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THE HELLENISTIC GYMNASIUM AND THE PLEASURES OF *PAIDEIA*

ABSTRACT. Alonso Troncoso Victor, *The Hellenistic gymnasium and the pleasure of "paideia"*.

The author tries to investigate the function of the *gymnasium*, undoubtedly a fundamental institution of the Hellenistic world (336-30 B.C.). In Hellenistic times it played a very important role also as educational centre and as an instrument of socializing and integration in the cultural life. The "men of the gymnasium" represented the leading social groups in the old and new polis of the Hellenistic oikoumene. In this context it would not be strange to find the emergence of a new concept of the *paideia* as a specially pleasant activity.

Key words: gymnasium, education, *paideia*.

Nam et saeculis multis ante gymnasia inventa sunt, quam in eis philosophi garrire cooperunt, et hoc ipso tempore, cum omnia gymnasia philosophi teneant, tamen eorum auditores discum audire quam philosophum malunt: qui simul ut increpuit, in media oratione de maximis rebus et gravissimis disputantem philosophum omnes unctionis causa relinquent: ita levissimam delectationem gravissimae, ut ipsi ferunt, utilitati anteponunt (Cic. De orat. 2.5.21).¹

Cicero's critical judgment is not unbiased, but his representation of the origins of Greek gymnasia without philosophers corresponds to the historical reality. Sophists and thinkers, as well as teachers of rhetoric, came later, after the appearance of gymnasia, well into the fifth century. To tell the

¹ "For not only were their gymnastic schools introduced ages before the philosophers began to chatter therein, but even in the present day, although the sages may be in occupation of all the gymnastic schools, yet their audiences would rather listen to the discus than to the Master, and the moment its clink is heard, they all desert the lecturer, in the middle of an oration upon the most sublime and weighty topics, in order to anoint themselves for athletic exercise; so definitely do they place the most trifling amusement before that which the philosophers describe as the most solid advantage": trans. E.W. Sutton, Loeb Classical Library. I have used also Loeb's translations for the other classical authors.

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truth, intellectual life in the strict sense of the word was practically absent at the beginnings of our institution: the old education – the *archaia paideia* evoked by Aristophanes (*Nu.* 961) – consisted above all of physical training, sung poetry and choral dance.² The earliest sources are quite eloquent on this point. One of the first references in Greek literature to the gymnasium and gymnastics as an ingredient of a pleasant life within the polis can be read in Bacchylides' paean for Apollo Pythaieus at Asine, and no reader could guess any intellectual connotation in his verses: "Peace gives birth to noble wealth for mortals, to the flowers of honey-tongued songs, to the burning for gods of thighs of oxen and fleecy sheep in yellow flame on elaborate altars, to young men's concern with the gymnasium, with pipes and revelry".³ To these blessings of *eirene* the poet adds the public rejoicings in a purely urban context: "The streets are laden with lovely feasts, and the songs of boys rise to flame". Bearing in mind that Bacchylides' grandfather was an athlete (Sud. B 59), and considering also that the poet belonged to the local elite of Ceos, his testimony turns out to be very telling about the importance of gymnasia at the very beginning of the classical age. One of his contemporaries, Pindar, also had something to say about the pleasures associated with gymnastics. Another fragment refers to the men who take delight in bodily exercises and horsemanship: καὶ τοὶ μὲν ἵπποις γυμνασίοισι... <τε> τέρπονται (Pi. fr. 129.6). Both poets, therefore, might have shared a similar view of the gymnasium, as a place that was full of life – of young life – and joy, with the prospect of worshipping the male body.

The etymology and original sense of the word *gymnasion* meant, in effect, the place where the young men exercised naked (*gymnos*), although this exercise of the body was not a purely physical or mechanical training, as happens today with sport: since Homer it was combined with instrumental and vocal music – the songs of boys evoked by Bacchylides – in the form of dances and even military exercises. The poems of Tyrtaios and Alcman, for example, were intended to be sung by youths and young maidens as part of the Spartan *agoge*, mixing wisely agonistic spirit, aesthetic experience and disciplined learning.⁴ The lyric poets of archaic Greece, no doubt, bear witness to this twofold, balanced education, aimed at creating a harmonious male creature and, to a much lesser extent, his female counterpart. Their pictures can be completed with the archaeological evidence of vase-paintings inspired by scenes of the palaestra (wrestling-school) and the

² On this archaic *paideia* at Athens, see Marrou 1965: I § 4.

³ Bacchylides fr. 4.62-68: trans. D.A. Campbell.

⁴ Consider, for example, Alcman's verses (fr. 27 Campbell): "Come, Muse, Calliope, daughter of Zeus, begin the lovely verses; set desire on the song and make the choral dance graceful". For Megara, see Thgn. 1.791.

gymnasium – paintings like that by Euphranor (ca. 500) on the *kylix-krater* in the Berlin Museum, or that of Douris (ca. 480) on the *kylix* in the Louvre.⁵ They are contemporary with the “ancient education” of the Athenians, described by the Better Argument in the *Clouds* of Aristophanes (*Nu.* 961ff). This *paideia* of the good old days lasted at least until the generation of the men who fought at Marathon and knew the existence of music masters and wrestling trainers for the children, together with the *gymnasia* for the young. Most telling in the nostalgic evocation of that pedagogic tradition by Aristophanes is its natural setting, like a prefiguration of the later *locus amoenus*: “No, you’ll be hale and glistening and pass your days in *gymnasia*, not in the agora chattering about the thorny subjects currently in vogue, or being dragged into court about some trifling, obstinacious, disputatious, ruinous case. No, down to the Academy you shall go, and under the sacred olive trees you shall crown yourself with white reed and have a race with a decent boy your own age, fragrant with woodbine and carefree content, and the catkins flung by the poplar tree, luxuriating in spring’s hour, when the plane tree whispers to the elm”.⁶

The Athenian comic dramatist is an interesting source for us because he refers explicitly to another aspect of Greek education at *gymnasia* that should not be overlooked: homosexuality.⁷ Needless to say, same-sex attraction constituted a characteristic ingredient of the binomial teaching/learning and pleasure in Greek history. In fact, modern historiography speaks of pedagogic pederasty to refer to the early insertion of love and sex in the process of enculturation at the *polis*. The fascination with the beauty of the male figure had been linked to the concurrent introduction of pederasty as an educational system in regions like Laconia and Crete during the archaic age, not to speak of classical Athens. Ancient authors, sculptors and vase painters bear clear witness to the eroticisation of the male body in pa-

⁵ Delorme 1960: 256, defined the *gymnasium* as “un établissement où l’on pouvait se livrer à tous les exercices du corps et de l’esprit”. Andronicos 1982: 58, did have a point when he argued that it is difficult for us today to appreciate the beauty and charm of classical education, after so many centuries of divided existence that led us to feel scorn and shame for our body, and to separate the exercise of it from musical rhythm, from song and from poetry.

⁶ *Nu.* 1003-1008: trans. J. Henderson. See below note 10.

⁷ Aristophanes’ *Clouds* 973-980 are critical and unambiguous: “At the trainer’s the boys had to cross their thighs when sitting, so they wouldn’t reveal anything that would torment the onlookers; and when they stood up again, they had to smooth the sand and take care not to leave behind an image of their pubescence for their lovers to find. And in those days, no boy would oil himself below the navel, and so his privates bloomed with dewy down like apricots. Nor would he liquefy his voice to a simper for his lover and walk around pimping for himself with his eyes”: trans. J. Henderson. See also V. 1023-1038. In reality, when we speak of Greek homosexuality, we mean bisexuality, what is not the same. See also K.J. Dover, *Greek Homosexuality*, London 1978, p. 54-55.

laestrae and annexed spaces, and to this purpose served athletic nudity and the practice of oiling the body. The beauty and erotic power of the naked body were highlighted by the custom of oiling one's body for exercise. The provision of the precious liquid for such decoration will be the greatest expense of a Hellenistic gymnasium, and it will have to be heavily subsidised by the public coffers or private donors, if not by the kings themselves. The main venue for men and boys to meet and spend time together, and for men to educate boys in the arts of warfare, sports, and philosophy, was the gymnasium. "The cities which have most to do with *gymnasia*" is the phrase which Plato used to describe the polis where homoerotic love flourished (*Lg.* 636b-c), whereas Xenophon noted that "in many states the laws are not opposed to the indulgence of these pederastic appetites" (*Lac.* 2.14). Gymnastics in this instance conveys not only the sense of athletic discipline but also, from the Greek "nude", the fact that all these exercises were done by men and boys who were naked, and thus especially liable to be excited by physical beauty. Moreover, the relationship between a trainer and his athletes often had an erotic dimension, and the same place which served as training ground served equally for erotic dalliances, as seen in many scenes of seduction and lovemaking depicting implements found at palaestrae, such as sponges and strigils.

If we now move to the end of classical times and the beginning of Hellenism, we will find the idea of the gymnasium essentially related to pleasant sport activities, but with a new emphasis on the educative principle, that is to say, a more conscious or intellectual idea of education.⁸ In Plato's late thought the concept of *paideia* as an integral learning of music and gymnastics is centred in the institution of the gymnasium (*Lg.* 764c-d). In theory, the philosopher does not envisage the pairing of physical and musical training as a source of pleasure, escapism and agonistic self-assertion, but as a moral means to achieve civic discipline and virtue.⁹ We should not rule out the possibility that Plato was reacting here against the democratisation of *gymnasia* in classical Athens, as the political pamphleteer known as the 'Old Oligarch' had criticised, pointing precisely at the pleasure element inherent to *gymnasia*.¹⁰ Nonetheless, when considering the infrastructures

⁸ See Marrou 1965: II § 1-12, on Hellenistic age as the civilisation of *paideia*. On the athletic and intellectual activities in *gymnasia*, see Delorme 1960: 274ff, 316ff; Gauthier 1995: 3ff; Scholz 2004: 103ff. Turner 1984: 173: "The gymnasium was a club which offered intellectual as well as physical amenities".

⁹ See *Lg.* 633a, 636a-c, 656c, 658e-659a, 673, 700, 764c-765a.

¹⁰ "Some rich persons have private *gymnasia*, baths, and dressing-rooms, but the people have built for their own use many wrestling-quarters, dressing-rooms, and public baths. The rabble has more enjoyment (*ἀπολαύει*) of these things than the well-to-do members of the

of the new city state, the founder of the Academy – a school located in a park and gymnasium in the outskirts of Athens – recommends that these educative centres be erected in a nearly idyllic landscape: “As to spring-waters, be they streams or fountains, they shall beautify and embellish them by means of plantations and buildings, and by connecting the pools by hewn tunnels they shall make them all abundant, and by using water-pipes they shall beautify at all seasons of the year any sacred glebe or grove that may be close at hand, by directing the streams right into the temples of the gods. And everywhere in such spots the young men should erect gymnasia both for themselves and for the old men – providing warm baths for the old: they should keep there a plentiful supply of dry wood, and give a kindly welcome and a helping hand to sick folk and to those whose bodies are worn with the toils of husbandry – a welcome far better than a doctor who is none too skilful”.¹¹ The philosopher, older and wiser, seems therefore to indulge in some concessions to the body when discussing the educative establishments, as if the passing of time had detached him from his utopian positions of the *Republic*. This intellectual recognition of the bodily needs, coexisting with the life of spirit, constitutes a fundamental leitmotiv of ancient paganism and classical philosophy, leading to the well known maxim *mens sana in corpore sano* (Iuv. 10.356).¹² One of the implications of this point of view is the idea that at least a certain amount of corporal pleasure should not be excluded from the citizen training. Even Plato was not a theorist thinking in a vacuum, so the outside world inspired and conditioned inevitably many of his proposals. In fact, the sites of gymnasia

upper class” (X. *Ath.* 2.10): trans. G.W. Bowersock. See too Ar. *Nu.* 991. For the aristocratic character of gymnasia in archaic and classical Greece, cf. Scholz 2004: 13f, and Plu. *Them.* 1.2.

¹¹ *Lg.* 761b-d: trans. R.G. Bury. In my opinion, this passage – together with Ar. *Nu.* 1003-1008, quoted above – is particularly interesting because it shows how Greek thought and sensibility established a link between enjoyment of nature and *paideia*, far away from the city and politics (especially democracy), the *insanum forum* of Vergil (G. 2.502). This explains the insertion of some educative establishments and practices in the framework of a bucolic landscape, the *locus amoenus* of Latin and European tradition (on which see Curtius 1948: X § 6). It is explicit in Aristotle’s lectures for Alexander at idyllic Mieza (Plu. *Alex.* 7.4), and perhaps it can be read implicitly in Theocritus’ poem (24) on the little Heracles’ upbringing at Argos (cf. Alonso 2005: 192f), as well as in Bion’s verses (5) on Eros’ schooling. The association of forests, books and the Muses inspires an inscription on a Herculanean herm (CIG 6186), analysed by Curtius 1948: XVI § 2, and of course Cicero’s statement *si hortum in bibliotheca habes, deerit nihil* (*Ad familiares* 9.4).

¹² *Orandum est ut sit mens sana in corpore sano* (Iuv. 10.356): see the comment on it by Marrou 1965: II Conclusion. If gymnasia soon became places for more than exercise, this development arose through recognition by the Greeks of the strong relation between athletics, education and health. Accordingly, the institution became connected with education on the one hand and medicine on the other. Physical training and maintenance of health and strength were the chief parts of children’s earlier education.

were often sacred groves beside a stream, outside the city walls, as was the case with the three gymnasia at Athens, the Lyceum on the banks of the Cephisus, the Academy and the Cynosarges by the Eridanus and the Ilissus. Consequently, their buildings included bathrooms, undressing-rooms, an oil store, a dust-room where the athletes powdered themselves before exercise, in addition to a running-track and usually a palaestra for wrestling.¹³

In a vein perhaps a bit less doctrinaire than that of Plato, Aristotle writes his treatise on man's welfare and political organisation, *Politics*, in which education (*paideia*) and virtue (*arete*) are again profoundly intertwined (1283b 25). No wonder the Stagirite pays special attention to the process of socialisation from childhood that enables the citizen to participate fully in the polis' institutions. According to this philosopher, the traditional subjects of Greek education, "reading and writing, gymnastics, music, and fourth, with some people, drawing" (1337b 24-26), had in general a practical aim, with the exception of music, "for at present most people take part in it for the sake of pleasure (ἡδονῆς χάριν)" (1337b, 28f). Moderation – in other words, realism – and a certain eclecticism are features that preside over Aristotle's educative program, with the result that entertainment can be made compatible with effort: "music has the power of producing a certain effect on the moral character of the soul, and if it has the power to do this, it is clear that the young must be directed to music and must be educated in it. Also education in music is well adapted to the youthful nature; for the young owing to their youth cannot endure anything not sweetened by pleasure, and music is by nature a thing that has a pleasant sweetness".¹⁴

The testimony of Aristotle is particularly interesting for our purposes, because he writes at the threshold of the new age, inaugurated by his pupil Alexander the Great. At that moment the central place of the gymnasium in Greek civilisation was already firmly established, and its relevance can be measured by different sources, archaeological, epigraphic and, of course, literary.¹⁵ It is symptomatic, for example, that such a philosopher as Zeno of Citium, who evidently did not care about political correctness, included the gymnasium among the three main institutions that should be abolished in the ideal society described in his treaty *Peri Politeias*. This work represented

¹³ The palaestra-gymnasion complex at Delphi and Olympia, to cite the most relevant examples, was equipped with bathing facilities: see Mallwitz 1972: 278ff, and Jannoray 1953.

¹⁴ *Pol.* 1340b, 11-17: trans. H. Rackham. Note also his other statement: "For pleasure is thought to be especially congenial to mankind; and this is why pleasure and pain are employed in the education of the young, as means whereby to steer their course" (*Pol.* 1172a, 20-22). Classes of music are attested epigraphically in some Hellenistic gymnasia: see Bringmann, Steuben 1995: no. 266 [E]; Bagnall, Derow 2004: no. 77; Weiler 2004: 35f, with the previous bibliography.

¹⁵ See in general Delorme 1960, Gauthier 1995, and Kah, Scholz 2004.

a full scale attack against the dominant values of the polis, and in it the founder of stoicism lay down community of wives and prohibits the building of temples, law-courts and gymnasia (SVF I 267). This intellectual task of demolition undertaken by Zeno was not followed by other schools of philosophy, such as the Academy or the Peripatus, nor by the Stoics themselves, who were perfectly capable of adapting their doctrines to the political and social establishment of the Hellenistic world.¹⁶ But perhaps better than Hellenistic philosophy, reduced to fragments and secondary works, contemporary historiography and geography could provide more revealing information about gymnasia, from Alexander to Augustus. Oddly enough, Polybius does not help much in the search of the ideology and image of the gymnasium in the second century: this centre appears from time to time in the extant books of his *Histories*, including the privileged group of their members,¹⁷ but no description of their role and functioning is given. Much more informative are Diodorus and Strabo, two authors who still belong to Hellenism, even though to its final period. Both bear direct witness to the emblematic nature of the gymnasium in every Greek community that deserved the name of polis.

Diodorus (5.15.2) mentions the gymnasium among the monuments and all kinds of things "which contribute to making happy the life of man" (καὶ τὰλλα πάντα τὰ πρὸς βίον ἀνθρώπων εὐδαιμονία). The concept of *eudaimonia* appears again in Diodorus' representation of the gymnasia, when he tells that Iolaos, the good companion of Heracles, established a colony in Sardinia, where "he had large and expensive gymnasia constructed and the other institutions which contribute to the prosperity and happiness" (καὶ τὰλλα τὰ πρὸς τὴν εὐδαιμονίαν συντείνοντα, 4.30.1). It is revealing that, if not the concept of happiness, the qualities of growth (αὔξη) and renown (δόξα) are connected to our institution in a third passage of the same historian. In effect, speaking of Dionysius of Syracuse, the Sicilian states that the tyrant "also constructed large gymnasia along the Anapus River, and likewise temples of the gods and whatever else would contribute to the growth and renown of the city" (15.13.5). In these proceedings Diodorus' association of *eudaimonia* with the gymnasium demands our full attention. It must have been a recurrent theme (or motif) in Hellenistic literature. In fact, joy and delight are the feelings attributed to a young member of the Alexandrian gymnasium who had fallen in the battlefield and thereby praised by an anonymous poet. I refer to one of the finest lapidary epitaphs of the third century B.C., an elegiac sextain carefully inscribed on a marble plaque, la-

¹⁶ Cf. Erskine 1990: 23, 64ff, 73f, 121f, 181ff, 207ff,

¹⁷ See 5.88.5: οἱ ἐν τῷ γυμνασίῳ. Compare with *FGrHist* 160 F 1 and *PFlor.* 79.25.

menting the death of Philoxenus, who died in Caunus and whose bones were brought to Alexandria: "No longer does thy mother, Philoxenos, welcome thee, throwing her arms around thy lovely neck in a long embrace, no longer dost thou walk with the youth through our famed city, happy or glad (*γηθόσυνος*) from the shady exercise ground of the gymnasium. No! your father brought hither your pale bones when Kaunos had consumed thy flesh with greedy flame".¹⁸

We can pass from this nostalgic evocation of the Alexandrian gymnasium at the height of the Ptolemaic power to the notice given by Strabo, our second source at the end of the Hellenistic age. The geographer from Amasia does not forget to mention the emblematic building in his detailed description of Alexandria: "In short, the city is full of public and sacred structures; but the most beautiful is the gymnasium, which has porticoes more than a stadium in length".¹⁹ Artistic and architectural beauty, therefore, is attributed to our institution in the capital of the kingdom, evidently to the advantage and appeal of the idea of education. But the most audible echoes of the Hellenistic praise of the gymnasium can be recognised in another book of the *Geography*. Strabo presents a cultural analysis of the city of Neapolis, an island of Hellenism in Roman Italy. Although some of the barbarian Campanians had been admitted in Neapolis as fellow-inhabitants and the Romans themselves had recently repopulated the city - the geographer argues-, "very many traces of Greek culture (*τῆς Ἑλληνικῆς ἀγωγῆς*) are preserved there - gymnasia, ephebeia, phratriae, and Greek names of things" (5.4.7). The whole description of Neapolis made by the Hellenistic author is of major interest in our context; it very well reflects the atmosphere of learning and relaxation, of cultivated education and pleasures, all qualities and ingredients reputed as consubstantial to the Greek way of life by the senatorial and equestrian elite of the late Republic who declared herself philhellene. According to this Roman picture of Hellenic civilisation - a selective and to a certain extent an idealised picture -, the gymnasia and the civic associations related to it occupied the centre of the scene. Furthermore, Strabo's description is also interesting because it refers also to the well-to-do strata of Roman society, the leading *ordines* (the *ordo senatorius* and the *ordo equestris*) embedded in Hellenism and certain cosmopolitanism. The Latinists and the historians of Rome know perfectly that at the end of the Republic philhellenism was, more than a political attitude in foreign affairs, a *modus vivendi* expressed in the social and private sphere, especially in domestic life, associated to education, culture and leisure. We cannot avoid quoting

¹⁸ Translation by Fraser 1972: I 613.

¹⁹ 17.1.10: see Fraser 1972: I 28-30.

here the seminal study of Paul Zanker (1987) about Augustus and the power of images, whose first chapter studies precisely the private ambientes of the senatorial and municipal *villae*, far away from the capital, the *Urbs*, and from the stressing dedication to the *res publica*. At the very end of the Hellenistic age, when Marcus Antonius spends the winters in Alexandria and Athens, in company of Cleopatra and Octavia, during the cessation of military operations, local *gymnasia* appear as most suitable settings for encounters and social life, for sports and diversions, for discussions and lectures of the public teachers.²⁰ From the Roman point of view that was, of course, *otium cum dignitate*.

Now I would like to emphasise the historical relationship between the Hellenistic kingship and the educational and recreative functions of *gymnasia*. Perhaps the most perfect association of *basileia* with the trio *gymnasion*, *paideia* and *hedonai* in the symbolic language of art and ostentation can be contemplated in the famous pleasure boat that the King Hieron of Syracuse ordered to build. We are lucky to have two Hellenistic descriptions of large boats made for rival rulers. Both accounts are preserved by chance in Atheneus.²¹ One boat was a seagoing vessel made by Ptolemy IV Philopator for use on the Nile, the so-called "cabin-carrier". Not only were the two boats nearly contemporary in the later third century, they were also comparable in being floating palaces with considerable architectural character. Hieron's boat was surrounded on the outside by Atlantes, that is, giant male figures like those on the Olympieum at Acragas, bearing an entablature decorated with triglyphs. The forms were thus identifiably Doric and directly recalled the greatest monuments of pre-Hellenistic Sicily. A poem inscribed on the boat said that the giants had made it sail the paths of heaven, while large letters on the prow acclaimed its builder as Hieron the Dorian. It has been said that these features make it almost certain that the architecture of the boat was intended to be read along with the inscriptions as expressive of Hieron's Dorian character. Maybe, I see no objection in accepting this interpretation. But, in my opinion, at the same time it should be stressed that Dorian ethnicity did not prevent Hieron from expressing very clearly his personal association to the common values of the Hellenistic civilisation, and particularly to the idea of the *gymnasium* and the literate education.

²⁰ Plu. *Ant.* 29.1; App. *BC* 5.76. Antonius is also connected in Tarsus with *gymnasia*, teaching and poetry through the person of Boethus, whom he entrusted the expenditures of *gymnasiarch* (Str. 14.5.14). The Roman triumvir knew that "the people of Tarsus have devoted themselves so eagerly, not only to philosophy, but also to the whole round of education in general (παιδείαν ἐγκύρων), that they have surpassed Athens, Alexandria, or any other place that can be named where there have been schools and lectures of philosophers" (Str. 14.5.13).

²¹ Athen. 5.204d-209e = Calixenus *FGrHist* 627 F 1 and Moschion *FGrHist* 575 F 1.

Before proceeding to describe the ship, Athenaeus remembers that the king of Syracuse was “not only interested in the building of temples and gymnasia, but was also a zealous shipbuilder” (5.206e).²² Accordingly, we read later that the big boat contained “on the level of the uppermost gangway a gymnasium and promenades built on a scale proportionate to the size of the ship” (5.207d). Next to them lay a shrine of Aphrodite, lavishly furnished, “and adjoining the Aphrodite room – Athenaeus goes on – was a library large enough for five couches, the walls and doors of which were made of boxwood; it contained a collection of books, and on the ceiling was a concave dial made in imitation of the sun-dial on Achradina”.²³ The literate *paideia* of the king’s court explains also the decoration of some cabins with “a tessellated flooring made of a variety of stones, in the pattern of which was wonderfully wrought the entire story of the *Iliad*”, whereas “in the furniture, the ceiling, and the doors all these themes were artfully represented”.²⁴

Kings, no doubt, wanted to be present at gymnasia,²⁵ conscious of the prominent role played by these centres in the social and cultural articulation of Greek civilisation all over the Hellenistic world. Royal propaganda by means of benefaction (*euergesia*) to the installations and activities of the gymnasium is well attested during the whole period, and this strategic allegiance between the crown and the gentlemen’s club became easier precisely by the recreative character of the institution.²⁶ Then, Hellenistic gymnasia opened their doors not only to the citizens of the polis where they were placed, but also to distinguished foreigners eager to improve their *paideia* by travelling abroad and surpassing local limitations. To this international atmosphere, visiting teachers also contributed, frequently assuring the continuity and diversity of the classes. By thus producing hellenised elites, to-

²² Ath. 5.206e: trans. Ch.B. Gulick. See Bringmann, Steuben 1995: no. 318.

²³ Ath. 5.207e. In reality, Athenaeus does not say βιβλιοθήκη, a word that had used when speaking of Philadelphus’ libraries (5.203e), but σχολαστήριον (from *schole* and *scholazo*), literally a place for passing leisure in (Liddell & Scott, s.v.).

²⁴ Ath. 5.207c-d. Note too that Polybius (5.88.5) records that Hieron and his son Gelon made the Rhodians a present of 75 talents, so that the islanders could recover themselves from an earthquake and, among other expenditures, they could buy oil for the gymnasia of their city: cf. Ameling 2004: 133 n. 26.

²⁵ On royal benefactors of gymnasia, see Bringmann, Steuben 1995: 17 [E], 106 [E], 270 [E], 189-191 [E], 284 [E], 357 [E], 390 [A], 418 [A], and Ameling 2004. For a sacrifice in a gymnasium to Philetaerus Euergetes, see OGIS 764.47.

²⁶ The exclusivist character of the gymnasium is well attested. In the decree and gymnasial law of Beroia (ca. 200-170), those who may not take part in the institution are explicitly listed: “a slave, a freedman, or a [son] of these, if he has not been through the palaistra, if he has been a prostitute, or has practised a banausic trade, or is drunk, or mad” (trans. Bagnall, Derow 2004: 135).

gether with a common culture, gymnasia became strategic allies of royal power in the most difficult task of cohering the heterogeneous territories of the kingdoms. Most revealing in this respect can be the terms in which the inhabitants of Tyriaion, in rural Phrygia, asked King Eumenes II for the right to organise and conduct themselves as a polis: "that a polis constitution be granted..., own laws, and a gymnasium".²⁷ The centrality of the latter in Greek civilisation remained for a long time, and over the whole expanse: at Aï Khanum (Alexandria on Oxus), a palace, a theatre, a heroön, and a gymnasium were found. Nearly four centuries later, under the Principate of Marcus Aurelius, Pausanias gives us the *locus classicus* to qualify a Greek polis. Speaking about the Phocian town of Panopeus, he is sceptical about the possibility of classifying this community as a true polis: "If one can give the name of city" - he argues - "to those who possess no government offices, no gymnasium, no theatre, no market-place, no water descending to a fountain, but live in bare shelters just like mountain cabins, right on a ravine".²⁸ These monuments, therefore, might be considered a sort of canonical list of urban elements that made a Greek settlement a true polis, and our club is listed in second place, only after the *archeia*. Pausanias' comment reminds us of another list of city buildings that the poet Martial missed so much during his last retirement in his home town, Bilbilis (Calatayud), under Trajan. In a letter to his friend Priscus (12. *Epist.*), the epigrammist laments his retirement in the Spanish Tarragonensis, *in hac provinciali solitudine*, and evokes the delights of urbanity and cultural life at the capital of the empire: "that subtlety of judgment, that inspiration of the subject, the libraries, theatres, meeting-places, where pleasure is a student without knowing it -to sum up all those things which fastidiously I deserted I regret, like one desolate".²⁹ *Studere se voluptates non sentiunt*: Martial's statement represented already a cliché in Greco-Roman tradition. Some generations earlier, under Augustus, Vitruvius had noticed the trinomial: libraries, delectation and royal power. The outlook of this Roman architect was essentially Hellenistic, and it is not by chance that in his treaty *De architectura* he refers to the origins of the greatest book collections of Antiquity, those of Alexandria and Pergamum, emphasising that books, delectation and kingship interplay: "The Attalid kings, impelled by their delight in literature, established for general perusal a fine library at Pergamus. Then Ptolemy, moved by unbounded jealousy and avaricious desire, strove with

²⁷ Trans. Bagnall, Derow 2004: 80. See also Ameling 2004: 132.

²⁸ 10.4.1: trans. W.H.S. Jones.

²⁹ Trans. W.C.A. Ker: "Illam iudiciorum subtilitatem, illud materiarum ingenium, bibliothecas theatra convictus, in quibus studere se voluptates non sentiunt, ad summam omnium illa quae delicati reliquimus desideramus quasi destituti".

no less industry to establish a library at Alexandria after the same fashion".³⁰

Delectatio is of course the crucial word: it is presented by Cicero and Quintilian as one of the aims of oratory;³¹ the concept will be well known to the humanists of the Renaissance, like Rodolphus Agricola, who reproduced it in *De inventione dialectica*,³² and finally it became nearly a commonplace in modern Romanic languages, for example, *enseñar deleitando*.³³ In English the term delightful (from the same etymology) and the idea of delightful education are no less related to the pagan tradition of aristocratic upbringing: in Lord Chesterfield's *Letters to his Son* (1774), the international model of the Franco-Italian gentleman (*gentiluomo*), with its emphasis on *la politesse, les manières et les grâces*, is based on the knowledge of Greek and Roman classics, not to speak of eloquence, law and modern languages. This mundane concept of education, capable of reconciling learning with sensuality, discipline with sociability, politics with leisure, has been quite lively in European modern history and civilisation, especially in the Renaissance, the Enlightenment, and not without some repressions, the Belle Époque –all before the totalitarian and plebeian isms of the twentieth century liquidated this legacy perhaps forever. There is not a real break in continuity between the care of Attalus II for the education of his nephew and successor Attalus (III), as expressed in his letter to the Milesians (*I Eph* 202), and the epistolary dedication of Chesterfield to his beloved Philip. And it is not by chance that the statue of the young prince Attalus was erected and exhibited in the terrace reserved for the *paides* in the gymnasium at Ephesus.³⁴ The term *kalokagathos*, both ethic and aesthetic, used by the Attalid in his epistle to characterise the nature of the educand, is most telling in this context, in the same

³⁰ Trans. F. Granger: "Regis Attalici magnis philologiae dulcedinibus inducti cum egregiam bybliothecam Pergami ad communem delectationem instituissent, tunc item Ptolemaeus infinito zelo cupiditatisque incitatus studio non minoribus industriis ad eundem modum contenderat Alexandriae comparare". Vitruvius goes on: "Cum autem summa diligentia perfecisset, non putavit id satis esse, nisi propagationibus inseminando curaret augendam. Itaque Musis et Apollini ludos dedicavit et, quemadmodum athletarum, sic communium scriptorum victoribus praemia et honores constituit".

³¹ Cic. *Opt.Gen.* 1.3; 5.16; *Brut.* 185, 276; *Orat.* 21.69; Quint. *Inst.Orat.* 2.21; 3.5.2.

³² Ezra Pound, *The Cantos* 89, quotes Agricola to the effect that one writes "to move, to teach or to delight" (*ut moveat, ut doceat, ut delectet*), with the implication that the present cantos are designed to teach. For poetry as entertainment in Greek and Roman literature, cf. Curtius 1948: *Exkurs X*.

³³ Cf. Diego Saavedra Fajardo, *Empresas políticas*, no. 5: "Deleitando enseña" (ed. López Poza), on the Christian prince's education (1642).

³⁴ For this gymnasium, cf. Delorme 1960: 171ff, and Wörrle 2007; for the whole dossier on Attalus' education and the concept of the international republic of aristocracy, see Alonso 2005: 186ff, 198f. Cf. also Ameling 2004: 138f.

way that the insistence of the lord on an attractive appearance betrays his worldly ends: *beaux esprits, savants, et belles dames* (Letter 194). If discontinuity existed between both pedagogic conceptions, it was due to Judaism and Christianity, two Semitic religions that repressed bodily pleasure and nudity and that condemned not only pederasty, but bisexuality in general as well. Furthermore, the educative role of theatre and the requirements of court society were paramount in both educational codes, Hellenistic and Enlightened, according to the complexity reached by the process of civilisation (in the sense of Elias). I dare say that the Goethe of *Dichtung und Wahrheit* would not disagree on principle with these manners and tastes,³⁵ and above all with the sense of compromise – and the wisdom – that they entail. It might be perhaps interesting to compare the style of this *paideia*, liberal, mundane and cosmopolitan,³⁶ with other educational proposals in Western tradition, stamped with clerical, professional or nationalist orientations, and to study also their eventual intercrossings.³⁷

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³⁵ For Goethe's *Bildung* as presented in this work, see, for example, I chap. 3-4, III chap. 11-12, and IV chap. 19.

³⁶ Note Plutarch's comment on the building program of Cimon, a typical member of that kind of aristocracy: "He was the first to beautify the city with the so-called "liberal" (έλευθερίος) and elegant resorts which were so excessively popular a little later, by planting the market-place with plane trees, and by converting the Academy from a waterless and arid spot into a well watered grove, which he provided with clear running-tracks and shady walks" (*Cim.* 13.8): the inverted commas are the translator's, B. Perrin.

³⁷ This would mean at the same time to follow their polemic relations: for example, Johnson's and Dickens' criticisms against Chesterfield, epitomising to a certain extent middle class morality, or Jews' (Maccabees') and Romans' (Cato's) reaction against Hellenistic *paideia*: see 1 *Ma.* 1.12; 2 *Ma.* 4.7-20; Plb. 31.25.5a; Plu. *Cat. Ma.* 3.7, 12.4-5, 20.6.

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