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Hellenistic Gymnasia in the Heart of Athens: Change and Continuity

Summary

While the old gymnasia (Academy, Lyceum, Kynosarges) were situated outside the walls of Athens, two new gymnasia were built in the city's heart soon after 229 BC: the Diogeneion and the Ptolemaion. This paper discusses the history, architecture and function of these two gymnasia, reviewing both literary and epigraphic evidence and the archaeological remains in the area of their probable location. These complexes had a remarkable urbanistic impact, introducing a touch of modernity into the chaotic and old-fashioned centre of the town. While their exact location is still debated, they established a firm topographical and ideological connection with the older city-centre ('Old Agora') and served the headquarters of ephebic training and education throughout the Hellenistic and Roman periods.

Keywords: Athens; gymnasia; Ptolemaion; Diogeneion, *ephebeia*; Old Agora; Theseus

Während die alten Gymnasia (Akademie, Lykaion, Kynosarges) außerhalb der Stadtmauern Athens lagen, wurden kurz nach 229 v. Chr. zwei neue Gymnasia im Zentrum der Stadt errichtet: das Diogeneion und das Ptolemaion. In diesem Beitrag werden die Geschichte, Architektur und Funktion dieser bei-

den Gymnasia untersucht, auf Basis einer systematischen Analyse aller relevanten literarischen, epigraphischen und archäologischen Quellen. Die Komplexe waren wichtig für das Stadtbild, weil sie dem chaotischen, altmodischen Zentrum einen Hauch von Modernität verliehen. Ihre exakte Lage bleibt zwar umstritten, aber sie waren topographisch und ideologisch fest mit dem alten Stadtzentrum verbunden und dienten als Zentren für die Ausbildung der Epheben in der gesamten hellenistischen und römischen Zeit.

Keywords: Athen; Gymnasia; Ptolemaion; Diogeneion; Ephebie; Alte Agora; Theseus

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The aim of this paper is to focus on ancient Athens, namely on one or possibly two gymnasia belonging to the Hellenistic period: the Diogeneion and the Ptolemaion. Built most likely in the third century BC, they survived until the second half of the third century AD. At the present state of research, it is not possible to obtain a concrete view of their physical appearance because – at least in this writer’s opinion – they have not yet been found nor securely identified. Nonetheless, the available documentary sources testify the relevance they had in the life of the polis. Thus the history of both complexes can serve as a useful case-study to explore the connections between the buildings, the polis identity and the shaping of the urban spaces through time.

Old evidence can now be re-examined taking into account the enhanced knowledge of the archaeology of the city. Recent explorations by the Ephorate of Antiquities of Athens in the area north of the Acropolis, where the gymnasia are likely to have been, have provided new data; a review of the archaeological evidence, deriving both from systematic excavations in the key monumental sites and from the rescue-activities carried out in the modern city centre, can contribute when taking a fresh look at the urban history and to focus on some specific points related to the gymnasia under examination (Pl. 1).¹

1 Gymnasia in the urban history of Athens: an outline

As is well known, the gymnasium (as an institution as well as a facility) played a key role in defining the identity of the polis. The study of gymnasia is therefore essential for understanding urban development and exploring the dynamics of change and continuity in the history of a city, both as a space and as a society which produce the city’s monumental image.

Throughout the centuries, Athens had many gymnasia. Three dated to the Archaic age: the Academy, the Lyceum, and the Kynosarges, all located outside the city

walls in the *proasteion* (the liminal ‘belt’ of the *asty*), respectively to the north-west, to the east and to the south-east.² These were the traditional and most renowned gymnasia of the polis, each provided with a distinct ‘personality’ and with local cults and legends. They were deeply-rooted in the religious, military and civic life and served as centres for educating young citizens.

The Academy, sacred to the hero Hekademos, housed the olive-trees of Athena; it was associated then with the poliadic goddess and with other gods, such as Hephaistos. At some major civic festivals magnificent torch-races began there and continued along the wide processional route that linked the Academy with the Kerameikos and the Acropolis. Close to the Kolonos Hippios and frequented by the Athenian cavalry, the Academy was the most ‘aristocratic’ among the Athenian gymnasia, embodying and bolstering the values of the *archaia paideusis* (the traditional education), focused upon athletic training and music.³ Coherently it was the ideological term of the *Demosion Sema*, the state cemetery for the war dead, who were rated as heroes and ideal citizens.

The Lyceum originated from a precinct sacred to Apollo Lykeios, while the Kynosarges adjoined a sanctuary of Herakles. The former gymnasium was used by horsemen and hoplites for exercise and, like the Academy, was frequented by ephebes, as attested in Hellenistic inscriptions.⁴ The latter was associated with *nothoi* (those born from a foreign mother), but it was soon equated to the other main gymnasium.

Literary tradition connects distinguished Athenians with the foundation, the architectural refurbishment or simply the presence in one or the other gymnasium: the Peisistratids and Kimon with the Academy, Peisistratos, Pericles, and Lycurgus with the Lyceum, and Themistocles with the Kynosarges. Since the Archaic age, these gymnasia probably also served as aggregation points for political groups. From large open spaces with running tracks, places for wrestling, a water supply and

1 For recent research activities by the Ephorate in the area to the north of the Acropolis: Tsoniotis 2007 [2014]; D. Sourlas 2007 [2014]; Tsoniotis 2006 [2014]; Tsoniotis 2012; D. Sourlas 2013; Tsoniotis 2013; Tsoniotis 2014; D. Sourlas 2014. For an overview of the archaeological data concerning the areas to the east and the north of the Acropolis, see Longo 2011; DiCesare 2014, with references to the excavations reports.

2 Academy: Delorme 1960, 36–42; Kyle 1987, 71–77; Billot 1989; Caruso 2013; Trombetti 2013, 6–29; Marchiandi 2014a; Di Cesare 2015b, 233–

246. Lyceum: Delorme 1960, 42–45, 54–58; Kyle 1987, 77–84; Trombetti 2013, 30–39; Marchiandi 2014b. Kynosarges: Delorme 1960, 58–59; Kyle 1987, 84–92; Billot 1994; Privitera 2011a; Privitera 2011b; Trombetti 2013, 39–52. – For an up-to-date overview of the Athenian gymnasia: De Domenico 2018.

3 *Ar. Nub.* vv. 961–1023.

4 Lynch 1972, 157, with a list of second century BC inscriptions.

groves, they developed into more elaborate facilities during the Archaic and Classical ages. Furthermore, from the fourth century BC they became the seats of concurrent philosophical schools.

In the Hellenistic age, two more gymnasia were added to the urban landscape and will be discussed in this paper: the Diogeneion and the Ptolemaion. Unlike the old gymnasia of the polis, they were given a central position in the town, thus following a trend in Greek city planning of the fourth and third centuries BC.⁵ As will be examined below, this location was nonetheless of specific significance.

At least in the second century AD there were other gymnasia in Athens which Pausanias refers to: one, known as “of Hermes”, was posited along the road leading from the Dipylon Gate to the Agora; another, of uncertain position, was named after the emperor Hadrian.⁶

In addition to these examples, there are epigraphic testimonia of more unidentified gymnasia. A fragmentary inscription of 305/304 BC, found in the Piraeus, which contains a decree in praise of the officials of the *ephebeia* and the *epheboi*, was to be published ἐν τῷ γυμνασίῳ τῶν ἐφηβῶν.⁷

A boundary stone of a gymnasium (ἄρο[ς] γυμν[αίου]), dating to the third century BC, was found near the Odeion of Herodes Atticus, not far from the place where, according to recent studies, the Lycurgan Panathenaic Stadium would have been located.⁸ A second stone, with a similar text (ἄρος γυμνασίου) but of unspecified date, was found by K. Rhomaios at the south of the Acropolis, re-employed in a wall found between what are currently Veikou and Drakou Streets.⁹ The stones have been transplanted from one or two Athenian gymnasia possibly placed within the city, such as the Ptolemaion or the Diogeneion.

In addition, from the Classical period onwards, Athens was well equipped with several *palaistrai*, featuring a developed architectural design.¹⁰ They were often named after private citizens, but it is not clear if they were state owned or privately owned.¹¹

2 Athens in the third century BC

Before trying to place the Ptolemaion and the Diogeneion within the monumental palimpsest of the city, a glance at the archaeological plan of Athens, namely of the northern quarters, is required. Leaving out of consideration the Roman Market, the so-called Hadrian’s Library and some adjoining buildings of Hellenistic/Roman date, it is not difficult to obtain a view of what the Late Classical and Hellenistic city looked like. The many remnants of walls, floors and streets unearthed under the modern town give the idea of a maze of houses and streets, many of them related to the urban Gates. A large part of Athens to the north and east of the Acropolis was, in fact, residential: houses were attached to small sanctuaries, streets and other buildings, while outside the walls they were interspersed amongst cemeteries and workshops.¹² Athens was a very old city and it differed radically from other Hellenistic centres which adopted different, more up-to-date, urbanistic principles. This was the *forma Urbis Athenarum* perceived by Heraclides Criticus (or Creticus), the third century BC author of a treatise *On the Greek Cities*: the city was dry and looked ugly with small and uncomfortable houses; streets were badly arranged because of their antiquity. A visitor would hardly believe that he had reached the famous Athens. But soon the writer re-qualifies the city, thanks to the grandeur of its monuments: the Parthenon, the theatre, the unfinished Olympieion, and its three charming gymnasia – γυμνάσια τρία, Ἀκαδημία, Λύκειον, Κυνόσαργες – all surrounded by trees and lawns.¹³

In Heraclides’ treatise there is no mention, however, of the one or two Hellenistic gymnasia of Ptolemy and of Diogenes, possibly because both were built some years later, and after the writer’s visit, or because they were too recent to deserve any mention. It may be argued that the

5 Von Hesberg 1995, 14–15; this was, however, not the rule, see the remarks of von den Hoff 2009, 252–253.

6 Gymnasium of Hermes: Paus. I.2.5. Gymnasium of Hadrian: I.18.9; S. Privitera in Greco, Longo, et al. 2011, 504–505.

7 IG II² 478, 30.

8 M. Levensohn and E. Levensohn 1947, 65 no. 2. The location of the Panathenaic Stadium: Kalligas 2009; *contra*, Korres 2015, 133, 135 n. 23.

9 Threpsiadis 1950, 65 n. 2. Sometimes the two stones are considered the same; Ma 2008, 14 n. 26.

10 As the one described in Pl. *Lys.* 203a–207a.

11 Ps.–Xen., *Ath. Pol.* 2.10, with Kyle 1987, 66–69, 144; Antipho, Fr. 66 Blass–Thalheim (*palaistra* of Silyrtios); Pl. *Chrm.* 153a (p. of Taureas); Ps.–Plut., *X orat.* 837e (p. of Hippokrates); Lys. Fr. 75 Thalheim (anonymous p.); see Di Nicuolo 2014.

12 Monaco 2013b; Monaco 2013a; Di Cesare 2014c, 721–725.

13 Heraclides Fr. 1 Pfister = I Arenz. As for the date, Arenz 2006 favours 271–267 BC, while Chaniotis 2008, 109 n. 24, argues for 229–200 BC.

newly built Hellenistic facilities had a great impact on the traditional urban landscape, introducing a touch of ‘modernity’ into the chaotic and antiquated center of the town. Public building activity had shaped, in the past, the physical image as well as the civic awareness of the Athenians; but, after the big *erga* of Pericles and Lycurgus, no great buildings were added to the *asty*. Therefore, the two third century BC gymnasia opened a new building season, which was pursued in the following decades and century, by the gift of the Lakydeion garden to the Academy by Attalos I, the reshaping of the Agora between the second and third quarter of the second century BC (Middle Stoa, East Building, South Stoa II, Attalos Stoa, Metroon), the construction of the Stoa of Eumenes on the south slopes of the Acropolis (197–159 BC), of the portico(es) (around 160 BC) flanking the large street at the east of the Tower of the Winds, the new building stage of the Olympieion by Antiochus IV (175–163 BC) and the Ptolemaic foundation of the Serapeion.¹⁴

2.1 The Diogeneion

The Diogeneion is linked with a remarkable event in the Hellenistic history of Athens: the liberation from the last Macedonian garrison in 229 BC. In that year, the Athenians convinced the commander Diogenes, after paying him a large sum, to leave the Piraeus and Athens with his troops.¹⁵ Diogenes received Athenian citizenship, the front seat (*proedria*) in the theater and probably public maintenance (*sitesis*) in the Prytaneion; he took the title of Euergetes and the new annual festival of the Diogeneia was instituted, centred in the Diogeneion.¹⁶

It is not clear who funded the construction – if it was the person honored by the Athenians or the Athenians themselves as a token of gratitude.¹⁷

What was the Diogeneion and what did it look like? The earliest epigraphic reference to it dates back to 107/106 BC. The Diogeneion was already an old structure at the time, since the ephobic decree records the repairs to its walled precinct (*peribolos*), which had fallen down. These repairs were made by the *kosmetes* Eudoxos and paid for at his own expense.¹⁸ It contained (or at least was) a *temenos*, as inscriptions record that the *epheboi* and the *kosmetes* were attending sacrifices at the Diogeneia ἐν τῷ τεμένει.¹⁹ This *temenos*, therefore, was consecrated to the cult of the Euergetes²⁰ and hence it contained at least one altar.

As is clear from the epigraphic evidence, from the Hellenistic age until the second half of the third century AD, the Diogeneion was one of the main centres of ephobic activity;²¹ this is the reason why the *kosmetes* paid for its partial rebuilding. A reference in Plutarch helps to better understand the functions of the place.²² The author was well acquainted with the Diogeneion: he had probably been *ephebos* in Athens, studying under Ammonius, a Platonic philosopher and strategos.²³ The dramatic date of the *Quaestio convivialis* under consideration is AD 70 and the relevant passage reads: “While in charge as hoplite general at Athens, Ammonius heard a demonstration (*apodeixis*) given in the Diogeneion by the *epheboi* who were studying literature, geometry, rhetoric and music; then he invited the successful teachers to dinner.”²⁴

Some other information is added by the officials in

14 Lakydeion: Schaaf 1992, 112–119; Agora: Camp 2010, 20–21; Longo 2014, 883–885; Stoa of Eumenes: Korres 2015, 129–146; Portico(es): Korres 1994, 140–145, figs. 5 and 8; Di Cesare 2014c; Olympieion: Santaniello 2011; Serapeion: Paus. I.18.4.

15 Plut. *Arat.* 34.5–6; Paus. II.8.6.

16 Habicht 1982, 82–84; Habicht 1995, 182–183; Mikalson 1998, 172.

17 For the Diogeneion: Ferguson 1911, 238–239; Graindor 1915, 241–244; Guidi 1921–1922; Graindor 1922, 220–228; Judeich 1931, 92, 379; Delorme 1960, 143–146; Pélékidis 1962, 264–266; Lattanzi 1968, 21–23; Travlos 1971, 577 fig. 722 no. U, 579; Bringmann and Steuben 1995, 45–46; Lippolis 1995, 51–55; Miller 1995, 207–208, 243–244; Mikalson 1998, 172; Kotsidu 2000, 70; Krumeich 2004, 133–135; Di Cesare 2014b; D. S. Sourlas 2015, 311–312. Delorme 1960, 144, refused to connect the gymnasium with the Macedonian commander, and thought of a homonymous person of the second century. Umholtz 1994, 133–135, has suggested that the Athenians gave the name of Diogenes to a building already under construction.

18 IG II² 1011, 41: καταπεσόντος δὲ τοῦ περιβόλου τοῦ Διογενείου προε-

νοήθη[η] τῆς ἐπισκευῆς αὐτοῦ ἀναδεξάμενος τὴν εἰς τ]αῦτα δαπάνην ἐκ τῶν ἰδίων.

19 IG II² 1039, 55–56; compare 1040, 2–3 and 1043, 48–49.

20 For the sacrifices (*thysiai*) to Diogenes Euergetes compare e.g. IG II² 1141, 14–15. For the sacrifice of two bulls at the Diogeneia by ephebes see e.g. IG II² 1028, 23–24.

21 The end of the Diogeneion is in some way related to the end of the ephobia, institution that, according to some scholars, went on until the fifth century AD; Kennell 2006, XIV, 62–64; Remijsen 2015, 62–63. According to Frantz 1979, SEG 29, 199, the Diogeneion would have been restored in AD 396–401, on the basis of her integration of IG II² 5205 = 13292.

22 Plut. *Qu. Conv.* IX.1.1 (736D Wyttenbach).

23 Scarcella 1995.

24 Ἀμμώνιος Ἀθήνησι στρατηγῶν ἀπόδειξιν ἔλαβε <ἐν> τῷ Διογενείῳ τῶν γραμματῶν καὶ γεωμετρίαν καὶ τὰ ῥητορικὰ καὶ μουσικὴν μανθανόντων ἐφήβων. Note that ἐν has been added by Madvig (see the Teubner edition by C. Hubert, *app. crit. ad loc.*).

charge there, such as *hypopaidotribes*, the *grammateus*, the *hypogrammateus*, the *didaskalos*, the *hegemon*, the *hoplomachos* and the *kestrophylax*. A *thyroros* is also known;²⁵ another official, ὁ ἐπὶ Διογενείου, was probably a caretaker of the grounds and the building(s), stationed permanently at the Diogeneion.²⁶ The *kosmetes* as the head of ephebic training was also a key figure there.²⁷ Finally, a group called “those around the Diogeneion” (οἱ περὶ τὸ Διογένειον) was at home in the gymnasium from the end of the second century AD.²⁸

Some scholars have pointed out that in not one of the extant sources the Diogeneion is expressly called a gymnasium; hence the possibility that it could have been just a *heroon* or a palaestra attached to a larger gymnasium, that of Ptolemy.²⁹ Furthermore, as will be observed later, Plutarch and Pausanias, writing in the Imperial age, mention only one gymnasium in the centre of the city.

On the other hand, the literary and epigraphic testimonia so far taken into account, spanning from Hellenistic to Roman times, give the Diogeneion the status of a gymnasium in its functions.³⁰ The ephebes there were given both an intellectual and athletic/(para)military instruction, as is clear from the presence of the specific staff.³¹ At the same time, the Diogeneion emerges from the sources as an easily distinguishable place which is never mentioned in association with the Ptolemaion. It is less likely, then, that it constituted just a part of the other gymnasium.

A *palaistra* used by ephebes, mentioned in an inscription, may perhaps be connected with the Diogeneion.³² The text refers to the erection of a *kosmetes*

herm in that palaestra, and herms of the same kind, that is supporting portrait-heads of the officials of the *ephebeia*, were found in the Post-Herulian Wall near the church of Agios Dimitrios Katiphoris along with ephebic decrees mentioning the Diogeneion,³³ with one of these texts expressly pointing out the Diogeneion as the place of display.³⁴

2.2 The Ptolemaion

Writing at the end of the first century/beginning of the second century AD, Plutarch in the *Life of Theseus* affirms that the hero's bones lie buried “in the heart of the city, near the gymnasium of our days”: ἐν μέσῃ τῇ πόλει, παρὰ τὸ νῦν γυμνάσιον.³⁵ He is referring to the Ptolemaion, since some decades later Pausanias established the same spatial relation between the gymnasium and Theseus' sanctuary, the Theseion, said to be ‘near’ the former: πρὸς δὲ τῷ γυμνασίῳ (*scil.* of Ptolemy, mentioned just before) Θησέως ἐστὶν ἱερόν.³⁶ In the same passage the writer supplies other short but invaluable information about topography (see *infra*) and the historical circumstances of the construction: from the verb employed, κατασκευάζω, the gymnasium emerges as a gift to the polis by King Ptolemy (Πτολεμαίου δὲ ἀπὸ τοῦ κατασκευασαμένου καλουμένου).³⁷ Pausanias briefly refers to the sculptural adornment of the place: herms (suitable to the setting) and statues, viz. of a Ptolemy (probably as the founder of the gymnasium), of the Stoic philosopher Chrysippus and of Juba II of Mauretania (a friend of Augustus). The portrait-gallery included also historical persons on gilded shields.³⁸

25 The ‘officials’ mentioned above are listed in IG II² 2221, 70–76, under the heading τάξεις ἐν Διογενείῳ. For the ἐπὶ Διογενείου κεστροφύλαξ compare IG II² 2208, 39 (212/213 AD or later).
 26 Compare e.g. IG II² 2018, 142; 2208, 41; 2239, 25. This caretaker appears in inscriptions dating back from the beginning of the second century AD.
 27 For his ἐπιμέλεια περὶ τὸ Διογένειον see IG II² 3741, 9–10 (145/146 AD).
 28 The identity of the group is debated: a particular class of ephebes; Graindor 1922: *mellepheboi*; Reinmuth 1959; Reinmuth 1962: pre-ephebes or ephebes younger than 18; or the staff of the Diogeneion; Dow 1958; Dow 1960.
 29 The two hypotheses in Lippolis 1995, 56, 66; Miller 1995, 207–208 and Mikalson 1998, 172, respectively.
 30 Compare Goette 1997, 180: “ein gymnasionähnlicher Bau”.
 31 For the gymnasia and the education of the ephebes in the Hellenistic period see Gauthier 1995 and, lastly, Burkhardt 2004; Kah and Scholz 2004; Scholz 2004; Kennell 2015; Kyle 2015, 234–236. The chronological problem of the beginnings of an organized Athenian ephebeia is examined afresh by Chankowski 2014. For the Athenian ephebeia in the Roman

period: Newby 2005, 168–201.

32 IG II² 2037, 1 (AD 125/126): ἐν εὐφήβοισι παλαίστραι. This palaestra “for the ephebes” is clearly distinct from other palaestrae used by *paides*, known from Hellenistic inscriptions and existing in Athens in the second century BC, i.e. that of Timeas (IG II² 956, 61–63; 957, 46–48), of Antigenes (IG II² 958, 60, 62) and another whose name is lost (IG II² 960, 25–27).
 33 Graindor 1915; Lattanzi 1968; Krumeich 2004; Vlachogianni 2018a; Vlachogianni 2018b; E. Vlachogianni in Lagogianni-Georgakarakos and Papi 2018, 203–241, Cat. no. 21–59.
 34 IG II² 1078, 41–42 (ca. AD 220).
 35 Plut. *Thes.* 36.4.
 36 Paus. I.17.2.
 37 Schaaf 1992, 73–74, 81–82; Kotsidu 2000, 69–70. According to Lauter 1986, 16, and Habicht 1982, 112–117, the gymnasium was, on the contrary, a gift of the Athenians to the King.
 38 IG II² 1070, 6–9 (beginning of the first century AD). For the sculptural adornment of the Ptolemaion, see Kazakidi 2015, 215–217. A statue

This gymnasium has been assigned to different Ptolemies of the third and second centuries BC.³⁹ Historical probability favors Ptolemy II Philadelphus (283–246 BC) or Ptolemy III Euergetes (246–221 BC). The hitherto oldest epigraphic occurrence of the Ptolemaion is of 122/121 BC⁴⁰ but, accepting a plausible restoration of a more ancient inscription, the gymnasium would date back at least to the third last decade of the third century BC.⁴¹ In 224/223 BC, under the rule of Ptolemy III, a new tribe was created, called Ptolemais, so that the Egyptian king became one of the eponymous heroes;⁴² a priesthood of Ptolemy and his wife Berenike II was established; a festival, the Ptolemaia, was added to the sacred calendar of the Athenians.⁴³ The gymnasium is likely to belong to this very political climate and was strictly connected with both the honors received by the King and with his role as warrantor of the freedom of the polis in the years following independence from the Macedonians.

Like the Diogeneion, the Ptolemaion was a centre of the *ephebeia* and the seat of intellectual activity, provided with lecture halls and facilities for gymnastic training. Apollodoros reports that in the middle of the second century BC an unknown philosopher founded a school there among athletes intent on training;⁴⁴ in 122/121 BC the ephebes are praised for having attended academic courses held by Zenodotus (a Stoic philosopher) at the Ptolemaion and at the Lyceum, as well as by other philosophers in the Lyceum and the Academy.⁴⁵ Cicero could write to Brutus that he, along with Piso, was used

to hearing Antiochus (the head of the Academy) lecturing *in eo gymnasio, quod Ptolemaeum vocatur*.⁴⁶ Such a use of the place explains why statues of philosophers, like the one of Chrysippus, were erected there.⁴⁷

From 116/115 BC onwards, epigraphic sources attest the existence of a library, the contents of which increased with an annual donation of one hundred books by the ephebes when they graduated.⁴⁸ The model was that of the great Hellenistic capitals, such as Alexandria and Pergamon: the gift of Ptolemy for the city willing to honor him had a cosmopolitan allure.⁴⁹

Other architectural features of this gymnasium gathered from the inscriptions are: a *stoa*;⁵⁰ a *balbis* and an *exedra*, if the ascription to the Ptolemaion of an inventory found in the Athenian Agora is correct. It also records statues of gods (Asklepios, Hygieia, Artemis, Hermes), the Mousai, personifications such as Komodia and mythological figures like the Centaurs and the Kouretes, all subjects at home in a gymnasium.⁵¹

3 In search of the urban gymnasia

Pausanias describes the Gymnasium of Ptolemy after the *agora*, stating that the Gymnasium was not very far: ἐν δὲ τῷ γυμνασίῳ τῆς ἀγορᾶς ἀπέχοντι οὐ πολὺ.⁵² Since the writer repeatedly refers to the Athenian Agora as the Kerameikos, he seems to use the term *agora* to denote the

of Ptolemy son of Juba (IG II² 3445) was probably erected there. For Chrysippus, see von den Hoff 1994, 96–111; Di Cesare 2014d, 750.

- 39 A review of the various proposals in Schaaf 1992, 75. Essential literature: Wycherley 1957, 142–144; Delorme 1960, 146–147; Thompson 1966, 40–48; Thompson 1968, 37–41; Habicht 1982, 112–117; Schaaf 1992, 73–83; Bringmann and Steuben 1995, 45–48 no. 17 [L]+[E]+[A]; Lippolis 1995, 47–54; Miller 1995, 203–207; Wacker 1996, 173–178; Mikalson 1998, 178–181; Bringmann 2000, 12, 158, 160–161; Kotsidu 2000, 69–70, no. 19 [L]; Schmidt-Dounas 2000, 226–227; Lippolis 2006, 51–52; Marchetti 2012, 210–218; Saladino 2012, 176–180; Trombetti 2013, 59–60; Di Cesare 2014d; D. S. Sourlas 2015, 312–314.
- 40 IG II² 1006, 19 ([ἐν τε] τῷ Πτολεμαίῳ), 122/121 BC.
- 41 For the restoration of IG II² 836 see Oikonomides 1964, 52 no. 2 and Habicht 1995, 184–186 (SEG 21, 397; 32, 121): εἰς τὴν σ[τ]/τοῦαν τὴν ἐν [τε] παλαίστραι (?) τοῦ γυμνασίου τοῦ]/βασιλέως Π[τολεμαίου κτλ.].
- 42 His statue was added to the monument of eponymous heroes in the Agora: Paus. I.5.5.
- 43 Ferguson 1911, 239; Habicht 1982, 112–117; Schaaf 1992, 56. 80–81; Kotsidu 2000, 65–69 no. 18 [L]+[E]+[A].
- 44 Apollod. *FGHist* 244 F 59.
- 45 IG II² 1006, 19–20.
- 46 Cic. *Fin.* V.1.

- 47 The statue of Chrysippos (dead in 208 or 204 BC) has sometimes been used as an argument to support the higher dating of the gymnasium; Pélékidis 1962, 263; Wacker 1996, 174; but the statue could have been dedicated long after the philosopher's death. It was different from the one located *in Ceramico* (Cic. *Fin.* I.39; compare Diogenes Laertius VII.182: ἐν Κεραμεικῷ). Marchetti 2012, 210–216 is of a different opinion, and tries to place the Ptolemaion in the Athenian Agora, in the so-called South Square, reviving an old idea of Thompson and Travlos, later dismissed by these very same scholars.
- 48 IG II² 1009 and Meritt 1947, 170–172, no. 67.30–32 (without the mention of the Ptolemaion, such as in IG II² 1030, 36–37 and 1042.d1). The gymnasium is expressly mentioned in IG II² 1029, 25–6 (96/95 BC); SEG 22, 111.30 (46/45 BC); IG II² 1041, 24 (43/42 BC); IG II² 1043, 50 (38/37 BC).
- 49 See now Brenk 2007.
- 50 SEG 32, 121.3–4
- 51 Clay 1977; SEG 26, 139, 170–135 BC. The view of the editor has been recently challenged: it has been suggested that the inscription (or part of it) could pertain to the Asklepieion at the south slopes of the Acropolis; Ma 2008.
- 52 Paus. I.17.2.



Fig. 1 The area to the east of the Roman Agora: the Tower of the Winds and the arched façade.

marketplace of his time: the Roman Agora.⁵³ Such an interpretation would better explain why the next topographical fixed point is the sanctuary of Theseus, which was near the gymnasium, as seen above. Pausanias' description is seemingly structured as a clockwise 'route' from the Kerameikos to the Ilissos; after the Ptolemaion-Theseion pair, he mentions the Anakeion (the sanctuary of the Dioskouroi) and Aglauros' sanctuary firmly located in the cave at the eastern slopes of the Acropolis.⁵⁴ Therefore the Gymnasium of Ptolemy must be sought in the area encompassed by the Roman Agora and the Aglaurion.

In search of the Ptolemaion, some scholars have looked with good reason at the area eastwards of the Tower of the Winds (Pls. 2–3).

S. G. Miller's hypothesis is to consider modern Kyrristou Street, unusually straight in the modern Plaka, as a relic of the *xystos*: the portico covering the running-track should be recognized in the Hellenistic stoa behind the Tower of the Winds, flanking the so-called Agoranomion. The characteristic façade with a three arched

marble lintel would have been an original part of the Gymnasium, which was later transformed (Figs. 1–2).⁵⁵

Although with a different reconstruction, E. Lippolis sets the Gymnasium in the same area: the huge building whose remains are still visible along Adrianou Street (Fig. 3), traditionally reconstructed as a basilical building and identified as the Pantheon or the Panhellenion, would not be Hadrianic in date, as is usually believed, and should be considered as the north wing of the Ptolemaion in a first century AD reshaping.⁵⁶

A different restitution of the archaeological evidence has been advanced by M. Korres. The so-called Agoranomion (or Sebasteion)⁵⁷ would simply be a formal entrance to a broad street flanked by two porticoes, the architectural members of which were re-employed for the late-antique restorations of the cella of the Parthenon and of the doric stoa of the Asklepieion. The street would then enter the Roman Market (Fig. 4).⁵⁸

A new scenario has been introduced by recent studies and investigations in the same area, conducted by

53 Vanderpool 1974. The term *agora* is used by Pausanias only one other time in I.17.1. For the description of the Kerameikos (i.e. 'The Athenian Agora' as excavated by the American School of Classical Studies at Athens): I.3–16.

54 The structure of Pausanias' text: I.16, end of the description of the Kerameikos Agora; I.17.1, *agora* with the Altar of Eleos and other things; I.17.2 Gymnasium of Ptolemy and (I.17.2–6) Theseion; I.18.1, Anakeion; I.18.2, Aglaurion; I.18.3, Prytaneion; I.18.4, Serapeion; I.18.5, Temple of Eileithyia; I.18.6, sanctuary of Olympian Zeus.

55 Miller 1995, 203–206. For the stoa: Di Cesare 2014c; for the so-called

Agoranomion: Malacrino 2014b.

56 Lippolis 1995, 47–51. For the building and the preceding architectural phases see Dontas 1969; D. Sourlas 2013, 155 n. 29; 160–161, 162 n. 50; Malacrino 2014a; Karvonis 2016, 141–142 (7: D2, 3, 10–12, 20); Di Cesare 2018.

57 Hoff 1994.

58 Korres 1994, 140–145; Korres 2009, 75 fig. 4, 1; 85–93. These same architectural members were previously assigned by Miller to a colonnaded courtyard: Miller 1995, 208–209, 232–233.



Fig. 2 The area to the east of the Roman Agora: the arched façade (interior view) that lead into the columned street (so-called Agoranomion).



Fig. 3 Roman Building along Adrianou Street, northern front and inner piers.

Manolis Korres and Dimitris Sourlas, which have revealed the existence of a marble propylon of Ionic order west of the Tower of Winds and probably antedating the latter.⁵⁹ Further research will clarify whether this propylon corresponds to the entrance of a gymnasium which eventually incorporated the Tower of the Winds, or to some monumental layout whose purpose is still to be explained (Fig. 5).⁶⁰

Some points may be stressed here. First, the general,

coherent orientation of the structures does not mean that they are part of a single complex; instead, it is justified by the orography and the artificial terracing of the area at the lower northern slopes of the Acropolis. Such a terracing is recognizable from the east, where a massive retaining wall has been found in Tripodon Street, to the west, where a similar wall has recently been brought to light by the Ephoreia in Dioskouron Street.⁶¹ Second, the structures found in the area belong to different

59 Korres 2009, 86–88, fig. 4, 11–13; D. Sourlas 2013, 160–162. The structure, Hellenistic in date, was previously interpreted as an exedra.

60 Korres 2009, fig. 4, 13: “πρόπυλον γυμνασίου (?)”; D. Sourlas 2013, 162 and n. 50; D. S. Sourlas 2015, 313; see also Saladino 2012, 176–178, for the attribution of the propylon to the Gymnasium of Ptolemy, reconstructed as a two-level complex including the Hellenistic stoa and (at a

higher level) the so-called Agoranomion. The arched façade would date back to the Hellenistic period (for comparisons with a gymnasium in Delos and other Hellenistic examples see Saladino 2012, 176–178, n. 90–99).
61 *Analemma* in Tripodon Street: Di Cesare 2011; *analemma* in Dioskouron 5: Tsoniotis 2007 [2014].

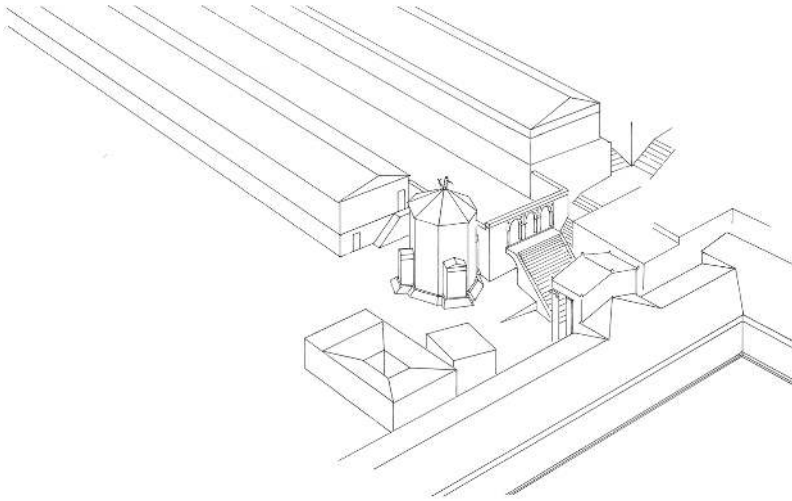


Fig. 4 Reconstruction of the area to the east of the Roman Agora according to Korres 1994.

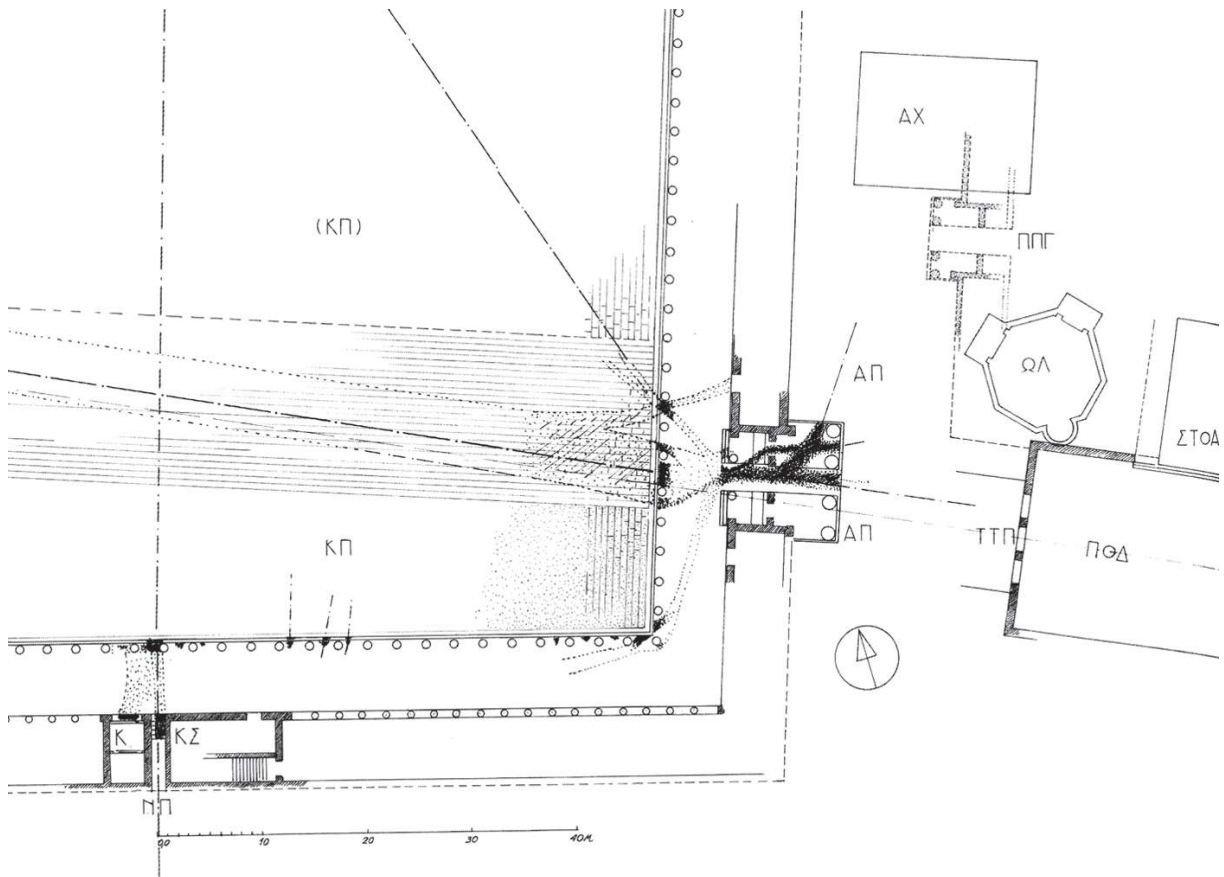


Fig. 5 The area to the east of the Roman Agora according to recent excavations; ΠΠΓ: former exedra, now interpreted as a propylon.

phases, dating at least from the second century BC to the second century AD. The long stoas flanking the street to the east of the so-called Agoranomion (the foundations of one survive), for instance, may be explained as an Attalid gift, while the huge Hadrianic building, instead of being a remodeling of an existing complex, is likely to have been an entirely new structure which overlaid late Hellenistic and proto-imperial structures.

When trying to identify the archaeological evidence of the area from the Roman Agora to the Aglaurion (and surroundings) with the help of the literary sources, it should be recalled that Pausanias used selective criteria and did not describe the entire architectural heritage visible in his days, nor is the archaeological record complete. Thus it is not easy to make two different and incomplete series of literary and archaeological data coincide. Without independent proof for the identification (inscriptions or artefacts implying the function of a space or a building), it is not possible to label all the archaeological remains in the modern Plaka.

There is little doubt, however, that the general area for the search of the Ptolemaion is that between the Roman Market and the Aglaurion. Through terracing, in fact, the entire district at the bottom of the Acropolis would be suitable for building. Arrangements on multiple levels are best detectable in the columned street, which runs higher than the level ground of the first floor of the Hellenistic stoa and of the Tower of the Winds.

Apart from monumental architecture, most of the northern quarters inside the walls, pertaining to the demes of Kydathenaion and Skambonidai, were taken up by houses. The large quarter west of the second century BC Tower of the Winds was a market area, with houses, shops, streets and free open space:⁶² an extension of the Agora proper, whose functions were later inherited by the Roman Market.

Without attempting to suggest a hypothetical location for the Ptolemaion, it will suffice to identify the urban space in which it was situated, and that is somewhere to the east of the Roman Agora (Pl. 1). The spot close to the foot of the Acropolis cannot be entirely ruled out either, in keeping with both the route of Pausanias and the



Fig. 6 The so-called Post-Herulian Wall adjoining the dismantled section near Ag. Dimitrios Katiphoris.

terracing that has been attested, from at least the Classical age, for the Acropolis slopes.⁶³

Turning to the Diogeneion, it is necessary to deal with the inner Late Antique *teichos*, the so-called Post-Herulian Wall, a long section of which was dismantled in 1861 near the already demolished church of Ag. Dimitrios Katiphoris.⁶⁴ The wall was built from second-hand material, which was architectural as well as epigraphical and sculptural. Inscribed blocks and herm shafts were used in the two faces of the wall, while many portrait-heads, removed from their shaft, were used to fill the interior (Fig. 6).

The majority of the notable finds consisted of ephebic catalogues, honorary decrees and other epigraphic material pertaining to the *ephebeia*; the herms ranged from the Julio-Claudian period to AD 260 and, aside from a few ephebes, supported portraits of the *kosmetai* and other officials (*antikosmetai*, *sophronistai*, *paidotribai*). As stated above, many documents mentioned the Diogeneion; some mentioned the Ptolemaion, and others the Theseion.⁶⁵ Originally exposed in the *temenos* of the hero, catalogues of winners at the Theseia were in fact found in the wall.

P. Graindor observed that both gymnasia and the Theseion should not be sought very far by the findspot of the inscriptions. The second-hand materials were in fact

62 According to recent research, Kienast 2014, the Tower (which had exterior sun-dials) was internally a sort of planetarium viz. a model of the firmament.

63 See for instance Travlos 1971, 577 fig. 722, no. T-V; Hoepfner 2006, 15 fig. 13. Terracing walls are recorded by 18th century scholars in the area near the Church of Ag. Anargyroi, and others are still visible today in

the surroundings of Ag. Nikolaos Rangavas; Lippolis 1995, 55–56; Longo 2011, 519–523.

64 Graindor 1915, 241–244; Krumeich 2004, 133–138; Di Cesare 2014a.

65 Ptolemaion: IG II² 1041, 23; 1043.50; Theseion: IG II² 956, 16; 957, 11; 958, 14.

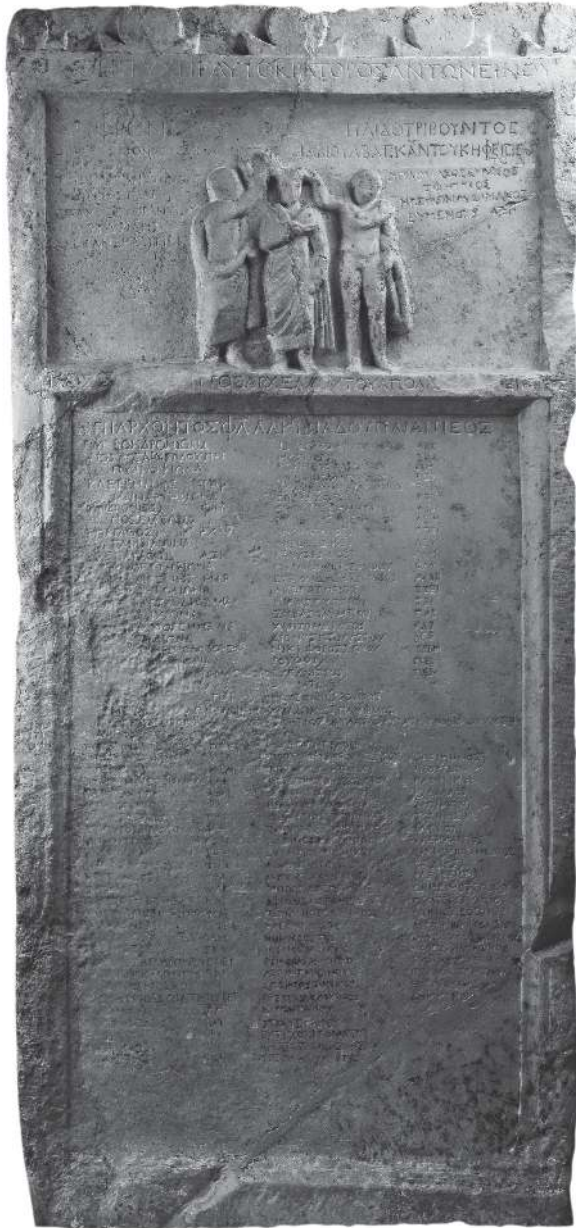


Fig. 7 Honorary stele for a kosmetes, 139/140 AD (EAM 1484; IG II² 2044), found in the Post-Herulian Wall near Agios Dimitrios Katiphoris.

built in the lower courses of the wall as they were used first, and before the builders could draw material elsewhere. Contrasting this view, G. Guidi stated that the source of all the ephebic material was the Agora, where many ephebic inscriptions were also found, connected

in part with the same late fortification circuit near the Church of Panagia Pyrgiotissa, built into a tower of the wall.⁶⁶

What is undeniable is the massive number of ephebic inscriptions and portraits from the lower courses of the wall near Agios Dimitrios; they are also consistent in chronology, ranging from the first century BC to the third century AD (Fig. 7). What were the consequences of the Herulian sack of AD 267 on the city? According to common belief, the materials removed from the destroyed gymnasia were built into the wall soon after; recent studies try to postpone the construction of the wall, dating it to the sixth century AD if not later.⁶⁷ If so, the ephebic epigraphic *corpus*, which seems to end in the last quarter of the third century AD, would have been left lying around somewhere for a very long time before being re-used. The association of the ephebic material from Ptolemaion, Diogeneion and Theseion is a reasonable argument to locate the Diogeneion not far away from Agios Dimitrios and also the old city centre, in which the ephebes had been at home for some centuries. It is not possible to ascertain if the Diogeneion adjoined the Ptolemaion, or if it was in the environs; a location outside the Post-Herulian Wall, not far from the Eridanos River, could also well suit a gymnasium.

The search for the Diogeneion in the proximity of Agios Dimitrios has not given results: A. Koumanoudis, after dismantling the Post-Herulian Wall, extended the excavation but could not find anything relevant; P. Pervanoglou, some years later, wrote of ancient columns in a nearby house.⁶⁸ Recent archaeological investigations in the site of Agios Dimitrios by the University of Athens has exposed the ruins of a building made of re-employed blocks, perhaps of Roman date.⁶⁹

4 Conclusion: the historical and urbanistic meaning of the new Hellenistic gymnasia

The three old Athenian gymnasia embodied the ideology and the values of the archaic and classical polis, when the gymnasium culture was rooted in the firm con-

⁶⁶ Guidi 1921–1922, followed by Delorme 1960, 144–145.

⁶⁷ For the chronological problem see Di Cesare and Marchiandi 2014. An up-to-date overview of the archaeological data for the Post-Herulian Wall in Tsoniotis 2008; Tsoniotis 2016; for the lower dating compare Bazzechi

and Baldini 2016, 707–709.

⁶⁸ *Γενική συνέλευσις* 1863 [1864], 7; Pervanoglou 1866, 160–161, no. 208.
⁶⁹ <http://chronique.efa.gr/app/webroot/index.php/fiches/voir/84> (visited on 11/12/2017) (Touchais).

nection between soldier and good citizen.

The new Hellenistic gymnasia reflected a different image of the city. They were embedded in the political situation following the liberation from Macedonian rule in 229 BC and with the guarantee of enduring freedom by the Egyptian King Ptolemy III Euergetes. The ancient heroes and gods were replaced by political authorities: a strict link was established between gymnasium and *Herrscherkult*, enhanced by the central location of the complexes.

The building of the new gymnasia in the *asty*, rather than on the outskirts of the city, bore a great impact on a symbolic and practical level. As can be observed in the case of the Roman Market and of the Library of Hadrian, construction would have required the expropriation of private houses followed by demolition and levelling operations.

Even though a convincing, albeit approximate, location can be advocated only for the Ptolemaion, the Diogeneion should not be sought very far. Both complexes were intentionally linked to the civic and sacral core of the archaic city in the deme Kydathenaion, the so-called Old Agora of Athens, which housed the ancient headquarters of the archons, the sacred heart of the polis (the Prytaneion), as well as the *temenos* of the hero-founder of the Athenian institutions.⁷⁰ The Theseion and the nearby Anakeion (the sanctuary of the Dioskouroi) were large open spaces appropriate for summoning hoplites (i.e. the *laos* of the Archaic city) and horsemen. For centuries, all this area at the feet of the Aglaurion had martial associations, and even when the agora was moved to

the Ceramicus, perhaps at the end of the sixth century BC,⁷¹ it persisted as one of the main representative nuclei of the polis.

The same urban spaces were traditionally associated with the *ephebeia*. Theseus was the archetype of the young men training in order to become citizens: the ephebes swore at the Aglaurion, while in the adjoining theatre they received a shield and a spear from the city and took part in a military parade. Accordingly, the Ptolemaion and the Diogeneion were archaistically connected with the glorious past of the city and its monumental and urbanistic cornerstones. That is clear for the Ptolemaion, in close proximity to the Theseion and the ‘Old Agora’.

By the end of the fourth century BC ephebate was no longer compulsory, and its prime military nature evolved mostly into physical training, general learning and religious duties. Hellenistic inscriptions feature the ephebes regularly frequenting the gymnasia of the polis and involved in processions, sacrifices, torch-races and participating in other contests during various Athenian festivals, including the Panathenaia, the City Dionysia, the Theseia and the Epitaphia.⁷² Rising when the *ephebeia* had become an aristocratic ‘club’ and the old polis a nostalgic memory, the new gymnasia re-enacted, if only symbolically, the cardinal values of the ancient polis, such as the *eleutheria* and the defense of the Attic borders, developing into athletic, philosophical and literary schools, which contributed to the urbanistic renovation as well as at the transformation of Athens into a glamorous university.

70 Di Cesare 2015a, 166–168; Di Cesare 2015b, 77–95.

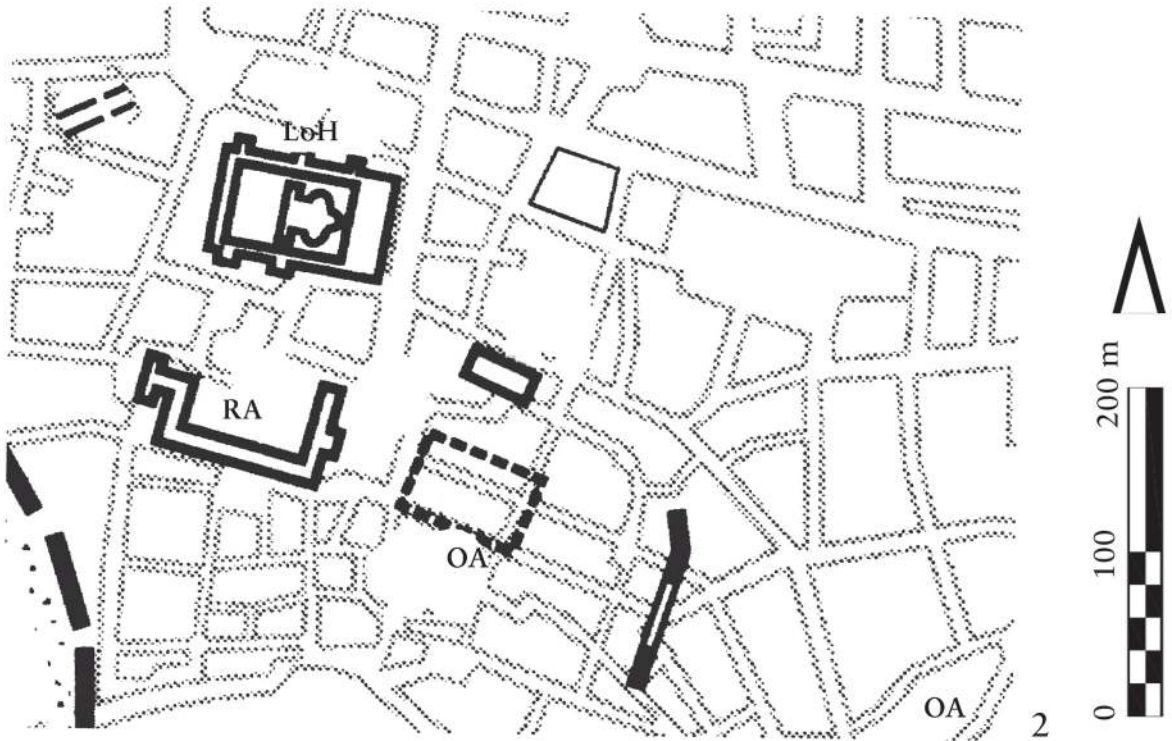
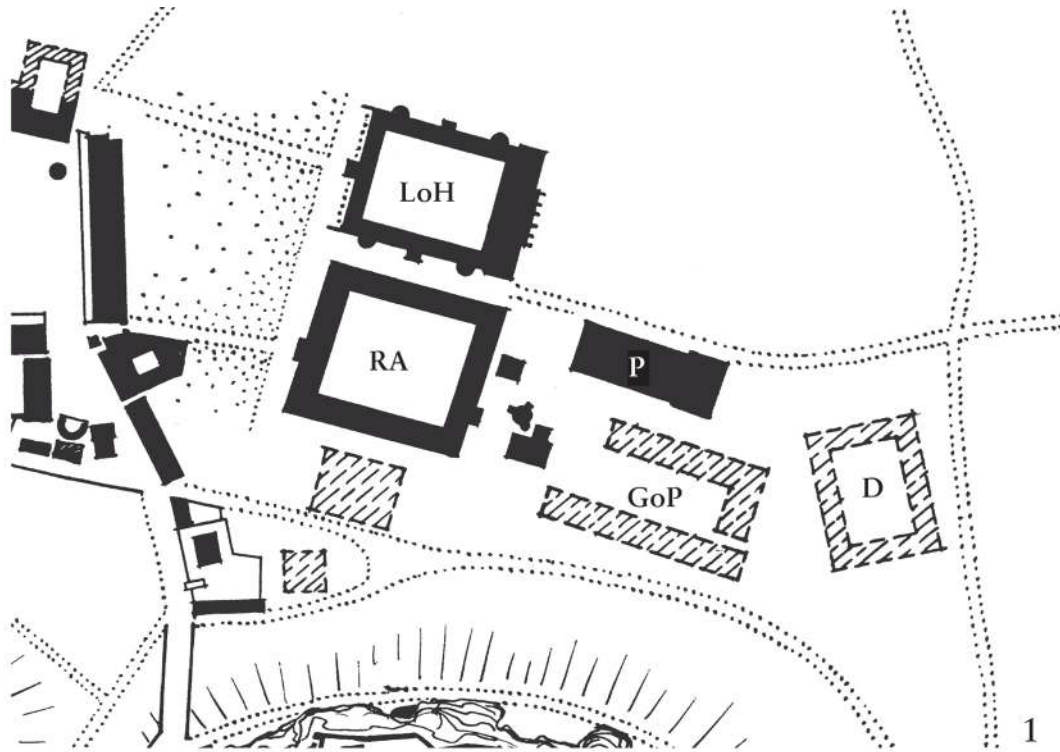
71 As advocated by the *horoi* (IG I³ 1087–1089), dating to ca. 510–500 BC.

72 Pélékidis 1962, 211–256; Mikalson 1998, 242–249, 292–293; Burkhardt 2004, 200–202; Chaniotis 2005, 47–55, 237–240; Kyle 2015, 234–236. For

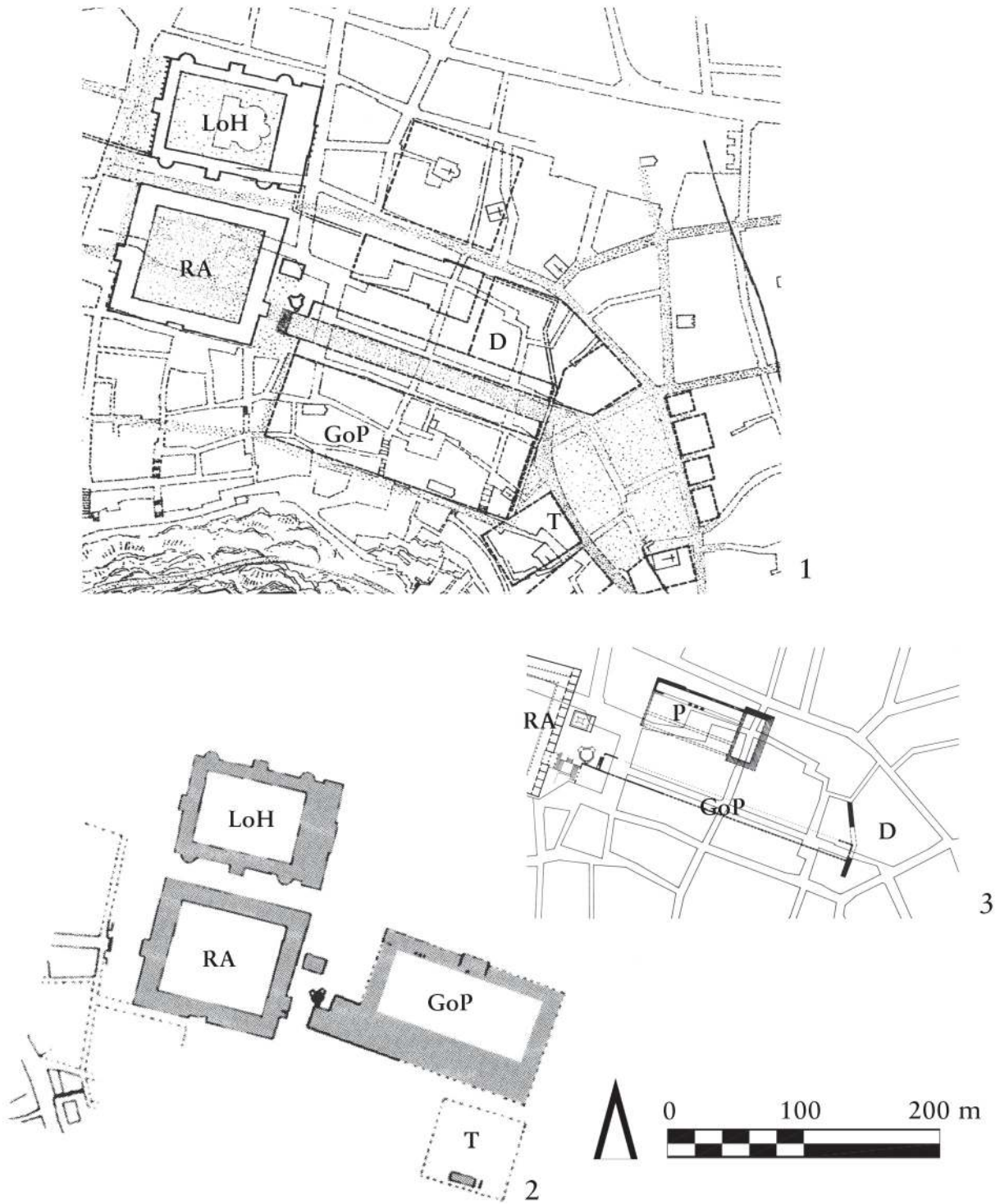
ephebes in “the gymnasia” of the city see e.g. SEG 26, 98.14 (late third century BC); IG II² 1006, 16, 60, 75 (122/121 BC); 1028.12, 34 (100/99 BC); 1043.43 (38/37 BC).



Pl. 1 General plan of ancient Athens: the central area, with the main evidence discussed in the text: 1. The Athenian Agora (Pausanias's Kerameikos); 2. Section of the Post-Herulian Wall in the Agora and Church of Pyrgiotissa; 3. Hellenistic houses and shops under the Roman Agora and Hadrian's Library; 4. Library of Hadrian; 5. Roman Agora (Pausanias's agora of I.17.1–2); 6. Tower of the Winds; 7. Hellenistic Stoa; 8. Arched façade and columned street (so-called Agoranomion); 9. Site of the terracing wall recently discovered in Dioskouron Street; 10. Hadrianic building above Hellenistic and Early Roman structures along Adrianou Street; 11. Post-Herulian wall: section dismantled in 1861; 12. Location of the demolished church of Agios Dimitrios Katiphoris; 13. Church of Ag. Anargyroi and site of ancient terracing walls; 14. Church of Ag. Nikolaos Rangavas and nearby terracing walls; 15. Retaining wall of Late Classical/Hellenistic Age in Tripodon Street 20–32; 16. Cave of Aglauros; 17. Ancient Tripodes Street; 18. Olympieion. Highlighted areas in the circles: OA. Supposed site of the so-called Old Agora (with the Prytaneion, the Theseion, and the Anakeion); PT. Supposed area in which the Ptolemaion was located; D. Supposed site of the Diogeneion.



Pl. 2 Different proposals for the sites of the Ptolemaion and the Diogeneion: D – Diogeneion; GoP – Gymnasion of Ptolemy; P – Pantheon; RA – Roman Agora. 1 Travlos 1971; 2 DNP s.v. Athenai. II. Topographie (H. R. Goette) (OA: approximate site of the Ptolemaion, the Theseion and the Old Agora).



Pl. 3 Different proposals for the sites of the Ptolemaion and the Diogeneion: D – Diogeneion; GoP – Gymnasium of Ptolemy; LoH – Library of Hadrian; P – Pantheon; RA – Roman Agora; T – Theseion. 1 Hoepfner 2006; 2 Lippolis 2006; 3 Miller2005.

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Cesare after Greco, Di Cesare, et al. 2014. 2 1 Travlos 1971, fig. at 577; 2 DNP s.v. Athenai. II. Topographie (H. R. Goette), fig. at 171–172. 3 1 Hoepfner 2006, 15, fig. 13 2 Lippolis 2006, 56, fig. 10. 3 Miller 1995, 244, fig. 2.

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