

## CALL FOR PAPERS

### Transformation of the Profane – Interdependencies of Sport and Cult

20. Grazer althistorische Adventgespräche  
17.–18. December 2020

University of Graz  
Institute of Classics, Department of Ancient History

The ancient Panhellenic agons are also known as »holy games«; this designation can tempt one to locate them in the sacred realm or even to regard them as a religious act. Such views do not remain unchallenged, although some aspects of the events are regarded as sacred, albeit often only in cautious gradual nuances: from questions about the origin of sport in general to founding myths of games to individual practices such as the use of oil or the custom of competing naked.

Wherever the boundary between ›sacred‹ and ›profane‹ may be drawn in today's understanding, its validity for the investigation of ancient realities is to be questioned, for on the one hand, there is a lack of terms in ancient times with which modern languages denote certain phenomena of human activity – such as ›sport‹ –, on the other hand, modern times lack clear, secure notions of what was denoted in ancient usage with special terms – such as ›hieros‹. This makes it questionable whether the separation of the sacred and the profane, which seems so obvious and clear to us, at all provides a useful criterion for ancient conditions.

Against the background of such questions of supposed certainties, it is the intention of the symposium to identify congruences and differences, overlaps and demarcations between sport and cult, to reformulate questions and to discuss theses and answers.

Taking into account the proliferating diversity of possible aspects, the contributions should be assigned to one of the following categories:

#### **Terminology**

Sport, cult, ritual, religion (with special consideration of tensions between the present and antiquity)

#### **Olympic fields I**

Divine Sport: Gods in competition

#### **Beginnings**

Sport in a ritual-sacred environment – Physical effort as an offering (David Sansone) – Mythical figures as founders and inventors (Heracles, Palaistra ...) – Funeral games

## **Elements of cult in competition/Elements of sport in cult**

Rites and Rituals – Oaths, regulations – Lots – Curse tablets – Initiation

## **The charisma of victory and victors**

Festivals – Public events – Prizes – Heroisation

## **Politics, religion, and sport**

Rulers – Judaism (Maccabees...) – Christianity (Church Fathers...)

## **Olympic fields II**

Olympism (Coubertin etc.) – Olympism (current trends)

A maximum speaking time of 30 minutes is planned for the presentations.

Languages: German, English

A publication of the contributions is planned.

Interested parties are requested to send in an abstract (500 words) and a short curriculum vitae.

**Closing date for submissions:** 16 December 2019

## **Contact**

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