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*Cover:* Statue base honouring M. Vettulenus Civica Barbarus (see p. 175, n. 208).  
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# Roman Messene. The Gymnasium

P. Themelis

In 369 B.C., Messene, founded at the western slopes of Mount Ithome, a position of great natural strength, at the same time as Megalopolis, was one of the largest cities in Greece with an area of about 290 hectares surrounded by a fortification wall with a circumference of 9,5 kilometres, still one of the most impressive ruins in Greece. During the 1960s Anastasios Orlandos excavated a monumental building complex with a court and a colonnaded temple, the well-known Asklepieion.<sup>1</sup> During the last twelve years or so the Archaeological Society of Athens has uncovered other large architectural complexes of the city centre, e.g. the theatre, the fountain house of Arsinoe, the north stoa of the Agora, the sanctuary of Demeter, the stadium and the gymnasium.<sup>2</sup> In Pausanias' time all the above buildings still retained the architectural form, the sculptural decoration and the function of the Greek period almost unchanged. Cult statues were standing on their bases still undamaged; they were mostly works in marble by the Messenian sculptor Damophon whom Pausanias especially admired.<sup>3</sup> Pausanias also saw works of other, unnamed artists, such as the chrysolith (made of gold and marble) cult statue of the deified mythical queen Messene in the Asklepieion, the statue of Zeus Soter, Poseidon and Aphrodite in the agora, and the statues of Hermes, Heracles and Theseus in the gymnasium made by sculptors from Alexandria.<sup>4</sup> Messene had managed, at least up to the 2nd century A.D., to

<sup>1</sup> A. Orlandos, *Prakt.* 1957, 121-125, pls. 53-58; 1958, 177-183, pls. 137-142; 1959, 162-173, pls. 136-145; 1960, 210-227, pls. 162-169; 1962, 99-112, pls. 103-120; 1963, 122-129, pls. 94-105; 1964, 96-101, pls. 99-109; 1969, 98-120, pls. 121-136; 1970, 125-141, pls. 172-184; 1971, 157-171, pls. 191-203; 1972, 127-138, pls. 103-116; 1973, 108-111, pls. Στ.-Ζ; 1974, 102-109, pls. 83-87; 1975, 176-177, pls. 154-161; Id., *BCH* 82 (1958) 714-717; 83 (1959) 636-639; 84 (1960) 695-700; 85 (1961) 697-703; 87 (1963) 768-777; 88 (1964) 734-742; 89 (1865) 729-732; 94 (1970) 984-989; 95 (1971) 892-895; 96 (1972) 60-66; *AJA* 67 (1963) 281-282; 75 (1971) 308-310; *Arch. Rep.* 1971/72, 10; Id., 'Νεώτεροι έρευναι εν Μεσσήνη 1957-1973', in: U. Jantzen (ed.), *Neue Forschungen in griechischen Heiligtümern* (Tübingen 1976) 9-38.

<sup>2</sup> P. Themelis, 'Ανασκαφή Μεσσήνης', *Prakt.* 1986, 74-82, pls. 17-22; 1987, 73-104, pls. 64-80; 1988, 43-79, pls. 31-57; 1989, 63-122, pls. 54-94; 1990, 56-103, pls. 31-74; 1991, 85-128, pls. 50-78; 1992, 60-87, Taf. 20-27; 1993, 48-72, pls. 25-49; 1994, 69-99, pls. 19-48; 1995, 55-86, pls. 13-42; 1996, 139-171, pls. 53-72; 1997, 79-113, pls. 32-65.

<sup>3</sup> G. Despinis, 'Zu einigen Künstlern der späthellenistischen Zeit', in: *Akten des XIII. internationalen Kongresses für klassische Archäologie, Berlin 1988* (Berlin 1990) 151; R.R. Smith, *Hellenistic Sculpture* (London 1991) 240-241 figs. 301-30; P. Themelis, 'Ο Δαμοφών και η δραστηριότητά του στην Αρκαδία', in: W.D. Coulson - O. Palagia (eds.), *Sculpture from Arcadia and Laconia. Proceedings of an International Conference, American School of Classical Studies at Athens 10-14 April 1992* (Oxford 1993) 99-109; Id., 'Damophon von Messene. Sein Werk im Lichte der neuen Ausgrabungen', *AntK* 36 (1993) 24-40, pls. 3-9; Id., 'Damophon of Messene. New Evidence', in: K. Sheedy (ed.), *Archaeology in the Peloponnese. New Excavations and Research* (Oxford 1994) 1-37; P. Moreno, *Scultura ellenistica I* (Roma 1994) 504-518; P. Themelis, 'Damophon', in: O. Palagia - J.J. Pollitt (eds.), *Personal Styles in Greek Sculpture* (Yale Classical Studies 30, Oxford 1996) 154-187, pls. 91-130; Id., 'Ο Δαμοφών στην Κύθνο', in: L. Mendoni - A. Mazarakis (eds.), *Proceedings of a Conference KEA-KYΘNOC 1994* (Αθήνα 1998) 437-448.

<sup>4</sup> P. Themelis, 'Statuenfunde aus dem Gymnasium von Messene', *NBA* 15 (1998/99) 59-84.



avoid the decline which had already begun in neighbouring Arcadia, presented by Pausanias with a dramatic picture of abandonment and decay (Pausanias 8.30.1 and 8.44.3.).<sup>5</sup>

The gymnasium, forming one architectural unit with the stadium of the city, seems to have developed into a much-frequented centre of civic life and an exhibition gallery for important works of art from the early Imperial period onwards. In addition to the statues of Hermes, Heracles and Theseus mentioned above, many honorific statues of gymnasiarchs, benefactors of the town and men of intellectual accomplishments were set up inside or in front of the stoas. Remarkable mantic ritual was conducted on the grave and shrine of the heroized Messenian king Aristomenes seen by Pausanias in the gymnasium: a bull tied to a column played the main role in the ritual (Pausanias 4.31.3-4; cf. *SEG* xxiii 205, 207 and *SEG* xxxv 343). To all this we should add a considerable number of imposing grave monuments belonging to eminent Messenian families which were granted the privilege of intramural burial, more precisely of burial in the area of the gymnasium. The rising generation trained in the gymnasium was thus introduced to the world of heroes and heroized mortals and to the traditions and obligations it represented.<sup>6</sup>

The end of the race course abuts the southern section of the city wall. At this point the wall was partly broken through in order to construct a high rectangular podium projecting southward like a bastion. On the podium was a Doric temple with two columns in antis.<sup>7</sup> All its architectural members - around 1400 - lay scattered around the podium, but the metal dowels and lead sheathing were missing. The collapse of the building is not to be attributed to an earthquake, but to the actions of men who wanted to pry out the metal. Grave stelae, built into the podium wall, indicate that the original construction dates to the Augustan period. Many fragments of marble sculpture were found, among which it was possible to mend up a marble sarcophagus of the mid second century A.D. with a reclining male figure on the lid, an *imago clipeata* of a bust in armour probably of the first century A.D., a portrait head, probably Antonine, as well as other sculptures and funerary inscriptions. This imposing monument occupying such a prominent place above the stadium could be identified as the grave monument of the family of the Saethidae.<sup>8</sup> Pausanias saw and described the heroon of this family in the stadium (Pausanias 4.32.2). Tod in 1905 and Kolbe reconstructed the stemma of the Saethidae for a span of five generations.<sup>9</sup> A member of this family, Tiberius Claudius Saethidas Caelianus II was high priest of the *Sebastoi* for life and Helladarch, of the province of Achaia between 139 and 161 A.D.<sup>10</sup> A long inscription recently found in the theatre is carved on the marble base for a statue of Tiberius Claudius Saethidas. It provides valuable information on the family, its donations and building activity in Messene.<sup>11</sup> An equestrian statue of the same

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Strabo 8.388; N. Papachatzis, *Παυσανίου Αττικά* (Athens 1974) 9-10; Id., *Παυσανίου Αρχαϊκά, Αρκαδικά* (Athens 1980) 2-9.

<sup>6</sup> W. Burkert, *Greek Religion* (Cambridge, Massachusetts 1985) 208.

<sup>7</sup> F. Cooper, 'Scamilli impares and the Heroon at Messene', in: L. Haselberger (ed.), *Appearance and Essence Refinements of Classical Architecture - Carvatures* (Philadelphia 1997) 97-112.

<sup>8</sup> P. Themelis, 'Το στάδιο της Μεσσήνης', in: W. Coulson - H. Kyrieleis (eds.), *Proceedings of an International Symposium on the Olympic Games* (Athens 1992) 89-90.

<sup>9</sup> I. Tod, *JHS* 15 (1905) 43; W. Kolbe, *IG* v 1, 1451, 1455a and 512.

<sup>10</sup> C. Habicht, *Pausanias' Guide to Ancient Greece* (Berkeley 1985) 38, 58 and note 80, 81.

<sup>11</sup> P. Themelis, *Heroes and Hero Shrines at Messene* (Athens 2000, in print).



Helladarch Saethidas stood in front of the east stairway leading to the orchestra of the *ekklesiasterion*.<sup>12</sup>

Inscriptions carved on limestone stelae and columns of the gymnasium list the ephebes of the city according to the five tribes Aristomachis, Kleolaia, Hyllis, Kresphontis and Daiphontis. The name of the eponymous priest of Zeus Ithomatas appears at the head of each of these inscriptions usually followed by the year after Actium. Most of the catalogues found until now date between 19 B.C. and 96 A.D.<sup>13</sup> In some of the catalogues listed are also the ephebas of a new sixth tribe called "(the tribe of) foreigners and Romans" (Ξένων καὶ Ῥωμαίων),<sup>14</sup> while in one inscription the ephebes of a seventh group are listed under the heading "and the ephebes from the towns (of Messenia)" (καὶ οἱ ἀπὸ τῶν πόλεων). Three of the five ephebes in this group, described as *Mothoniai* (from Methone), bear Roman names: Tullius Pespup, Gaius Cestus and Gaius Aulus.<sup>15</sup> A second catalogue mentions five ephebes from Asine, present-day Korone: Agesilaos son of Kallikrates, Dionysios son of Xenon, Aristoteles son of Philostratos, Aig[geus] son of Kleoboulos and An[droni]kos son of Damatrios, followed by ephebes from Kyparissia and, presumably, other towns.<sup>16</sup> This means either that the towns of Messenia, which are also called the "towns in the province" (αἱ κατὰ τὴν ἐπαρχίαν πόλεις) in the inscription SEG xxiii 206 dated to 2-3 A.D., sent their ephebes to be trained in the capital or that some Messenian families had just moved from the coastal towns to the capital and were not yet registered in one of the five old tribes.

The Achaean League (Polybius 18.42.7) had detached Asine and Pylos from Messene's sphere of influence as early as the end of the First Macedonian War (c. 205 B.C.). The same thing happened in 191 B.C. with Methone and other important coastal towns of Messenia: they became independent members of the Achaean League. After 146 B.C. the Messenian Confederacy succeeded in attaining political unification and complete restoration; it was still in existence in the imperial period. Augustus only turned Thouria over to the Lacedaemonians as a reward for their assistance at the Battle of Actium. From that time on Thouria was a Lacedaemonian town (IG v, p. 262). According to Pausanias (4.35.3), Methone became independent under Trajan (98-117 A.D.). Shortly afterwards Kyparissia, Asine and other Messenian towns as well gained a short period of independence as attested by their pseudo-autonomous coinages during the reigns of Septimius Severus (193-211 A.D.), Caracalla (198-217 A.D.) and Geta (211-212 A.D.). The ephebes spent three years in the gymnasium as the description *trietirenes* indicates. It is not known whether or not this was customary before the reigns of Augustus and Tiberius. It does seem, however, that this practice was abandoned by Methone at the time of self-government under Trajan and by the other towns at the beginning of the third century A.D. The sixth very numerous tribe of "foreigners and Romans" was probably formed in the Augustan period, because of the increase in population which can be observed, as Greeks from other towns, Romans and freedmen settled in Messene. It seems however that, towards the end of the first century A.D., this tribe was absorbed into the five old tribes. Two ephebic lists of 92 A.D. (Inv. nos. 4207 and 4208), found in the

<sup>12</sup> P. Themelis, *Η αρχαία Μεσσήνη* (Athens 2000) 69-72; IG v 1, 1455a.

<sup>13</sup> A full publication of these inscriptions is being published by Niki Makris.

<sup>14</sup> Also in the so-called "oktobolos" inscription IG v 1, 1433, v. 8 the Ξένοι καὶ οἱ τετιμαμένοι ἐν ταῖς φυλαῖς Ῥωμαῖοι are mentioned.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. IG v 1, 1417.

<sup>16</sup> Dionysios son of Xenon is probably a relative of Timaios son of Xenon mentioned in the inscription IG v 1, 1407 from Asine (present-day Korone); cf. IG v 1, 1408.

gymnasium west stoa no longer have a separate tribe of foreigners and Romans, but now the Roman names in the five tribes are by far more numerous than the Greek names.<sup>17</sup>

In their free time, the ephebes scratched their names everywhere they possibly could; they specially favoured the statue bases. They also sat on the northwest propylon steps and played with dice. A monumental Doric propylon has been uncovered at the north end of the gymnasium west stoa.<sup>18</sup> All of the architectural members made of local limestone, such as capitals, epistyles, triglyph-metope blocks, cornices, pediments without sculptural adornment and palmette acroteria, were found scattered around, mostly in front of the south side of the standing columns. An inscription on the middle epistyle has to do with the construction of the building by the gymnasiarch Charteles, son of Philon. Directly below is a second inscription concerning a repair of the gymnasium carried out by the gymnasiarch Dionysios son of Demetrios, whom we know from an ephebic catalogue. A third, longer inscription is carved on the three central plain metopes of the building, reading:

## Metope A

Εἰς τὰν τ[ῶ]ν Σεβα-  
στῶν τι[μὰ]ν δι' αἰῶ-  
νος Γάϊο[ς] Ἰού-  
λιος Εὐρυκ[λέ]-  
[erasure]  
[erasure]

## Metope B

[erasure] ἀνέθη-  
κε τᾷ πόλει δη-  
νάρια μύρια εἰς τε  
θυσίας τοῖς Σε-  
βαστοῖς καὶ εἰς  
ἐλαίου παροχὰν

## Metope C

εἰς ἑκάτερα τὰ  
Γυμν[άσι]α ἐπὶ  
γραμ[ματ]έως Συ-  
νέδ[ρῳ]ν Μνασι-  
σ[τρ]άτου τοῦ  
[Φίλο]ξενίδα.

"*Gaios Ioulios Eurykl[-----] donated ten thousand denarii to the city for the perpetual sacrifices in honour of the Divi Augusti and for the supply of oil for both gymnasia when Secretary of the Council was Mnasistratos son of Philoxenidas*".

The reference to two gymnasia is important. They are to be identified as the later and the older gymnasium mentioned in the well-known inscription dated to Tiberius' reign found by A. Orlandos in front of the Sebasteion grand stairway.<sup>19</sup> The same inscription also mentions the "Olympic" and the "middle" stoa of the gymnasium.<sup>20</sup> The secretary Mnasistratos, son of Philoxenidas was honoured by the Council of Elders of Artemis Oupesia and Orthia as their benefactor, according to the testimony of an inscription dated to the year 42 A.D.<sup>21</sup> This year can be taken as the *terminus ante quem* for the construction of the monumental propylon which seems to date to Augustan times according to its architectural features as well.

It seems that the erased name at the end of the first metope, of the major donor of 10,000 denarii for the expenses of the sacrifices to the Augusti and oil for the two gymnasia, could be restored as "Gaius Julius Eurykles, son of Lakon", Epistates of Sparta and Prostates of the koinon of Free Laconians (A.D. 14-32) or as "Gaius Julius Spartiatikos son of Eurykles Lakon", who was exiled in A.D. 61. The erasure could thus be explained as a *damnatio memoriae* that took place after the exile of Spartiatikus. G.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. *IG* v 1, 1473.

<sup>18</sup> P. Themelis, 'Statuenfunde aus dem Gymnasium von Messene', *NBA* 15 (1998/99) 68-70.

<sup>19</sup> A. Orlandos, *Prakt.* 1959, 170-171.

<sup>20</sup> P. Themelis, *Prakt.* 1993, 67-68.

<sup>21</sup> A. Orlandos, *Prakt.* 1962, 102, pl. 106; Id., *Ephem.* 1965, 116-121; *SEG* xxiii 208 and 206.



Julius Eurykles son of Lachares, grandfather of Spartiaticus, was a benefactor of the Peloponnese and a patron of the Asklepieion at Epidauros. At Asopus his benefaction took the form of a perpetual oil supply.<sup>22</sup>

The propylon leads via the stairway to a large room with a high base set in front of its south wall. The marble torso of a naked male lay in front of the base with fragments of the hands, shins, the feet attached to the plinth and the support (a palm tree trunk) for the right weight leg. The statue fell off its base at a time when the gymnasium had already been abandoned and in the course of time had been gradually covered over with earth; it lacks its head, right thigh and left shin. It is a copy of Polycleitos' Doryphoros set up on a base originally made for a bronze statue or for a group of bronzes. A cutting was made in the base to receive the marble plinth of the Doryphoros. But since the cutting was too shallow for the plinth four iron clamps were installed at the edge of the plinth in order to fasten the statue securely on its new base which had apparently also been brought in from elsewhere. The Doryphoros of Messene augments the list of complete or partly preserved Roman copies known to us.<sup>23</sup> The copy from Pompeii in Naples (Museo Nazionale), 2.12 m high, is the closest to ours in regard to volume and proportions.<sup>24</sup> In all likelihood, the Doryphoros of Messene was made during the latter part of Augustus' reign, that is to say, it is contemporary with the revival of the *ephebeia* in Messene and the construction of the monumental Doric propylon. The placing of the statue on a base originally made for a bronze statue could be associated with the renovation of the gymnasium which seems to have been made before Pausanias' visit around 155 A.D.

The find of a new copy of the Doryphoros in the gymnasium of Messene at once raises the question of naming and interpreting the Polycleitan spear-bearer. As early as 1909 Hauser advanced the view that nudity and overlifesize scale indicate that a hero or a demigod, most probably Achilles, was represented, not a mortal victor.<sup>25</sup> In a recent study, Burkhardt Wesenberg advanced new arguments for identifying the Doryphoros as Achilles with the lance at Patroclus' funeral games.<sup>26</sup> Pausanias had undoubtedly seen a statue of the Athenian hero Theseus set beside those of Herakles and Hermes in the gymnasium of Messene. The statue of the Doryphoros found close to room III of the gymnasium where the cult statues of Herakles and Hermes were standing (see below) is the most probable candidate to be identified as Theseus. In Athens the institution of the *ephebeia* clearly bears the marks of initiation rites.<sup>27</sup> The service of the *epheboi* for two years (one less than in Messene) consisted in military training in the barracks of Piraeus

<sup>22</sup> On the Euryclid dynasty see E. Kjellberg, 'C. Julius Eurykles', *Klio* 17 (1921) 49-58; G.W. Bowersock, 'Eurycles of Sparta', *JRS* 51 (1961) 111-18; P. Cartledge – A. Spawforth, *Hellenistic and Roman Sparta: A Tale of Two Cities* (London – New York 1989) 97-104.

<sup>23</sup> P. Themelis, 'Statuenfunde aus dem Gymnasium von Messene', *NBA* 15 (1998/99) 74-78.

<sup>24</sup> On the copies of the Doryphoros and on other related topics see the recent publication, W.G. Moon (ed.), *Polykleitos, the Doryphoros and Tradition* (Wisconsin 1995) 65-161.

<sup>25</sup> *ÖJh* 12 (1909) 104; cf. G. Lippold, *Die griechische Plastik* (HdA III, München 1950) 163 with note 13; S. Howard, 'The Hero as Norm in the Fourth-Century Sculpture', in: *Proceedings of the XII International Conference of Classical Archaeology Athens 1983*, vol. 3 (Athens 1988) 116, note 5 and 121.

<sup>26</sup> B. Wesenberg, *JdI* 112 (1997) 59ff.; cf. W. Gauer, 'Der argivische Heros mit dem Pferd. Neue Überlegungen zur Deutung des polykletischen Doryphoros', *Archeologia* 43 (Warszawa 1992) 7-14. However, W. Gauer identifies the Ephebe Westmacott with the "canon" of Polykleitos and not the Doryphoros.

<sup>27</sup> W. Burkert, *Greek Religion* (Cambridge, Massachusetts 1985) 263.



and as *peripoloi* in guarding the frontiers. When some Attic inscriptions mention that the Athenian ephebes "lifted up the oxen" at the sacrifice, they are seen to perform at the same tests of youthful strength which the young Theseus performed (Pausanias 1.19.1).<sup>28</sup> The festival of the Oshophoria is based on the aetiological myth of the return of Theseus from his victory against the Minotaur and his "ambiguous" situation: happy because of his victory and sad because of the death of his father.<sup>29</sup> In a situation "between and betwixt", according to the most suitable expression of the British anthropologist Victor Turner.<sup>30</sup> The black chlamys worn by the Athenian ephebes was considered to be a reminiscence of this death.<sup>31</sup> The presence of a statue of Theseus in the gymnasium of Messene, representing the hero after his victory of the Minotaur could thus be justified. A wall painting in Herculaneum depicts him triumphantly standing in front of the entrance to the labyrinth; he has his lance or a kind of long club on his left shoulder in a representation iconographically close to Polykleitos' Doryphoros.<sup>32</sup> The marble copy of Doryphoros now in Naples was set up in the palaestra of Pompeii, so that he could have had the same function and probably the same significance as the Doryphoros in the gymnasium of Messene.

Two limestone bases with inscriptions came to light in Room IX of the west stoa of the gymnasium. Two marble statues which had fallen over were found in front of these bases. One of these, made of Pentelic marble, is missing the head; it is 1.71 m high and represents a figure wrapped in a mantle, belonging to the very popular type of the *Romanus palliatus*. The bundle of papyrus rolls serving as a support beside the left foot characterizes the man as a philosopher or orator, in any case as a learned man. The separately inserted head must surely have been the portrait of a man whom the town of Messene honoured by setting up his statue, dated, according to style and workmanship, to the first century A.D. An inscription on the front of the base pertaining to the mantle figure runs as follows:

3      Ἀ πόλις  
       Τι. Κλαύδιον  
       Νικηράτου  
       υἱὸν Θέωνα  
       ἦρωα.

"The city (honours) Tiberius Claudius Theon, son Nikeratos, hero".

An earlier inscription at the back side is related to the bronze statue of a gymnasiarch set up by the ephebes in his charge after they had completed their three-year term. The title 'hero' for Tiberius Claudius Theon son of Nikeratos indicates that he was honoured after his death. We know a Nikeratos, son of Theon, probably the father of the man honoured

<sup>28</sup> IG ii/iii<sup>2</sup> 1006, 1008, 1011, 1028/9; SEG xv 104; xxiv 109; L. Ziehen, *Hermes* 66 (1931) 227-232. RE XVIII 610. W. Burkert, *Greek Religion* (Cambridge, Massachusetts 1985) 261-263.

<sup>29</sup> Plutarch, *Theseus* 22.4; P. Vidal-Nacquet, *Ο μαύρος κυνηγός* (Αθήνα 1983) 174.

<sup>30</sup> V. Turner, *The Forest of Symbols. Aspects of Ndembu Ritual* (Ithaca and London 1967), passim.

<sup>31</sup> Plutarch, *Theseus* 22.4; P. Vidal-Nacquet, *Ο μαύρος κυνηγός* (Αθήνα 1983) 174.

<sup>32</sup> The original painting has been ascribed to the painter and sculptor Euphranor: A.B. Levides, *Πλίνιος ο Πρεσβύτερος περί της αρχαίας ελληνικής ζωγραφικής, 35ο βιβλίο της Φυσικής Ιστορίας* (Αθήνα 1994) pl. 40-41; J.J. Pollitt, *The Art of Ancient Greece. Sources and Documents* (Cambridge 1990) 167-168; R. Ling, *Roman Painting* (Cambridge 1991) 138, fig. 143; O. Palagia, *Euphranor* (Leiden 1980) 50-51 and 57-60.



here, from the Augustan building inscription of the Sebasteion (Inv. no. 1014, v. 19; *SEG* xxiii 205, 207) and a second Nikeratos who was epimelete of Artemis Oupesia or Orthia in A.D. 42 (Inv. no. 1013; *SEG* xxxviii 337).

The second marble statue representing Hermes is over-lifesize, 2.08 m high, completely preserved, mended up from many joining fragments. The messenger of the gods appears naked and in mid-strike, with his drapery wrapped around his left forearm. The manner in which the weight is distributed as well as the addition of the support in the form of a tree trunk by the copyist, suggest that the original was made of bronze in the early fourth century B.C. Its prototype must be looked for among the works of the followers of Polykleitos' school and not of Praxiteles.<sup>33</sup> The iconographic similarity of the Messene Hermes to the Hermes Psychopompos depicted on the relief column drum of the younger Artemision in Ephesus is striking.<sup>34</sup> The over-lifesize format, the nudity and the idealized features are in complete contrast to the naturalistic figure of Tiberius Claudius Theon, tightly wrapped up in his mantle. It appears to have a chthonic character, particularly in connexion with the nearby grave monuments, just as the Hermes of Andros is generally thought to be the escort to the realm of the dead, and not Hermes Agoraios.

The limestone lintel above the entrance to Room III of the west stoa, found where it crashed to the ground, has a three-line inscription:

Ἡρακλείδας καὶ Λούκιος Πετίκιος Γάλλος ὁ υἱὸς τὸν ναὸν κατεσκεύασαν  
Ἑρμῇ Ἡρακλεῖ καὶ τῇ πόλει.

"Herakleidas and his son Lucius Peticius Gallus built the temple in honour of Hermes, Herakles and the city".

The inscription must refer either to the rebuilding of a temple of Herakles and Hermes destroyed for unknown reasons or, more probably, to the removal of the two cult statues to gymnasium Room III now remade into a temple. Transplanting the statues may have something to do with the setting up of the Doryphoros at a new site. Hundreds of pieces of marble, varying from small chips to large fragments, belonging to two statues were found in the earth filling of Room III. Chopping up the statues and blocking the entrance was probably the work of Christian fanatics, done towards the end of the fourth century A.D. as a coin of Theodosius found in the marble fragment layer attests. The colossal statue certainly represented Herakles; the other statue, approximately lifesize, probably was a Hermes, of a type different from the Hermes from Room IX described above. Two bases were also uncovered in situ in Room III. A large rectangular base, apparently for the statue of Herakles in the middle of the room, and a smaller for Hermes found in its SE corner. Both bases were originally made for bronze statues. The smaller one must have been brought in from elsewhere as it happened with the statues. The fragments that have been recognized until now have made it possible to determine that the Herakles of

<sup>33</sup> D. Arnold, *Polykletnachfolge* (Berlin 1969) 215; A. Linfert, *Von Polyklet zu Lysipp. Polyklets Schule und ihr Verhältnis zu Skopas von Paros* (Köln 1969) 1-25; D. Kreikenbom, *Bildwerke nach Polyklet: Kopienkritische Untersuchungen zu den männlichen statuarischen Typen nach polykletischen Vorbildern* (Berlin 1990) passim; cf. E. Berger, B. Müller-Huber, L. Thommen, *Der Entwurf des Künstlers: Bildhauerkanon in der Antike und Neuzeit* (Basel 1990) fig. 446-450.

<sup>34</sup> G. Lippold, *Die griechische Plastik* (München 1950) 255, pl. 89,2; P.E. Arias, *Skopas* (Roma 1952) 111-112, pl. VI,18; R. Carpenter, *Greek Sculpture. A Critical Review* (Chicago 1960) 176, fig. xxxiii; A. Rügler, *Die columnae coelatae des jüngeren Artemision von Ephesos* (Tübingen 1988) 54-56 and 69-73 and 119-120, pl. 13-14; J. Boardman, *Greek Sculpture: The Late Classical Period and Sculpture in Colonies and Overseas* (London 1995) 29-30, pl. 23; cf. O. Rayet, *Monuments de l'art antique II* (Paris 1884), 6ème livraison no. 7, p. 9; C. Anti, *Monumenti antichi* 26 (1920) 546; D. Arnold, *Die Polykletnachfolge* (Berlin 1969) 215.



Messene is a version of a sculpture by Lysippos. The fragments preserve the club, the trunk, the right hand that lay on the back, the left forward foot with a section of the plinth, the toes of the right foot with a part of the plinth, the hair and the mouth and the left thigh. The Herakles is closer to the copy in Caserta than the copy in Naples known as the Farnese-Pitti Herakles. Joining fragments of the rocks on which Herakles supported his club carry the partly preserved *tabula ansata* with the signatures of the sculptors:

"Apollonios son of Hermodoros from Alexandria and Demetrios son of Apollonios".

Christian Habicht identified the son of the sculptor Demetrios with the homonymous initiate in the mysteries of Samothrace named in the inscription IG xii 8, 206 (lines 9-10), dated to the first century A.D. The same sculptors signed two other statues in Messene, one of which stood in the Artemision of the Asklepieion.<sup>35</sup> The statue from the gymnasium of Messene, a free copy of Lysippos' Herakles by two sculptors from Alexandria, throws doubt on the hypothesis concerning the Asia Minor origin of the Caserta type.<sup>36</sup> The fact that this statue appears on the reverse of a pseudo-autonomous coin issue of Messene during the reign of Septimius Severus (A.D. 193-211) shows its significance for the city. Herakles is particularly suited to the gymnasia and the ephebes, for "there is something forever youthful about this hero who is always wandering, fighting and nowhere at home".<sup>37</sup>

Soon after A.D. 360-370 the gymnasium was abandoned and fell into ruin. Stray finds, especially coins of Valentinian and Theodosius, show that life went on. Between A.D. 400 and 600 Christians settled here and they are apparently responsible for the chopping up of the statues of Herakles and Hermes in Room III. The centre of the new settlement was, however, at the Asklepieion and the Agora, where a protobyzantine basilica has been recently revealed.

The image provided by the above shortly commented new epigraphical, sculptural and architectural finds from the gymnasium testify to the growth of a Roman provincial town like Messene which was raised to a higher social and economic level thanks to the long peace (*pax Romana*). It seems to have preserved certain privileges and enjoyed freedom to govern itself according to its ancient constitution. The city formed the basis of social, economic and public life and was linked with a large district, corresponding more or less to present-day Messenia, which was called its territory. "The measure of self-government enjoyed by such a town was determined by its past history and the willingness of Rome to take that history into account".<sup>38</sup>

<sup>35</sup> *StudClas.* 24 (1968) 97; IG v 1, 1461 (= Inv. no. 127); A. Orlandos, *Prakt.* 1962, 112-112a, no. 4, pl. 112a (= Inv. no. 1020); SEG xxiii 225; P. Themelis, 'Artemis Ortheia at Messene, the Epigraphical and Archaeological Evidence, in: R. Hägg (ed.), *Ancient Greek Cult Practice from the Epigraphical Evidence. International Seminar at the Swedish Institute at Athens 22-24 November 1991* (Stockholm 1994) 101-122.

<sup>36</sup> D. Krull, *Der Herakles des Typ Farnese. Kopienkritische Untersuchung einer Schöpfung des Lysipp* (Frankfurt am Main 1985) 369-373 and 377, pl. 9.

<sup>37</sup> W. Burkert, *Greek Religion* (Cambridge, Massachusetts 1985) 211; cf. J. Delorme, *Gymnasion* (1960) 339.

<sup>38</sup> M. Rostovtzeff, *Rome* (Translation into English by J.D. Duff, New York 1957) 215-232.