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978-1-107-05078-5 - The End of Greek Athletics in Late Antiquity
Sofie Remijsen
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THE END OF GREEK ATHLETICS IN LATE ANTIQUITY

This book presents the first comprehensive study of how and why athletic contests, a characteristic aspect of Greek culture for over a millennium, disappeared in late antiquity. In contrast to previous discussions, which focus on the ancient Olympics, the end of the most famous games is analyzed here in the context of the collapse of the entire international agonistic circuit, which encompassed several hundred contests. The first part of the book describes this collapse by means of a detailed analysis of the fourth- and fifth-century history of the athletic games in each region of the Mediterranean: Greece, Asia Minor, Syria, Egypt, Italy, Gaul, and northern Africa. The second half continues by explaining these developments, challenging traditional theories (especially the ban by the Christian emperor Theodosius I), and discussing in detail both the late-antique socio-economic context and the late-antique perceptions of athletics.

SOFIE REMIJSEN is Junior Professor in the Department of History at the University of Mannheim.

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Even after the Emperor Theodosius' edict suppressing the antique Olympiads had broken the thread of athletic tradition, there remained here and there modest gymnasia where obstinate amateurs lingered; but they were no longer lit by the gleams of artistic beauty and intellectual efforts, for mind had become divorced from muscle. This obscure epoch deserves research. I should have liked to lead the way myself; I shall not be able, and hope that others may share this ambition. Who knows whether such research might not help us better to grasp the character and scope of those outbursts of energy of which the Greek empire time and again provides a fascinating and mysterious spectacle throughout the thousand years of its stormy history?

Baron Pierre de Coubertin on February 24, 1918

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Acknowledgements

Occasionally, people ask me whether I like sports. As I have been studying Greek athletics since the summer of 2006, they often react with surprise when I admit that, outside of academia, I'm not such a sporty person. At the start of this book, therefore, I would like to thank the person who brought me in touch with this, for me unlikely, topic: Willy Clarysse, an extremely enthusiastic papyrologist and occasional critic of sports devotees. After he hired me to make a website on Greek athletics in cooperation with his Chinese colleagues in Beijing, I discovered that athletics can also offer a fascinating perspective on society and culture at large, and hope that the readers of this book will too.

This monograph represents a revised version of a Ph.D. thesis written 2008–11 at the University of Leuven, with the help of a scholarship from the Research Foundation of Flanders, and under the supervision of Willy Clarysse. I greatly appreciated the intellectual, practical, and social support of a fantastic team of colleagues at the Leuven ancient history department. Some of the earliest research for this Ph.D. happened during a research stay at the University of Cincinnati, made possible by Peter van Minnen, and made easy by local support from Andrew Connor. In 2010, several chapters were written at the Kommission für Alte Geschichte und Epigraphik in Munich, a visit made possible by Christof Schuler, Rudolf Haensch, and the Jacobi Stiftung. Earlier versions of some chapters have been published as separate articles after being presented at conferences in Bloomington, Vienna, Exeter, and Nijmegen (Remijsen 2012, 2014, 2015a, and 2015b in the bibliography), and thus profited from the feedback of various respondents. Additionally, my research was aided by the kindness of several scholars who gave me access to their unpublished work, especially Ine Jacobs, Johannes Hahn, Alexander Puk, Jean-Yves Strasser, and likewise Nick Gonis and Dominic Rathbone, who gave me early access to the papyri on sport published in *P. Oxy.* LXXIX.

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Abbreviations

AE	<i>L'Année Épigraphique</i>
AJA	<i>American Journal of Archaeology</i>
I.Hierapolis	<i>Altertümer von Hierapolis</i> , by C. Humann <i>e.a.</i> , Berlin, 1898.
BCH	<i>Bulletin de Correspondance Hellénique</i>
BGU	See P.
BL	<i>Berichtungsliste der Griechischen Papyrusurkunden aus Ägypten</i> , Leiden, 1922–.
CC SL	<i>Corpus Christianorum Series Latina</i> , Turnhout, 1953.
CIG	<i>Corpus Inscriptionum Graecarum</i> , Berlin, 1828–1877.
CIL	<i>Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum</i> , Berlin, 1863.
CPR	See P.
CRAI	<i>Comptes-rendus des séances de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres</i>
DNP	<i>Der neue Pauly. Enzyklopädie der Antike</i> , ed. H. Cancik, H. Schneider, and M. Landfester, Stuttgart, 1996–2003.
FD III	<i>Fouilles de Delphes: III. Épigraphie</i> . Paris, 1929–.
FGrH	<i>Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker</i> , by F. Jacoby <i>e.a.</i> , Leiden, 1923–.
HSCP	<i>Harvard Studies in Classical Philology</i>
IAG	<i>Iscrizioni agonistiche greche</i> , by L. Moretti, Rome, 1953.
IAPH2007	<i>Inscriptions of Aphrodisias</i> , by J. Reynolds, C. Roueché, and G. Bodard, 2007: http://insaph/kcl.ac.uk/iaph2007 .
IC	<i>Inscriptiones Creticae</i> , by M. Guarducci, Rome, 1935–1950.
I.Corinth	<i>Corinth VIII</i> , by J. H. Kent, Princeton, N.J., 1931–1966.

- I.Cos *Iscrizioni di Cos*, by M. Segre, Rome, 1993–2007.
 I.Didyma *Didyma: II. Die Inschriften*, by A. Rehm, Berlin, 1958.
 IG *Inscriptiones Graecae*, Berlin, 1877–.
 IGLS *Inscriptions grecques et latines de la Syrie*, Paris, 1929–.
 IGR *Inscriptiones Graecae ad res Romanas pertinentes*, by R. Cagnat *e.a.*, Paris, 1911–1927.
 IGUR *Inscriptiones Graecae Urbis Romae*, by L. Moretti, Rome, 1968–1990.
 IJHS *International Journal of the History of Sport*
 IJO *Inscriptiones Judaicae Orientis*, by W. Ameling, Tübingen, 2004.
 IK *Inschriften griechischer Städte aus Kleinasien*, Bonn, 1972–.
 I.Kition *Kition dans les textes: Testimonia littéraires et épigraphiques et corpus des inscriptions*, by M. Yon *e.a.*, Paris, 2004.
 ILAfr *Inscriptions latines d'Afrique: Tripolitaine, Tunisie, Maroc*, by R. Cagnat, A. Merlin, and L. Chatelain, Paris, 1923.
 ILAlg *Inscriptions latines de l'Algérie*, by S. Gsell and E. Albertini *e.a.*, Paris, 1922–1976.
 ILCV *Inscriptiones Latinae Christianae Veteres*, by E. Diehl, Berlin, 1924–1967.
 ILS *Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae*, by H. Dessau, Berlin, 1892–1916.
 IM *Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts. Istanbuler Abteilung*
 I.Memnonion *Les graffites grecs du Memnonion d'Abydos*, by P. Perdrizet and G. Lefebvre, Nancy, Paris, and Strasbourg, 1919.
 I.Métr.Ég. *Inscriptions métriques de l'Égypte gréco-romaine*, by É. Bernand, Paris, 1969.
 I.Napoli *Iscrizioni greche d'Italia: Napoli*, by E. Miranda, Rome, 1990–1995.
 I.Porto *Iscrizioni greche d'Italia: Porto*, by G. Sacco, Rome, 1984.
 IvM *Die Inschriften von Magnesia am Maeander*, by O. Kern, Berlin, 1900.
 IvMilet *Inschriften von Milet (Milet. Ergebnisse der Ausgrabungen und Untersuchungen seit dem Jahre*

List of abbreviations

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- 1899 6), by A. Rehm, W. Günther, and P. Herrmann, Berlin, 1997–2006.
- IvO *Die Inschriften von Olympia (Olympia. Die Ergebnisse der von dem deutschen Reich veranstalteten Ausgrabung 5)*, by W. Dittenberger and K. Purgold, Berlin, 1896.
- IvP *Die Inschriften von Pergamon (Altortümer von Pergamon 8)*, by M. Fränkel, Berlin, 1890–1895.
- JÖAI *Jahreshefte des Österreichischen Archäologischen Institutes*
- JRA *Journal of Roman Archaeology*
- JRS *Journal of Roman Studies*
- LSJ *A Greek–English Lexicon: Revised and Augmented Throughout by Sir Henry Stuart Jones with the Assistance of Roderick McKenzie*, by H. G. Liddell and R. Scott, Oxford, 1940.
- MAMA *Monumenta Asiae Minoris Antiqua*, Manchester and London, 1928.
- M.Chr. See P.
- O. See P.
- OF *Olympische Forschungen*, Berlin, 1944–.
- OMS *Opera Minora Selecta*, by L. Robert, Amsterdam, 1969–1990.
- OGIS *Orientis Graeci Inscriptiones Selectae*, by W. Dittenberger, Leipzig, 1903–1905.
- P. . . . /Pap. All abbreviations referring to editions of papyri or ostraca can be found in the online *Checklist of Editions of Greek, Latin, Demotic and Coptic Papyri, Ostraca and Tablets*: http://library.duke.edu/rubenstein/scriptorium/papyrus/texts/clist_papyri.html.
- PG *Patrologia Graeca*, by J. P. Migne *e.a.*, Paris, 1857–1866.
- PIR² *Prosopographia Imperii Romani. Saec. I, II, III*, 2nd edn., Berlin, 1933–.
- PLRE *The Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire*, by J. R. Martindale, A. H. M. Jones, and J. Morris, Cambridge, 1971–1992.
- PO *Patrologia Orientalis*, Paris, 1904–.
- PSI See P.
- RE *Paulys Realencyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft*, ed. A. Pauly, G. Wissowa *e. a.*, Stuttgart, 1894–1980.

xviii	<i>List of abbreviations</i>
RM	<i>Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts. Römische Abteilung</i>
Sardis VII	<i>Sardis: VII. Greek and Latin Inscriptions</i> , by W. H. Buckler and D. M. Robinson, Leiden, 1932.
SB	See P.
SC	<i>Sources chrétiennes</i> , Paris, 1942–.
SEG	<i>Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum</i> , Leiden and Amsterdam, 1923–.
SPP	See P.
Steinepigramme	<i>Steinepigramme aus dem griechischen Osten</i> , by R. Merkelbach and J. Stauber, Stuttgart, 1998–2004.
St.Pont. III	<i>Studia Pontica III. Recueil des inscriptions grecques et latines du Pont et de l'Arménie</i> , by J. G. C. Anderson, F. Cumont, and H. Grégoire, Brussels, 1910.
<i>Suppl.Epi.Rodio</i>	“Supplemento epigrafico rodio,” by G. Pugliese Carratelli, <i>Annuario della scuola archeologica di Atene e delle missioni italiane in Oriente</i> , 30–32, 1952–1954: 247–316.
Syll. ³	<i>Sylloge inscriptionum graecarum</i> , 3rd edn., by W. Dittenberger, Leipzig, 1915–1924.
TAM	<i>Tituli Asiae Minoris</i> , Vienna, 1901–.
TAPA	<i>Transactions of the American Philological Association</i>
TLG	<i>Thesaurus Linguae Graecae</i> : www.tlg.uci.edu/ .
W.Chr.	See P.
ZPE	<i>Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik</i>