

COMPETING FOR THE EMPEROR:
GAMES AND FESTIVALS IN HONOUR OF HADRIAN*
COMPETIR POR EL EMPERADOR:
JUEGOS Y FIESTAS EN HONOR DE ADRIANO

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RESUMEN

This article analyzes the agonistic events that were held in honour of the emperor Hadrian by the cities of East Mediterranean during the first two centuries AD, with a special focus on the

ABSTRACT

Este artículo analiza los eventos agonísticos organizados en honor del emperador Adriano en las ciudades orientales del Mediterráneo durante la primera mitad del siglo II d.C. viendo su función

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city-elites' attempt to obtain the emperor's favour by means of these games. In the first part of the article, the cities that organized these *agones* are classified according to four categories: 1) cities that introduced agonistic contests dedicated to the emperor within their traditional *agones*; 2) cities that organized games *ex novo* and presumably celebrated them on a single occasion; 3) cities that organized games *ex novo* and made them permanent events; 4) cities whose games, which were created *ex novo*, are included in the new Hadrianean calendar. This classification will allow, in the second part of the article, to underline both the degree of closeness between Hadrian and the various city-elites and the special status acquired by those cities whose *agones* were included in Hadrian's *nea periodos*.

uno de los elementos de los que se servían las élites cívicas para captar la atención del emperador. En la primera parte del artículo, las ciudades que llevaron a cabo estos *agones* se clasifican en torno a cuatro categorías: 1) ciudades que introdujeron disciplinas agonísticas dedicadas al emperador en sus juegos tradicionales; 2) ciudades con fiestas *ex novo* que se realizaron presumiblemente una única vez; 3) ciudades cuyos juegos *ex novo* perduraron a lo largo de los siglos; 4) ciudades cuyos juegos *ex novo* fueron incluidos en el nuevo calendario adrianeo. Esta clarificación permitirá desarrollar en la segunda parte del artículo el grado de aproximación de las élites cívicas con el emperador Adriano, así como el status que adquirieron las ciudades cuyos juegos fueron incluidos en la *nea periodos* adrianea.

PALABRAS CLAVE

Hadrianeia, Greek athletics, euergesia, civic elites, imperial cult

KEY WORDS

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“THE AGONISTIC FESTIVAL WAS A DEFINING CHARACTERISTIC OF Greek civic life under Roman rule”:¹ with these words O. van Nijf emphasizes the role played by sports within Greek *paideia* during Roman times. The imperial creation of *agones* in Nicopolis, Rome and probably Neapolis, the opening of *gymnasia*, and the publication of works such as the *Gymnasticus* by Philostratus, represent some of the milestones that underlined the growing importance of sport in the Roman world. The attraction exerted by athletic contests onto the population did not go unnoticed to the emperors, who took steps towards their use to further the integration of the imperial provinces and to further spread the imperial cult.² Already since Augustus’ times, and with a considerable increase during Hadrian’s rule, newly-founded games began to be named after the reigning emperor, such as the *Augusteia*, *Tiberieia*, *Claudieia*, *Vespasianeia* or *Traianeia*. On the other hand, the *agones* became also an instrument for the various cities to attract the attention of the emperors by organizing games dedicated to them, thus renewing their allegiance to Rome.

This article consists of two parts. The first part will provide a classification of the cities that organize *agones* in honour of Hadrian according to whether they introduced the imperial cult into the traditional city-*agones* or they founded Hadrianean games *ex novo*. The second part of the article will focus on two main points, namely the crucial role played by the city-elites in spreading the imperial cult by means of the agonistic games, and the reasons why Hadrian rewarded the cities of Ephesus, Smyrna and Athens by including their Hadrianean games in the *nea periodos* of Alexandria Troas.

1. Van Nijf, 1999, p. 198.

2. Albanidis and Giatsis, 2007, pp. 196-197; Van Nijf and Williamson, 2015, pp. 95-112.

1. HADRIAN GAMES

The organization of an *agon* in Roman imperial times usually revolved around two main pivots, the emperor and the city-elites. Before starting the process, it was necessary for the organizing city to obtain permission for holding the games from the emperor. Among the various emperors, one of the major promoters of athletic contests was certainly Hadrian. He appeared as the *euergetes* of the celebrations of two major cities in Greece: specifically, as *agonothetes* of the Dionysian Games of Athens in 124/125 AD and as *patronomos* of Sparta, a position which appointed him as the “guardian of tradition” and “protector of the traditions of Lycurgus”.³ Under Hadrian’s rule there was a true explosion of agonistic events, with up to twenty-one new games dedicated to the emperor being held according to M.T. Boatwright.⁴ Being the host of imperial games was a privilege and a honour for the cities, and *agones* became thus an important instrument for competition for prestige among cities. An example of this kind of competition can be seen within games founded in honour of the emperor by the Cilician cities of Anazarbus and Tarsus, in what is seen by A.H.M. Jones as contest for supremacy over neighbouring cities: “Tarsus celebrating the Epinicia, Olympia, Actia, Coraea, Demetria, as well as various games in honour of different emperors, Augusteia, *Hadrianeia*, *Commodeia*, *Severeia* (...) Anazarbus responding with a rival Epinicia and Olympia, the Sebastia, ecumenical games in honour of Hadrian and Decius, and the Antoniniana, first of the world”⁵

The games in honour of the emperor represented a mean for the competition not only between the various cities, but also between the city-elites of the same city.⁶ The games were a symbol of the identity of the city-elites, who were in charge of the administration and performance of the *agones* and on some occasions had to finance the games with their own money. In charge of the organization of each of the games was an *agonothetes* (president of games), who is usually mentioned in the inscriptions. As will be discussed later on, some of the *agonothetes* themselves referred to the “Hadrianean games” which they had organized as *megala*, thus trying to elevate them above the games held by other *agonothetes*, for which no similar qualification is provided. Once the emperor had approved the organization of the games, the cities were

3. On the position of *patronomos*: *IG* V.1, 32b; see Bradford, 1977, p. 494. There is some scholarly disagreement over the dating of Hadrian’s position as *patronomos*: in 128-129 AD according to Kennell, 1991, p. 131; in 127/128 AD according to Bradford, 1986, pp. 71-74; Cartledge and Spawforth, 2002, p. 108; in 128 AD according to Weber, 1907, p. 211; in 123/124 AD according to Atkinson, 1949, p. 465.

4. Boatwright, 2000, p. 99. In general see: Lämmer, 1967; Le Glay, 1976; Leschor, 1998, n. 10.

5. Jones, 1998, p. 208.

6. Van Nijf, 2004, p. 221; Pleket, 2010, pp. 175-203.

fully engaged in the search for funding to cover the costs,⁷ such as the construction or restoration of recreational areas (mainly stadiums and theatres), the remuneration of the athletes and the *technitai* who would win the various contests, sacrifices, banquets, and even the oil supply for the *gymnasia*. F. Camia analyzed the sources which were available to the cities in order to fund their agonistic competitions,⁸ both by means of public funding which was set aside by both the city and the sanctuary, and thanks to the euergetism of the city-elites. The best known case of costs being covered through *euergesiai* is a decree in Oinoanda (Lycia), where the Emperor Hadrian authorized the organization of the Demostheneia games, which were dedicated to Hadrian himself, and which had the entire funding covered by C. Iulius Demosthenes.⁹ Demosthenes himself makes a detailed summary of the various expenses for the games, specifying the cost of each contest.

1.1. TRADITIONAL GAMES OF THE GREEK CITIES

The first group of cities that will be analyzed in this article consists of those that introduced the imperial cult in their own traditional festivals. This method is the simplest of all since the only changes are made to the titulature of the *agones* by adding to it the name of the emperor, and by the introduction within the contests of additional disciplines in honour of the emperor. An significant example is provided by the city of Thespieae (Boeotia) and its Shrine of the Muses, where the penteteric *agones Mouseia*¹⁰ were held since the second half of the third century BC. At the beginning of the century Thespieae carried out a reorganization of its games in order to attract a larger number of participants and increase the importance of the games beyond the city's boundaries. Following the example of the Pythian games, artistic contests were introduced in the *Mouseia* games, which gained thus the qualification of *isopythian*. The association of these games with the imperial cult began in the first century AD,¹¹ although the emperor's name would not be introduced in the titulature until the reign of Trajan: *μεγάλων Τραϊανήν Ἀδριανήνων Σεβαστήων Μουσῆω[v]* (Great Trajanean Hadrianean Augustan Musean Games).¹² The increasing popularity of the *Mouseia* had them lasting until the reign of Caracalla in the third century AD. Some

7. Zuiderhoek, 2009, pp. 76-88.

8. Camia, 2011.

9. *SEG* 38, 1462; Wörrle, 1988; Mitchell, 1990.

10. Hom., *Il.* XIII 21; Ath., 14 629a; Plut., *Amat.* 1; Paus., IX 31, 3.

11. Schachter, 1981-1994, p. 152.

12. *I.Thesp.* IV 177.

athletic inscriptions provide useful information on the different disciplines that were included, such as comedies, tragedies, and competitions of heralds and citharists. Together with these competitions, there were also two contests entirely dedicated to the imperial cult: lyric poetry, ἔγκωμιογράφος εἰς τὸν αὐτοκράτορα followed by the εἰς ἔγκωμιον Μούσας, and epic poetry, ποιητής εἰς τὸν αὐτοκράτορα, equally followed by the ποίημα εἰς τὰς Μούσας.¹³

This same process took place in the city of Xanthos (Lycia). The inscriptions mention the *Letoa Traianeia Hadrianeia Antoneia* games, whose name merges the traditional celebrations that took place in the sanctuary of Letoa with the name of the emperors Trajan, Hadrian and Antoninus Pius.¹⁴ The only additional hypothesis about the games is formulated by P. Baker and G. Thériault, who consider it likely that these *agones* were related to the Lydian *Koinon*, given the occurrence of the expression παρὰ Ξανθίο<ι>ς in the inscriptions that refer to the games.¹⁵

A different case is that of the *Hadrianeia Heracleia Isaktion agones* in the city of Heraclea in Pontus.¹⁶ The lack of epigraphic documentation does not allow to shed light on the exact time when the games were founded, and the scholarship is split between two hypotheses concerning their origins: either that the games were the result of the merging, during Hadrian's times, of the *Heracleia agones* in honour of the mythical founder of the city with the imperial cult, as possibly shown by their adoption of Hadrian's name; or that they were founded *ex novo* during the reign of Hadrian.¹⁷ The first hypothesis implies that the games were founded under the reign of Trajan. In one of Pliny's letters, he writes to Trajan to consult him on the inheritance of Julius Anchus. In the will of this citizen, born in Pontus, a sum of money was donated to the cities of Heraclea and Tium, with Pliny being in charge of deciding whether the money should be used for the embellishment of the cities or for the foundation of some penteteric

13. Schachter, 1981-1994, pp. 177-178.

14. Courtills, 2002, p. 304; Baker and Thériault, 2014, p. 100.

15. Games dedicated to "ancestral gods" were traditionally held in Xanthos/Xánthi, and included those in honour of Leto, Artemis and Apollo, which were still held during imperial times. Augustus introduces the *Romaia*, an *agon* in honour of the Roman emperor. On the *Letoa* see IGR III, 605 = TAM II.1, 496; Baker and Thériault, 2014, p. 107; Hansen and Le Roy, 2012. On the *Romaia* Wörrle, 1988, p. 238.

16. MAMA VIII 521.

17. Magie, 1950, p. 1472, n. 10. As the name of the games suggests, the organization probably followed the same pattern of the *Actian* games instituted by Augustus in Nicopolis after the battle of Actium: Suet. *Aug.* 18, 2; Paus. V 23, 3; X 2, 2 and X 38, 4; Cass. Dio LI 2-3. On the evidence of Actian games: Moretti, 1953, nn° 58, 62, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 75, 77, 78, 79, 89, 81, 82, 85, 87, 88, 90. On the great Actian games see *id.*, nn° 59, 60. On general topic see Pavlogiannis *et alii*, 2009, pp. 79-102.

games that would bear the name of Trajan. Accepting the first hypothesis (i.e., that the games were founded during Trajan's rule) would entail that Pliny eventually chose the second option resulting in the organization of the games *Traianeia Heracleia*,¹⁸ which in Hadrian's times acquired the name of *Hadrianeia*. I would be more inclined towards the second hypothesis, which postulates that the games were founded during the reign of Hadrian. In the inscriptions of the athletes who took part in the *Hadrianean* games of Xanthos and Thespieae, which are dated after the death of Emperor Hadrian, the games are still referred to as "Trajanean and Hadrianean", that is, they do not lose the name of the previous emperors. In the case of Thespieae, the insertion of the name of Antoninus Pius does not replace those of the previous emperors, and the games' titu- lature becomes *Letoa Traianeia Hadrianeia Antoneia*. In the case of Heracleia, the only mention of the *Hadrianeia* comes from the inscription of the athlete M. Aurelius, dat- ing from the early third century AD. If these games had been those funded with Julius Anchus' money, their name would have not shown Hadrian's name replacing that of Trajan. If in the third century AD these games are still being calling only by the name of Hadrian, it would imply that they were founded *ex novo* under the reign of the emperor, as in other cities.

1.2. AGONES EX NOVO

The second group of cities to be analyzed consists of those that founded *agones ex novo* and, as far as the epigraphic evidence goes, celebrated them on a single occa- sion. As rightly stated by M. Boatwright, it is possible that the main cause of this sudden increase in the number of games was due to extraordinary celebrations for the emperor's visits. One of the most important facets of Emperor Hadrian was his desire to travel and visit in person the territory he ruled upon. Several scholars have tried to trace the routes followed by the emperor on his travels. In the case of the eastern Mediterranean, Hadrian made two big journeys, the first during the years 123- 124 AD and the second around 128-132 AD.¹⁹ It is very likely that the city-elites took advantage of the occasion to organize all kinds of celebrations, not just to honour the emperor but also to have the opportunity to approach him directly. Concerning the first journey, there is evidence of the celebrations funded by Antonia Tyrannis of Erytea, the *Megala Hadrianeia Epibateria* which, as its name suggests, comme-

18. Plin., *Ep.* X 75-76.

19. Weber, 1907; Syme, 1988; Højte, 2000; Birley, 2004.

morated Hadrian's visit to the island.²⁰ Among the games that commemorated the visit of the emperor are the *Hadrianeia Olympia* in 124 AD in Thyateira,²¹ and the *Hadrianeia* in Coela.²² During Hadrian's second journey to the eastern empire the *Olympia* of Tralles were organized in 129 AD,²³ and the *panegiris* of Gaza in 130 AD.²⁴ The *Hadrianeia*²⁵ of the city of Attuda in Caria, the founding date of which remains unknown, were likely connected to the visit of Emperor Hadrian, as well as the *Hadrianeia Antinoeia* of Bithynia-Claudipolis,²⁶ the *Hadrianeia* of Magnesia ad Sipylum²⁷ and possibly the *agones* of the city of Sardis.²⁸

In some cases, cities organized *agones* to honour the Emperor Hadrian not just for a single occasion, but on a regular basis. The *Hadrianeia* or *Hadriana Olympia* of Anazarbus were founded in order to commemorate one of the two visits of the em-

20. IGR IV 1542; Halfmann, 1996, p. 112; Haensch, 2009, p. 96.

21. IG II, 3491; Petzl, 1974, pp. 117-119; *I.Smyrna* 668; IGR IV 1260; SNGD 688. There are few references to the interaction between Hadrian and Thyateira. We only know that Hadrian granted the city some benefits, and that the city because of this erected to him altars with the titles "Soter" and "Ktistes": Robert and Robert, 1978, p. 452; TAM V.2, 310; IG II², 1088; SEG 41, 67; IGR IV 1196-1199.

22. T-TEA, 179-180. On the relationship between Hadrian and the city of Coela see Grelle, 1972, p. 180; Albanidis and Giatsis, 2007, pp. 177-197.

23. *I.Tral* 136; IG II², 3163; FD III.4, 476; SEG 52, 1448; SEG 34, 1120; *I.Ilion* 125, pl. 21; *I.Tral* 119; TAM V.2, 1022; Magie, 1950, p. 1480, n. 33. The emperor might have visited Tralles due to the impulse of Phlegon, who was one of the emperor's *liberti* and who was born in Tralles: Weber, 1907, pp. 222-223; Boatwright, 2000, p. 101. Magie, 1950, p. 1480, n. 33 and Birley 1997, p. 222 place the date of the emperor's visit in 129 AD. According to Halfmann, 1996, pp. 138-140, the visit took place in 124 AD. The relationship between Hadrian and the city of Tralles dates back to 127 AD, when the emperor granted to the city, through the intermediation of Fabricius Priscianus Charmosynus, the distribution of a great quantity of grain imported from Egypt: CIG 2927. The city erected a statue in Hadrian's honour and proclaims him *Soter* and *Ktistes*: CIL III 444.

24. *Chron. Pasch.* I 474. In favour of the *Hadrianeia*: Moretti, 1953, p. 210; Lämmer, 1967, p. 39; Leschor, 1998, p. 44, n. 40; Boatwright, 2000, p. 101; Weiss, 2014, pp. 180 and 182. Against: Wallner, 2001.

25. CIG 3952. The *Olympia Heracleia Adrasteia* also were held in this city: MAMA VI 79 and 81, 82; Mitchell, 1993, p. 225, n. 197.

26. MAMA VIII 521. During the emperor's journey to Bithynia around 123-124 AD he visited the cities of Nicomedia, which adopted the title of *Hadriane*, Nicea, to which Hadrian very likely grants its first *neokoria*, and Bithynium-Claudipolis: Birley, 1997, p. 158; Burrell, 2004, pp. 163-164. The *Hadrianeia Antinoeia* were obviously dedicated to Hadrian and Antinous, the latter having been born in the city of Bithynium-Claudipolis (Cass. Dio LXIX 11, 2; Paus. VIII 9, 7)

27. The games in honour of Hadrian in the city of Magnesia are only known from a single coin, by the dating of which it can be surmised that at the end of the 3rd century AD celebrations in honour of Hadrian, Alexander, Antoninus and the *agon Enmonideia* were held in Magnesia: SNGD 1968, 278.

28. Le Glay, 1976, p. 361.

peror, either in 117-118 AD or 131 AD.²⁹ Some athletic inscriptions reveal the sacred, ecumenical and iselastic character of the celebrations, and that they were held until mid-third century AD.³⁰ The same characteristics were also shared by the Ἀδριάνειος Φιλαέλφειος of Alexandria³¹ or the *Hadrianeia* or *Hadriana* of Antioch in Syria. These last games appear in the athletic inscriptions from the late second century AD to the first half of the third century AD.³² It is likely that the scarcity of epigraphic documentation during Antoninian times is due to Marcus Aurelius' prohibition for Antioch to organize any kind of spectacles, because of the support provided by the city to Avidius Cassius.³³ The *Hadrianeia* of Antioch appear in the Chronicle of John Malalas, who states that on June 23, the city held a festival named after Hadrian which was instituted on the occasion of the inauguration in Daphne of the buildings funded by the emperor.³⁴ Unfortunately John Malalas does not specify the year when this event took place, although the dates of the emperor's visits in 123 AD and 129-130 AD are the most likely options. In his study on the itineraries followed by the emperor in his eastern journey W. Weber states that the celebrations ought to have taken place in the year 129 AD, since the route followed by Hadrian during his first trip would exclude his presence in Antioch in June of the same year.³⁵

Epigraphic evidence suggests other reasons behind the founding of games in honour of Hadrian. In some cases the occasion for celebrating was not the emperor's visit, but the concessions and benefits that the emperor had granted to the city. The *Hadrianeia* games or *Hadriana Olympia* in the city of Tarsus, which according to existing evidence were held during the second half of the third century AD,³⁶ probably owed their foundation to the city obtaining its first *neokoria*. The first mention of the *neokoria* of Tarsus is found on a Hadrianic coin. The obverse of the coin carries the effigy of Emperor Hadrian along with the legend ΑΥΤ ΚΑΙ ΘΕ ΤΡΑ ΠΑΡ ΥΙ ΘΕ ΝΕΡ ΥΙ ΤΡΑΙΑ ΑΔΡΙΑΝΟC CE ΠΠ. On the reverse there is the ten-column porch of a temple with ΑΔΡΙΑΝΩΝ ΤΑΡCΕΩΝ ΜΗΤΡΟΠΟΛΕΩC ΚΟΙΝΟ ΚΙΛΙΚΙΑC on the architrave. As indicated by B. Burrell, the inscription of the coin's reverse

29. Halfmann, 1996, pp. 190, 194; Birley, 1997, p. 69; Ziegler, 1993, pp. 22-23.

30. *I.Anazarbus* 25; *FD* III.1, 555; Ziegler, 1985, p. 32, B1; *id.* (n.32) 419, 428, 431, 612.

31. Probably funded around 130-131 AD: *I.Sardis* VII 79. The epithet *Philadelphius* might refer to the emperor's fondness for his sister Paulina; Birley, 1997, p. 257.

32. *I.Tral* 117; *FD* III.1, 550; *I.Side* 149; *I.Anazarbus* 25; *FD* III.1, 555.

33. HA, *Av. Cas.* 9, 1.

34. Malalas, *Chron.* XI 278, 16.

35. Weber, 1907, pp. 121, 131; Downey, 1961, pp. 222-223; Boatwright, 2000, p. 99, n.75.

36. *SNGS* I, 1139, 1185; *SNG* IV, 5348; *SNGD* 6077.

could be related to the imperial cult in the city and thus to the *neokoria* granted by Emperor Hadrian.³⁷ This coin would thus establish a *post quem* indicator of the year in which Tarsus obtains the *neokoria*. Emperor Hadrian is referred to as *P(ater) P(atriciae)*, a title he assumes in 128 AD, so the concession ought to have been granted after this date. It is likely that due to the introduction of the new imperial cult and the granting of the *neokoria*, the city of Tarsus celebrated Hadrian also by adopting the appellative of Ἀδριανή³⁸ and instituting regular celebrations, the *Hadrianeia* games, to commemorate the fact.

The Cyzicus games in Mysia could also be linked to the imperial concession of a *neokoria*.³⁹ In epigraphic sources these *agones* appear under three different denominations, *Hadriana Olympia*, *Hadrianeia* and *Olympia*.⁴⁰ In two inscriptions we find the denomination *Hadrianeia Olympia Koinon Asias*, and while F.W. Hasluck sees it as a reference to a single *agon* founded in 139 AD,⁴¹ L. Moretti considers the *Hadrianeia Olympia* and the *Koinon Asias* as two separate games, with the latter being founded in 139 AD.⁴² The athletic inscriptions shed no light on when they were held for the first time. The only kind of dating can be inferred from the mention of the athlete Callimorphus, whose victories took place during the reign of Emperor Hadrian, that is, between 117-138 AD.

Alongside the city-elites, the synod of *technitai* was also in charge of the organization of some of the imperial *agones*. There is evidence of the creation of a new type of agonistic games in Hadrian's times, the *mystikos agon*, in the cities of Ankara, Iconium and Side, games that were held until half of the third century AD.⁴³ These celebrations were organized by the synod of the *technitai* and were dedicated to Dionysus, the synod's patron deity, and to the Emperor Hadrian as New Dionysus. They were probably religious celebrations that were part of the mysteries associated with the imperial cult, which included dramatic-religious stage events and ritual dancing that were held in the theatre.⁴⁴ In an inscription dated to the 3rd December of 128 AD, the "world-wide performers (*technitai*) gathered around Dionysos and

37. Burrell, 2004, pp. 212-213.

38. *BMC Cilicia* 187, n° 150 y 151.

39. Burrell, 2004, pp. 86-94, 337.

40. *I.Tral* 135; *CIG* 2810, 3428, 3672; *IG* II-III, 3169/70; *BE* 1970, 16; *IGR* IV 16, 154, 162; *IG* XIV 972; *EA* 1990, 34-36 = *SEG* 40, 1141; *IGBulg* III.1, 892; Bodnar and Mitchell, 1976, p. 26, n° 1.

41. Hasluck, 1910, pp. 187 and 260.

42. Moretti, 1953, p. 283, n° 3 and 286, n° 1.

43. Robert, 1960, pp. 367-368.

44. Pleket, 1965, p. 336.

emperor Trajan Hadrian Augustus Caesar, new Dionysos, namely, those who are crowned sacred victors, fellow-contestants, and registered members of the sacred theatrical synod (or: as well as the members of the sacred theatrical synod)⁴⁵ a decree signed by the emperor Hadrian and Trebius Sergianus⁴⁶ celebrates Ulpus Aelius Pompeianus, high priest of the *koinon* of Galatia and *Helladarcha*, for his *euergesia* within the organization of the first *mystikos agon* of Ankara.⁴⁷ According to the decree, the city council chose Ulpus Aelius Pompeianus⁴⁸ as *agonothetes* of the games after having received the approval of the Emperor Hadrian. The former carried out the *agonothetia* exceptionally well and with unusual speed, and he even made effort to intercept the contestants who were on their way to other games in order to invite them to the *mystikos agon*. He also organized the games flawlessly and with great splendour, without skimping on costs, and paid from his own pocket for the prizes of the winners of the various contests. On line 21, the inscription refers to the work of Pompeianus in the organization of the mysteries, likely those related to the imperial cult, and thanks to him, the city succeeded in proclaiming its devotion to the two deities to whom the games were dedicated, Dionysus and the emperor Hadrian as New Dionysus.

In the same stele it is stated that the synod decided to reward Ulpus Aelius Pompeianus for his *euergesia* with the erection of two statues with his likeness, one of which to be located in the theatre of the city of Ankara to “be an example of virtue to the spectators” to the competitions and which should be honoured by the participants in *mystikos agon* with crowns, under penalty of expulsion from the contests. Archaeological excavations have revealed three bases of statues dedicated to Ulpus Aelius Pompeianus in Ankara, where he was honoured as *Euergetes*, *Helladarcha* and high priest, and it is likely that one of them is the one that was erected by the synod for Pompeianus’ *euergetic* activity.⁴⁹ The second statue was erected in the city of Neapolis, probably due to some yet unknown connection between Ulpus and the city. Another statue found in Ankara describes the new honour that the synod

45. Translation by Harland 2014 = <http://philipharland.com/greco-roman-associations/honorary-decree-by-performers-for-ulpius-aelius-pompeianus-128129-ce/>

46. Governor of Galatia: *PIR*² T 325.

47. Petzl and Schwertheim, 2006, pp. 30-31 point out that Pompeianus achieves the citizenship under Trajan, although he uses the demonym/gentilic of Hadrian, surely because of his closeness to the latter.

48. *IGR* III, 209; *SEG* 6, 59; *AE* 1926, 73; Mitchell and French, 2012, n° 141.

49. Mitchell and French, 2012, n° 139, n° 142 decree (*id.*, n° 141) is carved on one of the sides of the base of a statue, with another side including the dedication of the statue to Ulpus Pompeianus by the synod of *technitai* of Dionysos and of the emperor Trajan Hadrian Cesar Augustus (*id.* n° 140).

bestowed upon Ulpus Aelius Pompeianus. In this case, Torcuatus, the city *Helladarcha*, had the Synod erect two golden *tondi* with the image of Pompeianus which, as indicated in their inscriptions, had to be displayed in two of the most important points of the city.⁵⁰ It is possible that one of the *tondi* is nowadays preserved in the Museum of Anatolian Civilizations in Ankara. Stephen Mitchell has identified another of the two effigies of Pompeianus as a bronze *imago clipeata*, usually attributed to Emperor Trajan.⁵¹

Ulpus Aelius Pompeianus, the first *agonothetes* of Ankara's *mystikos agon*, can be linked to the diffusion of this type of *agon* to other cities of Asia Minor. In lines 7-8, of the previously discussed second stele a mystic celebration, this time in the city of Claudiopolis, is mentioned: ἀγώνος [μυστικοῦ ἐπιτελου | μὲν] ου ἐν τῇ Κλαυδ[εικονιέων πόλει].⁵² According to E. Bosch, Claudiopolis is to be identified with Iconinum, current Konya, which changed its name during the reign of Emperor Claudius. The relationship of this city with the Emperor Hadrian is rather weak: the only attestation of it indicates that Hadrian granted to the city the status of Roman colony and renamed it as *Adriana Augusta Iconensium*. It is possible that due to the imperial concession, the city deemed it appropriate to carry out some kind of celebration to honour the Emperor Hadrian. The fact that the *mystikos agon* of Iconium is mentioned in the stele where the honours that the synod grants Ulpus Aelius Pompeianus are listed could point to Pompeianus himself as the responsible for promotion of this kind of *agon* to a few other cities of Asia Minor.

Also in Side (Pamphylia) there is evidence of the organization of an *agon mystikos* dedicated to the emperor, Dionysus, and Demeter.⁵³ While the evidence for these ceremonies is from a later period, and the only dated inscription belongs to Commodus' times, the relationship between Hadrian and the two deities suggests that the *agon* was probably introduced during Hadrian's time.⁵⁴ S. Mitchell and D. French hypothesize that behind the foundation of the *agon* in Side was P. Aelius Pompeianus Paion, referred to as νέος Ὀμηρος,⁵⁵ winner of numerous competitions of poetry, songwriter, rhapsodos of the divine Hadrian, one of the leading members of the synod of the *technitai* in Hadrian's times, and responsible for the synod granting

50. *IGR* III, 210; *SEG* VI 58; Mitchell and French, 2012, p. 143.

51. Mitchell, 2014, pp. 1-10.

52. Reconstruction by Bosch, 1967, n° 130.

53. Robert, 1960, 366; Nollé, 1986, p. 205.

54. *I.Tral.* 135; *I.Side* 149.

55. *I.Side* II 70.

honours to Aelius Alcibiades.⁵⁶ S. Fein indicates that there is a connection between Pompeianus Paion and Ulpius Aelius Pompeianus of Ankara, and interprets Aelius Paion's choice of taking the cognomen Pompeianus as a way to display his cultural affinity with Ulpius Aelius Pompeianus. As pointed out by S. Mitchell and D. French, if this hypothesis is correct, it can surely "emphasize the importance of the latter as a leading personality in the artists' guild at this time, and explain the extraordinarily conspicuous honours that he received from its members."⁵⁷

2. THE HADRIAN AGONISTIC CALENDAR AND THE GREEK CITIES

Epigraphic evidence shows that there was a close relationship between the emperor and the synod of the *technitai*.⁵⁸ It is likely that the foundation of *mystikoi agones* in those cities where there is no evidence of the organization of any other games dedicated to Hadrian, is to be seen as the will to honour the emperor as the patron and benefactor of the synod, that is, as the New Dionysus. The stele found in Alexandria Troas includes three letters dated 134 AD, signed by the Emperor Hadrian and addressed to the συνόδῳ θυμελικῆ περιπολιστικῆ τῶν περὶ τὸν Διόνυσον τεχνειτῶν ἱερονεικῶν στεφανειτῶν ("the travelling musical union of artists associated with Dionysus and victorious in sacred and crowned contest") which describe Hadrian's major reorganization of all the *agones* held across the Roman empire. In the first and third of these letters a number of rules applying to the games are established, for examples on how the games were to be funded, how to punish misdemeanours, the privilege of *anaptosis* or banquet offered to the winners of the various contests, and the details of ceremony by which they were to be granted cash prizes, if applicable.⁵⁹

The second of the letters is the most interesting for the purpose of this article. In this one, the Emperor Hadrian organizes a calendar of the major agonistic games over a four-year cycle that began with the Olympics games, since they were "the oldest and most renown games in the Greek world" and ended with the Panhellenia games of Athens. Hadrian's agonistic calendar formed a new *periodos* or circuit that includes the most important games of the Roman Empire. Among them were obviously those games which constituted the *archaia periodos* (Olympia, Delphi, Isthmia and Nemea)

56. *I.Eph.* 22.

57. Fein, 1994, pp. 118-26; Mitchell and French, 2012, p. 308.

58. An edict found in Egypt states that the emperor favoured the association and granted to its members, among other things, juridical immunity and exemption from military service: Oliver, 1989, n° 96 A-C.

59. Petzl and Schwertheim, 2006.

and the three great Roman games of Nicopolis, Rome and Neapolis. Together with them there appear many civic games, which, by means of their integration into the *nea periodos* by the emperor, granted to their own cities a privileged status.

This could have been especially true in the case of the games dedicated to the Emperor Hadrian. Among the *agones* that constitute the Hadrianean circuit we do not find all of the *agones* dedicated to the emperor, but only some of them: the *Hadrianeia* of Smyrna, the *Hadrianeia* of Ephesus together with the *Hadrianeia*, the *Olympia* and the *Panhellenia* of Athens. By the integration of their games into the new calendar, the emperor had a powerful tool at his disposal for granting a privileged status to some Greek cities. It is possible that the emperor's decisions in this sense depended on the degree of closeness Hadrian had with the various city-elites, especially those who founded ceremonies dedicated to the emperor and even commemorated some of the most important events of his life and political career. To this end, a thorough analysis of the games would improve our insight and understanding of the reasons behind the emperor's choice to include specific games in his *nea periodos*, thus privileging specific cities.

2.1. SMYRNA

The Smyrna games are mentioned in lines 71-72 of the letters of Alexandria Troas where Hadrian established that they should begin on the 4th of January of the fourth Olympic year, that is, 137 AD: "The Smyrnaeans shall begin their local Hadrianeia⁶⁰ from the day before the Nones of January and will hold the festival for forty days".⁶¹ The city of Smyrna owed the celebration of the games dedicated to Hadrian to the sophist M. Antonius Polemo of Laodicea (Phrygia), who was based in Smyrna and had among his disciples Herod Atticus, as we know from inscriptions and Philostratos' works.⁶² His oratory skills earned the city of Smyrna an award of ten million drachmas from the emperor Hadrian, money that was used for the erection of a grain market, a temple and a *gymnasion*, the grandest of all Asia.⁶³ The last two buildings are mentioned in a Smyranean inscription, which can be dated to 124 AD by means of the consulate of M.A. and C. Bellicus Glabrio Tebanius Torquatus. The inscription

60. Epigraphic sources also refer to them as *Hadrianeia Olympia*, *Hadriana Olympia* or *Megala Hadriana Olympia*: IGR IV 1431; *I.Olymp.* 237; FD III.1, 549, 550; FD III.6, 143; IG II², 3162; *I.Tral.* 118, 136; IG XIV, 1102; IG II-III, 3169/70; *I.Eph.* 1615, 1131; *I.Smyrna* II.1, 660, 661 668.

61. Translation by Jones, 2007, p. 155.

62. In general on M. Antonio Polemon see Swain, 2007.

63. Philostr., VS 1, 25 (531).

includes a list of 25 names of the people who had carried out some kind of *euergesia*, probably destined to the *gymnasion*. Lines 28-38 mention the *euergesia* which the Emperor Hadrian had accepted to carry out “through the help of Antonius Polemo”. Among these *euergesiai* there is the second *neokoria* which was granted to the city before or in 124 AD with the approval of the Senate, and the organization of the ceremonies associated with the imperial cult: payments to theologians and *hymnodoi*;⁶⁴ funds for the 92 columns for the *gymnasion*, 72 of marble from Synnada, 20 of Numidian marble and 6 of porphyry; and the celebration of a sacred *agon*, which represents a likely reference to the *Hadrianeia* games.

Polemon’s closeness to the emperor and the benefits that he achieved for the city made so that Smyrna granted him and his heirs, among other honours, a life-long *agonothetia*: “heaped on the head of Polemo all the wreaths of honour that were theirs to give, decreeing for himself and his family the distinctions most sought after in Smyrna; for they bestowed on him and his descendants the right to preside over the Olympic games founded by Hadrian, and to go on board the sacred trireme”, a position which he held with great devotion.⁶⁵

2.2. EPHEBUS

Ephesus’ games appear twice in the letters of Alexandria Troas. The first mention is in lines 45-47, which mention the process by which the games dedicated to Hadrian had been instituted: “I have also written to the councils of the provinces indicating that the Ephesians have distributed the categories in the *Balbilleia* between two contests, and that those who win the *Hadrianeia* there must receive the contributions as they received them when they won the *Balbilleia*. This has also been written to Petronius Mamertinus, my friend and the prefect of Egypt, so that there too payment is to be made to victors in the *Hadrianeia* of Ephesus”.⁶⁶ These lines describe how the contests which initially were part of the *Balbilleia* games were split into two different *agones*: the *Balbilleia* and the newly-created *Hadrianeia*. The *Balbilleia* included all kinds of contests, such as competitions of trumpeters and heralds, and athletic disciplines such as *stadion*, *dolichos*, *pentathlon*, *pankration*, boxing, wrestling and even rhetoric contests or musical ones such as the Pythian flute.⁶⁷ Since the inscriptions that

64. About their function see Fontani, 2007, pp. 237-240.

65. Philostr. *V S I* 25 (534).

66. Translated by Jones, 2007, p. 154.

67. Lehner, 2004, pp. 177 and 179, n° 4.

relate the winners of the *Hadrianeia* of Ephesus⁶⁸ also include contests which were held in the *Balbilleia*, Y.-J. Strasser concludes that “il a été remarqué que ce partage des épreuves entre *Balbilleia* et *Hadrianeia*, si tel est le cas, n’a pas duré, puisque les mêmes spécialités sont connues pour l’un et l’autre concours” and that “les *Balbilleia* et les *Hadrianeia* tels qu’on les connaît dès la seconde moitié du II^e s. ne peuvent être seulement le résultat du partage des épreuves en deux concours”.⁶⁹

There is a great deal of epigraphic evidence about the *Hadrianeia* games founded *ex novo* in Ephesus.⁷⁰ We know the name of several of the *agonothetai*, such as Aristokrates of Ceramo, M. Fulvio Publicanus and M. Antonius Lollianus, with some of them even having been appointed for life such as Cn. Dottius or P. Vedius Papianus Antoninus.⁷¹ It is interesting to notice how all inscriptions, including the Cn. Dottius’ one, refer to the games as *Megala Hadrianeia*. M.N. Tod rightly sees the *megala* as referring to the magnitude of the games themselves that the *agonothetai* are funding, and not to the imperial cult.⁷² Under this perspective, the games’ titulature would be another tool for the competition among city-elites in their attempt to be remembered as great *euergetai* and *maecenates* of the polis.

The second mention of the Ephesian games in the letters of Alexandria Troad occurs at lines 69-70, where it is stated that: “The Ephesians shall leave an interval of four days from the shield(-race) in Pergamum and the contest shall be finished on the fortieth (day) from the beginning”.⁷³ Hadrian does not specify which Ephesian games are the ones inserted in the third Olympic year of his calendar, and the issue has been the subject of scientific debate. Scholars are split between two hypotheses, either that those were the games organized by the *Koinon* Asia, or that they were the *Hadrianeia* games. The editors of the letters of Alexandria Troas, G. Petzl and E. Schwertheim, together with L. Shear, opt for the games of the *Koinon* Asia to be placed in December-January of the third Olympic year. On the other hand, W.J. Slater and J.-Y. Strasser place the *Hadrianeia* of Ephesus games in June of the second Olympic year, while

68. Lämmer, 1967, pp. 53-55.

69. Strasser, 2010, p. 605, n° 25.

70. *Olymp* 237; *I.Anazarbus* 25; *CIL* III 296; *I.Eph.* 724, 730, 618, 1083, 1085a, 1087a, 1132, 1153 1604, 2072, 4114; *EA* 1990, 34-36 = *SEG* 40, 1141; *I.Tral.* 117, 135; *EA* 1993, 131-133, pl. 16 = *SEG* 43, 731; *IG* XIV, 739, 1102, 1113; *FD* III.1, 550; *IG* II-III, 3169/70; *IGR* IV, 1432; *IGR* III, 370; *CIG* 2810, 5913; *SNGD* 1957ff, 1905; *SNGR* 1942 ff. 443. On the *grammateus* of the *agon*: Lämmer, 1967, p. 58.

71. *I.Eph.* 618, 724, 730, 1085a, 1087a, 1153.

72. Also *megala* in: Erytrea: *IGR* IV, 1542; Smyrna: *I.Smyrna* II.1, 661; Thyatira: *SEG* 49, 1703, *I.Smyrna* 668 and *TAM* V.2, 1026 = *IGR* IV, 1260.

73. Translated by Jones, 2007, p. 155.

P. Gouw inserts them in July of the 3rd Olympic year. The latest contribution to this problem has been by R. Gordillo, who inserts the Hadrianean games of Ephesus in December-January of the third Olympic year, thus linking the games to the celebration of the birthday of Emperor Hadrian.

2.3. ATHENS

Three Athenian games dedicated to the emperor, the *Hadrianeia*, the *Olympia* and the *Panhellenia*, are included in Hadrian's *nea periodos*. The first two games were entirely organized by the city, while the third one, although it takes place in Athens, was organized by the Panhellenion, a newly founded league of cities. Lines 62-63 of the letters of Alexandria Troas state that: "After the Olympia shall be the Isthmia, and after the Isthmia the *Hadrianeia*, so that the contest begins on the next day after the festival at Eleusis ends".⁷⁴ As various scholars have pointed out, the fact the *panegyris* of Eleusis⁷⁵ and the *Hadrianeia* were held in subsequent days indicates that *Hadrianeia* games had to be held in a location close to the Eleusinian sanctuary, probably Athens, since otherwise the athletes would not have the time to travel from one event to the other. Epigraphic evidence does not indicate the time of the foundation of the *Hadrianeia*.⁷⁶ They are likely to have been found in 124/125 AD on occasion of the celebration of the first visit of Emperor Hadrian. Epigraphic evidence shows that in 124/125 AD the Athenian calendar started on the 1st of Boedromion, while previously it started on the 1st of Hecatombeon.⁷⁷ According to O. Palagia, this alteration is due to Hadrian's plan to associate the figure of Augustus with the Athenian polis. Since 9/8 AD, the Asian cities followed a common calendar in which the new year began on the 23rd of September, Augustus' birth day.⁷⁸ Palagia hypothesizes that Hadrian changed the beginning of the Athenian calendar to the month of Boedromion, thus following the Asian calendar, in order to promote the cult of Augustus in Athens.⁷⁹ However, there are a number of problems with this interpretations. First, of all, Roman emperors did not usually get involved in changes to the provincial or

74. Translated by Jones, 2007, p. 155.

75. On the identification of Eleusis' contests see Le Guen, 2010, p. 213; Strasser, 2010, pp. 610-611.

76. *FD* III.4, 308; *FD* III.6, 143; *CIG* 3674; *TAM* II, 587; *FD* III.1, 89, 547, 549 A-D; *BE* 1970, 16; *IG* III 20; *IG* XIV, 739 = *IGR* I, 444; *I.Eph.* 2072; *IG* XIV, 1102; *FD* III.1, 550; *IGR* IV, 1761; *I.Sardis* VII 79; Robert, 1989, 647-668; *I.Eph.* 1112, 1131, 1613; *IGR* IV, 1432; *FD* III.1, 555.

77. Follet, 1976, p. 117.

78. *OGI* 458.

79. Palagia, 2008, p. 228.

civic calendars. When Julius Caesar changed the official Roman, not all provinces and cities of the empire adopted the new calendar, as it was the case of Athens, which continued with their measurement system based on lunar time. Similarly, the aforementioned new calendar for Asia was the work of the “Greeks of the Province of Asia” who, urged by Paulus Fabius Maximus, proposed to change the day of the new year to the 23rd of September in order to express their gratitude to the emperor for his generosity toward them. If the Athenian citizens decided to change the calendar and make the new year begin on the 1st of Boedromion, their intention was probably to honour, rather than Augustus, the emperor Hadrian, whose words as related by an inscription stated ἴστε ὡς πάσαις χρῶμαι προφάσεσιν τοῦ εὐ ποιεῖν καὶ | δημοσίᾳ τὴν πόλιν καὶ ἰδίᾳ Ἀθηναίων τινάς· (“know that I take every occasion to benefit both the city publicly and any of the Athenians privately”).⁸⁰

In the month of Boedromion the great Eleusinian Mysteries, the rituals to Demeter and Kore, took place in Eleusis. We know that Emperor Hadrian participated in them twice, in the year 124 AD in order to achieve the rank of *mystes*, and in 128/129 AD in order to become *epoptes*.⁸¹ In coinage iconography his initiation is represented by the emperor wearing toga civilis and by the legend HADRIANUS AUGUSTUS PATER PATRIAE REN(atus), that is, he who has participated in the mysteries and was reborn.⁸²

The new Athenian calendar year started on the 1st of Boedromion, thus coinciding with the start of ephebic year. The *Hadrianeia* games for the *epheboi* were probably founded in the same year as the *Hadrianeia* Panhellenic games, which were held every four years and enjoyed the participation of the most prestigious athletes of the empire.⁸³ According to P. Graindor, the ephebic games were founded in 124/125 AD in connection with the changes to the Attic calendar, and were officially held for the first time in 125/126 AD.⁸⁴ It is possible that both games, the athletic and the ephebic, were created at the same time, in occasion of the first visit of Emperor Hadrian. Thus, if we take the new *Hadrianeia periodos* of Alexandria Troas as the frame of reference, the *Hadrianeia* games would have been held in November of the first Olympic year, i.e. 133 A.D. Therefore, this year would make it the third time that the

80. *IG II²*, 1102, ll. 10-11. Translated by Oliver, 1970, p. 216.

81. *Aur. Vic.*, 14, 4; *HA, Had.* 13, 1; Galimberti, 2007, p. 131; Birley, 1997, p. 175.

82. Kuhlmann, 2002, p. 75.

83. *IG III*, 121, 1108, 1113, 1114, 1119, 1120a, 1121, 1122, 1123, 1124, 1128, 1129, 1133, 1138, 1146, 1147, 1160, 1162, 1168, 1169, 1171, 1173, 1177, 1185, 1188, 1192, 1193, 1197, 1202.

84. Graindor, 1922, p. 180.

Hadrianeia were held, following their inauguration in 125 AD and their celebration for the second time in 129 AD.

Other Athenian games that appear in the new Hadrianic *periodos* are the *Olympia*.⁸⁵ Line 70 of the letter of Alexandria Troas states that “(The contestants shall go) to the Joint (Festival) of the Achaeans and Arcadians in Mantinea, and then to the Olympia. In this year the Panhellenia take place”.⁸⁶ As shown by J. Y. Strasser, the *Olympia* games referred to in this line are those that were held in Athens as they are referred to as Ὀλύμπεια, a term used together with Ὀλύμπεια to designate the Athens Games, while the term Ὀλύμπια was used for the Games of Olympia.⁸⁷ In Athens Hadrian, among other things, financed the works of completion of the *Olympieion*, and epigraphic evidence shows that this *euergesia* was celebrated by the city who gave the emperor, among others, the title of *Olympios* in 128/129 AD. It is likely that in that same year the city founded the *Olympia* games to honour the emperor’s new title and his patronage of the city.⁸⁸ The first celebration of the Olympia could have been carried out in 133 AD, as can be implied from the inscription of the *auletes* P. Elius Elianus.⁸⁹

The letters of Alexandria Troas only state that the *Panhellenia* games, which closed the agonistic circuit, and the Athenian *Olympia* were held in the same year, without specifying the month. The inscriptions of some athletes represent the main evidence for the dating of the *Olympia* games. Line 25 of the inscription of M. Aurelio Asclepiades, a pancratiast of around 200 A.D., lists the games won by him in this order: Ἀθήνας ε΄, Παναθήναια, Ὀλύμπεια, Πανελλήνια.⁹⁰ By means of comparison to the order in which the other cities celebrations appear, it is likely that the distribution of Athenian games followed a chronological order within the Olympic circuit, first the *Panathenaia*, then the *Olympia*, and finally the *Panhellenia*. Thus, the *Olympia* would have taken place at some time between *Panathenaia* and *Panhellenia*. In the athletic inscription of an unknown pentathlete of Ephesus from the second half of the second century AD the order of the games mentioned after the *Panathenaia* games

85. *IG* V.1, 479; *CIG* 1068, 2810b, 2811b; *TAM* II 587; *I.Tral.* 117, 136; *IG* XIV 739, 1102, 1112; *IG* II² 3161, 3162, 3303, 3687, 3966a, 4075; *I.Sardis* VII 79; *FD* III.1, 547, 549; Moretti, 1953, n° 75; *I.Eph.* 1131; *I.Smyrna* II.1, 661.

86. Translated by Jones, 2007, p. 155.

87. Strasser, 2010, pp. 614-615.

88. *Camia*, 2011b, pp. 36-42. On the date see Graindor, 1934, p. 42; Follet, 1976, p. 346.

89. *FD* III.1 547; Luberto, 2018, p. 55.

90. *IG* XIV, 1102.

is Ἴσθ[θ]μία ἐν Ἴσθμῷ γ', Μαντίνειαν, Λακεδαίμον[α τὸ β', Ὀ]λύμπεια ἐν Ἀθήναις.⁹¹ Unfortunately, the inscription does not specify which games were won in Mantinea by said pentathlete. However, the vast list of Aurelio M. Damas Demonstratos indicates that he won games [κοινὰ Ἀρκ]άδων ἐν Μαντινείᾳ γ' [Λακεδαί]μονα ζ'.⁹² If, as the inscription of Damas shows, the games held before the Spartan Games are to be identified with the games of the *Koinon* of the Arcadians in Mantinea, it is likely that the mention of Mantinea in the inscription of the unknown *pentathlete* actually refers to the *koinon* of the Arcadians itself. The Hadrianean calendar frequently establishes the temporal sequence Isthmia – *Koinon* Mantineans – *Olympia* of Athens. Thus, placing the games of Mantinea after the Isthmia games in the fourth Olympic year would mean that the *Olympia* games would have taken place just after the *Koinon* of Arcadians, probably around the Attic month of Poseideon.

Epigraphic and literary sources provide no clear reason for choosing the month of Poseideon in order to celebrate the *Olympia*. However, epigraphic evidence shows that at some point after 124/125 AD the name of the Athenian intercalary month, Poseideon, is altered. The traditionally named *embolimos* (Ποσειδεῶν Β') becomes *Hadrianion* (Ἀδριανίων), in honour of the emperor.⁹³ The change in nomenclature of the months in the provincial calendars as a way to honour the emperors was a common practice, either by means of the emperor's proper name, or with an epithet such as Σεβαστός or Καισαριος. In Egypt, the month of Choiak (December) was renamed Ἀδριανός, obviously with the aim of honouring the emperor. Scholars explain the change in the Egyptian nomenclature which was performed around 130 AD as meant to commemorate the journey of Hadrian and his retinue across Egypt.⁹⁴ However, the studies by K. Scott on Egyptian epigraphy show that "the month Ἀδριανός was in use as early as 119/120 or perhaps in 118/119".⁹⁵ According to Scott, the only date that justifies the change in the nomenclature of the Choiak month is the 10th of December of 117 AD, the day when Hadrian received his second *tribunicia potestas*. Although the choice of the month Poseideon remains open to debate, it is possible to hypothesize that the Athenians followed the Egyptian example in choosing the month Poseideon = Choiak = December for celebrating the Emperor Hadrian. Therefore, the change of the name of the intercalary month and the celebration of the

91. Moretti, 1953, n° 75.

92. *I.Sardis* VII 79.

93. Follet, 1976, p. 363.

94. Weber, 1907, p. 257; Birley, 1997, p. 252.

95. Scott, 1931, p. 261.

Olympia games in the month of Poseideon could reflect the Eastern tradition, started by Egypt, of commemorating Hadrian receiving the *tribunicia potestas* in Rome.

Therefore, the city of Athens had two games that were under its own supervision. There is no epigraphic evidence that mentions the names of the *agonothetai* of the *Hadrianeia* games. S. Follet assumes on the basis of an inscription mentioning [--ἀγωνοθ]έτην θεὸν Ἀδρια[νὸν] that the Emperor Hadrian received the lifetime *agonothesia* of the games.⁹⁶ However, there is no hard evidence for this hypothesis and for disclosing the identity of the heirs of the *agonothesia* after the death of the emperor. On the other hand, for the *Olympia* there is some epigraphic evidence of the names of some of the members of city-elite who received the *agonothesiai*: T. Flavio? (Hadrianic period),⁹⁷ Elio Ardys (150/151 AD), Pomp. Hegias (3rd century AD) and Iulios Mousonios.

The *agones* that closed the Hadrianic *nea periodos* were the *Panhellenia* games of Athens: “after the *Balbilleia* (come) the *Panhellenia* and the *Olympia* following the *Panhellenia*”.⁹⁸ Probably the *Panhellenian* games⁹⁹ were founded in 131/132 AD on occasion of the third and last voyage of the Emperor Hadrian to Athens, but they would not be actually held until after a few years later. During the visit to Athens, Hadrian presided over the inauguration of the temple of Zeus Olympios¹⁰⁰ and the creation of a new supra-civic league, the *Panhellenion*.¹⁰¹ The league was a coalition of cities that had passed through a strict admission process, the main requisite being their ability to provide proof of their Greek ethnic identity.¹⁰² An example of this process is the attempt by city of Synnada to link its origins with Athens, as can be seen from the coin iconography, which displays not only hints at Synnada’s origins as a Ionian colony,¹⁰³ but also Athens’ identifying attributes such as the goddess Ath-

96. Follet, 1976, p. 348.

97. *Id.* 250, 346.

98. Petzl and Schwertheim, 2006, ll. 72-73.

99. *I.Olymp.* 237; *OGI* 404, 3833; *AE* 1969, 30; *AE* 2001, 1826; *IG* III 17, 32, 129, 370, 681, 1141, 1199; *TAM* II 587; *IG* X 181; *IG* XIV 739, 1102; *I.Sardis* VII 79; *IG* IV 1474; *IG* II² 1106, 3162, 3163, 3649; *IG* VII 49; *SEG* 34, 176; *SEG* 36, 258; *I.Smyrna* 661; *I.Eph.* 1131, 1613; Oliver, 1970, nn° 19, 21; Follet, 1976, p. 345, n° 2.

100. St. Byz., *s.v. Olympieion*; Philostr., *VS* I 25, 3 (533).

101. *IG* II² 3289; *IG* IV 1052. On the *Panhellenion* see Spawforth and Walker, 1985 and 1986; Gordillo, 2012; Corcella, Monaco and Nuzzo, 2013; Monaco, 2018.

102. Romeo, 2002, p. 21.

103. *BMC PHRYGIA* Synnada: 396 n° 23. Dated around the time between Claudius’ and Galienus’ rule. The obverse shows a depiction of a bearded Thynnaros with the legend ΣΥΝΝΑ Α ΔΕ ΩΝ. The reverse shows a Thyche with the legend ΙΩΝ ΩΝ. Another example appears in *BMC PHRYGIA* Synnada:

ena Polias,¹⁰⁴ the owl, and even the panathenaic amphorae that were granted to the winners of the *Panathenaea* contests.¹⁰⁵ Stephanus of Byzantium, a sixth century AD writer, hints in his *Ethnics* at the issue of Synnada's origins by means of an allusion to the journey of Ionian Acamas, son of Theseus, who founded the city and populated him with Macedonians.¹⁰⁶ In order to support its entry in the Panhellenion, Synnada began a campaign publicising its alleged Athenian ties,¹⁰⁷ and founded the *Panathenaia Hadrianea* games, with the denomination *Panathenaia* providing a connection with Athens' own *Panathenaia*.

The complex organization of the Panhellenion League had its head in the Archon of the Panhellenion, together with an assistant, the *antarchon*. Underneath them were the *panhellenes*, the representatives of the cities that belonged to the Panhellenion. The functions of the league were political-administrative ones such as of seat of judicial proceedings, court of appeal, and representative body of its member cities before the imperial power; also religious ones, such as the organization of the cult of the emperor Hadrian Πανελλήνιος,¹⁰⁸ and of new *agones*, the *Panhellenia*.¹⁰⁹

The Panhellenian games were managed by the Panhellenion League without any interference from Athens. Epigraphic sources indicate that the offices of Archon of the league, that of the priest of Hadrian *Panhellenios* (ἱερέα θεοῦ Ἀδριανοῦ Πανελληνίου) and that of *agonothetes* of the Panhellenian Games were held by the same person,¹¹⁰ so that the archon likely also supervised the league, the imperial cult

396 n° 26, with the legend ΣΥΝΝΑΔΕΩΝΙΩΝΩΝ. and the depiction of a conical mountain on the reverse. See also in the same catalogue other example at p. 405, n° 67; p. 406, nn° 70, 71, 73.

104. RPC 8500, dated around the second century AD. On its obverse there is a Thyche wearing a tower-crown with no legend. On the reverse there is Athena with her full attributes and the ΣΥΝΝΑΔΕΩΝ, which represents a direct connection between the cities of Synnada and Athens

105. RPC 9999: dated around second century AD. The obverse shows a depiction of Thynnaros, with the legend ΘΥΝΝΑΡΟΣ. The reverse shows the Athenian owl and the commemorative amphoras which were given to the winners of the Panathenaic games.

106. St. Byz., Σύναδα.

107. It is likely that the mind behind the propagandistic campaign was Tiberius Claudius Attalos Andragathos, who among other things was the eponym archon of Athens in 140/141 AD (*IG II² 2047*), *panhellene* of Synnada, *strategos* of the hoplites and priest of Dionysos *Choreios*, of Zeus *Eleutherios* (*IG II 1075 + 2291 c = SEG 30, 89 C, 16; IG V 45d2*) and of the *Homonoia* of the Greeks in Platea (*IG II² 1105 = SEG 30, 86*). In general on Tiberius Claudius Attalos see Nafissi, 1995.

108. *IG II² 3626, 3386; IGR IV 552, 1157; SEG 39, 242; SEG 15, 530*.

109. Cass. Dio LXIX 16, 2; *Eusebii pamphili chronici canones*, 260-282. This passage mentions the emperor's deeds in his sixteenth year of rule (132/133 AD). Follet, 1976, p. 348 links this passage with the *Hadrianeaia* games, while according to Strasser, 2000, p. 569 it refers to the *Panhellenia* games.

110. Camia, 2011b, p. 45; Gordillo, 2012, pp. 69-73.

and also the games associated with it, the *Panhellenia*.¹¹¹ The election of a new archon among the *panhellenes* every four years allowed the cities of the Panhellenion, in spite of the fact that they did not organize their own games in honour of Hadrian, to show their devotion to the emperor by means of the Panhellenian games. The names of the archons who received also the *agonothesai*: Herodes Attico (reign of Hadrian); Q. Elio Epicteto (reign of Hadrian-A. Pius); T. Flavio Cylo (153-157 AD); T. Elio Gemio Macedo (189-93 AD).¹¹²

3. CONCLUSIONS

Under the rule of Emperor Hadrian many cities organized agonistic games dedicated to the emperor. Hadrian's journeys to the Greek territories were likely the impulse behind the cities' attempts to honour the emperor by means of dedicating such games to him. To the emperor, the games represented an useful tool for spreading the imperial cult by means of Hellenic rituals that would be widely accepted across the Greek territories. On the other hand, the city-elites who organized the games used them as an opportunity to distinguish themselves and to obtain from the emperor titles and honours for both themselves and their city. But also supra-civic entities such as the synods of athletes and *technitai*, with the latter being responsible for the founding of the *mystikos agon* dedicated to the emperor as New Dionysus in Ankara, Side and Iconium, were the recipients of the emperor's favour thanks to their connection to the games.

The analysis of *agones* held in honour of Hadrian also provides insight into the degree of closeness between civic elites and the emperor. Specifically, those cities that did not enjoy especially close ties with the emperor were the ones who tended to organize "Hadrianean games" more or less on their own initiative. For example, the cities of Thespieae and Xanthos, who already were holding games in honour of the emperor at least since the times of Trajan, simply included Hadrian's name in the titulature of their traditional games. On the other hand, a much stronger effort in seeking the emperor's favour than simply adding his name can be observed in those cities that founded "Hadrianean games" *ex novo*. The occasion of Hadrian's visits had many cities seeking funding to commemorate the arrival of the emperor, and the creation of *una tantum agones* such as those in Erytrea, Athens, Tebtynis,

111. IG IP² 1093, 2243, 3626; IG IV 1474. IG X.2, 181; IGR IV 573 y 576. Philostr., VS 1, 3 y 2, 17; Camia, 2011a, p. 104.

112. Spawforth and Walker, 1985, pp. 84-85.

Thyateira, Coela, Tralles, Gaza, Alexandria, Attuda, Bitinia-Claudiopolis, Magnesia ad Sipylum, Oenoanda and Sardis. Those cities which the emperor not only visited but granted titles or benefits to, create permanent *agones* that are documented to have been held until the third century AD, such as those in Heraclea, Anazarbus, Antioch, Tarsus or Cyzicus.

Hadrian included in his *nea periodos* only five *agones* entirely dedicated to the emperor himself. The cities that organized these *agones*, Ephesus, Smyrne and Athens acquired thus a privileged status compared to other cities whose “Hadrianean games” were not included in the *nea periodos*, and such inclusion is probably to be linked to the commemorations on behalf of these cities of great achievements of the emperor and important moments of his life. The games of Ephesus and Smyrna were held in January, which might be related to the celebration Hadrian’s birth day; the *Hadrianeia* games of Athens were held in the month of Boedromion, which hints at their possible function of commemorating the emperor’s “rebirth” after his initiation to the mysteries of Eleusis; and placing the *Olympia* in December would link them to the celebration of Hadrian’s *tribunicia potestas*. Finally, the Panhellenia celebrated the founding of the Panhellenion League and the union of all Greeks under one *koinon* of imperial creation.

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