Greek cities.<sup>5</sup> The site of Brauron in Attica has yielded interesting visual evidence in the shape of small vase paintings of little girls or *parthenoi* engaged

4 Cairns 2006, 362–403.

5 Kennell 2012; Forbes 1933.

in what seems to be a footrace. This may refer to a female ritual involving some form of competition held as an alternative to more conventional male competitions.<sup>6</sup> There is of course debate as to whether this really should be seen as 'sport', but this seems too sceptical: a fourth-century inscription shows that there must have been a gymnasium and a palaestra in the immediate vicinity of the places where the girls (known as *arktoi*) were housed,<sup>7</sup> although the buildings are as of yet not found, which points at regular athletic activity. Most scholars would accept this as sufficient proof for athletic activity in the case of males.

At any rate, it is very likely that only a handful of young women could take part in them. To these girls—and their families—participation offered an opportunity for public self-representation through their offerings to the goddess and even a source of prestige, as we may deduce from a line in Aristophanes.<sup>8</sup> It is fair to assume that such girls involved in sport were not a cross-section of society, but will have belonged to prominent families for whom the visibility of their women added to their symbolic capital. Inscriptions from Thessaly point in a similar direction. From Atrax and some other cities we have dedications to Artemis that were set up by (young) women describing themselves as *epinebeusasa*. This term is interpreted by Hatzopoulos as referring to an age-group for women—comparable to the male *epheboi*—and he proposes that the dedicants had been engaged in some type of race in a context of initiation rituals.<sup>9</sup>

More evidence for this kind of traditional footraces dates to the Roman period. Perhaps the most famous example of girls' races is the Heraia at Olympia, which were described in some detail by Pausanias.<sup>10</sup> He mentions that the winners were allowed to set up statues with their names inscribed, but interestingly no such inscription appears to have survived, and no victor is known.<sup>11</sup> As to the statues, the only evidence we have consists of a small number of statuettes from the archaic period—all found outside Olympia—of a running girl in the pose described by Pausanias.<sup>12</sup>

6 Scanlon 2002.

7 SEG 52.104, l. 1–8.

8 Ar. *Lys.* 641–647 who does not, however, mention the footraces.

9 Kravaritou 2018 and Hatzopoulos 1994. For an example see SEG 34.493.

10 Paus. 5.16.

11 There is some debate as to whether the Heraia were a female equivalent of the Olympic games, but it seems more likely that they were anchored in local traditions: Pirenne-Delforge 2019. It is not impossible that they received a boost in the Roman period when several contests developed footraces for women. If so, Pausanias may have witnessed a (re)invented tradition.

12 One statue of a young girl in a similar pose is archaizing in style, but undoubtedly stems from the Roman period. If anything, this is a sign of antiquarian interest.

The statuettes may have a link with Sparta, although proof for this has not been offered. If a Spartan connection may be accepted, it certainly fits with established ideas that girls participated in the Spartan *agoge*. The famous educational system obviously had its roots in the Spartan past, but in the course of its history it was re-invented several times to suit contemporary needs.<sup>13</sup> The public nature of female education had been exercising the minds of many commentators, but is not so easy to unpack the evidence and distinguish fact from fiction.

There can be no doubt that physical training had been part of the upbringing of Spartiate girls. The earliest sources refer to footraces and contest in strengths that were attributed to the mythical lawgiver Lykourgos, who set them up for eugenic purposes.<sup>14</sup> It is not clear what happened to these races in the Hellenistic period, but there is firm evidence for footraces in the Roman period. Pausanias describes footraces (*dromou agones*) that were held for the so-called Dionysiades, a small group of eleven girls in the service of Dionysos.<sup>15</sup> A fragmentary inscription from imperial Sparta establishes a link with the *agoge*. The activities of the Dionysiades were overseen by the *biduoi*, a board of officials whose duties were broadly comparable to those of the *kosmetai* in Athens, which suggest that these races should indeed be seen as truly agonistic.<sup>16</sup>

So far the evidence for female sport in Roman Sparta is not that dissimilar to what we find in other Greek cities, as it consisted mainly of training and footraces for a select group of young girls. It is not impossible that physical education for girls went beyond running, and may in fact have involved some form of nudity. Ancient observers long before Propertius had been clearly excited by the idea; Euripides already presented Spartan women as being as loose as their clothing, which may be one of the earliest examples of the sexualisation of female athletic bodies.<sup>17</sup> However, it seems safer to follow Plutarch, who may have echoed Plato in his admiration for the Spartan constitution. He states that girls received an all-round athletic training, which indeed included (ritual) nudity, but he is also keen to present this practice in a conservative and traditional frame. The purpose of the exercise was to prepare Spartiate girls for childbirth and motherhood.<sup>18</sup>

13 Kennell 1995.

14 Xen. *Lac.* 1.4.

15 Paus. 3.13.7.

16 SEG 11.610 with Cartledge and Spawforth 1989, 190.

17 Eur. *Andr.* 595–601.

18 Plut. *Lyc.* 14.2–15.1.

All the credible evidence places the athletic activities of girls in a traditional framework. Footraces served to demarcate distinctions between categories of women. In all cases the sporting activities served to distinguish *parthenoi* from adult (married) women. Female exercise was reserved for unmarried girls, and could be justified by reference to its potential contribution to their future role as mothers. Although the girls were in the public eye, they certainly did not escape the domestic sphere. They had a place in the world of sport, but it was only on rare occasions that female participation became a truly public event. Such events were reserved for only a small selection of women presumably of elite families that were able to capitalise on the physical activities of their daughters. This holds even for Sparta, where relatively large numbers of girls were engaged in athletics, yet the *agoge* was only open to Lakedaemonian girls, not to *perioikoi* or helots.

#### 4 Women and Horse Races

Kings of Sparta were my fathers and brothers. Kyniska, victorious at the chariot race with her swift-footed horses, erected this statue. I assert that I am the only woman in all Greece to have won this crown.

IvO 16o, transl. MILLER<sup>19</sup>

Footraces were not the only way whereby women could enter the agonistic sphere: chariot races provided an alternative and even more distinguished route. Here, the distinction between males and females intersects with other distinctions especially of wealth and power, as horse racing has always been the pursuit of the wealthy classes. Women could compete on equal terms with men in equestrian competitions because they did not necessarily involve personal participation. In ancient—and modern—horse races, it was the owners who entered the horses and reaped the glory of victory, while the jockeys and charioteers, who did the racing, remained anonymous. Owners did not even have to be physically present, which made it possible for wealthy women to take part even in the Olympic Games, where women were not allowed. This allowed for agency on the part of women. However, as we shall see, a family frame was rarely far away.

As far as we know, the first Greek woman to have exploited this opening was the Spartan princess Kyniska, who won twice in Olympia, probably in 396

19 Miller 2012, 106.

and 392 BCE, and achieved Panhellenic recognition, as is clear from an inscription that she dedicated in Olympia and a mention in Pausanias.<sup>20</sup> The latter also mentions that other Spartan women followed in her footsteps, including a women called Euryleonis, who obtained a victory at Olympia in 360 BCE. By the time that Pausanias visited Sparta, a statue had been set up for her in the city, suggesting high status.<sup>21</sup> And finally, a woman called Olympio, daughter of Agenor, was successful in the Athenian Panathenaia of 170–169 BCE.<sup>22</sup> All in all, more than thirty female equestrian victors are known who obtained at least forty-three victories between them.<sup>23</sup>

Pausanias presents Kyniska as the first woman to have an interest in breeding and racing horses, which is of course impossible to check. It is likely though, that Kyniska's interest in horses was anchored in local traditions in Sparta where (some) young women of elite status were engaged in horse racing at the Hyakinthia.<sup>24</sup> Still, the decision to enter in the Olympics was a strikingly public move and reactions have been predictably ambivalent. Pausanias describes Kyniska, as 'extremely ambitious' which is not a positive qualification for a woman, and, more significantly, stories circulated to deny Kyniska agency and diminish the value of her victory.<sup>25</sup> However, Kyniska's tone suggests differently. It is also important to note that she emphasises her family connections in her own inscription. Her proud claim to be the daughter and sister of Spartan kings suggests that we should understand her initiative rather as an attempt to gain prestige for herself and her family on a Panhellenic scale. We should also note that she seems to have inspired a run of female chariot owners to do the same. Quite a few of them belonged to, or were associated with, the Ptolemaic court.

It is well known that the Ptolemies played an active role in Greek athletics by sponsoring participants and of course by entering themselves in major contests.<sup>26</sup> They may have wanted to flag their Greek credentials, but this remarkable display of agonistic spirit will also have served to convey an image of the Ptolemaic dynasty as particularly successful and powerful. At least thirteen members of the ruling family are attested as having competed (and won) at chariot races, among them four women.<sup>27</sup> In chronological order we find

20 IvO 160, Paus. 3.8.1.

21 Paus. 3.17.6.

22 SEG 41.115 col. 1 l. 34.

23 For a list see the appendix.

24 Ath. 4.139–140.

25 Xen. *Ages.* 9.6 and Plut. *Ages.* 20.1 attributed the idea to her brother Agesilaos.

26 Remijnsen 2009.

27 Scharff 2019, 211–224. I want to thank Sebastian Scharff for sharing his unpublished Habilitation with me.



Berenike I, Arsinoe II, Berenike Syra and Berenike II who were victorious in the Olympic, Nemean and Isthmian games between 292 and 244 BCE. All these victories were publicised widely by poets such as Callimachus and Posidippus.<sup>28</sup>

It is explicitly stated that the first Berenike sought to emulate “and take away the ancient glory from Kyniska”, which suggests that Panhellenic recognition was a major aim.<sup>29</sup> However, the high visibility of royal women appears to have been part of a strategy to create a dynastic image, as male Ptolemies linked the glory of victory not only to the *arete* of individuals, but to their entire ‘house’, explicitly referring to the successes of their female family members.<sup>30</sup> Ptolemy II even appears to have been more concerned to highlight his mother’s achievements than those of his father: “of my father’s glory I boast not, but that my mother, a woman, won with her chariot—that is great”.<sup>31</sup> This shows that the visibility of women was not only due to the self-presentation of women themselves, but a structural element of the collective self-presentation of a dynasty integrating their female members into an image of power.

The high visibility of agonistic women was not limited to women of the royal family, but was extended to other women at court, such as Belistiche, the mistress of Ptolemy II, who is on record for victories in Olympia in 268 and 264 BCE.<sup>32</sup> Moreover, we find female chariot owners also among the newly emerging Ptolemaic international aristocracy. One example comes from Athens: between 202 and 178/177 BCE Polykrates of Argos, his wife Zeuxo and their daughters Eukrateia, Zeuxo and Hermione were all successful at the horse races in the Panathenaia.<sup>33</sup> The high status of this family is evident from a series of honorific dedications on Paphos. They were examples of a newly emerging Panhellenic elite, extremely wealthy, extremely well-connected and operating on a large international scale.<sup>34</sup> Van Bremen has shown that agonistic skills and competing at the games were built into the careers of such people.<sup>35</sup> Polykrates was the Ptolemaic governor of Cyprus, his wife Zeuxo stemmed from Cyrene. Polykrates’ son Ptolemaios, an *archisomatophylax* of Ptolemy, was honoured by his fellow members of his gymnasium, but it was the agonistic glory won by his mother and his sisters that made this family stand out.<sup>36</sup> Polykrates’ own sister

28 Posidippus, *Ep.* 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 87 and 88. Callim. *Victoria Berenices*.

29 Posidippus, *Ep.* 87 on the victory of Berenike I.

30 For this argument see Scharff 2019, 217.

31 Posidippus, *Ep.* 88, l. 5–6. Transl. Scharff 2019, 217.

32 P.Oxy 17.2082, l. iv. 6–8. and Paus. 5.8.11 (Moretti no. 554 and 549).

33 Tracy and Habicht 1991.

34 SEG 20.194–198.

35 Van Bremen 2007, 360–361.

36 SEG 20.198.

seems also to have been victorious at Athens, adding another female element to this family's glory.

Another example concerns a family descending from Telemachos of Elis, whose victories spanned a period from the third to the first centuries BCE. Their names appear on a large statue base in Olympia that honours several members of this prominent family, six of whom claim victory in an equestrian discipline at Olympia.<sup>37</sup> Two of these are women: Timareta and her daughter Theodota II. Timareta is honoured by her two brothers, and the three of them honour their mother Theodota I (who may have won a victory as well). It is very likely that the family tree can be expanded to include other Olympic victors. Whatever the precise arrangement of this family, it is clear that a female victory was highly valued and fully integrated in the display of the family, whose agonistic qualities seem to have been maintained over several generations.

This trend continued in the Roman period. A famous text from Delphi that will be discussed below mentions Hedeia, originally from Caesarea Tralleis, as the victor of a chariot race at Isthmia.<sup>38</sup> Her victory should be dated round the middle of the first century CE. An entry in a victors' list of Oropos mentions a certain Habris from Kyme, who had entered the *Amphiareia Romaia* with a span of horses (*synoris teleia*) in the first half of the first century BCE.<sup>39</sup> Also in the first century we find in Kyme itself a fine funerary epigram for Damodika, who did not only proudly frame her racing victory as a source of prestige for her family, but also referred to their pro-Roman credentials:<sup>40</sup>

My name was Damodika, my husband was the splendid and honourable Hermogenes—Krates brought me forth in this life. I did not die without being lamented widely, for I left behind a son, and the glory of a renowned victory in the chariot race. I could not look to my husband as I gave out my last breath, as he was in Rome as an envoy, and could not oblige me with the final favour.

I.Kyme 46

This brief survey has shown that the sporting success of women was not limited to initiation rituals. There is substantial evidence that women could play a highly visible role in the equestrian events at a panhellenic scale. It is clear that their contribution in sport was highly valued and considered an important

37 IvO 198–204. The family is discussed in Zoumbaki 2001, esp. 372–376.

38 Syll.<sup>3</sup> 802.

39 Epigr. tou Oropou 525, l. 61.

40 I.Kyme 46 = SGO 05/03/03.

part of the collective self-presentation of prominent families. This is in keeping with the general role of sport and athletic victory in this period, but the role of women is also an indication of the changing nature of society. Their visibility was not a sign of emancipation, but a sign of a more hierarchical world order centred on elite families. In the Hellenistic period some women were able to enter the agonistic sphere only as members of prominent families, in the expectation that they would add to their family's prestige.

## 5 Female Athletes in the Early Empire

Hermesianax son of Dionysios citizen of Kaisareia Tralleis, as well as Ko ... (dedicated) to Pythian Apollo (the statues of) his own daughters who themselves had the same citizenships.

Tryphosa who had won the stadion at the Pythian games when Antigonos and Kleomachis were agonothetes, and at the following Isthmia when Iuventius Proclus was agonothete, the first of girls.

Hedea, who had won the chariot race in armour at the Isthmian games when Cornelius Pulcher was agonothete, and the stadion at the Nemean games when Antigonos was agonothete. And in Sikyon when Menoitas was agonothete. She also won the kithara-singing in the boys' category at the Sebasteia (Augustus games) at Athens, when Novius son of Pheilinos was agonothete. And she was the first ever to become a citi[zen of ...], the first girl.

Dionysia, who had won ... when Antigonos was agonothete; and the stadion at the Asklepieia in sacred Epidauros.

Syll.<sup>3</sup> 802

The idea that young girls could compete in running contest was firmly established in practice and on an ideological plane, and the idea that female victories in horse races could contribute to family status on a Panhellenic plane had also found wide acceptance. In the early imperial period these two strands came further together, as there was a sudden increase in footraces for girls that were part of—or associated with—prestigious festivals in Korinth, Delphi, Nemea, Sparta, Neapolis and Rome.

Most of our information comes from public victors' lists or victory dedications, mostly set up by relatives of the victorious girls.<sup>41</sup> Pride of place must

41 See the appendix for a list of all the known cases.

go to a unique monument from Delphi set up by a Hermesianax from Tralleis for his three daughters, Tryphosa, Hedeia and Dionysia, who had all been victorious in running competitions at Delphi, Isthmia, Nemea and Sikyon.<sup>42</sup> There is some discussion as to whether this means that they competed against boys, but it seems more likely that these races were reserved for girls.<sup>43</sup> Such races seem to have been an innovation of the early imperial period. A contemporary inscription from Korinth mentions the introduction of a girls' race (a *virgi[ num certame ]n*) at the Kaisareia of Isthmia.<sup>44</sup> This inscription is dated to the reign of Tiberius or Claudius, when the cult of Livia was established in several parts of Greece.<sup>45</sup> Her cult seems to have been accompanied by footraces in other places as well. Around the same time another footrace in her honour appears to have been established in Sparta, as we learn from a second-century inscription for a certain Panthalis daughter of Agis(?) who was victorious in one such race.<sup>46</sup> A festival for Livia as Julia Augusta was also set up in Thyateira by a private benefactress. It was apparently run by female agonothetes who set up dedications to the empress.<sup>47</sup> More evidence for separate races for girls are found in Neapolis, where we find an inscription for a Seia Spes (2 CE), who had won in a footrace for the "daughters of councillors".<sup>48</sup> The recent publications of victor lists for the Italika Romaia Sebasta set up by Augustus have added more girls who competed in races for senatorial girls (*synkletikai parthenoi*). They may have been local girls, but a Flavia Thalassa came from Ephesos to win the girls' stadion race.<sup>49</sup> Finally, there is literary evidence for footraces for girls in Rome under Domitian and Septimius Severus, and a later text mentions an all-girls footrace at Antiocheia, which may be dated to the reign of Caracalla.<sup>50</sup>

The evidence is limited, but points at a wave of agonistic innovations in the early imperial period that made it possible for girls to compete in top-tier agonistic festivals, and find public recognition for it. This innovation was, however, anchored in various ways, so as not to undermine the social hierarchy. The first anchor was cultural traditionalism: the evidence is limited to footraces, which

42 Syll.<sup>3</sup> 802 = F.Delphes III.1 534 = IAG 63 with SEG 52.526.

43 Lee 1988.

44 SEG 52.526.

45 Kantirea 2007, 74–78.

46 SEG 11.830.

47 TAM v.2 904–906.

48 SEG 14.602.

49 SEG 58.1085; SEG 64.860. Miranda de Martino 2016, 393.

50 Domitian: Suet. *Dom.* 4; Dio Cass. 67.8.1; Septimius Severus: Dio Cass. 75.16.1.5; Caracalla: Malalas 12.288–289 with Remijsen 2015, 100–103.

had always been an acceptable field for girls to compete in, and had become a point of interest for Pausanias and other authors exactly around that time. Secondly, as with the chariot races, the celebration of athletic skills was firmly subordinated to family interests. Where we have information about their background, the girls seem to have belonged to elite families. In the case of the Sebasta in Neapolis, it is explicitly stated that the contests were open only to *parthenoi* of high status: daughters of councillors (*thygaterai bouleutikai*) or unmarried girls of senatorial rank (*parthenoi synkletikoi*). We know nothing about the status of Hermesianax and his daughters, but the fact that Hedeia was able to enter in a chariot race suggests that they must have been well off as well. Finally, the name of the Spartan girl who won in the *diaulos* is mangled, but it is possible that she should be identified with a Iulia Panthalis, daughter of Agis who is known from an honorary inscription set up by her son, so she will have been of high status as well.<sup>51</sup> Seia Spes even linked two families: the inscription identifies her as from bouletic stock, but it was set up—perhaps years later—by her husband, which suggests that her status and victory served his family interests as well. And thirdly, it is striking that several of these texts explicitly locate the victories in contests connected with the imperial cult—some of which were even dedicated to the empress Livia—and were thus supportive of the social and political order.

## 6 Women and Gymnasia

When Publius son of Decimus was *archon*, in the month Boukattios. The *archontes* M. Antonius Primus and Antonius Zosimos, and Publius Castricius Alkimos inscribed the members of the upper gymnasium at their own cost: Marcia Ismenodora, Marcus Thalerus etc.

IG VII 1777

The evidence for women's involvement and success in agonistic festivals raises a further question: if the daughters of Hermesianax as well as the female contestants in the Sebasta of Neapolis were successful in running competitions—including competitions at the highest level—they must have been able to train somewhere. In the ancient world this would have implied that they had access to a gymnasium. This is of course, not without significance. The gymnasium had always been a public space in the city, revolving around the education of boys

<sup>51</sup> IG v.1 588.

and fostering manhood. So, how did women get access to this male space, and what can we say about their place in the agonistic sphere?

We have seen above that female presence in a gymnasium context was certainly attested in Roman Sparta.<sup>52</sup> It is possible that girls were accepted to the gymnasium elsewhere, but the evidence is scanty. A line in Athenaeus (second century CE) suggests that something similar occurred on Chios, where girls were also seen (or imagined) exercising alongside the boys.<sup>53</sup> An inscription from Pergamon praises a magistrate for keeping order among the girls (*eukosmia parthenon*). As *eukosmia* is a value term that is particularly associated with the orderly behaviour of ephebes and *neoi* in the gymnasium, this may be another indication that girls had access to this institution.<sup>54</sup> Another indication of membership may be that women were occasionally singled out in oil distributions by (male and female) gymnasiarchs.<sup>55</sup>

Tsouvala has recently collected some more evidence for the participation of women in the gymnasia of the Roman East<sup>56</sup> She interprets an inscription from imperial Hermione as a list of ca. 130 members of a gymnasium, of whom at least a quarter can be identified as feminine.<sup>57</sup> Two other examples support her case: an inscription from Roman Thespiai, which underwent an agonistic boom in the Roman period, explicitly mentions one Marcia Ismenodora as a member of the upper gymnasium, as well as a contributor to the financing of the inscription.<sup>58</sup> Another female member of a gymnasium is attested on imperial Kos, where one Hetereria Procilla, daughter of Caius, is listed as a member of the *presbytike palaistra*, which Tsouvala interprets as being reserved for young men and women in the final stages of their education.<sup>59</sup>

Tsouvala rightly points out that even though the evidence is scanty, it must present the tip of a wider iceberg of female interests in sport and competition.<sup>60</sup> Women may have entered gymnasia and agonistic contests in larger numbers than has often been assumed, but it remained relatively difficult for them to obtain public recognition as active members, and direct evidence for

52 Bérard 1989 has drawn on visual evidence to argue that women were admitted to Athenian gymnasia as well. It is not clear, however, that the images pertain to Athens or were indeed depicting a realistic situation. Cf. Neils 2012.

53 See above note 22.

54 IvP II 463 (before 37 CE).

55 See below note 67.

56 Tsouvala 2014.

57 IG IV 732 with SEG 65.220.

58 IG VII 1777.

59 Iscr. di Cos ED 228.

60 Tsouvala 2014, 121.

their activities is lacking. However, there were other ways for women to gain prominence in the agonistic world, namely as gymnasiarchs, agonothetes and benefactresses. This will bring us back to the familiar role of women as the representatives and agents of wealthy families.

## 7 Women as Agonistic Officials

The city (honoured) Euthymia Hira, who was gymnasiarch, and the first and only to provide oil by the barrel for an entire year, all day long, on account of her virtue and benevolence towards itself.

I.Erythrai 85

In the imperial period women entered the agonistic world not only as contestants, but also, and crucially, as officials, benefactresses and even as organisers and financiers of athletic institutions and events. This is part of a broad trend of women occupying a place in the public sphere, and may be connected to a wider social and political transformation that culminated under the early emperors.<sup>61</sup> The most frequent category is that of the gymnasiarchs. Most gymnasiarchs were of course male, but in the Roman period we also see women in that position.<sup>62</sup> The number is small, but not negligible: female gymnasiarchs are attested in at least twenty-eight cities.

Gymnasia were public institutions, but in the Roman period the running of the gymnasium was often left to private citizens who were appointed as gymnasiarchs. From the second century BCE, it became increasingly common for gymnasiarchs to pay for the running costs of the gymnasium; most of the evidence concerns the supply of oil, but running the baths, which became a popular feature in the Roman era, was costly as well.<sup>63</sup> This seems to have raised the status of the office: in many Hellenistic cities the gymnasiarchy was referred to as an *arche*, whereas it had ranked as a mere liturgy in classical Athens.<sup>64</sup> The high status of the office is further reflected in the fact that in many cities the known gymnasiarchs belonged to the upper echelons of society. Many of these women were performing the job together with their husbands—but others were evidently acting alone.<sup>65</sup> But even if women were acting together

61 Van Bremen 1996 is fundamental.

62 Van Bremen 1996, 68–73; Biemann 1998, 36–42.

63 Fröhlich 2009.

64 Quass 1993 describes this as liturgical *archai*.

65 van Bremen 1996, 68–73.

with their male relatives, this does not preclude a (strong) personal interest in athletics, nor should we deny women agency in this process.<sup>66</sup> It is normally assumed that female gymnasiarchs were not involved in the daily running of the gymnasium and that the gymnasiarchy of this period was *limited* to a financial contribution. While this may be true in many cases, there is some circularity, as part of the argumentation that gymnasiarchs were no longer actively involved may rest exactly on the fact that there were women gymnasiarchs. Yet, even if the minimum expectation was only a financial contribution, this would have applied equally to male and female gymnasiarchs. We are of course not informed about the motivations of individual benefactors for a particular form of *euergesia*, but we do know that they had a choice that they could exercise—even against the wishes of the general population.<sup>67</sup> No-one would deny that a male gymnasiarch might have wanted to fund a gymnasium out of a strong personal connection with athletics, and we cannot exclude that the same applied to at least some women.<sup>68</sup>

We are not often informed about the duties of these female gymnasiarchs, but there is no reason to assume that they differed significantly from those of their male counterparts. It is worth pointing out that at least some of these female gymnasiarchs made a point of directing their benefactions specifically to other women. Female gymnasiarchs were occasionally praised for including the women of their communities as the recipients of oil, which is another indication that women had access to the gymnasium.<sup>69</sup>

In the same period women also entered the agonistic sphere as the organisers, sponsors and presidents (*agonothetes*) of agonistic festivals.<sup>70</sup> Emily Hemelrijk has looked at the role of women as sponsors of festivals and spectacles in the western provinces, and concluded that female benefactors were much more likely to spend on banquets and distributions (in which they included women more often than did their male counterparts) than on games and spectacles.<sup>71</sup> But the situation in the East was different. Here the evidence for women who sponsored, organised or were otherwise involved in agonistic festivals is far from negligible. It should be noted, however, that many more women may have been active as organisers, as the organisation of festivals and

66 The famous story about Kallipateira of Rhodes (Paus. 6.7.1–6) suggests that female pride in the achievements of male relatives may have been a factor in their enthusiasm.

67 Van Nijf 2020.

68 A special connection may be assumed in: TAM III.1 179 and 180.

69 E.g. I.Stratonikeia 242 and 311. See for the duties of the priestly couples involved: Williamson 2013.

70 Van Bremen 1996, 73–76; Biemann 1998, 42–48.

71 Hemelrijk 2015, 138–147.



contests was often included among the duties of (imperial) priestesses, even if this was not always spelled out in our sources. We must remember that many of the contests were organised as part of the imperial cult, although some cases involved women benefactors funding local commemorative games.<sup>72</sup>

Finally, a fairly prestigious, but not very frequent way in which women could be involved in the agonistic world was as *theoroi*, which is mostly attested at Ephesus.<sup>73</sup> *Theoroi* were generally official spectators, sent out by one city to observe the contests of another, but these women seem to have acted locally.<sup>74</sup> Louis Robert suggested long ago that these women were a special and privileged category of spectators, perhaps as a local counterpart to the priestess of Demeter, who in ancient Olympia had been the only married woman allowed to watch the games.<sup>75</sup> Again their backgrounds were impeccable: all known women *theoroi* belonged to the highest strata of society, that is to the same top-families that also provided the gymnasiarchs and agonothetes. The inscriptions from which we know their names were often set up by (male) family members as well, showing that their public involvement in the agonistic world was seen a source of pride for their families.

What does this tell us about the ability of women to gain public recognition with this function? In the first place, these women entered the agonistic domain, not merely as individuals, but as the representatives of their families. We saw that many of these women were not acting alone. In about half of the cases, female gymnasiarchs carried out the job together with male members of their family: their husbands and sometimes their underage sons, or in some cases other female members of their families. Female agonothetes were also often operating together with their husbands.<sup>76</sup> In some cases there was a clear family tradition of agonistic involvement as gymnasiarchs or agonothetes. This may be connected to the general patterns of civic euergetism, but in some cases we may assume that women were active in these roles out of some special engagement with the agonistic sphere.

What is beyond doubt, however, is that all the women involved belonged to wealthy and important families and that their role was bound up with the creation and maintenance of family reputation. Entering the agonistic domain afforded a public visibility that was appreciated widely by elite families in the Roman East.

72 See below.

73 I.Ephesos 718, 892–897, 1264; Samitz 2018, no. 1 (all from Ephesos); IG v.1 587 refers to a *theoros* at the Spartan Hyakinthia.

74 Rutherford 2013.

75 Robert 1974.

76 Biemann 1998 43–44.

Finally, it is striking that nearly all women involved had in one way or other a strong connection with the imperial cult, or at least with the representation of the imperial system. Some were involved in the imperial cult mostly as imperial priestesses, others served at the occasion of a particular festival in honour of the emperors.<sup>77</sup> In one exceptional case we even find a female member of the imperial family acting as a perennial gymnasiarch. The fingerprints of the emperors, and of imperial women, are found all over, and this ties in with our observations above that many of the festivals with footraces for girls were also connected with the imperial cult—and sometimes specifically dedicated to female members of the imperial house. It would appear, then, that female athletics was specifically connected to the representation of the imperial dynasty and specifically with its female members. The female members of the imperial family could be associated with agonistic festivals as benefactors of dedicatees, but they were apparently not allowed to gain personal agonistic success, as this may have clashed with the traditional Roman view of appropriate behaviour for women that Augustus sought to restore. Their female Greek subjects were not limited in a similar way. Greek agonistic tradition offered women a way to enter the public domain, without fully escaping the domestic sphere.

## 8 Conclusion

The role of women in ancient sport was perhaps limited, but its importance should not be underestimated. Women's sport was not exceptional, but integrated in the social and political structures of the Greek polis, and peaked in the early imperial period. For most of the time, however, it remained hidden. The perceived nature of athletics as a quintessentially male pursuit prevented its publication. When women made a public appearance in the agonistic sphere, their athletic role intersected with issues like status and wealth.

In several Greek cities young women had always engaged in athletics, especially in running contests as part of coming-of-age rituals or of a broader educational system. These activities were locally based, but they must have been structural in many Greek cities. The numbers involved in each case may have been small, and only a handful of girls from elite families were able to publicise their athletic achievements. Even in Sparta, where female sport was integrated in a wider educational structure, the beneficiaries appear to have been full Spartiate girls.

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<sup>77</sup> Biemann 1998, 40–42 and 46–48.

From the fourth century BCE on, some women were able to take on a public role in agonistic events at a Panhellenic scale, especially through horse racing. Although the agency of the women is not in question, we see that women engaged in sport only as members of royal dynasties and wealthy families, whose male members apparently considered public commemoration of their achievements an advantage. Female victory was a crucial element in the self-presentation of these families.

In the early Roman period, there was a strong increase in the number of possibilities for women to enter the agonistic domain. The visibility of women in sport was now part of a wider social and political transformation that was connected to the rise of imperial power. Footraces for girls are attested at some Panhellenic events, often in connection with the imperial cult. The field seems to have been socially selective, although female participation at the highest level must have had a wider base—in local contests and gymnasia. There is indeed some evidence for active female participation in imperial gymnasia, although its precise nature remains difficult to establish.

In this period, women also started to enter the agonistic sphere as officials, organisers and financiers of athletic events. These women belonged to the wealthiest and best-connected families of their home town, and like their Hellenistic ancestors they were part of the collective self-presentation of these families and their role was highly valued. Significantly, many of these women were also connected to the representation of imperial power, often as priestesses in the imperial cult. In this way they played an important role in connecting local and imperial structures of power. These developments may also have formed the backdrop of Propertius' comments on contemporary athletics in Sparta. The conspicuous entry of women into the male world of Greek athletics as spectators, financiers, organisers and as participants was thus linked with the onset of imperial rule.

So, far from being marginal, women's sport was widely spread and not without importance. Much of it may have been carried out in the background—without attracting the attention of male writers and observers: but when they did, it becomes clear that their role could be significant. Rather than being a marginal group, or exceptions to the rule, women made an important contribution to athletic life, and in this capacity they must have formed a structural element of the imperial Greek city.<sup>78</sup>

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## Female victors in chronological order

No.	Person and origin	Prosopographies <sup>79</sup>	Festival	Discipline
1	Nikagora	CC ID 9583	Olympia in Elis?	running: <i>dromon ton parthenon</i>
2	Kyniska daughter of Archidamos II from Sparta	CC ID 3451 = Moretti (1957), no. 373, 381	Olympia in Elis (2×)	equestrian: <i>harma</i> (2×)
3	Euryleonis from Sparta	CC ID 3647 = Moretti (1957), no. 418; Mannheim, no. 1393	Olympia in Elis	equestrian: <i>synoris</i>
4	Berenike I daughter of Magas from Eordaia (Macedonia)	CC ID 3690 = Canali de Rossi (2013), p. 102, no. 3; Mannheim, no. 248	Olympia in Elis	equestrian: <i>harma teleion</i>
5	Phanion daughter of Onesandros from Chios			unknown
6	Arsinoe II Philadelphos from Alexandria (Egypt)	CC ID 3692 = Canali de Rossi (2013), p. 103, no. 5; Mannheim, no. 192	Olympia in Elis	equestrian (3×): <i>harma polikon, synoris teleia, harma teleion</i>
7	Berenike (Syra?) from Alexandria (Egypt)	CC ID 3728 = Canali de Rossi (2013), p. 103, no. 6; Mannheim, no. 250	Nemea in Argos; Isthmia in Corinth; Olympia in Elis	equestrian: <i>tethrip-pon teleion?</i>
8	Belistiche from Macedonia	CC ID 1147 = Moretti (1957), no. 549, 552; Mannheim, no. 247	Olympia in Elis	equestrian: <i>tethrip-pon polikon</i> and <i>synoris</i>

79 CC references are to the Connected Contests database, maintained at the University of Groningen ([www.connectedcontests.org](http://www.connectedcontests.org)); Mannheim references are to a database of Hellenistic athletes, maintained by a team at the University of Mannheim: <http://athletes.geschichte.uni-mannheim.de>.

Date	Comments and references
unknown	<p>An inscription for Nikagora, set up by her brother Nikophilos is mentioned in a gloss in a manuscript of Pausanias by Manuel Souliardos. The attribution to Olympia is uncertain.</p> <p>Souliardos on Paus. 5.16.2, cf. BE (1907) p. 64</p>
early 4th c. BCE; 97 and 96th Olympiad?	<p>Kyniska was the sister of Agis II and Agesilaos II (king of Sparta from ca. 398–360 BC). Pausanias saw two victory monuments of Kyniska (5.12.5, 6.1.6). One consisted of bronze horses, the other of a chariot, horses, a charioteer and a statue of Kyniska herself.</p> <p>Paus. 3.8.1; 6.1.6; IV O 634; IV O 160 = IG VI, 1564a = IAG 17</p>
ca. 375–350 BCE; 103rd Olympiad?	<p>Pausanias mentions a statue set up in Sparta for Euryleonis who won a victory at Olympia with a two-horse chariot in the 4th c. BCE. The statue may have been erected later.</p> <p>Paus. 3.17.6</p>
Some date between 292–280 BCE	<p>Posidippus Epigr. 87 = P. Mil. Vogl. VIII 309, col. XIII, ll. 31–34; Posidippus Epigr. 78 = P. Mil. Vogl. VIII 309, col. XII, ll. 20–33; Posidippus Epigr. 88 = P. Mil. Vogl. VIII 309, col. XI l. 35–XIV l. 1</p>
3rd c. BCE	<p>Dedication to Leto by Aristodemos of a statue of Phanion, daughter of Onesandros, who had won unknown contest.</p> <p>SEG 35.933</p>
272 BCE	<p>Daughter of Ptolemaios I.</p> <p>Posidippus Epigr. 78 = P. Mil. Vogl. VIII 309, col. XII, ll. 20–33</p>
mid-3rd c. BC	<p>Berenike Syra, the daughter of Ptolemaios II Philadelphos, the sister of Ptolemaios III, wife of Antiochos II (285–246 BCE) was victorious in the <i>harma teleion</i> at Olympia in 260 or 256 BCE; in all horse races at Nemea between 260–240 and in a horse race at the Isthmia in 260–240. Perhaps she should be identified with Berenike II the wife of Ptolemaios III Euergetes (266–221 BCE). (Canali de Rossi, p. 103, note 22).</p> <p>Posidippus Epigr. 78 = P. Mil. Vogl. VIII 309, col. XII, ll. 20–33; Posidippus Epigr. 79 = P. Mil. Vogl. VIII 309, col. XII, ll. 34–49; Posidippus Epigr. 82 = P. Mil. Vogl. VIII 309, col. XIII, ll. 9–14</p>
268 BC 128th Olympiad (P.Oxy 2082); 264 BC 129th Olympiad (Pausanias)	<p>Belistiche won at Olympia in <i>harma polikon</i> in 268 BC and <i>synoris polike</i> in 264 BC. She was a courtesan of Ptolemaios II Philadelphos.</p> <p>P.Oxy 2082; Paus. 5.8.11; Euseb. Chron. ll. 264–265 (ed. Christesen); Ath. 13.596e; Plu. Amat. 9</p>



Female victors in chronological order (*cont.*)

No.	Person and origin	Prosopographies	Festival	Discipline
9	Berenike II daughter of Magas from Alexandria (Egypt)	CC ID 4193 = Mannheim, no. 249; Kostouros (2008), no. 35	Nemeia in Argos	equestrian: <i>tethrip-pon</i>
10	..a.gora daughter of Lysistratos from Pedieis (Rhodes)	CC ID 9561 = Mannheim, no. 1566	Haleia in Rhodes	equestrian: <i>synoris polike</i>
11	Hermione daughter of Polykrates from Argos	CC ID 9564 = Mannheim, no. 514; ProsPtol 17209	Panathenaia in Athens	equestrian: <i>keles teleion</i> and <i>keles polikon</i>
12	Eukrateia daughter of Polykrates from Argos	CC ID 9563 = ProsPtol 17210; Mannheim, no. 435	Panathenaia in Athens	equestrian: <i>synoris teleia</i>
13	Zeuxo daughter of Polykrates from Argos	CC ID 9562 = Mannheim, no. 1074; ProsPtol 17212	Panathenaia in Athens	equestrian: <i>harma polikon</i>
14	Zeuxo daughter of Ariston from Kyrene	CC ID 9565 = Mannheim, no. 1073; ProsPtol 17211	Panathenaia in Athens	equestrian: <i>harma polikon</i>
15	Aristokleia daughter of Megalokles from Larissa (Thessaly)	CC ID 7956 = Mannheim, no. 160	Eleutheria in Larisa (Thessaly)	equestrian: <i>synoris polike</i>
16	[ <i>synoris polike</i> victress] daughter of Mnasiadas from Argos		Panathenaia in Athens	equestrian: <i>synoris polike</i>
17	[panathenaia victress] from Argos		Panathenaia in Athens	equestrian: <i>synoris teleia</i>
18	[ <i>keles teleios</i> victress] from Alexandria (Egypt)	CC ID 9567 = Mannheim, no. 1185	Panathenaia in Athens	equestrian: <i>keles</i>
19	Olympio daughter of Agetor from Sparta	CC ID 9571 = Mannheim, no. 785	Panathenaia in Athens	equestrian: <i>harma teleion</i>
20	Kleainete daughter of Karon from Liguria (Italy)	CC ID 9570 = Mannheim, no. 591	Panathenaia in Athens	equestrian: <i>synoris polike</i>
21	Eirene daughter of Ptolemaios from Alexandria (Egypt)	CC ID 9569 = ProsPtol 1463; Mannheim, no. 387	Panathenaia in Athens	equestrian: <i>harma polikon</i>

Date	Comments and references
mid-3rd c. BCE	Call. Fr. 383 Pfeiffer + SH 254.1–10
ca. 200 BCE	..a.gora Lysistratou Pediada was honoured by several cities for a victory in the Haleia of Rhodes in <i>synoris polike</i> . Pedieis was a deme of Lindos.
202–198 BCE	Tit. Cam. 282, 23a = MDAI(A) 25 (1900), p. 107, no. 106 Hermione daughter of Polykrates from Argos, won with <i>keles teleion</i> in the Panathenaia of 202 and with [keles polikon] in Panathenaia of 178–177. See also the victories by her sister Eukrateia: no. 12, Zeuxo: no. 13 and her mother Zeuxo 14.
202–198 BCE	IG II(2), 2313 col. 2 lines 14–15; IG II(2), 2314 col. 2 lines 91a–92, 93a–94 See also the victories by her sisters Hermione no. 11, and Zeuxo no. 13 and her mother Zeuxo no. 14.
202–198 BCE 182–181 BCE	IG II(2), 2313 col. 11, lines 12–13 She was twice victorious at the Panathenaia. See also the victories by her sisters: Hermione no. 11, Eukrateia no. 11 and her mother Zeuxo no. 14.
202–198 BCE	IG II(2), 2313 col. 2 lines 8–9; IG II(2), 2314, col. 1 ll. 49–50 See also the victories by her daughters Hermione no. 11, Eukrateia no. 12 and Zeuxo no. 13.
Between 196– 150 BCE	IG II(2), 2313 col. 11 lines 59–60 NN daughter of Mnasiadas of Argos ([... Mnasi]ada Argeia).
182–181 BCE	IG IX.2, 526 l. 18–19 = SEG 40. 1640 = Graninger (2011), 161–165, no. 2. IG II(2), 2314, col. 1, ll. 47–48
182–181 BCE	NN from Argos [... Argeia ap' Achaia].
182–181 BCE	IG II(2), 2314, col. 1, ll. 53–54 --- adou Alexandritis (NN daughter of ---ades, from Alexandria; cf. Tracy—Habicht (1991); SEG 41, 114).
170–169 BCE	IG II(2), 2314 col. 1, ll. 51–52 SEG 41.115 colII, line 34
170–169 BCE	SEG 41.115 col. I lines 30–31
170–169 BCE	SEG 41.115 col. I, line 33

Female victors in chronological order (*cont.*)

No.	Person and origin	Prosopographies	Festival	Discipline
22	Archagathe daughter of Polykleitos from Antiochia ad Pyramum (Mallus) (Cilicia)	CC ID 9568 = Mannheim, no. 125	Panathenaia in Athens	equestrian: <i>synoris teleia</i>
23	Eugeneia daughter of Zenon from Tarsos (Antiochia ad Kydnon) (Cilicia)	CC ID 9572 = Mannheim, no. 429	Panathenaia in Athens	equestrian: <i>harma polikon</i>
24	Menophila daughter of Nestor, origin unknown	CC ID 9575 = Mannheim, no. 698	Panathenaia in Athens	equestrian: <i>synoris polike</i>
25	Kleopatra II daughter of Ptolemaios V Epiphanes from Alexandria (Egypt)	CC ID 9574 = Mannheim, no. 604	Panathenaia in Athens	equestrian: <i>harma teleion</i>
26	Agathokleia daughter of Noumenios from Alexandria? (Egypt)	CC ID 9573 = Mannheim, no. 4	Panathenaia in Athens	equestrian: <i>harma polikon</i>
27	Damodika daughter of Krates from Kyme (Aiolis)	CC ID 9576 = Mannheim, no. 1559	Unknown	equestrian: <i>harma</i>
28	Theodota daughter of Antiphanes from Elis	CC ID 985 = Moretti (1957), no. 675; Mannheim, no. 247	Olympia in Elis	chariot: <i>harma polikon</i>
29	Timareta daughter of Philistos from Elis (Elis)	CC ID 983 = Moretti (1957), no. 673; Mannheim, no. 1040	Olympia in Elis	chariot: <i>synoris teleia</i>
30	Eukleia daughter of Me--- from Chios?	CC ID 9577 = Mannheim, no. 431	Unknown on Chios	equestrian: <i>harma polikos</i>
31	Mnasimache daughter of Phoxinos from Krannon (Thessaly)	CC ID 9582 = Mannheim, no. 718	Amphiareia Rhomaia in Oropos	equestrian: <i>harma polikon</i>
32	Lysis daughter of Hermonax from Magnesia on the Maeander (Caria)	CC ID 9581 = Mannheim, no. 655	Amphiareia in Oropos	equestrian: <i>keles polikon</i>
33	Peitho daughter of Makedon from Ephesos / Apollonia (Ionia)	CC ID 9579 = Mannheim, no. 822	Rhomaia in Xanthos (Lydia)	equestrian: <i>synoris polike</i>
34	Habris daughter of Kaikos from Kyme (Aeolis)	CC ID 9395 = Mannheim, no. 473	Amphiaraia kai Rhomaia in Oropos (Boiotia)	chariot: <i>synoris teleia</i>
35	[---]ione daughter of Polyxenos from Larissa (Thessaly)	CC ID 7980 = Mannheim, no. 1346	Eleutheria in Larissa (Thessaly)	equestrian: <i>harma teleion</i>

Date	Comments and references
170–169 BCE	SEG 41.115 col. I line 32
166–165 BCE	SEG 41.115 col. II, lines 28–29
162–161 BCE	SEG 41.115 col. III, lines 11–12
162–161 BCE	Tracy—Habicht (1991) IIII, lines 21–22 = SEG 41.115 col. III lines 21–22
162–161 BCE	SEG 41.115 col. 3 ll. 17–18
1st c. BCE?	Epitaph with epigram for Damodika who “left behind fame on account of a victory with the chariot”. Kyme was famous for horse racing.  I.Kyme 46 = SGO 05/03/03
84 BCE; 174th Olympiad	On a family monument.  IvO 203
ca. 100–75 BCE; 174th Olympiad?	On a family monument.  IvO 201
88 BCE?	Eukleia daughter of Me ... won in a local chariot race on Chios.  McCabe Chios 58 = AD (1927), 28, n. 12 cf. Robert OMS I no. 34, 518–524
ca. 80–50 BCE?	She may be identified with a priestess of Artemis, which would require downdating this inscription (Graninger 2011, 83; cf SEG 42, 507 with Habicht ZPE 101 [1994], 225–226).  I.Oropos 529
ca. 80–50 BCE	I.Oropos 527, l. 13–14
80–60 BCE	Peitho daughter of Makedon Ephesia had herself announced as from Apollonia in Lycia.  SEG 28.1246, l. 42–44
ca. 80–50 BCE	I.Oropos 525 = IG 417+415 = Arch Eph (1923), 48, 126
First half of the 1st c. BCE	[Ep]ione?  SEG 54.560 = Graninger (2011), nr. 4

Female victors in chronological order (*cont.*)

No.	Person and origin	Prosopographies	Festival	Discipline
36	[female athlete] from Neapolis? (Italy)	CC ID 966 = Ugolini (2015), no. 7	Italika Rhomaia Sebasta in Neapolis (Italy)	running: <i>stadion thygateras bouleuton</i>
37	Kasia daughter of Marcus Vettulenus Laetus from Elis (Elis)	CC ID 780 = Moretti (1957), no. 866	Olympia in Elis	chariot: <i>tethrippon polikon</i>
38	Dionysia daughter of Hermesianax from Kaisareia Tralleis (Caria)	CC ID 622 = Sève (1993), no. 13; Moretti (1953), no. 63	Unknown contest (Nemea?) and Asklepiaia in Epidaurus	running: <i>stadion</i>
39	Hedea daughter of Hermesianax from Kaisareia Tralleis (Caria)	CC ID 299 = Kostouros (2008), no. 72; LGPN v5b-7084; Farrington (2012), no. 1.142; Moretti (1953), no. 63	Unknown contest in Sikyon; Nemeia in Argos; Isthmia in Corinth	running: <i>stadion?</i> ; chariot: <i>enoplion harmati</i>
40	Tryphosa daughter of Hermesianax from Kaisareia Tralleis (Caria)	CC ID 297 = Moretti (1953), no. 63; Weir (2004), p. 129; Farrington (2012), no. 1.141; LGPN v5b-12953	Pythia in Delphi; Isthmia in Corinth	running: <i>stadion</i>
41	(... E ...) [female runner] from Neapolis	CC ID 9591	Italika Rhomaia Sebasta in Neapolis	running: <i>parthenoi politikai</i>
42	Kasta (Casta) from Neapolis?	CC ID 9590	Italika Rhomaia Sebasta in Neapolis	running: <i>parthenoi sygkletikai</i>
43	Iousta (Justa) from Neapolis	CC ID 9589	Italika Rhomaia Sebasta in Neapolis	running: <i>stadion</i> for <i>bouleuton thygateres</i>
44	Flavia Thalassa from Ephesos	CC ID 9588	Italika Rhomaia Sebasta in Neapolis	running: <i>stadion parthenon</i>
45	Aemilia Rekteina from Neapolis?	CC ID 9587	Italika Rhomaia Sebasta in Neapolis	running: <i>dialulos</i> for <i>bouleuton thygateres</i>
46	Panthalis daughter of Agis? from Sparta (Lakonia)	CC ID 970 = Ugolini (2015), 10	Livia in Sparta	running: <i>dialulos</i>
47	Seia Spes daughter of Seius Liberalis from Neapolis (Italy)	CC ID 964 = Ugolini (2015), no. 5	Italika Rhomaia Sebasta in Neapolis (Italy)	running: <i>stadion thygateras bouleuton</i>

Date	Comments and references
After 27 BCE	Fragmented text, imperial age.
21 CE = 200th Olympiad	I.Napoli 66 Moretti 1957, no. 866 identifies her as Kasia M[nasithea] He suggests that Kasia's victory took place at the 233rd Olympiad (= 153 CE). A new fragment allowed changing both the date and the name.
ca. 45 CE	I.Olympia Suppl. 31 = IvO 233 = SEG 40.391 = SEG 44.389 = SEG 48.550 = SEG 53.433 Dionysia daughter of Hermesianax from Tralleis won an unidentified (running?) competition (possibly Nemeia) and the stadion at the Asklepieia at Epidauros. She was one of three sisters who all won various victories in running and other contests.
ca. 43 CE ca. 45 CE	F.Delphes III.1, 534 = IAG 63 Hedea daughter of Hermesianax from Tralleis won the <i>enoplion harma</i> at the Isthmia, the <i>stadion</i> at Nemea and in Sikyon, and the <i>paidas kitrarodous</i> in the Sebasteia at Athens. She won as " <i>prote parthenon, prote ap'aionos</i> ". She was one of three sisters who all won various victories in running and other contests.
ca. 45 CE	F.Delphes III.1, 534 = IAG 63 Tryphosa Daughter of Hermesianax from Kaisareia Tralleis won the stadion at Pythia, and the Isthmia immediately after one another; she won " <i>prote parthenon</i> ". She was one of three sisters who all won various victories in running and other contests.
82 CE	F.Delphes III.1, 534 = IAG 63 Miranda (2017a) 257, col. I, l. 35–36
82 CE	Miranda (2017a) 257, col. I, l. 30
82 CE	Miranda (2017) 257, col. I, l. 27
82 CE	Miranda (2017a) 258, col. I, l. 25
82 CE	Miranda (2017b) 94–95.
2nd c. CE	The name is uncertain. Panthalis daughter of Agis (?) may be identified with Panthalis Agidos in IG 5.1, 588.
154 CE	SEG 11.830 = Meritt Hesperia Suppl. 8 (1949), 215 SEG 14.602

Female victors in chronological order (*cont.*)

No.	Person and origin	Prosopographies	Festival	Discipline
48	[running victress] from Neapolis?	Ugolini (2015), no. 7	Italika Rhomaia Sebasta in Neapolis	Running: For <i>bouleuton</i> (?) <i>thygateras</i>
49	[chariot victress]?, origin unknown	CC ID 9592	Italika Rhomaia Sebasta in Neapolis (Italy)	equestrian: <i>harma teleion</i> ?

Date	Comments and references
Imperial period	Uncertain. NN appears in a list of victors in a running race for ... $\theta\upsilon\gamma\alpha\tau\acute{\epsilon}\rho\alpha\varsigma$ of the Italika Rhomaia Sebasta.
86 CE	<p data-bbox="239 377 486 398">I.Napoli I 66 = IG XIV, 755g</p> <p data-bbox="239 407 1103 486">Highly uncertain. <math>\theta\upsilon\gamma(\alpha\tau\acute{\epsilon}\rho\alpha??)</math> appears at the end of a list of victors in the chariot race of the Italika Rhomaia Sebasta of 86. Miranda (2014), 1185 thinks that this refers to a different contest, such as a composition in prose of poetry in honour of a daughter of an emperor.</p> <p data-bbox="239 522 471 543">Miranda (2018), 275. no. 3</p>