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Galen's Treatise 'Thrasylbulus' and the Dispute Between 'Paidotribes' and 'Gymnastes'

Jesús-M. Nieto Ibáñez

Leon

The revival of Greek sport in the second century AD coincides with the medical and philosophical critique of Galen against professional athletics, which has negative effects on health and ethical and moral values. The treatise *Thrasylbulus sive utrum medicinae sit an gymnasticae hygieine* is a doctrinal justification of the technique of the *gymnastes* in contrast with that of the *paidotribes*.

The second century AD was a period of renaissance for Greek athletics. This is evident not *only* in the new splendour of sporting competitions, but also in the increased number of literary works that has athletes and their activities as one of their themes. Phlego, Lucian, Pausanias, Philostratus and Galen are the most familiar of this trend.¹ However, despite its apparent splendour, this is a period of decay for sport. Athletes were entirely professionals and the main sports activities, or at least those followed by the public, took place in the mass spectacles of the circus and the amphitheatre, far removed from the ancient collective glories of the Panhellenic Games.

Two authors stand out in this resurgence of athletics, Philostratus and Galen, who also point out its failings. From different viewpoints both sought a rehabilitation of ancient sport, the first from a cultural sphere and the second from a medical perspective. Philostratus in his *De gymnastica* advocated a return to the natural roots of athletics and to the heroism of its origins, with its physical and moral values. His other treatise, the *Heroicus*, advocates moral rearmament and the prestige of religion and Greek civilization in general in the face of the spread of foreign customs.

Galen is a figure of the first rank in the history of gymnastics² and sports medicine in antiquity.³ He was able to combine his medical knowledge, consisting of a wide range of treatment programmes and

¹ R. S. ROBINSON, *Sources for the History of Greek Athletics*, Chicago 1981, 212–233. – I follow the systems of abbreviations of the LIDDELL/SCOTT, *Greek-English Lexicon* for the ancient authors and *L'Année Philologique* for journals.

² I use the term "gymnastics" instead of "athletics" to preserve better the Greek terminology.

³ B. BILIŃSKI, *L'agonistica sportiva nella Grecia antica*, Roma, 1959, 108–128, and J. JÜTHNER, *Die athletischen Leibesübungen der Griechen*, Band 1, Wien 1965, 22 f., 157 ff.

ideas on hygiene and diet,⁴ with an authentic sports ethic in favour of the rehabilitation of ancient athletics. There are four works of his that are especially concerned with the topic of physical exercise and sport, *De sanitate tuenda*, *De parvae pilae exercitio*, *Adhortatio ad artes addiscendas (Protrepticus)* and the *Thrasybulus (Thrasybulus sive utrum medicinae sit an gymnasticae hygieine)*.

Gymnastics, which throughout Greek history had been based on philosophical and medical principles, was incorporated by Galen as a part of medicine, a preventive and fitness-based form of keeping healthy. The evolution of physical exercise from a purely military or survival gymnastics to pure sport, had two very interesting features in the Greek world: its conversion into professional athletics and the fact that it gave rise to medical gymnastics.⁵ These two features are two sides of the same coin, since the greater demands of sports competitions pushed the development of more systematic and sophisticated training. Professional athletics had been a field for medical research of the human body and health as far back as the *Corpus Hippocraticum* itself.⁶

The treatise *Thrasybulus*⁷ does indeed form a part of Galen's works on therapeutics, but with a more theoretical than practical approach. It is this work which best shows his justification for gymnastics in a period of crisis in sport. The central theme of the treatise is clearly indicated in the subtitle, that is, whether fitness is a matter for medicine or for gymnastics. The discussion goes fully into the already long-established debate between doctors and gymnasts athletes and in the consideration of this question various aspects of physical exercise and of health are addressed. Galen's critique starts from the confrontation between two very similar areas of knowledge, that of the *paidotribes*, the trainer for the activities of competitive sport and the arena, and that of the *gymnastes*, the coach who was master in the art of preparing athletes. In fact, the discussion is between medicine and gymnastics – that is authentic gymnastics – not the activity of trainers, so-called *paidotribia*, which is the cause of the decay of Greek athletics.

⁴) A. BECK, *Zur diätetisch-physikalischen Therapie des Galen, besonders beim Fieber*, Berlin 1899; E. BEINTKER, *Modernes aus der Diätetik von Galenos*, in: *Hippokrates* 10, 1939, 92–93.

⁵) For the concept of the amateur athletics in the Greek Olympics and Galen see H. LEE, *Johann Heinrich Krause, and the Olympic Myth of Greek amateur athletics*, in: *Stadion* 29, 2003, 11–20.

⁶) *Epid.* V 14; VI 8,30.

⁷) The editions used were C.G. KÜHN, *Claudii Galeni opera omnia*, Vol. V, Leipzig 1821 (reprinted Hildesheim 1964), 806–898, and G. HELMREICH, *Claudii Galeni Pergameni scripta minora*, Vol. III, Leipzig 1893, 33–100.

Galen has no interest whatsoever in the latter, only in gymnastics, and not as a stand alone, but integrated into medicine.

Gymnastics and medicine originated from a shared competence. Herodicus of Megara was both a gymnast and a doctor who applied his experience in the gladiatorial arena to the curing of certain illnesses.⁸ Plato had already made a distinction between medicine, which sought to cure diseases, and gymnastics, which was aimed at people in good health. This demarcation was not a clear one, since gymnastics could also be recommended for some medical patients, as Hippocrates aptly shows on by prescribing physical exercises with therapeutic and prophylactic intentions. Physicians reacted against this Platonic approach, and it was Erasistratus, whom Galen quotes in this treatise, who first said that gymnastics was dependent on medicine. The negative effects a trainer practices on the health of athletes led him to stress the role of the doctor, as the most knowledgeable about the human body.⁹ Erasistratus used the word ὑγιεινή, "hygiene"¹⁰ or fitness, to differentiate his use of physical exercise from what was done by trainers in the area of gymnastics. As is shrewdly indicated by J. Ulmann,¹¹ the appearance of this term required a reconsideration of the concepts of gymnastics, medicine and fitness, and of the *paidotribes* and the physician. Medicine was to have two parts, therapeutics and fitness. The latter should be the more important, since it occupies itself with people in good health and so demands good knowledge of the body.¹²

The definitive objective of medicine is the activity of the body in whatever shape or form, including the areas of the *gymnastes* and the *paidotribes*. Activities in the arena should also aim at ensuring health, so the coach should not be eliminated, but should be under the supervision of the doctor as an additional specialist. A *gymnastes* should be considered not so much just a gymnastic coach, but a true educator, who should combine competency in sport with a deep knowledge of the rules of fitness and everything that Greek medical science had worked out about the development of the body, the effects of various exercises and the régimes suited to different temperaments.

⁸) J. JÜTHNER, *Philostratos über Gymnastik*, Leipzig/Berlin 1909, 9–16 and 32–43.

⁹) However, the experience of the *paidotribes*, well acquainted with the human body, diet and the use of massage, should not be forgotten; JÜTHNER, *Philostratos* (s. note 8) 23–30.

¹⁰) On this term, see JÜTHNER, *Philostratos* (s. note 8) 1–69.

¹¹) J. ULMANN, *De la gymnastique aux sports modernes: histoire des doctrines de l'éducation physique*, Paris 1977, 60.

¹²) *De sanit. tuen.* I 1.

Following the logical methods of philosophy, this treatise also looks at the problem of the terms fitness, medicine and gymnastics. As a first rough definition,¹³ medicine is said to be the technique that cares for the sick and also takes an interest in the healthy, while gymnastics is the skill of acquiring and maintaining good physical shape. Chapter 8 returns to the initial question as to whether the gymnastic coach or the physician should be charged with taking care of the healthy. In principle, Galen believes, it seems that medicine has as its aim the acquisition of health, and gymnastics that of maintaining it.

Following Hippocratic principles, he does not advise excessive physical exercise, and speaks of two kinds of gymnastics, one bad, and one good. The first produces apparent good, the second lasting good. As has already been mentioned and Galen himself recognizes, in his era gymnastics had reached extremes of unnaturalness that had gradually been developing from the times of Hippocrates and above all of Plato. The risks to health caused by bad gymnastics were caused by the poor disposition created which disturbed the balance on which health was based. "Professional athletes", lacking medical knowledge, increased the size and weight of athletes without control, and plied them with food and drink to a gluttonous degree.¹⁴

Bodily technique or skill had as an aim health and a good physical state, and Galen addressed the question of whether these are the same thing.¹⁵ He concluded that there is only one good for the body, and so only one bodily technique; health, strength, beauty are a part, a cause or an effect of this good. This is why there is just one technique, with two subdivisions, one which acts and another which corrects, but there is a need to name and classify this. In his eagerness to classify, Galen tried to commit a place for gymnastics and designed various types and subtypes of techniques. Gymnastics he saw as belonging to the productive or acquisitive techniques, but not to the contemplative and active. Bodily technique produces something which previously did not exist and corrects what already did. Galen defined two medical techniques or skills, curative, which corrects a great deal, and preservative, which corrects little. This latter is subdivided into three parts: εὐεκτικόν (good habits), which preserves the health of the healthy, ἀναληπτικόν (stimulant), bringing back the strength of those who have been ill, and between these two the ὑγιεινόν, the health proper, in its turn divided into φυλακτικόν, preservative or phylactic, and ὑγιεινόν, curative. The three are differentiated by the greater or lesser

¹³) Chapter 5.

¹⁴) Chapter 37.

¹⁵) Chapter 12.

intensity of their action. Other authors, according to Galen, add a fourth technique, called prophylactics. In the preservational part, that is, health in the narrow sense, three divisions are to be recognized: that which cares for healthy bodies in accordance with external appearance (ἀναληπτικόν), that which deals with them according to their physical state (ὕγιεινόν), and that which takes care of healthy bodies in conformity with their good physical fitness (εὐεκτικόν). The phylactic part is divided into four on the basis of what aids are used. These concern food and drink, what one does what is expelled from the body and outside influences.¹⁶ The second of these, relating to what one does, is the skill covering physical exercise, including all the activities and work done by men. Hence, this art, gymnastics, is one small part of the technique of health. For Galen, as for Hippocrates, this is the true gymnastics, the technique of strength that underlies all physical exercises, not just those of the arena, which are no more than a tiny part of the whole. So, this author distinguishes clearly between the fight trainer, or *paidotribes*, and the gymnastic coach, or *gymnastes*. Many activities depend on gymnastics in this sense, such as riding, hunting, and "normal" human actions, like cutting wood, digging and so forth, as well as wrestling, the aim of which is not to cure the body. Galen calls the skill of wrestling, καταβλητική, a destructive technique. A sound what would hate and abhor this practice, which destroys the life force. It is at this point that Galen lets loose insults against athletes and attacks the practice of wrestling and gladiators, with very harsh words,¹⁷ noting that "a fat stomach does not lead to sharp wits. Perhaps, he says, dust is the only thing from which hitherto they could draw wisdom. However, it is hard to see how the mud in which they have rolled about so many times can be an aid to wisdom, when even pigs live in the midst of it. Moreover, no natural logic would lead sharp wits to blossom in the dunghills among which they spend their days. Except for that they take no other exercise. Their whole life can be summed up as no more than eating, drinking, sleeping, defecating and rolling around in mud and dust."¹⁸

16) Τὰ προσφερόμενα καὶ κενούμενα καὶ ποιούμενα καὶ ἔξωθεν προσπίπτοντα.

17) Chapter 37.

18) Γαστήρ ἢ παχεῖα τὸν νοῦν οὐ τίκει τὸν λεπτόν. ἴσως οὖν ἢ κόνις ἔτι μόνη σοφίαν αὐτοῖς ἐδωρήσατο. τὸν μὲν γὰρ πηλόν, ἐν ᾧ πολλάκις ἐκυλινδοῦντο, τίς ὑπολαμβάνει σοφίας εἶναι δημιουργὸν ὄρων γε καὶ τοὺς σῦς ἐν αὐτῷ διατρίβοντας; ἀλλ' οὐδ' ἐν τοῖς ἀποπάτοις εἰκόσ, ἐν οἷς διημέρευον, ἀγχίνουσαν φύεσθαι. καὶ μὴν παρὰ ταῦτ' οὐδὲν ἄλλο πρότερον ἔπραττον. ὅλον γὰρ ἐωρώμεν αὐτῶν τὸν βίον ἐν ταύτῃ τῇ περιόδῳ συστρεφόμενον ἢ ἐσθιόντων ἢ πινόντων ἢ κοιμωμένων ἢ ἀποπατούντων ἢ κυλινδομένων ἐν κόνι τε καὶ πηλῷ.

Together with the problem of the classification of gymnastic technique there is the question of names. At the end of the work¹⁹ he recognizes that the term medicine can be applied to any bodily technique, even if it strictly only refers to one area of these. Hence, medicine also includes gymnastics, true gymnastics, as one part of such bodily technique. In conclusion, bodily techniques constitute a single whole with two parts, which strive for the good, in this case good physical state. In this way he answers the question which opens the *Thrasymbulus*.

The key to the problem of classification and definition of gymnastics within medicine is largely terminological. Hippocrates does not use the word *gymnastes* but does twice employ the term *paidotribes*,²⁰ in the sense of gymnastic coach.²¹ In Plato the word *gymnastes* is already to be found, even if this philosopher does not distinguish between *gymnastes* and *paidotribes*.²² Isocrates makes no distinction either.²³ When athletes' activities first began to become a convention or established, the term *gymnastes* is more frequently used. Plato understands gymnastics, as a part of bodily technique, suited to the healthy and not concerned with the sick. The text from the *Gorgias* reproduced by Galen²⁴ is totally clear in this respect, noting that "since there are two realities, there are two arts, one corresponding to the body, which cannot be defined with just one name, and another to the soul, which is to be called politics. Care of the body, although it is one whole, is to be divided into two parts, gymnastics and medicine."²⁵ Galen reproduces this terminological separation in the *Thrasymbulus*²⁶ and proposes that the *paidotribes* should be subordinate to the *gymnastes*.²⁷ He recalls the earlier situation relating to the problem of these names, pointing out that "in Homer there was not yet a name for the medical arts and nobody was called a *gymnastes*, just as nobody was called a doctor. Similarly, in Plato it is not possible to find the

¹⁹) Chapter 47.

²⁰) *Vict.* I 13 and 24.

²¹) On the use of this terminology, see C. A. FORBES, *Greek Physical Education*, New York 1929, 668 f.

²²) *R.* III 406 f.

²³) *Ant.* 181.

²⁴) Chapter 32.

²⁵) Δυσὸν ὄντων <τοῖν> πραγμάτων δύο λέγω τέχνας: τὴν μὲν ἐπὶ τῇ ψυχῇ πολιτικὴν καλῶ, τὴν δ' ἐπὶ τῷ σώματι μίαν μὲν οὕτως ὀνομάσαι οὐκ ἔχω σοι, μίαν δ' οὕσης τῆς τοῦ σώματος θεραπείας δύο μόρια λέγω, τὴν μὲν γυμναστικὴν, τὴν δ' ἰατρικὴν.

²⁶) Chapter 33.

²⁷) *De sanit. tuen.* 2,9,25 and 2,11,42.

word *gymnastes*²⁸ with any frequency, because the term *paidotribes*²⁹ is preferred for those offering training. This is because the specific skill of gymnastic coaches emerged just before Plato's days, when athletes' activities became more established."³⁰ Philostratus takes more or less the same stand,³¹ advocating authentic gymnastics, which should include a knowledge of medicine and of the human body in general, while this is not at the disposal of the *paidotribes*, who has specialized exclusively in the practice of competitive athletics. Galen goes further and suggests the elimination of gymnastics as an independent discipline, saying it should be integrated into medicine. For him, the skills of the *paidotribes* depend entirely upon gymnastics, even if on occasion there is an attempt to act independently, or as his treatise puts it, "like a foolish servant rebelling against its good master".³² At another point he indicates that "the *paidotribes* would be just as crazy in believing himself familiar with gymnastics or that he has mastered a part of it, since he is no more than its servant. Just as a soldier is the servant of military arts, a *paidotribes* is of gymnastics, because when he exercises his skills, he is subservient to gymnastics."³³

As may be noted in reading the treatise, Galen takes to task less the gymnastic coaches than the *paidotribai*, whom he sees as ignorant fellows who have trained professional athletes and are of no use to society. Plato, in his *Republic*, and Hippocrates, in his *Regimen*, had both already said that gymnastics, if limited to the training of athletes, had nothing to do with health proper: the condition (διάθεσις) of an athlete is not natural, a state of normal fitness (ἔξις) is better. On this point Galen refers to followers of the Hippocratic tradition on this science of the body, authentic gymnastics, like Diocles, Praxagoras,

²⁸) Only in the *Sph.* 218 b 4 and *Lg.* 720 e 3 and 916 a 8.

²⁹) For example, *Grg.* 452 a 3, *Prig.* 326 b 6, *R.* 389 c 3.

³⁰) Chapter 33: *Γυμναστικῆς δὲ τέχνης οὐπω μὲν ἦν τὸννομα καθ' Ὀμηρον οὐδὲ καλεῖται τις ἄλλως γυμναστικῆς, ὥσπερ ἰατρός, ὅπου γε καὶ παρὰ Πλάτωνι τὸ μὲν τῆς γυμναστικῆς ὄνομα οὐ πολλάκις εὐρεῖν ἔστι, παιδοτρίβην μὲντοι καλεῖ μάλλον ἢ γυμναστήν τὸν τεχνίτην αὐτῆς. ἤρξατο γὰρ ὀλίγον ἔμπροσθεν τῶν Πλάτωνος χρόνων ἡ τέχνη τῶν γυμναστῶν, ὅτε περ καὶ τὸ τῶν ἀθλητῶν ἐπιτήδευμα συνέστη.*

³¹) *Gym.* 14.

³²) Chapter 45: *Ὅλον ἔμπληκτός τις οἰκέτης ἐπανάσταται δεσπότη χρηστῷ, τῇ γυμναστικῇ.*

³³) 45: *μαίνονται γὰρ ἄν που κάκεῖνος, εἰ τὸν στρατηγὸν εἰς τὰς κατὰ μέρος ἐνεργείας προκαλούμενος, εἶτα βελτίων εὐρισκόμενος ἢ κοινωνεῖν ἀξιοῖ τῆς ἀρχῆς ἢ μέρος ἀποφαίνει τὴν αὐτοῦ τέχνην τῆς στρατηγικῆς. μαίνονται δ' ἄν οὐδὲν ἦττον, οἶμαι, καὶ ὁ παιδοτρίβης ἢ κοινωνεῖν γυμναστικῆς ἢ μέρος ἔχειν αὐτῆς οἰόμενος: ὑπηρετῆς γὰρ ἔστι μόνον, ὥσπερ γ' ὁ στρατιώτης τῆς στρατηγικῆς, οὕτω καὶ ὁ παιδοτρίβης [αὐτὸς γάρ], ἢ μὲν γυμνάζει, τῆς γυμναστικῆς, ...*

Phylotimus, Erasistratus and Herophilus, who contrast, for example, with Theo and Trypho, who wrote about unnatural techniques.³⁴ In Chapter 46 of the treatise he criticizes the barbarous customs seen in Rome, saying that “any healthy city would hate and abhor such practices, which destroy the whole life force and do not lead to good readiness of the body. He himself had often been able to show that he was stronger than athletes, even those who seemed to be the best and had won many prizes in competitions. Such men were totally useless when it came to arduous journeys or warfare, and even worse at tasks of daily city and country life.”³⁵ The Romans were fonder than the Greeks of spectacles that had nothing to do with the sort of gymnastics that Plato considered to be a part of education.³⁶

The criticisms in Galen’s treatise are to be seen as a critical framework by enlightened circles against professional sport, both on ethical and on purely medical grounds.³⁷ Censure of this sort of athletics went back a long way in Greece, almost contemporary with its emergence, and certainly in the time of Herodicus and took the shape precisely of this confrontation between doctors and trainers that has been described here.³⁸ Intensive training prior to competitions obliged trainers to have a solid knowledge of the human body and of dietary concerns which covered the athlete’s whole lifestyle, not just gymnastic practice. The harshest words against athletics are to be found precisely in the *Thrasybulus* and, above all, in the *Protrepticus*, a protest by an intellectual against the exploitation of athletics. Nonetheless, the purpose of these criticisms is different in the two works. The second attempts to steer young men away from the vain profession of athletes and their false glory. In the *Thrasybulus* the objective is deeper and more technical, the removal of gymnastics from the hands of the *paidotribai* so as to entrust it to physicians. This criticism of professional athletics was already present in Hippocrates, especially in the *Regi-*

³⁴) On the contributions by these authors to gymnastics see JÜTHNER, *Philostratos* (s. note 8) 8–26 and 48–51 and L. ENGLERT, *Untersuchungen zu Galens Schrift Thrasybulos*, Leipzig 1929, 21–24 and 38.

³⁵) Ὅπου γε καὶ ἡ ὑγιαίνουσα πολιτεία μισεῖ τοῦτο τὸ ἐπιτήδευμα καὶ βδελύττεται, πάσης μὲν τῆς εἰς τὸν βίον ἰσχύος ἀνατρεπτικὸν ὑπάρχον, εἰς οὐκ ἀγαθὴν δὲ τοῦ σώματος ἄγον διάθεσιν. ἐγὼ γοῦν ἐπειράθην ἑμαντοῦ πολλάκις ἰσχυροτέρου τῶν ἀρίστων εἶναι δοκούντων καὶ πολλοὺς στεφανίτας ἀγῶνας ἀνηρημένων ἀθλητῶν. ἔν τε γὰρ ὁδοιπορίαις ἀπάσαις ἄχρηστοι τελέως ἦσαν ἔν τε [ταῖς] πολεμικαῖς πράξεσιν, ἔτι δὲ μᾶλλον ἐν πολιτικαῖς τε καὶ γεωργικαῖς.

³⁶) J. SCARBOROUGH, *Galen on Roman Amateur Athletics*, in: *Arete* 2, 1985, 171–176.

³⁷) Cf. St. MÜLLER, *Das Volk der Athleten. Untersuchungen zur Ideologie und Kritik des Sports in der griechisch-römischen Antike*, Trier 1995, 310–313.

³⁸) Plato, *R.* III 406 a.

men even if in Galen the criticism is more scathing, since it focuses on the athlete as a person, and not just his activities, calling him a dim-wit.³⁹ Athletes are accused of being self-satisfied and arrogant;⁴⁰ they have no true physical attractiveness, as their faces are disfigured, their bodies out of proportion, nor have they any real strength, because their stamina is limited to the arena.⁴¹ Athletes are not of much use for anything, not work, not military exercises, they are not even really healthy. On a fundamental level they are fighting against nature, since gymnastic practice does not teach them to perform activities suited to men, such as sailing, cultivating fields and the like.

From an ethical point of view Galen attacks the praise that the vulgar populace bestows on an activity yielding only empty glory and which is of no *use* either to the common good of the city nor to the people engaged in it.⁴² His second ethical argument is the irrationality of athletic activities, which do not address the soul, but only the body, and even that badly. The principal difference between men and beasts is reason,⁴³ which does not seem to be present in some human activities. The activity of athletes being one. This practice promises only strength for the body and fame,⁴⁴ thereby completely neglecting the soul.⁴⁵ Galen complains, as Xenophanes⁴⁶ and the *Autolycus* of Euripides⁴⁷ already had, of the disproportionate honours heaped on athletes and above all of the spurious good health they think they enjoy.⁴⁸ They repeat views already expressed by Hippocrates⁴⁹ on their bad diet⁵⁰ and the way they strain in making excessive efforts. He concludes by stating that "in regard of bodily health no class is as unfortunate as athletes. They could indeed be said to have an appropriate name, 'athletes', whether because the 'wretched' receive their name

³⁹) ULMANN, *De la gymnastique* (s. note 11) 58 f.

⁴⁰) Chapter 46.

⁴¹) Chapter 36.

⁴²) Chapter 10.

⁴³) Chapter 1.

⁴⁴) Chapter 9.

⁴⁵) Chapter 11.

⁴⁶) D-K 21 fr. 1.

⁴⁷) Fr. 282 N².

⁴⁸) Chapter 11.

⁴⁹) See W.D. SMITH, *The development of classical dietetic theory*, in: Hippocratica. Actes du Colloque International, Paris 1980, 439–448.

⁵⁰) On the food of the athlete see I. MAZZINI, *Alimentazione e salute secondo i medici del mondo antico*, in: O. LONGO/P. SCARPI, *Homo edens: regimi, miti e pratiche dell'alimentazione nella civiltà del Mediterraneo*, Milano 1989, 257–264, and M. GRANT, *Galen on Food and Diet*, New York 2000.

from athletes, or because athletes and the wretched are called by the same name as they share the same thing, wretchedness.”⁵¹ He goes so far as to compare athletes with pigs because of their way of life and to say that their practices are not useful for any of life’s activities, with the same sort of words and a similar tone to what has already been commented on in Chapter 37 of the *Thrasymbulus*. Finally, athletes do not even gain financial benefits from their profession, as they are in debt, both while active and after retiring. The conclusion of the whole treatise is that the best profession for earning a living with dignity is medicine.

In the *Protrepticus* the term *paidotribes* is not to be found and that of *gymnastes* scarcely appears, since the object of the criticism is the athlete himself, not his trainer or coach. In 12,4 the word *gymnastes* is used as a synonym for athlete, not for master of gymnastics or coach. This terminological point is crucial, as it defines the object of Galen’s criticism of sport from two different points of view, medical in the *Thrasymbulus* and ethical in the *Protrepticus*. The technical intention of a true professional obliges him to make a clarification of the terminology in the case of the first treatise, as has been noted above.

It should be stressed that Galen is a good witness when making these criticisms, because he was very familiar with practices similar to those of athletics in his day, having been a doctor to gladiators. The athletic exercises described in his *Thrasymbulus* are sure certain to be those which were on the rise in competitions of that period. As noted by E. N. Gardiner⁵² in Galen’s times physical exercise shifted from freedom to the artificiality typical of a scientific system.⁵³ A scientific physician like him could only respond by seeking a justification for medicine and ways of dignifying it in an atmosphere marked by new and attractive activities. This he did through the definition and contrasting of medical skills as opposed to competence in gymnastics, so devalued already by trainers.

⁵¹ Σωματικῆς μὲν οὖν ὑγιείας ἔνεκα φανερόν ὡς οὐδὲν ἄλλο γένος ἀθλιώτερόν ἐστι τῶν ἀθλητῶν. ὥστ’ εἰκότως ἂν τις εἴποι συγγενῶς ὀνομάζεσθαι <τοὺς ἀθλητάς τε καὶ τοὺς ἀθλίους, ἦτοι γε ἀπὸ τοῦ ἀθλίου> τῶν ἀθλητῶν προσαγορευθέντων ἢ ἀπὸ τοῦ ἀθλητοῦ τὴν προσηγορίαν τῶν ἀθλίων ἐσχηκότων ἢ κοινῶς ἀμφοτέρων καθάπερ ἀπὸ πηγῆς μιᾶς τῆς ἀθλιότητος ὀνομασμένων, I, pp. 1–39 KÜHN.

⁵² *Greek Athletic Sports and Festivals*, London 1910, 509.

⁵³ Indeed, Galen was the first physician to advocate physical education based on anatomy and the physiology of the muscles, in the light of his experience and the animal and human dissections he had carried out in Rome. See G. BARRAUD, *Galien et l’éducation physique*, in: *Bulletin de la Société Française d’Histoire de Médecine* 32, 1938, 167.

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