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TYCHE

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Papyrologie und Epigraphik

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I N H A L T S V E R Z E I C H N I S

Bernhard W o y t e k: Theodore V. Buttrey †	1
Aitor B l a n c o - P é r e z: <i>EPINIKIA</i> : Celebrating Roman Victory in the Eastern Provinces of the Empire	9
Elena C h e p e l: P.Tbilisi inv. 344v: Extract from Memphite Land Register (Taf. 1–2).....	43
W. Graham C l a y t o r: Rent Receipts for Temple Land in Theadelphia (Taf. 3).....	49
Lucia C. C o l e l l a: Copia frammentaria di un protocollo di apertura di testamento in lingua latina (Taf. 4).....	55
Snežana F e r j a n č i ć – Nemanja V u j č i ć – Veselinka N i n k o v i ć: Fragments of Latin and Greek Inscriptions from the National Museum in Belgrade (Taf. 4–9)	61
Duccio G u a s t i: Il κόλλυβος è un sottomultiplo del χαλκοῦς?	75
Herbert H e f t n e r: Das Große Verfahrenstechnisch-Historische Scholion über den Ostrakismos [Philochoros FGrHist 328 F 30 / Theophrast fr. 640ab Fortenbaugh]. Versuch einer Rekonstruktion	79
Marek K r a m á r: Lysimachos, Byzantion und Athen.....	113
Eddy L a n c i e r s: The Career of Some Officials in the Arsinoite Nome in the Early Second Century BC.....	119
Dimitrios P a p a n i k o l a o u: On the Reluctant Orator of Ephesos.....	131
Federico R u s s o: La legislazione <i>de ambitu</i> a Roma e le norme contro la corruzione elettorale della <i>Lex Coloniae Genetivae Iuliae</i>	145
Georg-Philipp S c h i e t i n g e r: Die <i>lex Papiria de tribunis reficiendis</i> . Anmerkungen zu einem Machtkampf zwischen Scipio Aemilianus und der gracchischen Ackerkommission.....	167
Peter S i e w e r t: Fragment einer hocharchaischen Bronzetafel aus Olympia mit Nennung der Eleer und des Mantis-Amtes (BrU 8) (Taf. 10)	177
Ignazio S i m ó n C o r n a g o – Carlos J o r d á n C ó l e r a: The Celt- iberian S. A New Sign in (Paleo)Hispanic Epigraphy	183
Marja V i e r r o s: Copying practices in Ptolemaic Egypt. A discussion based on Greek agoranomic contracts from Pathyris (Taf. 11)	207
Bemerkungen zu Papyri XXXI (<Korr. Tyche> 855–885)	231
Adnotationes epigraphicae IX (<Adn. Tyche> 74–84)	249

Buchbesprechungen	265
Guido B a s t i a n i n i, Simona R u s s o (Hrsg.), <i>Comunicazioni dell'Istituto papirologico «G. Vitelli» 12</i> (Edizioni dell'Istituto Papirologico «G. Vitelli» 5), Firenze 2015 (Á. T. Michálykó: 265) — Graeme B o u r k e, <i>Elis, Internal Politics and External Policy in Ancient Greece</i> (Cities of the Ancient World), London, New York 2018 (P. Siewert: 267) — Alberto D a l l a R o s a, Cura et tutela. <i>Le origini del potere imperiale sulle province proconsolari</i> (Historia Einzelschriften 272), Stuttgart 2014 (F. Hurlet: 270) — Jonas G r e t h l e i n, Antonios R e n g a k o s (Hrsg.), <i>Griechische Literaturgeschichtsschreibung. Traditionen, Probleme und Konzepte</i> , Berlin, New York 2017 (J. W. G. Schropp: 272) — Josef W i e s e h ö f e r, Sabine M ü l l e r (Hrsg.), <i>Parthika. Greek and Roman Authors' Views of the Arsacid Empire / Griechisch-römische Bilder des Arsakidenreiches</i> (Classica et Orientalia 15), Wiesbaden 2017 (F. Alidoust: 276).	
Indices	281
Eingelangte Bücher	285

Tafeln 1–12

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AITOR BLANCO-PÉREZ

EPINIKIA: Celebrating Roman Victory in the Eastern Provinces of the Empire*

The promotion of artistic and athletic competitions, a typical feature of Greek *poleis*, was unprecedented during the first three centuries of the Roman Empire.¹ Across the eastern Mediterranean, the organisation of games grew as a mark of distinction for cities competing for rights, privileges and titles.² In this context of increasing intercity rivalry, such festivals provided civic communities with an opportunity not only to proudly state their rank and identity, but also to show their loyalty towards the rule of Rome. At the end of the second century AD, for instance, Miletus started to refer to the games traditionally dedicated to Apollo at Didyma as Μεγάλα Διδύμεια Κομμόδεα.³ In the settlement

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An appendix (app.) with the attestations of EPINIKIA is attached at the end of this paper.

¹ On the concept of 'explosion agonistique' during the imperial period see L. Robert, *Discours d'ouverture*, in: *Πρακτικά του Η' Διεθνούς Συνεδρίου Ελληνικής και Λατινικής Επιγραφικής, Αθήνα, 3–9 Οκτωβρίου 1982, τόμος Α*, Athens 1984, 38. For its impact on the epigraphic, numismatic, artistic and literary production see S. Mitchell, *Review: Wörrle, Festivals, Games, and Civic Life in Roman Asia Minor*, *JRS* 80 (1990) 183–193; H. W. Pleket, *Mass-Sport and Local Infrastructure in the Greek cities of Roman Asia Minor*, *Stadion* 24.1 (1998) 151–172; O. M. van Nijf, *Athletics, festivals and Greek identity in the Roman east*, *PCPhS* 45 (1999) 176–200; J. König, *Athletics and literature in the Roman Empire*, Cambridge 2005; Z. Newby, *Greek athletics in the Roman world: victory and virtue*, Oxford 2005; J. Nollé, *Stadtprägungen des Ostens und die explosion agonistique: Überlegungen zu Umfang, Aussagen und Hintergründen der Propagierung von Agonen auf den Prägungen der Städte des griechischen Ostens*, in: K. Coleman, J. Nelis-Clément (eds.), *L'organisation des spectacles dans le monde romain* (Entretiens sur l'Antiquité classique), Geneva 2012, 1–39.

² See L. Robert, *La titulature de Nicée et de Nicomédie. La gloire et la haine*, *HSPH* 81 (1977) 1–39; A. Heller, *Les bêtises des grecs: Conflits et rivalités entre cités d'Asie et de Bithynie à l'époque romaine, 129 a. C.–235 p. C.*, Pessac 2006; E. Guerber, *Les cités grecques dans l'Empire romain. Les privilèges et les titres des cités de l'Orient hellénophone d'Octave Auguste à Dioclétien*, Rennes 2009.

³ I.Didyma 156, 163, 168, 278, 305, 332, 333, 372, 375; SEG 4.425.

of Oenoanda (southern Anatolia), the more modest Demostheneia featured officials called *σεβαστοφόροι* in charge of carrying statues of the emperors.⁴ None of these examples were, however, accidental. Before the money promised by the benefactor Demosthenes could be spent on his homonymous agon, three citizens sought authorisation from Hadrian.⁵ In the case of Miletus, another long inscription informs us that Marcus Aurelius and Commodus made the unusual order to the Senate to grant the *eiselastic* status to the Didymeia only after they had met the petitioning embassy.⁶ Imperial favour upon such celebrations was therefore fundamental and reinforced the necessary diplomatic interconnections existing between peripheral aspirations and central authority. While we cannot always document such a nexus, it is evident that the organisation and presentation of local festivals was profoundly influenced by these conditions. The numerous attestations of *Ἀδριάνεια* were certainly instigated by the support of the emperor for Greek culture.⁷ Sometimes, festivals were just referred to as *Καισάρεια*, *Αὐγούστεια*, or *Σεβαστά*, but the frequent use of more specific nomenclatures such as *Σεουήρεια*, *Ἄντωνείνια*, *Γορδιάνεια*, and *Οὐαλεριανά* shows that the phenomenon continued until the mid-3rd century.⁸ Among these varied epithets related to Roman power that were bestowed on games, one has not received sufficient scholarly attention: *Ἐπινίκια*.

In spite of the classical echoes for the modern reader, these epinician games did not consist of the recitation of the odes that Pindar and Bacchylides composed for the agonistic champions of ancient Greece. Instead, the notion of victory was added to commemorate the military success of Rome and its emperors.

I Ἐπινίκια and Roman Victory

The region of Boeotia played a significant role in the First Mithridatic war. Even though most cities initially supported the king of Pontus, the arrival of Sulla and his subsequent military conquests changed this situation.⁹ As a result of the battles of Chaeronea and Orchomenos, the Roman general decided to organise a festival in Thebes commemorating

⁴ SEG 38.1462 (l. 62): προπομπεύσουσι τὰς σεβαστικὰς εἰκόνας. See M. Wörle, *Stadt und Fest im kaiserzeitlichen Kleinasien: Studien zu einer agonistischen Stiftung aus Oinoanda*, Munich 1988, 216–219.

⁵ Wörle, *Stadt und Fest* (n. 4) 73–75.

⁶ I.Milet 1075. See P. Herrmann, *Eine Kaiserurkunde der Zeit Marc Aurels aus Milet*, *MDAI(I)* 25 (1975) 149–166.

⁷ M. T. Boatwright, *Hadrian and the cities of the Roman Empire*, Princeton 2000, 94–104.

⁸ A list of numismatic occurrences of such agonistic epithets can be found in W. Leschhorn, *Die Verbreitung von Agonen in den östlichen Provinzen des Römischen Reiches*, *Stadion* 24.1 (1998) 31–57 and, more generally, in his *Lexikon der Aufschriften auf griechischen Münzen, Band 1: Geographische Begriffe, Götter und Heroen, mythische Gestalten, Persönlichkeiten, Titel und Beinamen, Agonistik, staatsrechtliche und prägerechtliche Formeln, bemerkenswerte Wörter*, Vienna 2002.

⁹ Appian, *Mithrid.* 5.29–30. See F. Santangelo, *Sulla, the elites and the empire: a study of Roman policies in Italy and the Greek east*, Leiden 2008, 33–49.

his victory (τὰ ἐπινίκια) in 85 BC.¹⁰ These events certainly had an impact on the local population because the surrounding communities soon started to replicate the celebratory attitude of the Romans in their own festivals. An inscription from Akraiphia records that the first Σωτήρια organised after the war included an ἐπινίκιον, a competition previously unattested in the programme.¹¹

A famous episode in the history of Boeotia and its relation with Rome sheds light on the particular circumstances that preceded the incorporation of this new type of agonistic element in the region. Between 74 and 73 BC, Roman tax-collectors challenged the asylum status of the temple of Amphiaraus claiming that no god was worshipped there.¹² Oropus was consequently forced to defend the divine character of this local cult and collected all the corresponding evidence supporting their case in the Senate. Among the documents, a letter of Sulla confirmed the inviolability of the sanctuary in 86 BC and instructed that all the revenues of the city could be dedicated to the games and sacrifices for the god Amphiaraus and “those which hereafter will be celebrated on behalf of the victory (νίκη) and leading role (ἡγεμονία) of the Roman people”.¹³ From this moment on, it appears that the old Amphiarean and later Ῥωμαῖα games at Oropus incorporated an epinician competition in the extensive agonistic programme as another unequivocal sign of their endorsement for the recent victory.¹⁴ One of the victors of

¹⁰ Plut., *Sull.* 19.6. On the precedent set by M. Perperna with the organisation of a festival in Pergamum to celebrate the victory over Aristonicus see I.Priene 65 l. 223–232 (cf. C. P. Jones, *Diodoros Paspáros Revisited*, *Chiron* 30 [2000] 6).

¹¹ IG VII 2727 (app. 1) l. 1–4: ἀγ<ω>νοθετοῦν[τος] Ποπλίου Κορνηλίου τοῦ Ποπλίου υἱοῦ [Ῥω]μαίου τῶν τριετήρων Σωτηρίων πρῶ[τον] ἀπὸ τοῦ πολέμου. This epinician contest was held at least another time according to IG VII 2728 (app. 2). While the nature of the remaining parts of the Σωτήρια festival is clear (e.g. epic, tragedy, encomium, cither), the precise content of this competition is not specified. It has been thought to be equivalent to the διὰ πάντων of the imperial period, see J.-Y. Strasser, *L'épreuve artistique dia panton*, *Historia* 55 (2006) 298–299. A. Manieri, *Agoni musicali in Beozia: gare di 'epinici' nel I sec. a. C.*, in: M. Vetta, C. Catenacci (eds.), *I luoghi e la poesia nella Grecia antica, Atti del convegno*, Pescara 2006, 345–358 has argued that this closing performance was open to all contestants and not only to victors of the different disciplines of the agon. A. Schachter, *Cults of Boiotia. I. Archeloo to Hera*, London 1981, 142–143 preferred to interpret these epinician as a global assessment of the overall quality of the individual victors rather than a separate competition. On both the history and the later attestations of the Σωτήρια festival in Akraiphia see A. Manieri, *Agoni poetico-musicali nella Grecia antica*, Pisa 2009, 78–79.

¹² See K. J. Rigsby, *Asylia: territorial inviolability in the Hellenistic world*, Berkeley 1996, 77–81. On this local Boeotian deity, see Schachter, *Cults of Boiotia* (n. 11) 19–25; P. Sineux, *Amphiaraos. Guerrier, devin et guérisseur*, Paris 2007.

¹³ I.Oropos 308 l. 48–49 (IG VII 413).

¹⁴ I.Oropos 523 (app. 3). Traditionally, the addition of the Ῥωμαῖα epithet was also linked with Sulla's victory, see Manieri, *Agoni poetico-musicali* (n. 11) 216–217. Very recently, Y. Kalliontzis, *La date de la première célébration des Amphiareia-Romaia d'Oropos*, *REG* 129 (2016) 85–105 has argued for a date in the mid-2nd century BC on the basis of some victors of I.Oropos 521 appearing in other agonistic catalogues (cf. *BE* 2017.265). While these observations should be taken into consideration for the dating of other festivals, Kalliontzis (p. 103) still places the setting up of I.Oropos 523 at the beginning of the 1st century BC because one of the winners, the

these later Ῥωμαῖα appears in a contemporary catalogue of the Μουσεῖα in Thespieae, which also featured a previously unattested ἐπνίκιον.¹⁵ The same competition is also listed in records of the Χαριτεῖσια of Orchomenus and the Σαραπιεῖα of Tanagra most likely dating after 87 BC.¹⁶

All these local celebrations of Roman victory in Boeotia would therefore match Sulla's efforts to publicise his triumphal career. Indeed, soon after organising a festival in Thebes, the general staged games in the circus of Rome that commemorated the *Victoria Sullana*, according to Velleius Paterculus.¹⁷ Coins issued between 84 and 83 also emphasised this ideal with the legend *IMPER(ATOR) ITERVM* and the representation of the two trophies that the general set up at Chaeronea.¹⁸ Provincial communities such as Oropus were well aware of this political agenda and experienced the benefits of the end of the first Mithridatic war by appealing to Sulla's favour and obtaining asylum for Amphiarus. In return, their local games would immediately celebrate both his success and the rule of Rome during the limited time span in which epinician contests remained part of the agonistic programmes of Boeotia.¹⁹ The endeavour of Sulla to associate the military power of Rome with his personal victories might have been replicated by Lucullus in Asia,²⁰ Pompey in Armenia,²¹ certainly continued with Julius

Athenian Eubios, took part in the Pythia of 98/97. Nevertheless, the paper fails to note that the archon opening I.Oropos 523 is most likely the same Alexidemos who participated in the diplomatic mission before the Roman Senate reported by I.Oropos 308 (l. 18). Likewise, two of the victors in I.Oropos 523 (l. 16, 26) are also attested in Tanagra winning a Σαραπιεῖα festival that also had an epinician competition (IG VII 542, app. 4). The brother of another contemporary victor in Tanagra probably appears in the aforementioned Σωτήρια of Akraiphia that were certainly held after the war (IG VII 2727, l. 5). Consequently, even if Oropus may have started the Ῥωμαῖα in the mid-2nd century, there should be no need to place the institution of epinician competitions in Boeotia prior to Sulla's campaigns.

¹⁵ I.Oropos 523 (l. 28e): [Στ]ράτων Ἰσιδότη[ου Ἀθηναῖος] = I.Thes. 173 (app. 7) l. 10: [Στ]ράτων Ἰσιδότη[ου Ἀθηναῖος]. Another winner of ἐπνίκια is attested in I.Thes. 163 (app. 8).

¹⁶ IG VII 542 (app. 4), 543 (app. 5), 3195 (app. 9), 3196 (app. 10), 3197 (app. 11); SEG 25.501 (app. 6).

¹⁷ Velleius Paterculus 2.27.6. Cicero, *Verr.* 1.10.31 only refers to them as victory games (*ad ludos victoriae*) without reference to Sulla; cf. RRC no. 421.

¹⁸ RRC no. 359. The iconic setting up of these trophies was still mentioned by Plutarch, *Sulla* 19, and Pausanias 9.40.7. On the recent archaeological and epigraphic (SEG 41.448, 59.483) discoveries supporting their existence and Sulla's involvement, see P. Assenmaker, *De la victoire au pouvoir: développement et manifestations de l'idéologie impériale à l'époque de Marius et Sylla*, Brussels 2014, 94–120, together with the observations provided by Y. Kalliontzis, *An unpublished casualty list from Plataia*, in: N. Papazarkadas (ed.), *The Epigraphy and History of Boeotia: New Finds, New Prospects*, Leiden 2014, 349–359.

¹⁹ While it is very difficult to track the exact chronology of the Boeotian festivals (e.g. A. G. Gossage, *The Comparative Chronology of Inscriptions Relating to Boiotian Festivals in the First Half of the First Century BC*, *ABSA* 70 [1975] 115–134), it appears that epinician competitions were not part of the agonistic programmes of Boeotia in the 1st century AD according to the latest collection of the evidence available in Manieri, *Agoni poetico-musicali* (n. 11).

²⁰ App. 12. See Jones, *Diodoros Pasparos* (n. 10) 11.

²¹ On the likely foundation of Nicopolis during Pompey's Armenian campaign on the basis of Strab. 12.3.28; Appian, *Mithrid.* 105, 115; Cass. Dio 36.50.3, 49.39.3, see G. M. Cohen, *The*

Caesar (*Victoria Caesaris*) and culminated under Octavian when the concept of *Victoria Augusti* became a permanent motif for the Roman Empire.²²

This process had again a manifest impact on the population of the eastern Mediterranean, the best illustration of which are the foundation of a city of victory — Nikopolis — and the establishment of the Actian festival on the Greek peninsula.²³ According to Strabo, games dedicated to Apollo already existed along the Ambracian gulf before 31 BC.²⁴ Following Octavian's victory over Mark Antony near Actium, the previously local event underwent a radical transformation. It was granted international, sacred and eiselastic status to become a new constituent of the *periodos*.²⁵ In this context, the subsequent attestation of local epinician celebrations surviving in our sources should be understood. One fragmentary inscription found in Kyrenia (Cyprus) records the honours of a civic benefactor, who had contributed to the maintenance of the gymnasium and was praised for providing a sacrifice as well as an athletic-equestrian agon "during the ἐπινίκια of the god Augustus Caesar".²⁶ This case is particularly important because it shows that the designation 'epinician' was not necessarily restricted to a concrete agonistic competition as it occurred in Boeotia, but it could also refer to a larger festivity in which imperial victories were commemorated.²⁷ Nevertheless, the honours from Kyrenia served to commemorate the benefactor's sponsorship of a sacrifice and the agon, rather than the fact that the city was holding any kind of victory jubilee. In Cyprus, ἐπινίκια are not attested elsewhere in the available sources and, consequently, the regularity of such celebrations cannot be assessed. It is precisely for this reason that this paper focuses on the occurrences directly connected to concrete events such as Greek games, which were subject to continuous memorialisation in the Roman Empire.

Under this premise, even if the term ΕΠΙΝΙΚΙΟC only appears on a coin from Laodicea (Phrygia) and is not attested at all in the epigraphic records for the rest of the

Hellenistic settlements in the East from Armenia and Mesopotamia to Bactria and India, Berkeley 2013, 48–49.

²² See J. R. Fears, *The Theology of Victory at Rome: Approaches and Problems*, ANRW II 17.2 (1981) 790–824; C. F. Noreña, *Imperial ideals in the Roman West: representation, circulation, power*, Cambridge 2011, 147–151.

²³ Suet., *Aug.* 18.2; Paus. 5.23.3, 10.38.4; Cass. Dio 51.1.2–4. See H. Cornwell, *Pax and the politics of peace: Republic to Principate*, Oxford 2017, 106–120. On the excavations of the Actian Tropaeum of Nicopolis, see K. L. Zachos, *The Tropaeum of the Sea-Battle of Actium at Nikopolis: Interim Report*, JRA 16 (2003) 64–92.

²⁴ Strab. 7.7.6.

²⁵ See M. Lämmer, *Die Aktischen Spiele von Nikopolis*, Stadion 12/13 (1986/1987) 27–38; R. A. Gurval, *Actium and Augustus: The Politics and Emotions of Civil War*, Ann Arbor 1995, 74–78.

²⁶ App. 13. See T. Fujii, *Imperial cult and imperial representation in Roman Cyprus*, Stuttgart 2013, 164 (cf. SEG 6.837).

²⁷ T. B. Mitford, *Roman Cyprus*, ANRW II 7.2 (1980) 1326 proposed Actian status for these games and an inauguration date around 27 BC. Given the lack of further attestations of such a high ranking agon in Cyprus during the 1st century AD, Fujii, *Imperial cult* (n. 26) 70 arguments for a local competition should be preferred, especially on account of the organiser's relation to the gymnasium of Kyrenia.

1st century AD,²⁸ it should not automatically be inferred that the celebration of Roman victory decreased in the eastern provinces. We know, for example, that Perge in Pamphylia commemorated the ΝΕΙΚΗ ΤΟΥ ΤΙΒΕΠΙΟΥ with coinage that included a representation of Victory approaching the local temple of Artemis.²⁹ In Nicomedia and Abdera the ΝΕΙΚΗ ΚΛΑΥΔΙΟΥ (CEBACTOY) appears on the obverse of their own bronze issues.³⁰ Abderan coinage as well as that from Nicopolis in Epirus, Philippi and Smyrna also alluded to Nero's martial and agonistic victories,³¹ while many other cities celebrated the military success of the Flavians.³² Likewise, the cult of *Victoria Britannica* was institutionalised in Corinth and Antioch (ad Pisidiam) by two soldiers returning to these Roman colonies,³³ the Sebasteion of Aphrodisias included numerous personifications of conquered peoples,³⁴ and Alexandria specifically referred to Domitian's campaigns with the legend ΝΙΚΗ ΚΑΤΑ ΓΕΡΜΑΝΩΝ and the representation of Victory holding a shield over captives.³⁵ All these elements consequently reflect the association of the cult of victory with the imperial rule, and the commemoration of triumphs accomplished by the emperors.³⁶

²⁸ RPC II 1284 (app. 14). The coin is dated to Domitian's reign and it would refer to his German victory. The term is carved on the façade of one of the city's temples and would mark its dedication to the Victory of the emperor (see P. Weiss, *Euergeten und Elemente der Zweiten Sophistik in der Münzprägung von Asia*, in: C. Michels, P. F. Mittag [eds.], *Jenseits des Narrativs: Antoninus Pius in den nicht-literarischen Quellen*, Stuttgart 2017, 192). In this sense, J. Nollé, *Εὐτυχῶς τοῖς κυρίοις – feliciter dominis! Akklamationsmünzen des griechischen Ostens unter Septimius Severus und städtische Mentalitäten*, Chiron 28 (1998) 343–344 has proposed that Domitian sent spoils of his German triumph to the city and the Laodiceans designated the hosting temple as epinician. On the reception of Roman trophies by provincial communities, the evidence of Anazarbus in the early 3rd century is illuminating and will be discussed later.

²⁹ RPC I 3371.

³⁰ RPC I 2079, Suppl. RPC I 1729.

³¹ RPC I 1731 (ΝΕΙΚΗ ΝΕΡΩΝΟΣ), 1374 (ΝΕΡΩΝΟΚ ΝΙΚΗ; cf. 1376: ΝΕΡΩΝΙ ΑΠΟΛΛΩΝΙ ΚΤΙΣΤΗ / ΝΕΡΩΝΙ ΔΗΜΟΚΙΩ ΠΙΑΤΡΩΝΙ ΕΛΛΑΔΟΚ), 1651 (VIC AUG with three standards of the COH PRAE PHIL), 2486 (ΝΙΚΗ ΠΟΠΠΑΙΑ).

³² The following provincial coins display the legend ΝΙΚΗ in this period: RPC II 121 (Corinth), 896 (Alexandria Troas), 1110–1111 (Nysa), 1076 (Ephesus), 1612 (Laodicea), 1637, 1655 (Caesarea, Cappad.), 2242, 2302, 2309 (Judaea), 2573, 2609 (Alexandria).

³³ I. Corinth 8.2 86–90, 158–163 (Tib. Claudius Dinippus); AE 2001.1918 (C. Caristianus Fronto). In a similar period, the position of *sacerdos Victoriae* appears attached to the career of Quintilius Maximus, who also belonged to a prominent family of another Roman colony, Alexandria Troas (AE 2008.1339–1340). On the heavy promotion and provincial reception of the conquest of Britannia see G. Standing, *The Claudian Invasion of Britain and the Cult of Victoria Britannica*, Britannia 34 (2003) 281–288.

³⁴ See R. R. R. Smith, *The marble reliefs from the Julio-Claudian Sebasteion*, Darmstadt 2013, 71–121, 140–147.

³⁵ RPC II 2521.

³⁶ See R. O. Fink, *Victoria Parthica and kindred Victoriae*, YClS 8 (1942) 81–101; T. Hölscher, *Victoria Romana. Archäologische Untersuchungen zur Geschichte und Wesensart von den Anfängen bis zum Ende des 3. Jahrhunderts n. Chr.*, Mainz 1967; C. Ando, *Imperial Ideology and Provincial Loyalty in the Roman Empire*, Berkeley 2000, 278–293. On the increasing representation of victory themes in the imperial coinage of the 1st century AD, see also R. Bellinger, M. A. Berlincourt,

II The Triumph of Greek Agones

The celebration of specific Roman victories through Greek games appears to have developed significantly under Trajan. His reign achieved conquests in Dacia and Parthia, which were followed by lavish memorialisation and triumphs. In this period, an inscription summarising the successful agonistic career of T. Flavius Archibius mentions his victory and crowning at the Ἡράκλεια ἐπινίκια Αὐτοκράτορος Νέρουα Τραιανοῦ Κ[αίσαρος Σεβαστοῦ] Γερμανικοῦ Δακικοῦ.³⁷ While the connection with the victories of Trajan is clear, the accurate identification of these epinician Herakleia remains problematic. A crucial lacuna obscures the location where this event took place. The reference to the games appears in a hierarchic account inserted between prizes achieved in the festivals of the periodos. This would indicate the elevated rank of the event and permits us to almost completely discard some possibilities. For example, if the form Ἡράκλεια indicated a location, the organisation of international agones at any of the several Herakleiai of the Roman Empire in this period remains unknown.³⁸ Likewise, none of the festivals dedicated to Herakles in the Greek East had such an important status at the beginning of the 2nd century AD.³⁹ As a result the most likely hypothesis is that Archibius' victory happened at Rome, which actually fits nicely in the aforementioned lacuna.⁴⁰ If this were indeed the case, it would provide us with another indication of the increasing promotion of Greek games in the imperial capital.⁴¹ The turning point in this process was the establishment of the Capitolia in 86, a festival that

Victoria as a Coin Type, Numismatic Notes and Monographs 149 (1962) 44–64; M. Alföldi, *Bild und Bildersprache der römischen Kaiser. Beispiele und Analysen*, Mainz 1999, 83–116.

³⁷ I.Napoli I 51 (IG XIV 747; IGR I 446). His two consecutive victories in the 220th and 221st Olympics — also recorded in the inscription — confirm that this pankration wrestler was undoubtedly an international star by the time in which he took part in the Herakleia Epinikia.

³⁸ The most likely candidate would be Herakleia Pontica, although this city only reached international games under Hadrian and these had isoactian status (I.Aphr. 2007 12.215). A letter of a Roman curator to Aphrodisias concerning the schedule of games mentions a city called Herakleia, but the context is unclear and it dates to the end of the 2nd century (I.Aphr. 2007 15.330).

³⁹ L. Moretti, *Iscrizioni agonistiche greche*, Rome 1953, 188 suggested Iasos in Caria where such Herakleia are attested (I.Iasos 110). The Herakleia of Thebes had an even more ancient tradition, but they were not granted international rank until at least Commodus (see P. Roesch, *Les Herakleia de Thebes*, ZPE 17 [1975] 1–7). In the same reign, the Herakleia Kommodeia of Tyre were promoted (S. Remijsen, *The end of Greek athletics in late antiquity*, Cambridge 2015, 92; cf. E. Miranda, *Testimonianze sui Kommodeia*, Scienze dell'Antichità 6/7 [1992/1993] 85–86 for the surviving evidence).

⁴⁰ See L. Robert, *Deux concours grecs à Rome: Antoninia Pythia sous Elagabal et concours d'Athéna Promachos depuis Gordien III*, CRAI 114 (1970) 6–27, no. 26.

⁴¹ On the efforts of both Nero and Domitian to promote this type of games, see most recently A. Heinemann, *Sportsfreunde. Nero und Domitian als Begründer griechischer Agone in Rom*, in: S. Bönisch-Meyer et al. (ed.), *Nero und Domitian. Mediale Diskurse der Herrscherrepräsentation im Vergleich*, Tübingen 2014, 217–258.

Archibius himself won between the 3rd and 6th celebrations (94–110).⁴² Under Trajan, everything seems to indicate that an agon was held to commemorate the end of one of the Dacian wars during the famously sumptuous triumphal celebrations of this emperor.⁴³ This would automatically justify the epinician designation. Hercules' deeds were likewise compared with the actions of Trajan by both ancient authors and imperial coins.⁴⁴ Therefore, if the international guild of athletes (ζυστός) contributed to the organisation of the event, the dedication to this deity would be clarified. Herakles was also the patron of this growing association, which aimed at achieving imperial relevance and favour.⁴⁵

The city of Rome did not experience sumptuous triumphs during the rules of Hadrian and Antoninus Pius. In a period in which the epigraphic commemoration of agonistic culture increased rapidly, there are no more surviving attestations of the Ἡράκλεια ἐπινίκια, probably indicating that they were not organised again. However, when the emperors adopted an offensive policy again, the attachment of Greek games to triumphal celebrations returned. One of the many honorific inscriptions set up for the athletic star M. Aur. Demonstratus Damas — another pancratiast — records among his victories the Ῥώμην ἐπινείκια τῶν κυρίων Αὐτοκρατόρων Ἀντωνίνου καὶ Κομμόδου.⁴⁶ The connection of these games with the victory over the Germans and Sarmatians in

⁴² Suet., *Domit.* 4.4. See M. L. Caldelli, *L'Agon Capitolinus: storia e protagonisti dall'istituzione domiziana al IV secolo*, Rome 1993; B. Rieger, *Die Capitolia des Kaisers Domitian*, Nikephoros 12 (1999) 171–203.

⁴³ The absence of the title *Parthicus* in Trajan's titulature rules out the Parthian triumph in 116. As for the exact Dacian celebrations, R. Knab, *Die Periodoniken. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der gymnischen Agone an den 4 griechischen Hauptfesten*, Gießen 1980, 76; and D. O. A. Klose, G. R. Stumpf, *Sport, Spiele, Sieg. Münzen und Gemmen der Antike*, Munich 1996, 105–106 prefer the end of the first war when 123 days of spectacles were held according to Cassius Dio 68.15. C. Wallner, *M. Ulpius Heliodoros und T. Flavius Archibios*, Nikephoros 14 (2001) 106–107, while not excluding this possibility, favours the second Dacian triumph that coincides with the peak of T. Fl. Archibius' career as shown by P. Gouw, *Griekse atleten in de Romeinse keizertijd (31 v. Chr.–400 n. Chr.)*, Amsterdam 2009, 159–160. On the celebration of Trajan's Dacian victory outside Rome see D. Dana, *Célébrations de la Victoria Dacica de Trajan à l'échelle de l'empire*, in: F. Mitthof, G. Schörner (eds.), *Columna Traiani – Trajanssäule: Siegesmonument und Kriegsbericht in Bildern: Beiträge der Tagung in Wien anlässlich des 1900. Jahrestages der Einweihung, 9.–12. Mai 2013*, Vienna 2017, 343–353.

⁴⁴ Plin., *Paneg.* 14.5, 82.6–7; Dio Chrys., *Or.* 1.56–84. See P. L. Strack, *Untersuchungen zur römischen Reichsprägung des zweiten Jahrhunderts. I: Die Reichsprägung zur Zeit des Traian*, Stuttgart 1931, 95–104; J. Bennett, *Trajan: optimus princeps. A life and times*, London 1997, 68–74; G. Seelentag, *Taten und Tugenden Traians: Herrschaftsdarstellung im Principat*, Stuttgart 2004, 405–408; O. Hekster, *Propagating Power: Hercules as an Example for Second-Century Emperors*, in: L. Rawlings, H. Bowden (eds.), *Herakles and Hercules: Exploring a Graeco-Roman Divinity*, Swansea 2005, 205–221; B. Woytek, *Die Reichsprägung des Kaisers Traianus (98–117)*, Vienna 2010, no. 72, 73, 99–101, 138, 143, 164, 192, 193, 457.

⁴⁵ See M. L. Caldelli, *Curia athletarum, iera xystike synodos e organizzazione delle terme a Roma*, ZPE 93 (1992) 75–87; Remijnsen, *The end of Greek athletics* (n. 39) 230–241. Titus Fl. Archibius actually became perpetual high-priest of the ζυστός.

⁴⁶ I.Sardis 79 (app. 18). On his extensive career and records see recently J.-Y. Strasser, *La carrière du pancratiaste Markos Aurélios Dèmostratos Damas*, BCH 127 (2003) 251–299.

176 is certain, likewise the location in Rome cannot be doubted. The exact chronology is, by contrast, more challenging and requires some detailed analysis. The immediate assumption is that these epinician games constituted part of the subsequent *ludi triumphales*.⁴⁷ Such a precise dating cannot unfortunately be confirmed on the basis of evidence mostly covering lengthy careers of agonistic prizes retrospectively. This problem is even more acute in the two other attestations of Roman epinician games also dating to the Antonine period. The first comes from Tralles, has a certain *terminus post quem* in 180, but the text of the inscription does not provide any further detail regarding the ῥώμην ἐπινείκια.⁴⁸ In the second, there is no close relative chronology, but the victory in the epinician games is said to have happened following (κατὰ τὸ ἐξῆς) another victory in the Capitolia.⁴⁹ Under the recurrent 5-year (πενταετηρίς) cycle of the latter festival, a collective date for all these epinician games in 176 cannot be sustained. Consequently, we are left with two possible scenarios: a) all the ἐπινείκια indicated the same celebration which could not be part of the *ludi triumphales* of Marcus Aurelius and Commodus, but rather two years later in 178, i.e. coinciding with the 23rd Capitolia.⁵⁰ b) They referred to more than a single event. This second hypothesis is plausible in the Antonine period because at least two triumphs were held in Rome: the Parthian (166) and the aforementioned German-Sarmatian (176). Furthermore, the year 166 fits in the pentaeteric scheme of the Capitolia and, consequently, it is compatible with the consecutive victory in the epinician games reported by one of the testimonies.⁵¹ This second hypothesis has evident advantages of interpretation which will also improve the assessment of the corresponding imperial policies and their reception by the provincial communities.

⁴⁷ On the basis of *HA, Marc.* 16.2 and *Commod.* 2.4, this triumph is dated to 23 December 176 (see A. Birley, *Marcus Aurelius: A Biography*, London 1966, 269–270; D. Kienast, W. Eck, M. Heil, *Römische Kaisertabelle: Grundzüge einer römischen Kaiserchronologie*, Darmstadt 2017, 132). Imperial coins in this year and 177 were issued to commemorate the event with legends *DE GERMANIS* and *DE SARMATICIS* (RIC III *Marcus Aurelius* 337–342, 362–367, 605–609, 629–635, 1162, 1179–1191, 1213, 1221, 1532–1533, 1554–1557, 1565–1577). An inscription probably connected to the setting up of the corresponding triumphal arch praises Marcus Aurelius and Commodus for “surpassing all the glories of all the greatest emperors before them, having wiped out or subjugated the most warlike peoples” (CIL VI 1014; ILS 374). This triumph most likely lies behind the (*ludi*) *Sarmatici* attested in the St. Maria Maggiore calendar as shown by I. Levin, *A Reconsideration of the Date of the Esquiline Calendar and of its Political Festivals*, *AJA* 86 (1982) 429–435.

⁴⁸ I. Tralleis 136 (app. 17). This inscription mentions a deified Marcus Aurelius and the 62nd local Olympics. On the dating of this local festival see L. Robert, *Études d'épigraphie grecque*, *RPh* 31 (1930) 33–35.

⁴⁹ IGR IV 160 (app. 16).

⁵⁰ See Strasser, *La carrière du pancratiaste* (n. 46) 291.

⁵¹ For example, P. Herz, *Gedanken zu den Spielen der Provinz Asia in Kyzikos*, Nikephoros 11 (1998) 173–175 has argued for the year 166 AD as the date of the ἐπινείκια attested in IGR IV 160. According to *HA, Marc.* 12.8 and *Commod.* 11.13, the triumph of Lucius Verus and Marcus Aurelius took place on the 12 October (see Kienast *et. al.*, *Römische Kaisertabelle* [n. 47] 131, 135).

III Victoria Parthica and the Eastern Provinces

In the year 162 Lucius Verus departed from the harbour of Brundisium with the intention of responding to the meddling of Parthia in the Armenian kingdom. Imperial coinage announced the *PROFECTIO AUG(usti)*,⁵² and two cities played a significant role in this expedition. In Greece, Verus visited his former teacher and benefactor, Herodes Atticus.⁵³ Athens took this opportunity to hold a special celebration of the Eleusinian Mysteries in which the emperor was initiated with the assistance of other local notables.⁵⁴ Once on the Asian continent, Lucius Verus is also known to have been a guest in Ephesus on, at least, two occasions.⁵⁵ On one of them, the Ephesians are even reported to have witnessed his wedding with Lucilla in 164.⁵⁶ Armenia had subsequently returned to the control of Rome and the imperial army was able to continue the campaign towards Mesopotamia. The Parthian king Vologases was defeated in 165 near Ctesiphon and, immediately, the legend *VIC(toria) PARTHICA* was propagated on coinage across the Empire.⁵⁷ Lucius Verus personally suggested to one of his tutors, Fronto, that these achievements (*res gestae*) “will seem as great as you want them to

⁵² RIC III, *Marcus Aurelius* 477–481, 1321–1323, 1356–1358. See W. Szaivert, *Die Münzprägung der Kaiser Marcus Aurelius, Lucius Verus und Commodus (161–192)*, Vienna 1986, 99.

⁵³ Philostratus, *V.S.* II 1.11, see A. J. Papalas 1978, *Lucius Verus and the Hospitality of Herodes Atticus*, *Athenaeum* 66 (1978) 182–184; H. Halfmann, *Itinera principum: Geschichte und Typologie der Kaiserreisen im Römischen Reich*, Stuttgart 1986, 210–212. On the previous good relations between Herodes and L. Verus see W. Ameling, *Herodes Atticus*, Hildesheim 1983, 83; J. Tobin, *Herodes Attikos and the city of Athens: patronage and conflict under the Antonines*, Amsterdam 1997, 204–206. Their formative years together with Marcus Aurelius are reported by the *HA*, *Verus* 2.5; see Birley, *Marcus Aurelius* (n. 47) 76–81 and H. Halfmann, *Marc Aurel und Herodes Atticus*, in: V. Grieb (ed.), *Marc Aurel – Wege zu seiner Herrschaft*, Gutenberg 2017, 211–222.

⁵⁴ IG II² 3592 (I.Eleusis 483), 3620 (I.Eleusis 503). See T. B. Barnes, *Hadrian and Lucius Verus*, *JRS* 57 (1967) 70–71; E. A. Kapetanopoulos, *Flavius Hiérophantes Paianieus and Lucius Verus*, *REA* 83 (1972) 63–69; S. Follet, *Athènes au II^e et au III^e siècle: études chronologiques et prosopographiques*, Paris 1976, 135–136; B. Rossignol, *Inter symfonias et cantica: notes sur le voyage de Lucius Vêrus de Rome à la Syrie (et retour)*, in: A. Hostein, S. Lalanne (eds.), *Les Voyages des empereurs dans l’Orient romain. Époques antonine et sévérienne*, Paris 2012, 37–63.

⁵⁵ I.Eph. 728, 3072.

⁵⁶ *HA*, *Verus* 7.7 (cf. *Marc.* 9.4–6). This notice was not very convincingly challenged by St. Karwiese, *Keine Kaiserhochzeit in Ephesos*, in: B. Otto, F. Ehrl (eds.), *Echo. Beiträge zur Archäologie des mediterranen und alpinen Raumes. Festschrift J. B. Trentini* (Innsbrucker Beiträge zur Kulturwissenschaft 17), Innsbruck 1990, 171–178. The canonical historical reconstruction provided, for example, by Birley, *Marcus Aurelius* (n. 47) 175; A. Chastagnol, *Histoire Auguste: les empereurs romains des II^e et III^e siècles*, Paris 1994, 177 should be preferred.

⁵⁷ RIC III, *Marcus Aurelius* 160–163, 533–534, 562–566, 571, 922, 929–936, 1436. See J. A. Garzón Blanco, *Los aureus y denarius emitidos por Lucio Vero entre los años 160 al 169: propaganda y documentación*, *Studia historica*, *Historia Antigua* 12 (1994) 91–102; M.-H. Quet, *Éloge par Aélius Aristide des co-empereurs Marc Aurèle et Lucius Vêrus, à l’issue de la guerre contre les Parthes*, *JS* 2002, 117–135.

seem”,⁵⁸ with the entire process culminating in the organisation of the Roman triumphal celebrations mentioned above. This heavily advertised event permeated profoundly through the population of the eastern provinces. Honorific statues and bases of the emperor survive in considerable numbers,⁵⁹ representations of Nike/Victoria dominated the contemporary bronze coinage of many cities,⁶⁰ and Lucian complained about the ridiculous number of fraudulent historians that he encountered in places such as Corinth and Ionia magnifying the victory.⁶¹ Exactly in this period, regular references to ἐπινίκια start to appear in the material record of Athens and Ephesus.

The remarkable celebration of Roman victory in Athens is particularly well illustrated by another episode involving Herodes Atticus. Until 165, the ephebes of the city had traditionally worn black. Through a benefaction of the rich Marathonian, these clothes were substituted by white chlamydes and amber clasps as the contemporary epigraphic evidence and, later, Philostratus attest.⁶² In the subsequent lists of local ephebic activities, an unprecedented epinician celebration was added following the model of previous competitions such as the *Germanikeia*, *Hadrianeia*, *Antoneia* and *Philadelphieia* that were equally connected to Roman power.⁶³ The registers of Athenian

⁵⁸ *Ad Verum* II.3. The collection of Fronto also contained an encomiastic text related to Verus' Parthian victory which has traditionally been named *Principia Historiae*. See M. P. J. van den Hout, *A commentary on the Letters of M. Cornelius Fronto*, Leiden 1999, 462–464; C. Davenport, J. Manley, *Fronto: Selected Letters*, London 2014, 156–157.

⁵⁹ On the modern rehabilitation of Lucius Verus' role see P. Lambrechts, *L'Empereur Lucius Verus. Essai de rehabilitation*, AC 3 (1934) 173–201; Barnes, *Hadrian and Lucius Verus* (n. 54); J. Fündling, *Lucius Verus: seine Kritiker, seine Lobredner und sein Platz in der Herrschaft*, in: M. Rathmann (ed.), *Studien zur antiken Geschichtsschreibung*, Bonn 2009, 235–260. The statue bases discovered in the Near East supporting the positive reception of the emperor in the provinces have been analysed by G. W. Bowersock, *Lucius Verus in the Near East*, in: C. Evers, A. Tsingarida (eds.), *Rome et ses provinces: Hommages à Jean Charles Balty*, Brussels 2001, 73–77. A colossal head of Lucius Verus has recently been discovered in the southern Anatolian city of Perge, see I. Delemen, *The Colossal Statue of Lucius Verus Recently Discovered in Perge*, *Adalya* 14 (2011) 297–314.

⁶⁰ According to the RPC database (<http://rpc.ashmus.ox.ac.uk>) these cities are: Corinth, Apollonia, Thessalonica, Pautalia, Nicaea, Byzantium, Amastris, Sinope, Cyzicus, Pergamum, Tralles, Antioch ad Maeandrum, Maconia, Silandus, Stectorium, Adada, Attaleia, Magydus, Side, Antioch, Pessinus, Nicopolis ad Lycum, Megalopolis, Mopsus, Byblos, Scythopolis, Caesarea Maritima, Aelia Capitolina, Gadara, Abila, Alexandria.

⁶¹ This is one of the main causes of his *Quomodo Historia Conscribenda sit*, see C. P. Jones, *Culture and Society in Lucian*, Cambridge 1986, 59–67; K. Strobel, *Zeitgeschichte unter den Antoninen. Die Historiker des Partherkrieges des Lucius Verus*, ANRW II 34 (1993) 1315–1360; A. M. Kemezis, *Lucian, Fronto, and the Absence of Contemporary Historiography under the Antonines*, *AJPh* 131 (2010) 285–325; A. Free, *Geschichtsschreibung als Paideia: Lukians Schrift "Wie man Geschichte schreiben soll" in der Bildungskultur des 2. Jhs. n. Chr.*, Munich 2015, 180–208.

⁶² Philostratus, *V.S.* II 1.5. IG II² 2090. See J. H. Oliver, *Roman Emperors and Athenian Ephebes*, *Historia* 26 (1977) 94; Ameling, *Herodes Atticus* (n. 53) 140; Tobin, *Herodes Attikos* (n. 53) 202–204. A reference to this benefaction also appeared in the epigram (IG II² 3606) which Marathon dedicated to Herodes after his return from Sirmium in 175 AD.

⁶³ See Follet, *Athènes* (n. 54) 321–324.

ephebes were supposed to be inscribed every year and prove that the new competition was maintained from 166 to, at least, 255/256.⁶⁴ The same epigraphic regularity shows that the ἐπινίκια were not held in all the years in which ephebic events were organised.⁶⁵ However, it is impossible to establish an exact chronological correlation between each of the ἐπινίκια and the celebration of imperial triumphs. As has been noted above, the late Antonine period experienced a particularly high number of military campaigns but ἐπινίκια are also attested in presumably peaceful years. This reality continued under the Severans just before the memorialisation of lists of ephebes became less frequent. It would therefore seem that these events were gradually detached from allusions to singular events such as the Parthian war and became a more general celebration of Roman victory. This process would explain why, in the last datable inscription currently available to us, two different ἐπινίκια are recorded: one regular and one extraordinary that could commemorate an unexpected achievement of Valerian and Gallienus in the mid-250s.⁶⁶

The case of Ephesus bears many similarities. This city did not only receive visits from Lucius Verus twice, but was also chosen as station point for the imperial army returning from Syria. This costly honour was again covered by one of the most important political figures of the local community: T. Flavius Damianus.⁶⁷ While Ephesus did not keep regular lists of their ephebes in the imperial period, the relevance of agonistic culture is well represented in the surviving epigraphic sources.⁶⁸ Even if the dating of these inscriptions cannot be as precise as in Athens, the attestation of epinician games is confirmed in the second half of the 2nd century AD. The most evident case is provided by the honours that the boule and demos granted to Timaios Attalos.⁶⁹ The inscription records his career, family and praise for fulfilling his promise and becoming agonothetes of the Μεγάλα Ἐπινίκια. Since the same man is later attested as secretary

⁶⁴ IG II² 2089, 2026 B, 2097, 3749, 2103, 2113, 2114, 2116, 2119, 2130, 2135, 2193, 2196, 2199, 2201, 2203, 2226, 2237, 2242, 2245; SEG 26.184. On the nature and publication of these registers in the Roman period see H. U. Wiemer, *Von der Bürgerschule zum aristokratischen Klub? Die athenische Ephebie in der römischen Kaiserzeit*, Chiron 41 (2011) 487–537.

⁶⁵ This important aspect was already observed by P. Graindor, *Études sur l'éphébie attique sous l'Empire*, Musée belge 26 (1922) 198, who also provided the first review of the epinician competitions in Athens. Previously, A. Dumont, *Essai sur l'éphébie attique II*, Paris 1876, 301 had realised that a connection between these competitions and some Roman victories could be established.

⁶⁶ IG II² 2245. For these motivations and the mid-3rd century dating see Follet, *Athènes* (n. 54) 325.

⁶⁷ I.Eph. 672, 3080. T. Flavius Damianus' commitment to euergetic activities in Ephesus is not only reported by Philostratus *V.S.* II.23, but also confirmed through the honorific inscriptions dedicated to him (see B. Puech, *Orateurs et sophistes grecs dans les inscriptions d'époque impériale*, Paris 2002, 190–200). On the significance of this benefaction considering the severe grain problems caused by the Antonine plague in Asia see F. Kirbihler, *Les émissions de monnaies d'homonoia et les crises alimentaires en Asie sous Marc-Aurèle*, REA 108 (2006) 613–640.

⁶⁸ See e.g. M. F. Lehner, *Die Agonistik im Ephesos der römischen Kaiserzeit* (PhD Thesis), Munich 2005.

⁶⁹ I.Eph. 721 (app. 25).

of the assembly when C. Arrius Antoninus was governor of Asia, there is no doubt that Timaios Attalos was president of these games before 188/189.⁷⁰ More interestingly, some of his benefactions would have been motivated by the victory of a single emperor if the conjectural reading of one section of the fragmentary inscription is accepted.⁷¹ The benefactions of T. Flavius Clitosthenes Iulianus, another agonothetes of the Μεγάλα Ἐπινίκια, also happened in this period,⁷² and one of the winners of these games was awarded prizes in the Didymeia of Miletus before Marcus Aurelius' and Commodus' grant of eiselastic rank.⁷³

Even more unequivocal signs of the celebration of Roman victory in Ephesus are provided by the numismatic evidence. Coins with the portrait of Lucius Verus include on the reverse the legend ΡΩΜΑΙΩΝ ΝΕΙΚΗ ΕΦΕCΙΩΝ.⁷⁴ Another contemporary issue with Marcus Aurelius on the obverse is even more specific: ΘΕΑ ΡΩΜΑΙΩΝ ΝΕΙΚΗ ΕΦΕCΙΩΝ.⁷⁵ As Nollé has convincingly shown, both coins indicate that the Ephesians accepted the divine character of Roman *Victoria* straight after the imperial success in Parthia.⁷⁶ He has also argued that a cult of the goddess was consequently established at the capital of Asia and the organisation of epinician games was part of it. As a result,

⁷⁰ I.Eph. 619 (PIR² A 1088).

⁷¹ I.Eph. 721 (l. 6): δόντα δὲ καὶ ε[ί]ς τὸν το ... το . Κάισ[αρ]ος νε[ί]κης]. The editors of the Ephesian epigraphic repertorium wanted to link this reference with the commonly called — and still problematic — *Parthermonument*. While it is now largely agreed that the general theme is more related to the Antonine dynasty rather than the Parthian victory (see J. Elsner, *Imperial Rome and Christian Triumph: The Art of the Roman Empire AD 100–450*, Oxford 1996, 123–125; O. Hekster, *Emperors and Ancestors: Roman Rulers and the Constraints of Tradition*, Oxford 2015, 90–92), the date of the setting up of the monument remains even more debated (see W. Oberleitner, *Zum Partherdenkmal: drei Problemkreise*, in: W. Seipel [ed.], *Das Partherdenkmal von Ephesos: Akten des Kolloquiums, Kunsthistorisches Museum*, Vienna 2006, 13–23). The traditional connection with Lucius Verus' presence in Ephesus during the 160's was still supported by W. Oberleitner, *Das Partherdenkmal von Ephesos: ein Siegesmonument für Lucius Verus und Marcus Aurelius*, Vienna 2008. However, this 'late dating' has particularly been challenged after P. Liverani, *Il monumento antonino di Epheso*, RIA 19/20 (1996/1997) 153–174 argued for the reign of Antoninus Pius. If this were the case, the nexus between Timaios Attalos, the monument and the reference to an imperial victory in his honorific inscription would become more difficult to sustain. Such problems of interpretation do not exist if only a connection with the epinician games he presided was meant.

⁷² I.Eph. 671 (app. 26). The chronology can be established on the basis of I.Eph 2070 + 2071.

⁷³ I.Eph. 1605 (app. 27). Photion, a wrestler from Laodicea, achieved victories not only in Asia Minor, but also in Greece and Italy.

⁷⁴ S. Karwiese, *Die Münzprägung von Ephesos. Bd. 5: Katalog und Aufbau der römischen Stadtprägung mit allen erfassbaren Stempelnachweisen*, Vienna 2012, no. 325, 331 [RPC IV 1143].

⁷⁵ Karwiese, *Die Münzprägung von Ephesos* (n. 74) no. 310 [RPC IV 2671], 377 (see P. Weiss, *Auxe Perge. Beobachtungen zu einem bemerkenswerten städtischen Dokument des späten 3. Jahrhunderts n. Chr.*, Chiron 21 [1991] 356 no. 10). The legend ANEIKHTOIC ΡΩΜΑΙΟIC would be carved on the Victory's shield.

⁷⁶ J. Nollé, *Ein ephesischer Kult der 'Victoria Romanorum' und das sogenannte Parthermonument*, Chiron 33 (2003) 459–484. In Asia Minor, only one type from Nicaea includes the legend ΡΩΜΑΙΩΝ ΝΙΚΗΝ [RPC IV 5542, 5979, 5980, 9434] and the images allude to the Parthian war.

these events did not serve to celebrate concrete imperial triumphs but occurred on a regular basis. The theory is compatible with the development of the Athenian ἐπινίκια even if both events had a different character. In Ephesus, the epinician competitions were not part of the ephobic programme but actually open to international contestants. We also know that sometimes they were referred to with the epithet Μεγάλα, which resembles the nomenclature of larger Greek agones.⁷⁷ The regularity of ἐπινίκια in Ephesus, however, should not automatically rule out the possibility of there being other games that equally celebrated specific imperial victories. This seems to be the case in Athens under Valerian and Gallienus. One Ephesian agonistic base can be interpreted in a similar way. It records the victory of Aurelius Basileus in a competition called Great Pythia when Valerius Messala was governor of the province (236–238).⁷⁸ The honorific text opens with a reference to the ἐπινίκια dedicated to Maximinus Thrax, most likely indicating that the victory of this emperor — also commemorated on a local coin —⁷⁹ was celebrated in the framework of the Great Pythian games. This interpretation is also supported by the background of the promoter of the agon, M. Septimius Marion. He is known to have been a perpetual prize-giver of Isthmian games in his name already in the reign of Severus Alexander (ἀθλοθέτης διὰ βίου τῶν μεγάλων Μαρριανῶν Ἰσθμίων).⁸⁰ A decade later, when he was secretary of the assembly, he also assisted his son M. Septimius Marianus in organising the new Great Pythia (ἀγωνοθέτης [τοῦ ἀγῶ]νος τῶν μεγάλων Πυθίων).⁸¹ The addition of the designation epinician to these games — attested only once — could therefore indicate that, on this occasion, a single imperial triumph (Maximinus Thrax's) was celebrated without necessarily being part of the series of regular ἐπινίκια that Ephesus had organised since the end of the 2nd century AD. The problem lies, nevertheless, in distinguishing between regular and special commemorations of Roman victory when only the term ἐπινίκια is recorded in inscriptions normally listing many agonistic prizes in an abbreviated form.⁸² What should remain clear in this case is that the *Victoria Parthica* of the Antonines, together with imperial publicity and, most importantly, the support of the local elites triggered the foundation of different forms of epinician games as constituent elements of the civic landscape of both Ephesus and Athens. Another eastern campaign also happened to produce analogous results in Cilicia under the Severans.

⁷⁷ Nollé, *Ein ephesischer Kult* (n. 76) 464 proposes that these “Great” games could refer to the extraordinary festivity that would be organised every five years of regular ἐπινίκια.

⁷⁸ I.Eph. 1107 (app. 28).

⁷⁹ Karwiese, *Die Münzprägung von Ephesos* (n. 74) no. 834.

⁸⁰ I.Eph. 1109, 1111, 1112, 1113; SEG 39.1192.

⁸¹ The complete nomenclature of these games was τὰ μεγάλα Πύθια Μαρριάνεια as recorded in I.Eph. 2073. This sequence is almost identical to the previous Isthmian games organised by M. Septimius Marion and confirms the close collaboration between father and son in promoting agonistic events in Ephesus.

⁸² This is the case of the Ephesian ἐπινίκια appearing in the list of victories of the successful athlete M. Aurelius Abas (IGR III 370, app. 32).

IV The Severan Victories and Cilicia

Like Lucius Verus' and Marcus Aurelius', the consolidation of Septimius Severus' rule was reinforced as a result of a Parthian expedition. The ritual calendar of Dura Europos still recalled under Severus Alexander that on the 28th of January 198 Ctesiphon fell again, another *Victoria Parthica* was achieved and hence the soldiers stationed on the Euphrates needed to sacrifice one cow for the anniversary.⁸³ On the same day Caracalla had definitively been coupled to the reign of his father and, in the following months, coins from Anazarbus recorded versions of the following legend: CEYHPIA OΛYMPIA EΠINEIKIA EN KOΔPIΓAIC.⁸⁴ Contemporary reverses from the capital Tarsos are even more specific and let us know that these Severan Olympics were organised by the league (κοινόν) of Cilician cities and that the Kodrigai referred to a monument at the limit (ὄρος) between this region and Syria.⁸⁵

After the preceding analysis of the term ἐπινίκια, it is indisputable that these games commemorated the victory of the African emperor and his son in Parthia. On top of this, the particular location of the event amplified the notion of military success associated with the Severan dynasty. The historical plain of Issos near the Syrian border had witnessed the battle against Pescennius Niger in 194, so the choice by the Cilician koinon was not coincidental.⁸⁶ It is not hard to imagine how much easier the grant of Olympics from the emperors could become when this festival served to celebrate their recent achievement exactly where their most hated enemy had previously been defeated. After all, Septimius Severus and Caracalla were authorising games with their names to a group of cities presumably committed to their triumph, while former supporters of Niger nearby such as Antioch were still suffering the punishment of their dissidence.⁸⁷ Cilicia, however, had not been crucial only in this civil war. The

⁸³ Dura 54 (l. 14–16). See Fink, *Victoria Parthica* (n. 36).

⁸⁴ R. Ziegler, *Kaiser, Heer und städtisches Geld: Untersuchungen zur Münzprägung von Anazarbos und anderer ostkilikischer Städte*, Vienna 1993, 262–263, no. 282 (app. 33), 289 (app. 34).

⁸⁵ R. Ziegler, *Städtisches Prestige und kaiserliche Politik: Studien zum Festwesen in Ostkilikien im 2. und 3. Jahrhundert n. Chr.*, Düsseldorf 1985, 22–23, no. A7–A10 (app. 35–38). On the identification of Kodrigai with the *quadrigae* on the triumphal arch that could commemorate Septimius Severus' victory over Pescennius Niger at the Cilician Gates see H. Hellenkemper, F. Hild, *Neue Forschungen in Kilikien*, Vienna 1986, 108–110.

⁸⁶ See H. Tauber, *Die syrisch-kilikische Grenze während der Prinzipatszeit*, *Tyche* 6 (1991) 201–210.

⁸⁷ Herodian 3.6.9; *HA, Sev.* 9 (cf. G. Downey, *A history of Antioch in Syria: from Seleucus to the Arab conquest*, Princeton 1961, 238–243; R. Haensch, *Capita Provinciarum: Statthalter-sitze und Provinzialverwaltung in der römischen Kaiserzeit*, Mainz 1997, 251–252; F. Millar, *Rome, the Greek World, and the East. Volume 3: the Greek World, the Jews, and the East*, Chapel Hill 2006, 191–193). In his chronicle of Diocletian, Malalas (12.307) reports that the stadium of Daphne was built by the emperor to prevent the departure of Olympic competitors from Antioch to the Kodrigai on the river Argyros. While the building works might have occurred in the late 3rd century AD, the episode with the athletes most likely dates to the early Severan period when the novel Cilician festival took place and the Syrian city was still recovering before successfully bidding to host their own Olympic games (see S. Remijsen, *The Introduction of the Antiochene Olympics: A Proposal for a New Date*, *GRBS* 50 [2010] 431–434).

importance of southern Anatolia, in general, increased considerably after the Julio-Claudian period as eastern campaigns intensified.⁸⁸ This imperial relevance was rewarded with favours promoting agonistic competitions. Hadrianeia festivals with sacred and international status are attested in both Tarsus and Anazarbus.⁸⁹ The award of neokoriai was equally related to this process as can primarily be observed in the capital of the region, which was allowed her first neocorate temple by the 130s.⁹⁰ The second neokoria came with Commodus and, after the damnation of the emperor's actions, was renewed by Septimius Severus.⁹¹ In Anazarbus, the first neokoria appears on coins dating between 198 and 200.⁹² Two of the reverses also specify that the grant was celebrated with a common oecumenical sacrifice (CYNΘYCIA OIKOYMENHC).⁹³ We know that some cities also seized these opportunities to organise concurrent games and, indeed, it is not unusual to find new international festivals when additional neokoriai were granted.⁹⁴ This close — although not indispensable — relationship between the spread of Greek agones and the grant of titles promoting regional status is again fundamental for explaining the evolution of the epinician celebrations in Cilicia.

The Epinician Severan Olympics held at Kodrigai are not attested as such in the dated coins of Anazarbus after 200. Only the agonistic legend ΟΛΥΜΠΙΑ was engraved in 202/203,⁹⁵ the year in which the city presumably received her second neokoria.⁹⁶ In 204/205, Anazarbus starts referring to herself as ΜΗΤΡΟΠΟΛΙΣ, mentions the unprecedented festival CEOYHPΙΑ Φ[ΙΛΑΔΕΛΦΙ]Α and produces coins that depict 3 agonistic urns.⁹⁷ This should indicate that by this year the city was organising three different games. One of the agones must have been the Hadrianeia founded in the 2nd century.⁹⁸ The Severan Philadelphian was certainly the second and emphasised the increasing association of Septimius Severus' sons with the imperial succession; with Geta holding his first consulate also in 205. The nature of the third festival is more difficult to elucidate. The immediate proposal would be to identify the ΟΛΥΜΠΙΑ of

⁸⁸ See S. Mitchell, *The Balkans, Anatolia and Roman armies across Asia Minor*, in: S. Mitchell (ed.), *Armies and Frontiers in Roman and Byzantine Anatolia: Proceedings of a Colloquium held at University College, Swansea, in April 1981*, Oxford 1983, 142; Ziegler, *Städtisches Prestige* (n. 85) 17–18 and *Kaiser, Heer* (n. 84) 21–24; H. Elton, *Military Supply and the South Coast of Anatolia in the Third Century*, in: S. Mitchell, C. Katsari (eds.), *Patterns in the Economy of Asia Minor*, Swansea 2005, 289–304.

⁸⁹ Ziegler, *Städtisches Prestige* (n. 85) A2, A12, A20–A21, B1–B3.

⁹⁰ B. Burrell, *Neokoroi: Greek Cities and Roman Emperors*, Leiden 2004, 212.

⁹¹ Burrell, *Neokoroi* (n. 90) 213–217.

⁹² Ziegler, *Kaiser, Heer* (n. 84) 262–264, no. 280–293. See Burrell, *Neokoroi* (n. 90) 220–222.

⁹³ Ziegler, *Kaiser, Heer* (n. 84) 264, no. 291–292. On the nature of these invitations see C. Jones, 'Joint Sacrifice' at *Iasus and Side*, *JHS* 118 (1998) 183–186.

⁹⁴ P. Weiss, *Festgesandtschaften, städtisches Prestige und Homonoiaprägungen*, *Stadion* 24.1 (1998) 59–70.

⁹⁵ Ziegler, *Kaiser, Heer* (n. 84) 265, no. 294–296.

⁹⁶ Ziegler, *Kaiser, Heer* (n. 84) 266, no. 300. See Burrell, *Neokoroi* (n. 90) 222–296.

⁹⁷ Ziegler, *Kaiser, Heer* (n. 84) 267–268, no. 301–307.

⁹⁸ This festival was also referred to as IEΠOC OIKOYMENIKOC as confirmed by Ziegler, *Kaiser, Heer* (n. 84) 282, no. 432.

202/203 with the Epinician Severan Olympics held by the Cilician koinon between 198 and 200. The problem with this identification lies in the fact that under Elagabalus one coin of the city records the legend ANTΩNEINIANA ΠΡΩΤΑ ΤΗC ΟΙΚΟYΜΕΝΗC ΕΠΙΝΕΙΚΙΑ ΟΛΥΜΠΙΑ.⁹⁹ In this period other bronze pieces still record three agonistic urns, so the legend cannot refer to the addition of a new festival but rather to the adaptation of a previous one.¹⁰⁰ A solution can be proposed if the first Epinician Severan Olympics at Kodrigai are conceived of as an exceptional celebration which was organised by the Cilician koinon only once and which did not maintain continuity. Hence, the ΟΛΥΜΠΙΑ recorded in 202/203 would instead refer to the festival that Anazarbus was exclusively granted during that year in conjunction with her second neokoria. These Olympic games would be organised directly by the city, which bestowed the denomination Epinician Antoniniana upon them between 218–220 and became the first of the Empire to celebrate the very recent victory over Macrinus. This hypothesis can be supported by some concomitant elements attested in the local evidence. Firstly, Anazarbus really strove to be associated with the previous actions of Macrinus. Even if Cassius Dio is critical of the Parthian campaign of this emperor, the Senate in Rome automatically conceded the triumphal sacrifices and an acclamation.¹⁰¹ In 217/218, a large issue of Anazarbean coins records with both images and letters that the city “was adorned with Roman trophies”.¹⁰² This is the sole numismatic occurrence of the term τρόπαιον on the obverses surviving from the eastern Mediterranean and most likely means that Anazarbus especially received trophies as a symbol of her support for the Roman military success. After Elagabalus’ accession, this provincial community may have felt the need to demonstrate her allegiance towards the new — and opposing — emperor and decided to rename their own Olympic festival, which under the normal pentaeteric cycle was due to be held in 218/219 (202/203 + 4x4).¹⁰³ The second argument derives

⁹⁹ Ziegler, *Kaiser, Heer* (n. 84) 289, no. 452 (app. 32).

¹⁰⁰ Ziegler, *Kaiser, Heer* (n. 84) 283, no. 399–400, 284, no. 412. This would also be the case for the ΙΕΡΟC ΤΡΙΕΤΗΡΙΟC, which is attested in the same year and most likely needed to be rebranded when Caracalla pushed for the *damnatio memoriae* of his brother and the Severan Philadelphian epithets were not adequate any longer (Ziegler, *Kaiser, Heer* [n. 84] no. 348, 422, 423).

¹⁰¹ Cass. Dio 79.27 (cf. A. Scott, *The Legitimization of Elagabalus and Cassius Dio’s Account of the Reign of Macrinus*, JAH 1 [2013] 242–253). Imperial coins also celebrated this VICT(oria) PART(hica): RIC IV *Macrinus* 49–50, 164–166. In Ephesus, the Victory of the Romans was commemorated with the Τύχη of the Ephesians on a coin reverse (see Karwiese, *Die Münzprägung von Ephesos* [n. 74] no. 610). The city would have also dedicated vows (ΒΩΤΑ) to the emperor as depicted in Karwiese, *Die Münzprägung von Ephesos* (n. 74) no. 614–616.

¹⁰² See Ziegler, *Kaiser, Heer* (n. 84) 114–115, e.g. no. 324: ANAZ(APBOY) EN(ΔΟΞΟΥ) ΜΗ(ΤΡΟΠΟΛΕΩC) ΡΩΜ(ΑΙΚΟΙC) ΤΡΟΠ(ΑΙΟΙC) ΚΕΚ(ΟΣΜΗΜΕΝΗC). The adoption of these titles in the official nomenclature of the city is confirmed by milestones dating to Macrinus’, Elagabalus’ and Severus Alexander’s reigns (I.Anazarbos 11–13). On the possible connection between the τρόπαια and the triumphal arch preserved on the site see L. Robert, *Voyage en Grèce et en Cilicie*, CRAI 105 (1961) 176–177.

¹⁰³ Anazarbus also managed to make Elagabalus δημιουργός, the highest civic honour of the city (previously held by Commodus in Tarsus, see Ziegler, *Kaiser, Heer* [n. 84] 118–119) and produced coins connecting local cults with those of an emperor who may have visited the city

from the agonistic coins that Tarsus, the other Cilician centre, issued under Valerian and Gallienus. They represent three urns with the names CEYHPHIA OΛYMPIA, AΔPIANIA and AKTIA.¹⁰⁴ There is no reference to the koinon in the organization of these Severan Olympics and they were not epinician either. Therefore, it is plausible that these games were newly granted by Septimius Severus to Tarsus when the second neokoria was reinstated. The final argument to support the independent status of an analogous Olympic festival in Anazarbus is provided by one coin dating to 229/230.¹⁰⁵ Severus Alexander was about to enter another war near Cilicia and the city probably considered a return to the name CEOYHPHIA EΠHNIKIA OΛYMPIA for games that were still held every four years beneficial.¹⁰⁶ This sense of adaptability and the underlying efforts to display loyalty towards imperial rule and allegiance to the Roman victory in a competitive regional context can also be observed in Thyateira,¹⁰⁷ Pisidia,¹⁰⁸ and became even more evident in Macedonia during the mid-3rd century. This final case study will also introduce a concluding discussion about the strategies of reciprocity dominating epinician celebrations.

V Thessalonica and the Mid-3rd Century

Inter-city rivalry in Macedonia had two protagonists during the Roman imperial period: Thessalonica and Beroea. The first was seat of the provincial governor and the second hosted the centre of the Macedonian league.¹⁰⁹ In the brief reign of Nerva,

(see R. Ziegler, *Der Burgberg von Anazarbos in Kilikien und der Kult des Elagabal in den Jahren 218 bis 222 n. Chr.*, Chiron 34 [2004] 60–85; L. Bricault, *Antoninus à reculons: sur les pas d'Élagabal*, in: Hostein, Lalanne [eds.], *Les Voyages des empereurs* [n. 54] 83–105). On the concomitant significance of Victory in the issues of imperial coinage see Noreña, *Imperial ideals* (n. 22) 157 (cf. Herodian 5.5.7). As for the pentaeteric cycle of the Anazarbean Olympics, its regularity can be confirmed by local coins with legends dating to 230 (Ziegler, *Kaiser, Heer* [n. 84] no. 508–509, 544) and 250 (Ziegler, *Kaiser, Heer* [n. 84] no. 759 = RPC IX 1493, 762 = RPC IX 1485, 763–765 = RPC IX 1488, 766 = RPC IX 1487, 771 = RPC IX 1481).

¹⁰⁴ Ziegler, *Städtisches Prestige* (n. 85) A20–21.

¹⁰⁵ Ziegler, *Kaiser, Heer* (n. 84) 302, no. 544 (app. 40).

¹⁰⁶ The fact that only three agonistic urns were still displayed in this year (Ziegler, *Kaiser, Heer* [n. 84] 518) should confirm that the highest number of international games in Anazarbus was not altered from 204. For the equally remarkable honours bestowed on Severus Alexander by rivalling Tarsus see M. H. Sayar, *Tarsos und Severus Alexander*, EA 49 (2016) 177–186.

¹⁰⁷ An athletic competition referred to as epinician was organised in the gymnasium of Thyateira for Severus Alexander (TAM V 2.949 [app. 41], 1008 [app. 42]). TAM V 2.1016 (app. 43) even honours a performer of tragedy that “adorned epinician celebrations (ἐπινεϊκίους ἑορτάς), held for the piety of the greatest and invincible emperors”. This Lydian city had previously become the centre of a judicial district after a visit of Caracalla, and the local games were soon thereafter transformed into an attractive international event improving regional visibility (TAM V 2.943). In Taurian Chersonesos another epinician competition in one of the local gymnasia appears to have been organised according to IOSPE I² 436 (app. 49), but neither its exact date nor circumstances can be explored.

¹⁰⁸ See P. Talloen, M. Waelkens, *Apollo and the Emperors (II): The Evolution of the Imperial Cult at Sagalassos*, AncSoc 35 (2005) 235–242 for the evidence from Selge, Sagalassos and Ariassos.

¹⁰⁹ Haensch, *Capita Provinciarum* (n. 87) 104–112.

Beroea successfully defended her right to be the only neokoros and metropolis of the region.¹¹⁰ Her second neokorate was not reached until Elagabalus but disappeared after the *damnatio memoriae* of the emperor.¹¹¹ Under Gordian III, the second neokoria was reinstated while Thessalonica equally started to exhibit unequivocal signs of this competition for titlature in her inscriptions and coins.¹¹² In 238, the Goths crossed the Danube and inflicted their first major attack on imperial soil according to the Athenian historian Dexippus.¹¹³ Gordian III was forced to face these episodes of insecurity soon after his accession and Macedonia became a fundamental base from which the Roman response could be launched and supported. The importance of this frontier increased considerably and, indeed, in 242 the emperor is reported to have expelled the enemies from the Balkans on his way to a new war in Mesopotamia against the Sassanians.¹¹⁴ In this period and prior to Gordian's titles *Parthicus* and *Persicus Maximus*, Thessalonica issued numerous coins calling herself neokoros and emphasising the organisation of a new agonistic festival which challenged the previous Beroean exclusivity.¹¹⁵ The obverses mostly refer to ΠΥΘΙΑ, but the epithets KABIPEIA,¹¹⁶ KECAPEIA,¹¹⁷ and ΕΠΙΝΙΚΙΑ¹¹⁸ are also used. The long nomenclature of this festival is confirmed in 260 by an inscription recording the benefactions of a local high-priest that acted as ἀγ[ωνοθέτης ἀγώνος ἱερ]οῦ οἰκουμενικοῦ εἰσελαστικοῦ τῶν μεγάλων Καισαρείων Ἐπινευκίων Καβειρίων Πυθίων.¹¹⁹ The exact chronology of this Pythian agon can also be established because a list of victors in its 4th celebration is precisely dated to the Macedonian year 284 (i.e. AD 252/253).¹²⁰ As the festival in Thessalonica imitated the organisation of the Delphian Pythia, the pentaeteric cycle was most likely adopted, which places the foundation in 240/241.¹²¹ This chronology also fits with the fact that some of the Pythian coins include the portrait of Tranquillina whom Gordian had married by the summer of 241.¹²² Consequently, a date between this wedding and the beginning

¹¹⁰ I.Beroia 117. See Burrell, *Neokoroi* (n. 90) 191–192.

¹¹¹ Burrell, *Neokoroi* (n. 90) 192–195.

¹¹² Burrell, *Neokoroi* (n. 90) 195–197.

¹¹³ *HA, Max. Balb.* 16.3. See G. Martin, *Dexipp von Athen: Edition, Übersetzung und begleitende Studien*, Tübingen 2006, 161–162; L. Mecella, *Dexippo di Atene: Testimonianze e Frammenti*, Rome 2013, 277–286; G. Martin, *Die Struktur von Dexipps Skythika und die Historia Augusta*, in: B. Bleckmann, H. Brandt (eds.), *Historiae Augustae Colloquium Dusseldorpiense*, Bari 2017, 110–113.

¹¹⁴ *HA, Gord.* 26.4–5.

¹¹⁵ Burrell, *Neokoroi* (n. 90) 198–199.

¹¹⁶ I. Touratsoglou, *Die Münzstätte von Thessaloniki in der römischen Kaiserzeit: 32/31 v. Chr. bis 268 n. Chr.*, Berlin 1988, Gordianus III no. 204, 214–216.

¹¹⁷ Touratsoglou, *Die Münzstätte* (n. 116) Gordianus III no. 218–219.

¹¹⁸ Touratsoglou, *Die Münzstätte* (n. 116) Gordianus III no. 231–234 (app. 46).

¹¹⁹ IG X 2 1.1075. cf. SEG 56.748, 58.542.

¹²⁰ IG X 2 1.38.

¹²¹ Not only was Pythia the principal epithet of the festival, but also IG X 2 1.38 opens the catalogue of victors with a dedication to Apollo Pythios and a reference to the Amphiktyones.

¹²² See X. Lorient, *Les premières années de la grande crise du III^e siècle: De l'avènement de Maximin le Thrace (235) à la mort de Gordien III (244)*, ANRW II 2 (1975) 738.

of the Macedonian year on 14 October appears to be most likely. The setting out of this chronology is very important as it allows us to connect the epinician epithet to the initial victories that the army of Gordian achieved in Moesia and Thrace. Likewise, it shows that the sacred and eiselastic Pythian festival was granted by the emperor in conjunction with the first neokoria, following the model previously argued for Cilicia. As a result, the subsequent evolution of both the titles and agonistic events of Thessalonica can be better assessed. For example, coins that depicted the portraits of Philip and Otacilia Severa, but without Philip II, document the second celebration of the Pythia in 244/245.¹²³ Interestingly, the games are not referred to as epinician so the commemoration of Roman victory — as in Anazarbus — was not automatic but rather decided on an individual basis.¹²⁴

A major development can be observed under Trajan Decius and again should be connected with contemporary events affecting the Empire. Even if both the accession and fall of this ruler are not completely clear, it is certain that his reign was characterised by military campaigns across the Balkans, which concluded with a fatal battle near Abrittus.¹²⁵ In this period, Thessalonica claimed to be metropolis, colonia and four times neokoros; a titlature with no precedents in the eastern Mediterranean.¹²⁶

¹²³ Touratsoglou, *Die Münzstätte* (n. 116) Philippus I no. 17–32.

¹²⁴ This would be supported by the fact that the epinician epithet is also missing on coins with the legend ΠΥΘΙΑ and the portrait of Philip II, most likely indicating the third celebration of the festival in 248/249 after the proclamation of Philip II as *Augustus* in 247.

¹²⁵ See B. Gerov, *Die Einfälle der Nordvölker in den Ostbalkanraum im Lichte der Münzschatzfunde I*, ANRW II 6 (1977) 132–140; H. A. Pohlsander, *Did Decius kill the Philippi?*, *Historia* 31 (1982) 214–222; H. Wolfram, *History of the Goths*, Berkeley 1988, 43–46; C. Körner, *Philippus Arabs: ein Soldatenkaiser in der Tradition des antoninisch-severischen Prinzipats*, Berlin 2002, 288–328. This state of peril and Decius' presence in the region has been confirmed by new fragments of Dexippus recently discovered in Vienna (see G. Martin, J. Grusková, *Scythica Vindobonensia by Dexippus (?): New Fragments on Decius' Gothic Wars*, GRBS 54 [2014] 728–754, and J. Grusková, G. Martin, *Zum Angriff der Goten unter Kniva auf eine thrakische Stadt*, *Tyche* 30 [2016] 35–53). On the first months and the *dies imperii* of the emperor see R. Haensch, P. Weiss, *Weitere "Statthaltergewichte" von Nikomedeia. Neue Ergebnisse zur Stadt und Reichsgeschichte*, *Chiron* 44 (2014) 533–539.

¹²⁶ See Burrell, *Neokoroi* (n. 90) 199–202. R. Ziegler, *Thessalonike in der Politik des Traianus Decius und der Tod des Philippus Arabs*, in: M. Wissemann (ed.), *Roma renascens. Beiträge zur Spätantike und Rezeptionsgeschichte. Ilona Opelt von ihren Freunden und Schülern zum 9.7.1988 in Verehrung gewidmet*, Frankfurt 1988, 385–414 proposed that this extraordinary upgrade occurred after Decius inflicted a punishment onto Beroea, Thessalonica's rival, for opposing his accession and supporting Philip the Arab. Even though 4th and 5th century sources record that the final battle between the two Roman generals took place near Verona in Italy, S. Dušanić, *The end of the Philippi*, *Chiron* 6 (1976) 427–439 argued that Beroea should be read, the name of a city that he identified with Augusta Traiana in Thrace, also known as Beroea. Following this scribal error theory, Ziegler alternatively proposed the Macedonian Beroea even if this city is now known to have preserved its neocorate status during Decius' reign (I.Beroia 509). Likewise, the new fragments of Dexippus show that Decius did not despise the Thracian Beroea during his campaigns (Martin, Grusková, *Scythica Vindobonensia* [n. 125] 744). Nonetheless, Ziegler was right to highlight the unprecedented scale of Decius' grants for Thessalonica which show significant imperial support and can only be compared with the upgrades that Perge

Together with these distinctions, there are coins displaying four agonistic urns, which represent an analogous upgrade in the number of festivals that the city was expected to hold.¹²⁷ Trajan Decius, however, died prior to the end of the next Pythian cycle and, as discussed above, the 4th celebration of this older festival certainly happened in 252/253. The subsequent year of imperial instability may have had a profound impact on Thessalonica, as the Goths could have besieged the city in 254.¹²⁸ Celebrating the eventually successful outcome or another Roman victory, the Thessalonians decided to commemorate the next Pythian games as epinician. Unfortunately, the agonistic coins under Valerian only record a joint reference to the two sacred festivals that the city managed to keep — again coinciding with the number of neokoroi — but no further details concerning other epithets or number of celebrations.¹²⁹ Consequently, the only attestations of these epinician games come from two inscriptions dating to 259 and 260.¹³⁰ Both documents have a very distinctive format known as *invitatio ad munera*, the main point of which was the commemoration of gladiatorial and hunting spectacles promoted by high-priests of the imperial cult in Macedonia.¹³¹ Here, the two *munera* were sponsored

received in the late 270's when the emperor Tacitus launched his Gothic campaign from this Pamphylian city (see C. Roueché, *Floreat Perge*, in: M. M. Mackenzie, C. Roueché [eds.], *Images of Authority: papers presented to Joyce Reynolds on the occasion of her seventieth birthday*, Cambridge 1989, 206–222).

¹²⁷ Touratsoglou, *Die Münzstätte* (n. 116) Traianus Decius no. 2–3, 6–7, 9 (RPC IX 142–144, 147–148).

¹²⁸ Zosimus I.29.2; Zonaras XII.23; Syncellus 715. On the basis of these sources the siege was dated to 254 but a new fragment of Dexippus indicating that the Thessalonians needed to defend their city has tentatively been dated to the early 260s (see C. Mallan, C. Davenport, *Dexippus and the Gothic Invasions: Interpreting the New Vienna Fragment (Codex Vindobonensis Hist. gr. 73, ff. 192 v–193r)*, JRS 105 [2015] 203–205; contra O. Gengler, *Johannes Malalas und seine Quellen: Überlegungen zum Fall Philostratos (Malalas XII 26)*, in: E. Juhász [ed.], *Byzanz und das Abendland IV. Studia Byzantino-Occidentalia*, Budapest 2016, 79–89; C. Lucarini, *Zum neuen Dexipp*, ZPE 197 [2016] 42–45; D. Potter, *War as Theatre, from Tacitus to Dexippus*, in: W. Riess, G. Fagan [eds.], *The Topography of Violence in the Graeco-Roman World*, Ann Arbor 2016, 336; C. P. Jones, *Further Dexippus (2)*, 2017, available on his academia.edu profile). Whatever the exact dating of the large siege may be, the possibility of several raids reaching Macedonia during this traumatic period should not be ruled out. For a possible connection between these attacks and the increasing phenomenon of hoarding see I. Touratsoglou, *Greece and the Balkans before the end of Antiquity*, Athens 2008, 142–143 (cf. M. Spoerri-Butcher, A. Casoli, *Un trésor d'antoniniens trouvé à Érétie (Eubée) en 2011: questions de circulation monétaire en Grèce au III^e siècle ap. J.-C.*, SNR 91 [2012] 111–177).

¹²⁹ While the titles of metropolis and colonia were kept, two of the neokoroi disappeared (see Burrell, *Neokoroi* [n. 90] 202–203). For the agonistic coins under Valerian and Gallienus see Touratsoglou, *Die Münzstätte* (n. 116) 77–81.

¹³⁰ IG X 2 I.1074–5 (app. 47–48). The restoration of the festival epithets in the first inscription dating to 259 should be avoided, see SEG 50.638 instead. The dates, however, are certain because both the local Macedonian era and the Roman calendar are stated.

¹³¹ See P. Adam-Veleni, *An illustrated invitatio ad munera gladiatoria from Thessaloniki*, in: M. Tiverios et al. (eds.), *Threpteria: Studies on Ancient Macedonia*, Thessalonike 2012, 279–312.

by the same couple, Tib. Claudius Rufrius Menon and his wife Baebia Magna.¹³² In both inscriptions, the man was also praised for being the agonothetes of the Pythian festival which, as noted above, appeared with the epithets *Caesarea*, *Kabirea* and *Epinikia* in 260. In 259, the nomenclature is somewhat abbreviated, but there should be no doubt that both sequences refer to the presidency of the same festival and the dates of the inscriptions only apply to the organization of annual spectacles related to his imperial high-priesthood.¹³³ This also means that Rufrius Menon was considered agonothetes of the entire Pythian cycle running between 257/258 and 261/262.¹³⁴

The increasing relevance of Macedonia and, in particular, Thessalonica was rewarded with imperial grants promoting the status of the city in the mid-3rd century. The following and final section seeks to show that the attestations of ἐπινίκια can improve our understanding of the reciprocity influencing local reactions and corresponding diplomatic procedures.

VI Epinician Reciprocity

Profiting from the visit of Septimius Severus and Caracalla to Egypt, a rich Alexandrian addressed a petition for the establishment of a fund sponsoring ephebic activities at Oxyrhynchus.¹³⁵ Among the arguments supporting his request before the emperors, Aurelius Horion emphasised that the inhabitants of this community had already proved to be an ally (συμμαχήσαντες) of the Romans in a war against the Jews and that they had also organised a day of ἐπινίκια every year since then.¹³⁶ The exact components

¹³² Claudius Rufrius was very likely a descendant of a well-known leader of the Macedonian koinon attested in the Severan period (see IG X 2 1.142–143, 173, 183–185, 209 and SEG 46.815; cf. A. Tatakis, *Ancient Beroea. Prosopography and Society*, Athens 1988, no. 723). His wife Baebia Magna originated from a branch of the equally prominent family of Baebii (see A. Rizakis, *Recrutement et formation des élites dans les colonies romaines de la province de Macédoine*, in: M. Cébeillac-Gervasoni, L. Lamoine [eds.], *Les élites et leurs facettes: les élites locales dans le monde hellénistique et romain*, Rome 2003, 123; J. Bartels, *Städtische Eliten im römischen Makedonien: Untersuchungen zur Formierung und Struktur*, Berlin 2008, 126).

¹³³ On the connection between Macedonian high-priests and the organisation of gladiatorial spectacles see P. Herz, *Überlegungen zur Geschichte des makedonischen Koinon im 3. Jh.*, in: J. Rüpke (ed.), *Festrituale. Diffusion und Wandel im römischen Reich*, Tübingen 2008, 115–116. This is also clear in the imperial cult structures of the province of Asia as summarised by M. Carter, *Archiereis and Asiarchs: A Gladiatorial Perspective*, GRBS 44 (2004) 41–68.

¹³⁴ In the case of the games of the Macedonian koinon, Rufrius Menon actually became the διὰ βίου ἀγωνοθέτης by AD 260 (IG X 2 1.1075, l. 6).

¹³⁵ P.Oxy. IV 705 = CPJ II 450 (app. 44). On the life and benefactions of Aurelius Horion, a rich landowner with proprieties in Oxyrhynchus, see A. K. Bowman, *Aurelius Horion and the Calpurnii: Elite Families in Third Century Oxyrhynchus*, in: T. Gagos, R. S. Bagnall (eds), *Essays and texts in honor of J. David Thomas*, Oakville 2001, 11–18.

¹³⁶ Given that no Jewish wars occurred in the Severan period, this historical allusion probably refers to the Diaspora revolt under Trajan which came to an end with aid from the local population (see M. Pucci Ben Zeev, *Diaspora Judaism in turmoil, 116/117 CE: Ancient Sources and Modern Insights*, Leuven 2005, 51–54). Cf. W. Horbury, *Jewish War under Trajan and Hadrian*, Cambridge 2014, 246.

of this festivity are not specified and, indeed, this is not the main topic of the petition.¹³⁷ Nevertheless, it served to demonstrate the good-will (εὐνοία), loyalty (πίστις) and friendship (φιλία) of the inhabitants of Oxyrhynchus towards the Romans.

These three elements were obviously common-place in diplomatic discourse, and yet they continued to dominate the rhetoric of local alliances with the Empire. Another well-known document of the early Severan period found in Nicopolis ad Istrum confirms their relevance from a central perspective.¹³⁸ In this case, Septimius Severus and Caracalla reacted to an embassy carrying a local decree that celebrated their Parthian victory and joint rule with the organisation of a public festivity (δημοσίαν ἀγαγόντες ἑορτήν), presumably as soon as the city received all this good news (ἀγαθὰ εὐαγγέλματα).¹³⁹ The result was that the emperors, convinced of the Nicopolitan loyalty, granted a significant tax remission. This concession, however, was not a happy coincidence as well studied by C. Ando in relation to the importance of the *aurum coronarium* for the creation of imperial consensus.¹⁴⁰ Indeed, we also know that Aphrodisias in Caria had employed some of her most prominent citizens to deliver a similar resolution to the reigning duo exactly in the same year.¹⁴¹ Again the successful outcome of this mission was inscribed and the special rights of the autonomous city were preserved.¹⁴²

The procedure in all these cases is analogous. Local communities or individuals aspired to diverse privileges that only the emperors could grant. Imperial favour was therefore sought and any proof of their commitment to Rome could contribute. On the other hand, emperors could react positively in their reception — even if expected — of gestures from subjects approving their legitimacy and policies. In a period of dynastic

¹³⁷ The only other attestation of the term ἐπινίκια not only in Oxyrhynchus, but Egypt as a whole, appears in a calendar of sacrificial offerings and is related to the triumphs of Marcus Aurelius: P.Oxy. XXXI 2553 (app. 45).

¹³⁸ IGBulg II 659.

¹³⁹ Nollé, *Εὐτυχῶς τοῖς κυρίοις* (n. 28) 330–331 even argued that the event was epinician, but the epithet is not recorded in inscriptions or coins of the city. This type of local celebrations for a victory — detached from the agonistic circuit — could be analogous to the actions of a benefactor from Laodicea called P. Claudius Attalus who provided an epinician festivity as recorded on a series of coins dating to Antoninus Pius' reign, most likely commemorating his second *imperator* title: RPC IV 9988 (app. 19); see Weiss, *Euergeten und Elemente der Zweiten Sophistik* (n. 28) 185–194. In Aphrodisias, Tib. Claudius Zelus also sponsored what appears to be an analogous ἐπινίκιον under Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus with coins specifically alluding to the victory over the Parthians: RPC IV 36–39 (app. 20–23). cf. I.Aphr. 2007 8.84–85, 14–18; C. Roueché, *Performers and partisans at Aphrodisias in the Roman and late Roman periods: a study based on inscriptions from the current excavations at Aphrodisias in Caria*, London 1993, 163–164.

¹⁴⁰ The inscription actually records the payment of 700.000 denarii by the local community, see Ando, *Imperial Ideology* (n. 36) 175–190.

¹⁴¹ I.Aphr. 2007 8.36, 8.37.

¹⁴² See J. Reynolds, *Aphrodisias and Rome: documents from the excavation of the theatre at Aphrodisias conducted by Professor Kenan T. Erim, together with some related texts*, London 1982, 124–129.

uncertainty such as the early Severan, new opportunities to create bonds of reciprocity were offered and cities in the eastern provinces took their chances to excel in the prevailing competition for rank and status. This mutual, albeit unequal, exchange between peripheral interests and imperial responses also impacted the organisation of local festivals. Furthermore, the appearance and development of such events was influenced by these dominant forces because they generated loyalty to the central power and expressed gratitude for Rome's generosity.

As an example of this process of reciprocity, this paper has focused on the addition of the epithet ἐπινίκια to the nomenclature of Greek games. Agonistic culture, a fundamental aspect of civic culture in the eastern Mediterranean, features prominently in the surviving epigraphic and numismatic evidence.¹⁴³ Boeotia, for example, had a long tradition of inscribed music festivals and the impact of Sulla's hegemony can immediately be assessed. The imperial diffusion of the ideals of *Victoria Augusti*, coupled with the claimed conquests of territories such as Britannia or Germania, was equally echoed on the bronze coins of eastern provincial communities. This development coincided with the increasing relevance of Greek agones in the Roman Empire. The confluence of both trends appears to have crystallised under Trajan when his Dacian triumphal extravaganzas, at the very least, featured a showcase probably organised by the rising guild of athletes. The connection between agonistic displays and imperial victories in Rome continued under the Antonines and attracted some of the most prominent stars, who would then return to their places of origin and display their prizes. In the previous years, the same localities experienced the Mesopotamian threat, the expedition of Lucius Verus and the emphasis placed on his *Victoria Parthica* through all means of literary, visual and military propaganda. Two particularly notable poleis, Athens and Ephesus, translated this publicised effort into the establishment of recurrent ἐπινίκια, either as part of the epehebic competitions or larger games open to international contestants, which were recorded until the mid-3rd century. These initiatives generally received the support of local benefactors and members of the elite, such as Herodes Atticus, who could also expect to create even more intimate ties of familiarity with the ruling power. Otherwise, when facing trial before Marcus Aurelius, he would not have voiced his displeasure and lamented: 'This is what I get in return for my hospitality to Lucius — although it was you who sent him to me!'¹⁴⁴

The same framework of constant exchange and interconnectivity sheds light on the less regular attestation of games called ἐπινίκια in Cilicia. This region boomed after the accession of Septimius Severus at least in terms of the neokoriai and concomitant festivals granted. The league of its cities soon reacted with the organisation of an event commemorating another recent victory over the Parthians in the place where Pescennius Niger had been defeated. The people of Anazarbus — then with two neocorate temples — continued to display this enthusiasm either when they received the trophies of Macrinus

¹⁴³ On the continuity of agonistic culture in Late Antiquity despite the decrease in epigraphic and numismatic evidence see A. Puk, *Das römische Spielwesen in der Spätantike*, Berlin 2014, and Remijsen, *The end of Greek athletics* (n. 39).

¹⁴⁴ Philostratus *V.S.* 2.11.

or were interested in being the first to display their allegiance to the rival Elagabalus and, later, Severus Alexander. A comparable case in the mid-3rd century was presented by the unprecedented promotion of Thessalonica, which responded at least twice with the bestowal of this epithet upon her new sacred and eiselastic Pythian festival.

As emphasised in the introduction, the establishment of such a nexus of causality necessarily remains circumstantial when our evidence is primarily based on epigraphic and numismatic finds. The nature of this evidence actually obscures our knowledge of very local celebrations related to Roman victory such as those in Oxyrhynchus or Cyprus that could also be referred to as epinician but were not frequently recorded. This is not the case for agonistic festivals particularly between the 2nd and 3rd centuries AD. Our vast material shows that, among the many motifs and legends available to the cities in the eastern provinces of the Empire, the title ἐπινίκια was neither frequent nor customary. Indeed, there are many cases in which strategies of reciprocity with the emperors can be reconstructed, but these did not lead to the epithet being awarded to more games. The absence of such records is not accidental and should, consequently, underline the significance of the unequivocal acceptance and celebration of Roman victory by local communities that had different aspirations and media through which they might successfully demonstrate crucial virtues such as good-will, loyalty and friendship to the ruling and granting power of the emperors.

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Appendix of ΕΙΠΙΝ(Ε)ΙΚΙΑ Celebrating Roman Victories

Reference	Confirmed Dates	Provenance	Content
1 IG VII 2727	After 87 BC	Akraiphia	List of victors of the Σωτήρια. L. 1-4: ἀγ<ω>νοθετοῦν[τος] Ποπλίου Κορνηλίου τοῦ Ποπλίου υἱοῦ [Ῥω]μαίου τῶν τριετηρίων Σωτηρίων πρό[τον] ἀπὸ τοῦ πολέμου.
2 IG VII 2728		Akraiphia	Very fragmentary list of victors of the Σωτήρια.
3 I.Oropos 523	I BC One of the winners, the Athenian Eubios, took part in the Pythia of 98/97. The archon Alexidemos (l. 3) could be the same representative sent by Oropos to Rome for the embassy before the Senate between 74 and 73 BC [I.Oropos 308.18]	Oropos	List of victors of the Ἀμφιαρᾶ καὶ Ῥομιαῖα.
4 IG VII 542	I BC Record of two of the victors in I.Oropos 523.16, 26. Also a brother of one of the victors in IG VII 2727.5	Tanagra	List of victors of the Σαραπηεῖα.
5 IG VII 543		Tanagra	Fragmentary list of victors of the Σαραπηεῖα.
6 SEG 25.501		Tanagra	List of victors of the Σαραπηεῖα.
7 I.Thes. 173	I BC The victor Straton, son of Isidotos (l. 10) is attested in I.Oropos 523.28e	Thespia	List of victors of the Μουσεῖα.
8 I.Thes. 163		Thespia	List of victors of the Μουσεῖα.
9 IG VII 3195		Orchomenus	List of victors of the Χαριτέισια.
10 IG VII 3196		Orchomenus	List of victors of the Χαριτέισια.
11 IG VII 3197		Orchomenus	List of victors of the Χαριτέισια.

12	MDAI(A) 35 (1910) 409,3	c. 70 BC	Pergamum	Honorific decree. L. 21–22 according to Jones, <i>Diodoros Pasparos</i> (n. 10) 11: ἐν τε [τοῖς ὑπὸ Λικινίου Λευκόλλου ἀχθεῖσιν ἐφ' ἱερέως τοῦ δαίνοϲ τοῦ Στρατ]ονίκου ἐπινίκιος παραστήσας τοῖς θεοῖς θυσίας.
13	Fujii, <i>Imperial cult</i> (n. 26) 164, cf. SEG 6.837	After 27 BC	Kyrenia (Cyprus)	Honorific decree. L. 13–15: νῦν [δὲ ἐπὶ τοῖς] ἐπινίκιος τοῦ θεοῦ Σεβαστοῦ Καίσα[ρος πεπο]θηκε[ε] ? τῷ θεῷ Σεβαστῷ Κάσαρι θυσία[v].
14	RPC II 1284	AD 83–96	Laodicea (on the Lycus)	ΕΠΙΝΙΚΙΟC carved on the frieze of a temple with four columns enclosing a female figure holding a sceptre and a male figure (Domitian) in military dress holding a spear; between them they carry a Roman trophy. The issue was sponsored by Cornelius Dioscurides as recorded on the reverse. On the obverse Domitian appears with the title ΓΕΡΜΑΝΙΚΟC.
15	I.Napoli I 51	c. AD 110	Naples	Honorific inscription of the guild of athletes for T. Flavius Archibius. L. 8–14: Ῥώμηι τὰ μεγάλα Καπετώλεια τὴν τρίτη[v] πενταετηρίδα] ἀγενεῖον παγκράτιον στεφανωθέντα κα[ὶ] τὴν τετάρτην] ἀνδρῶν παγκράτιον νικήσαντα καὶ τὴν πέμπτ[την ἀνδρῶν] παγκράτιον στεφανωθέντα καὶ τὴν ἕκτην ὁ[μοίως ἀνδρῶν] παγκράτιον στεφανωθέντα πρώτον ἀνθρώπων· τὰ ἐν .c.5.] Ἡράκλεια ἐπινίκια Αὐτοκράτορος Νέρουα Τραιανοῦ Κ[αίσαρος Σεβαστοῦ] Ἑρμῆανικῷ Δακικῷ στεφανωθέντα ἀνδρῶν παγκρά[τιον].
16	IGR IV 160	After AD 166	Cyzicus	Honorific inscription for M. Aurelius Koros. L. 10–14: καὶ Ῥώμην Καπετώλεια ἀγενεῖον πανκράτιον· καὶ κατὰ τὸ ἐξῆς Ῥώμην ἐπινείκεια ἀγενεῖον πανκράτιον.
17	I.Tralles 136	After AD 180	Tralles	Honorific inscription for Serapion II following the confirmation of the emperor. L. 12–20: [κη]ρυκα νεικήσαντα ἐν Γράλλεσιν Ὀλύμπια, Πύθια, Ἀδριανὰ Ὀ[λ]ύμπια ἐν Σμύρνῃ καὶ Γ[Ὀλ]ύμπια, Αὐγούστεια [ἐ]ν Περγά[μ]ῳ, Ὀλύμπεια ἐν Ἀθῆναις, κοινὸν Ἀσίας ἐν Σμύρνῃ, Ῥώμην ἐπινείκεια.

18	I.Sardis 79	AD 212–217	Sardis	Honorific inscription for M. Aurelius Demonstratus Damas. L. 14–23: [Ῥώ]μην ἐπινεϊκτα τῶν κυρίων Αὐτοκρα[τόρων] Ἀντωνίνου καὶ Κομμόδου, ἐστεφάνω[σθη] χρυσῶ στεφάνῳ καὶ ἔλαβε χρυσοῦν βραβεῖον, αἰτησάμενος καὶ τυχὸν παρὰ τῶν κυρίων ἡμῶν θειοτάτων Αὐτοκρατόρων] Σεουήρου καὶ Ἀντωνίνου τὴν τε ἄρ[χιστερο]σύνην καὶ τὰς ἐυσταργίας εἰς τῆ[ν τῶν] παίδων διαδοχὴν.
19	RPC IV 9988 (cf. Weiss, <i>Euergeten und Elemente</i> (n. 28) 185–94)	AD 139–144	Laodicea	The reverse depicts a temple of eight columns and the establishment of an epimician festivity by the highpriest P. Claudius Attalus: ΕΠΙΝΕΙΚΤΙΟΝ ΑΤΤΑΛΟC ΑΝΕΘΗΚΕ ΛΑΟΔΙΚΕΩΝ. The obverse commemorates the council of Laodicea with a veiled and draped bust.
20	RPC IV 36	AD 161–169	Aphrodisias	Obverse with the bust of M. Aurelius and reverse recording the establishment of an epimician festivity by the priest T. Claudius Zelus: Τ Κ ΖΗΛΟC ΙΕΡΕΥC ΕΠΙΝΙΚΙΟΝ ΑΝΕ ΑΦΡΟΔΕΙCΙΕΩΝ. Aphrodite stands with the kalathos and is saluted by two emperors (M. Aurelius and L. Verus).
21	RPC IV 37	AD 161–169	Aphrodisias	Obverse with the bust of M. Aurelius and reverse recording the establishment of an epimician festivity by a priest (T. Claudius Zelus): ΙΕΡΕΥC ΕΠΙΝΙΚΙΟΝ ΑΝ[ΕΘΗΚΕΝ] ΑΦΡΟΔΕΙCΕ[ΩΝ]. The emperor in the centre is setting up a trophy over a captive and Victory bestows a crown.
22	RPC IV 38	AD 161–169	Aphrodisias	Obverse with the bust of L. Verus and reverse recording the establishment of an epimician festivity by the priest T. Claudius Zelus: Τ Κ ΖΗΛΟC ΙΕΡΕΥC ΕΠΙΝΙΚΙΟΝ ΑΝ ΑΦΡΟΔΕΙCΙΕΩΝ. Aphrodite standing with the kalathos is saluted by two emperors (M. Aurelius and L. Verus).

23	RPC IV 39	AD 161–169	Aphrodisias	Obverse with the bust of M. Aurelius and reverse recording the establishment of an epicurian festivity by a priest (T. Claudius Zelus): [Τ Κ ΖΗΛΟΙΣ ΙΕΡΕΥC ΕΠΙΝΙΚΙΟΝ ΑΝ[ΕΘΗΚΕΝ] ΑΦΡΟΔΙΤΕΙ[ΩΝ]. The emperor in the centre is erecting a trophy over a seated captive and Victory bestows a crown. Catalogues of ephebes.
24	IG II ² 2089, 2026B, 2097, 2103, 2113, 2114, 2116, 2119, 2130, 2135, 2193, 2196, 2199, 2201, 2203, 2226, 2237, 2242, 2245, 3749; SEG 26.184	AD 167/168–250's	Athens	
25	I.Eph. 721	Before AD 188/189 (cf. I.Eph. 619)	Ephesus	Honorific inscription for the benefactor Timaios Attalos. L. 5–8: ἐ[κτε]λέσ[α]ντα τῆ[ν ἀρχ]ιερω[σύν]η[ν], δόνατα δὲ καὶ εἶ[ς τὸν το . . . το . Κάσι]αρ[ος νε]ί[κτης ὑπέ]ρ τῶν κωνηγεσίων ἀργυρίου δηναρίω[ν μ]ηρίαδ[ί]α[ς ἐπ]ι[τά.] ἀγων[οθετή]σαντα τῶν τε μεγ[άλ]ων Ἐπινηκίων.
26	I.Eph. 671	Second half II AD (cf. I.Eph 2070 + 2071)	Ephesus	Honorific inscription for the benefactor T. Flavius Clitosthenes Iulianus. L. 2–9: Τ(ίτον) Φλα(άουον) Κλειτοσθένην Ἰουλιανὸν φιλοσέβαστον, ἀσιάρχην Ἰν[αίων τῶν ἐν Ἐφέσῳ καὶ ἀγωνοθέτην τῶν κοινῶν τῆς Ἀσίας καὶ τῶν μεγάλων Ἐπινηκίων.
27	I.Eph. 1605	Before AD 177	Ephesus	Honorific inscription listing the agonistic victories of the wrestler Photon. L. 8: ἐπιναίκια ἐν Ἐφέσῳ ἀγενεῖων πυγμῆν.

28	I.Eph. 1107	AD 236–238	Ephesus	Honorific inscription for the athlete Aurelius Basileus. L. 1–7: [Αὐτοκράτορος Καίσαρος Γ(αίου) Ἰουλί(ου)] Ο[ι] [ἡ]ρ[ο]ῦ Μιὰξ[ι]μ[ι]ῶν Σεβαστοῦ καὶ τοῦ βουδ αὐτοῦ Καίσαρος Γ(αίου) Ἰουλί(ου) Μ[ι]αξ[ι]μ[ι]ῶν Σεβαστοῦ ἐπινεΐκτα· Αὐ[τ]οκράτορα Β[α]σιλέα Κελεύου Ἐφέσιον ν[ικη]τήσαντα ἐνδόξως τὰ μεγάλα Πύθια ἐν Ἐφέσῳ.
29	I.Eph. 1087A	End of AD II–III	Ephesus	Fragmentary list of agonistic benefactions. L. 5–8: ἀγωνισθέντων τῶν μεγάλων Ἀδριανήτων ...; τοῦ τῶν Ἐπινεΐκτων ἀγῶνος ἐνιαυτῶ.
30	I.Eph. 3071	AD III	Ephesus	Honorific inscription for a benefactor, father of M. Aurelius Artemidorus Metrodorianus. L. 18–20: καὶ γυμνασιάρχου πάντων τῶν γυμνασίων καὶ ἀγωνοθέτου καὶ ἐπιαγωγέως τῶν μεγάλων ἐπινεΐκτων.
31	I.Eph. 1146		Ephesus	Fragmentary list of agonistic victories. L. 1–2: [...].α κοινὸν Ἀσία[ς] καὶ τὰ μεγάλα ἐπινεΐκτα καὶ [...].
32	IGR III 370	AD III	Adada	Honorific inscription for M. Aurelius Abas with a list of his agonistic victories. L. 23–24: Ἀδριάνεια ἐν Ἐφέσῳ δός, [Β]αλβ[ι]λ[η]τ[η] ἐν Ἐφέσῳ, κοιν<δ> Ἀσίας ἐν Κυζίκῳ, Ἐπινεΐκτα ἐν Ἐφέσῳ.
33	Ziegler, <i>Kaiser, Heer</i> (n. 84) no. 282	AD 198/199	Anazarbus	Coin with the portrait of Septimius Severus on the obverse. The reverse depicts Victory with a crown and a palm branch standing on a small globe. The legend reads: CEOVHP ANTON KAIC ANAZA [...] ΝΕΩΚ ΕΠΙ Ο Κ ΟΛΥΜΠ/ ΕΝ ΚΟΛΠΙ/ ΕΤ ΖΙC.
34	Ziegler, <i>Kaiser, Heer</i> (n. 84) no. 289	AD 199/200	Anazarbus	Coin with the portrait of Septimius Severus on the obverse. The reverse depicts a prize urn flanked by palm branches with CEVHPA on top, ΟΛΥΜΠΙΑ below, and ΕΠΙΝΕΙΚΙΑ on the bottom. The legend is completed with the sequence EN ΚΟΛΠΙΤΑΙC.

35	Ziegler, <i>Städtisches Prestige</i> (n. 85) no. 7	AD 198–202	Tarsus	Coin with the portrait of Septimius Severus on the obverse. The reverse depicts a prize urn with ΚΟΙΝΟC ΚΙ/ΛΙΚΩΝ / CEVHPEIA on top, ΟΛΥΜΠΙΑ inside and ΕΠΙΝΙΚΙΑ / ΟΡΟΙC ΚΙΛΙΚΩΝ below. This is encircled by the sequence ΑΑΠΙ CEVHPIANHC ΤΑΡ... ΟΛΕΩC Γ Β.
36	Ziegler, <i>Städtisches Prestige</i> (n. 85) no. 8	AD 198–202	Tarsus	Coin with the portrait of Septimius Severus on the obverse. The reverse depicts a prize urn with EN ΚΟΑΡΠ/ΓΕC / CEVHPEIA on top, ΟΛΥΜΠΙΑ inside and ΕΠΙΝΕΙΚΙΑ / ΟΡΟΙC ΚΙΛΙΚΩΝ below. This is encircled by the sequence ΑΑΠΙ CEVHPIANHC ΤΑΡCΟV ΜΗΤΡΟΠ/ΟΛΕΩC / Γ Β.
37	Ziegler, <i>Städtisches Prestige</i> (n. 85) no. 9	AD 198–202	Tarsus	Coin with the portrait of Septimius Severus on the obverse. The reverse depicts an agonistic table with prize urns and below the legend CEVHPEIA / Ο[ΛΥ]ΜΠΙΑ [ΕΠΙ]ΝΙ/Κ[ΙΑ] ΟΡΟ[Ι]C Κ[Ι]Λ[Ι].
38	Ziegler, <i>Städtisches Prestige</i> (n. 85) no. 10	AD 198–202	Tarsus	Coin with the portrait of Septimius Severus on the obverse. The reverse depicts a crown with eight small prize urns and palm branches. On top EN ΚΟΔΡΕΙ/[Γ]ΑΙC, CEVH/PEIA Ο/ΛΥΜΠΙΑ / ΕΠΙΝΕΙ/ΚΙΑ inside, ΟΡΟΙC / ΚΙΛΙΚΩΝ below.
39	Ziegler, <i>Kaiser, Heer</i> (n. 84) no. 452	AD 219/220	Anazarbus	Coin with the portrait of Julia Maesa. The reverse depicts a prize urn inscribed with ΟΛΥΜΠΙΑ. The following legend encircles it: ΑΝΑΖΑΡΒΕΩΝ / Α/Μ/Κ / ΑΝΤΩΝΕΙΝΙΑΝΑ ΠΡΩΤΑ ΤΗC ΟΙΚΟVΜΕΝΗC.
40	Ziegler, <i>Kaiser, Heer</i> (n. 84) no. 544	AD 229/230	Anazarbus	Coin with the portrait of Alexander Severus on the obverse. The reverse depicts a prize urn with palm branches and inscribed with ΟΛΥΜΠΙΑ. The following legend encircles it: ΑΝΑΖ · ΕΝΔΟΕ · ΜΗΤΡΟ · Ε · ΤΗ · Μ · C · / · Β · Γ · / CΕΟVΗΡΙΑ ΕΠΙΝΙΚΙΑ.
41	TAM V 2.949	AD 230–235	Thyateira	Honours by an association of the gymnasium for the benefactor Aurelius Glykon. L. 9–13: ἐπρελ[ο]υμένου Σεβηρείου ἀγῶ[νο]ς τῶν ἐπιτυκίων ἑορτῶν [τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Αὐτοκράτορος [Ι]Μ. Αὐρ. Σεβήρου Ἀλεξάνδρου]] Εὐσε[β]ίου· Εὐρυχῶς Σεβαστοῦ.

42	TAM V 2.1008	AD 230–235	Thyateira	Honours by an association of the gymnasium for the wrestler Aurelius Theseus. L. 6–10: νικησαντα ἐνδόξως παγκράτιον ἐν τῷ ὑπὸ αὐτῶν ἐπιτελουμένῳ ἐπινεκίῳ Σεβηρείῳ ἀγῶνι.
43	TAM V 2.1016	After Hadrian	Thyateira	Honours of the council for the tragic performer Ulpius Augustianus. L. 12–17: διὰ τῆς τραγικῆς ἐνυρθίου κεινήσεως ἐπιτελεσμένως ὑπὲρ εὐσεβείας τῶν μεγίστων καὶ ἀνεκίρτων αὐτοκρατόρων ἐπινεκίους ἑορτάς.
44	P.Oxy. IV 705 = CPJ II 450	After 202	Oxyrhynchus	Imperial petition by Aurelius Horion to Septimius Severus and Caracalla. L. 31–35: πα[ρ]οσε[στ]ῆ[ι] δὲ αὐτοῖς καὶ ἡ πρὸς Ῥομιάτους ἐν[ο]ι[α] τε καὶ πίστις καὶ φιλία ἦν ἐνεδείξαντο κα[ὶ] κατὰ τὸν πρὸς Ἰουδαίουσιν πόλεμον συμμαχήσαντες καὶ ἔτι καὶ νῦν τὴν τῶν ἐπινεκίων ἡμέραν ἐκάστου ἔτους πανηγυρίζοντες.
45	P.Oxy. XXXI 2553	Late AD II – Early III	Oxyrhynchus	Fragmentary calendar of cult offerings. L. 6: ἐπινεκίων θεοῦ Ἀθρηλίου Ἀγνο[ν]ίου -ca.?- I.
46	Touratsoglou, <i>Die Münzstätte</i> (n. 116) Gordianus III no. 231–234	AD 240/241	Thessalonica	Coins with the portrait of Gordian III on the obverse. The reverse depicts a prize urn with palm branches and inscribed with ΠΥΘΙΑ in the middle, on the top ΕΠΙ-ΝΙ and ΚΙΑ below. It is encircled by the legend ΘΕΣΣΑΛΟΝΙΚΕΩΝ ΝΕΩΚΟΡΩΝ *
47	IG X 2 1.1074 (for the titulature of the festival follow <i>SEG</i> 50.638)	AD 259	Thessalonica	<i>Invitatio ad munera</i> by the highpriest Tib. Claudius Rufrius Menon and his wife Baebia Magna who had also fulfilled other benefactions for the city. L. 7: ἀγωνοθέτης ἀγῶνος τε[ρο]ῦ οἰκ[ο]νομικῆς εἰσελαστικῆς τῶν μεγάλων Καβαριῶν Ἐπινεκίων Καισαρίων Πυθίων.

48	IG X 2 1.1075	AD 260	Thessalonica	<p><i>Invitatio ad munera</i> by the highpriest Tib. Claudius Rufrius Menon and his wife Baebia Magna who had also fulfilled other benefactions for the city. L. 7–8: [ἀγῶνος ἱερ]οῦ οἰκουµενικοῦ εἰσελαστικοῦ τῶν μεγάλων Καισαρείων Ἐπινηκίων Καβερρίων Πυθίων.</p>
49	IosPE I ² 436A		Chersonesos	<p>End of an epigram. L. 5–6: Θεοφίλου υἱὸς ἔθηκ' ἐπινηκ[ι]α γυμνασιάρχης.</p>