The Shops of Pergamon – Terraced *Ergastēria* as Economic Spaces

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The Hellenistic kingdom of Pergamon is world famous for its monumental architecture both within and beyond the royal residency, but little research has been conducted on economic aspects of the urban development of the *polis*. This study focuses on the smallest commercial units of Pergamene architecture – the *ergastēria* – dating from the 2nd century BC until the early Imperial Times (fig. 1).

Presence of $ergast\bar{e}ria$ can be considered solid evidence for at least a partial economic function of a building analogue to the well-known and extensively studied Roman ta-bernae. The definition of the Greek term $\dot{\epsilon}$ ργαστήριον² – literally 'a place where work is done' – falls within the broad spectrum of various commercial activities, such as craft production of all kinds, storage, the sale of goods and miscellaneous services.³ Such shops and workshops appear in linear arrangements as part of larger building complexes like stoai, but also as single architectural units affiliated with commercial activity.⁴

Pergamon presents a challenging case-study: Due to the long continuity of settlement as well as the lack of detailed archaeological records of the earliest excavations, a precise interpretation of the function of such architectural units is hardly ever possible. This study, therefore, focuses on more basic identification criteria such as the architectural configuration, the location and accessibility to roads, squares or terraces. The Greek term *ergastērion* thus suitably corresponds with the ubiquity and the multifunctionality of such economic micro-spaces and serves to label these units – at least on a typological level – wherever a precise function cannot be identified. This inquiry mainly regards *where* the *ergastēria* are located, to what broader building complex they belong, and *how* their development can be connected to the urban history.⁵

Evidence of Ergastēria in Pergamon

Presumably in the 2nd century BC⁶, a monumental square was created by building massive foundations for the Upper Agora, which enclosed the temple of Zeus Soter on its southern and eastern sides.⁷ Thirty-one rooms over two floors were incorporated into the terrace walls (fig. 2). Most of these units consisted of a back and a front room and were accessible through a small terrace surrounding the entire complex. An inscription preserving a royal letter⁸, which is conventionally attributed to the reign of Attalos I. on the basis of the letter shapes and contextual arguments, defines the earnings of a priest of Zeus.⁹ Among others, these specifically include revenues from *ergastēria*, which were to be leased by the allotted priest and handed over to the successor in good condition.

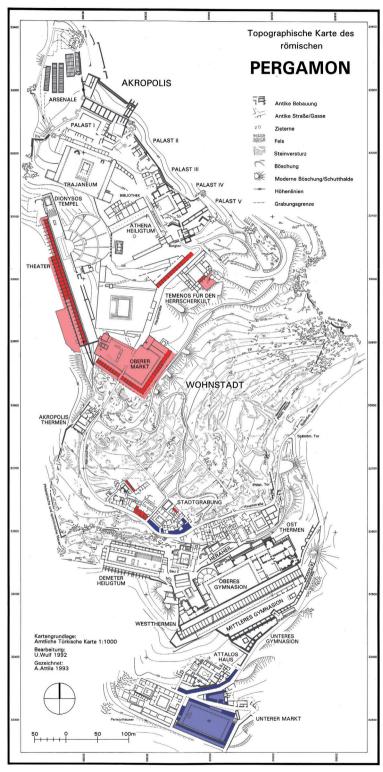


Fig. 1: The city of Pergamon and its $ergast\bar{e}ria$ of the 2^{nd} (red) and 1^{st} (blue) cent. BC/AD.

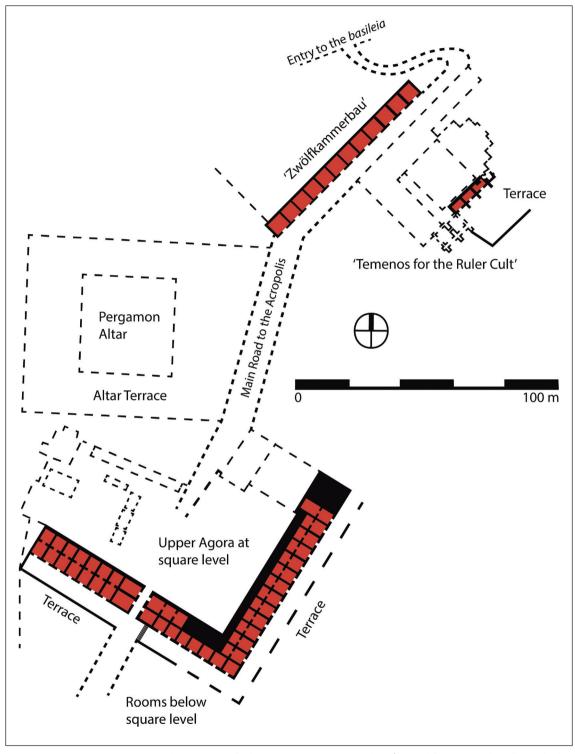


Fig. 2: The $ergast\bar{e}ria$ in the area of the Upper Agora, the 'Zwölfkammerbau' and the 'Temenos for the Ruler Cult' (2^{nd} cent. BC).

Louis Robert perhaps rightly wondered if the surviving rooms in the substructions of the Upper Agora should not to be associated with the inscription's content, but the chronological development – as presented by K. Rheidt's re-investigation – does not support a direct connection. At least in principle, the leasing of workshops to finance a priestly office should not be excluded for the 2nd century B.C., which then would have served a dual purpose: they provided a sustainable source of revenue as well as being essential substructures for the square. On courtyard level, the conventionally accepted reconstruction displays another set of twenty-eight rooms, but the complete devastation of the superstructure does not provide conclusive evidence for this hypothesis. 11

The twelve uniform rooms of the 'Zwölfkammerbau' line the western side of the main road before the entrance to the *basileia* (fig. 2) and were presumably built concurrently with the Upper Agora's monumental building phase of the 2nd century BC.¹² The rooms' functions must have been largely commercial, as suggested by the prominent location at Pergamon's main road. About concurrently or little earlier¹³, the 'Temenos for the Ruler Cult' was greatly extended and included three rooms in the foundations of the court's southeastern wing, connecting to a terrace;¹⁴ also these rooms probably served economic purposes (storage?).

The Theatre Terrace – Pergamon's longest terrace – demanded a highly complex, staggered construction to overcome the hill's steep incline, and formed the nucleus of numerous *ergastēria* of which several are still exceptionnally well-preserved today.¹⁵ Two series of paratactic rooms were part of a monumental building phase which took place between the end of the 3rd to the middle of the 2nd century BC (fig. 3)¹⁶: The main

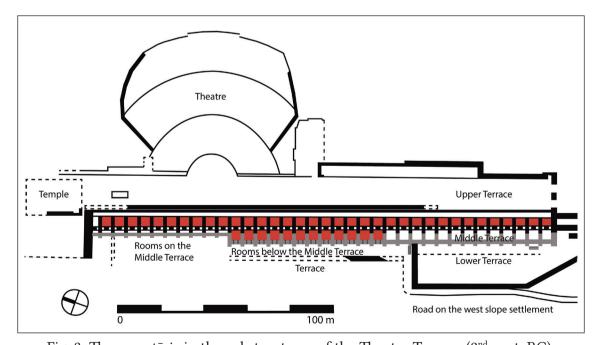


Fig. 3: The *ergastēria* in the substructures of the Theatre Terrace (2nd cent. BC).

group of thirty-five rooms within the sustaining walls, contained a door $(1.0 \times 2.25 \text{ m})$ and a window $(1.55 \times 1.57 \text{ m})$ and faced the so-called Middle Terrace. Similarly, a second group of twelve rooms was situated inside this terrace at the foot of the slope: these consisted of two floors and their entrances faced a small terrace close to the road network on the west slope settlement. The so-called Lower Terrace, built at an intermediate level between the Middle Terrace and the narrow path leading to the shops, used stairs to connect the various platforms.

The earliest evidence of *ergastēria* in the area of the Upper City dates back to the first half of the 2nd century BC. Although their scarce remains merely allow hypothetical reconstruction, a consistent pattern of at least twenty-nine paratactic rooms oriented towards the major roads may be observed.²⁰ In the 1st century BC, the entire Upper City underwent fundamental change: various buildings – including many *ergastēria* – were reshaped after a period of decay (fig. 4).²¹ The better state of preservation of the Upper City enables a more precise identification in several cases ranging from the 2nd to the 1st century BC: one room in the foundations of the so-called 'Gebäude mit dem Podiensaal' had a counter, ideal for selling goods to passersby on the street²²; another exhibited installations for a fireplace.²³ On the southeastern corner of the main road, several *pithoi* were installed under a small portico to facilitate the sale of liquids or other goods.²⁴

The building complex of the Lower Agora consisted of a central square, a wraparound porticus and various *ergastēria* (fig. 5).²⁵ They were situated on all three different levels of the complex's terrace architecture: at least six on the second floor of

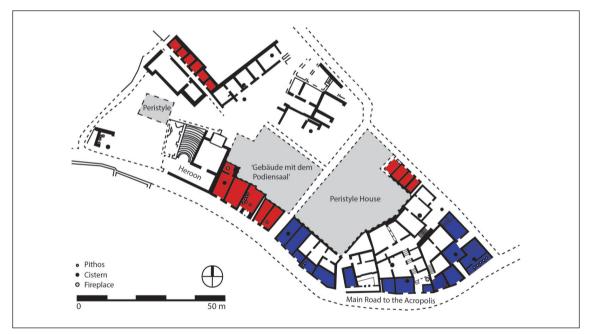


Fig. 4: The *ergastēria* in the Upper City area built in the 2nd (red) and 1st (blue) cent. BC.

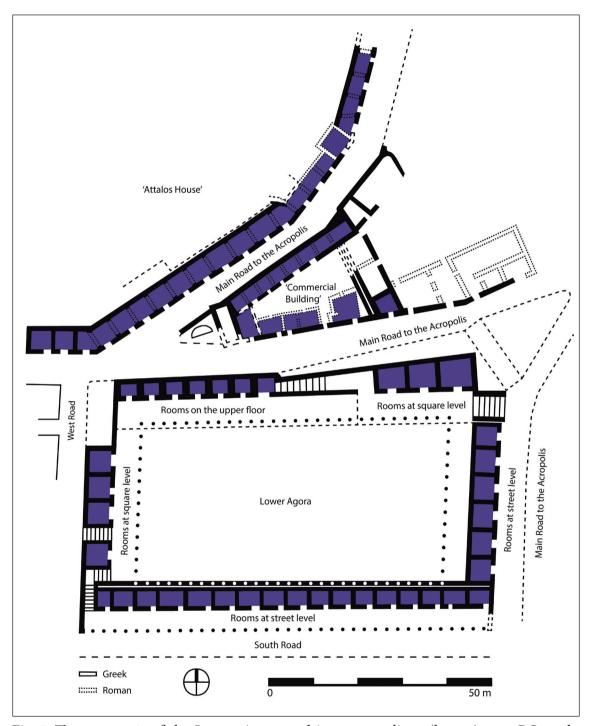


Fig. 5: The $ergast\bar{e}ria$ of the Lower Agora and its surroundings (late 1st cent. BC, early 1st cent. AD).

the northern *stoa*, four on the western and three on the northeastern side at courtyard-level. Six counterparts in the east wing, as well as the upper floors in the south *stoa*, remain uncertain reconstructions.²⁶ Below courtyard-level, the southern and eastern retaining wall was bordered by twenty-three rooms that all faced the surrounding roads and formed a solid foundation for the upper structure. New investigations suggest that the presumed 'Eumenian' date of the main construction phase needs to be revised to the early Imperial period (end of 1st century BC or beginning of the 1st century AD).²⁷

The area north of the Lower Agora exhibits an arrangement of *ergastēria* that clearly adapts to the winding main road. The architectural intertwining of the area suggests that these structures were built concurrently with the Lower Agora and thus likely date to the 1st century BC as well.²⁸ The massive terracing wall for the 'Attalos House' encompassed a row of at least twenty-one rooms in front of Pergamon's most important traffic route (fig. 5). Across the road, the triangular building is usually identified as a commercial complex, since its fourteen *ergastēria* faced mainly inward onto the triangular courtyard.²⁹

Chronology and Development of the *Ergastēria* in Pergamon

The chronological statistics and the spatial distribution of the preserved *ergastēria* show that the number of 122 units from the 2nd century BC³⁰ rose to 194 by the turn of the eras³¹, when the Lower City underwent fundamental change and became a new economic hotspot in the area of the Lower Agora. The *ergastēria* of Pergamon thus illustrate – both in number, urban distribution and chronology – the development of the urban economic spaces from Hellenistic times until the beginning of the 1st century AD.³²

The majority of the rooms – at least 109³³ out of 194 – appears in the foundations of large-scale buildings and thus form essential parts of the genuine Pergamene terrace architecture.³⁴ Consequently, economic aspects seem to have been taken into account in various major royal building projects, because *ergastēria* not only served as essential substructures, but also created long-lasting sources of revenue for the building contractor. Thus, this phenomenon is perhaps best described as sustainable project planning wherein commercial functions were considered in the planning process and integrated into the later management of such buildings.

The main road at Pergamon offered a unique economic hotspot, since *ergastēria* are found on every part of its route, turning this important traffic system³⁵ into a lively bazaar.³⁶ Where a direct access to the Pergamene road network was lacking, terraces themselves enabled access to the shops and storerooms.

This analysis demonstrates that commercial functions of Pergamene architecture were not limited to the two *agorai*, but can be found in various buildings – mostly large

scale – whose primary function was not necessarily related to commerce. Thus, the initiators of such building projects were fully aware of profitable sub-purposes regarding the essential terrace architecture, eventually leading to a sustainable development of the city's economic spaces.

Notes

- * This article presents a short summary of the results of my B.A. thesis (University of Zurich 2015). I owe special thanks for critical and fruitful discussions on this subject to B. Emme, F. Pirson, U. Wulf-Rheidt †, M. Trümper, Ch. Reusser, Ch. Leypold, M. Flohr and R. di Cesare. All epigraphic abbreviations follow the AIEGL conventions (https://aiegl.org/grepiabbr.html last checked on 7. 12. 2021).
- ¹ See most recently Holleran 2012, 99-158; Holleran 2017.
- ² Liddell Scott Jones 1996, 682 s. v. ἐργαστήριον. On the etymology see Chantraine 1970, 365 s. v. ἔργον; Beekes 2010, 450 s. v. ἔργον.
- ³ Karvonis 2007, 41 f. 47. The term appears frequently in epigraphic sources and is discussed by Ph. Gauthier in *I.Sardes Suppl.* II pp. 101–106 and Hellmann 1994, 137 (*SEG* XLIV 1772; *BE* 1995, 438 no. 58); on Delos see Hellmann 1992, 138–140 (*SEG* XLII 735; *BE* 1993, 467 f. no. 54); on Attica see Stanley 1990, 1–13 (*SEG* XL 175).
- ⁴ Karvonis 2008, 61–68 (*SEG* LVIII 798). Particularly well established in Greek cities was the combination of *stoai* with rooms behind the collonades, which were either called *oikoi/oikemata* or revealing their commercial purpose *ergastēria* (see Cannistraci 2011, 362–375 [*SEG* LXI 1692]; *BE* 2014, 398 f. Nr. 10)). ⁵ Similar mappings and brief discussions of economic spaces in Pergamon were published by Karvonis 2008, 75 f. with fig. 9 and Pirson 2012, 194 fig. 5. A more extensive study on Pergamon's economy is
- 2008, 75 f. with fig. 9 and Pirson 2012, 194 fig. 5. A more extensive study on Pergamon's economy is currently being conducted by Sandra Völkel (DAI Istanbul). Following these previous attempts, I exclude the rooms surrounding the courtyard on the west and east side of the sanctuary of Demeter (nos. 4. 7. 8. 9. 31–33, see Bohtz 1981, 32–34. 37 f. 58; pl. 43 "Baustufe 4"), being referred to as "the *stoai* and the *oikoi*" in the dedicatory inscription on the propylon (Hepding 1910, 439–442 no. 24 l. 2; Cannistraci 2011, 365). The ambiguous terminology (compare the explicit term *ergastēria* in *I.Pergamon* I 40 l. 7, *infra* n. 8), their seclusive location and the primarily religious function of the building complex do not directly point to economic activity; they thus rather served primary purposes of the sanctuary ("heilige Gemächer" according to Bohtz 1981, 33. 58). Börker 1983, 14 with n. 43 identifies them "zweifellos" as banquet rooms (followed by Leypold 2008, 119–122 no. 30). A comparable, non-commercial function can be assumed for the rooms nos. 11–17 in the "Untere Nord-Stoa", dating to the times of Philetairos (Bohtz 1981, 34 f. 57 f.; pl. 42 "Baustufe 3").
- 6 Rheidt 1992, 268 f. argues for a construction under the reign of Eumenes II. as already Lauter 1970, 96 on the basis of the masonry. This conventionally accepted date, however, has not yet been verified by archaeological findings and reflects the content of the famous passage by Strab. 13,4,2 (= 624C): κατεσκεύασε δ' οὖτος τὴν πόλιν καὶ τὸ Νικηφόριον ἄλσει κατεφύτευσε, καὶ ἀναθήματα καὶ βιβλιοθήκας καὶ τὴν ἐπὶ τοσόνδε κατοικίαν τοῦ Περγάμου τὴν νῦν οὖσαν ἐκεῖνος προσεφιλοκάλησε. "It was him (i.e. Eumenes II.) who also built up the city, and he planted the Nikephorion with a sacred grove, and out of

love for splendour he added dedications (i.e. buildings?) and libraries and today's wide extension of the settlement of Pergamon.".

⁷ Schrammen 1906, 93–107; pl. 22–34; Lauter 1970, 88 f. no. 2; Rheidt 1992, 263–269. 279–282; Köse 2005, 141 f.; Bielfeldt 2010, 168–179; Mathys 2012, 261–264; Radt 2016, 89–93; Laufer 2021, 159–163 (with a useful summary of the controversally discussed development of the area as Temenos and Agora). The thirty-one units did perhaps not solely serve as storerooms (as believed by Lauter 1970, 95: "Die dunklen Gelasse im Untergeschoß des Marktbaus von Pergamon mit ihrer einen Türe können den Kaufleuten höchstens als Warenlager gedient haben"), but rather as proper shops on an attractive point of sale on Pergamon's most significant road. Due to the descent of the slope, at least the rooms on the far west consisted of two floors (see Schrammen 1906, 93, the cross-section on pl. 26, and the front view on pl. 31). For justified criticism of the conventional interpretation of the Upper Agora as 'State Market' compared to the Lower Agora as 'Commercial Market' (e.g. by Coulton 1976, 176; Wulf 1994, 142 and others) see Hoffmann 2008, 38 n. 20; Bielfeldt 2010, 168 f.; Mathys 2012, 264. 268. The presumably strict distinction reflects rather the economic theory of the ideal *polis* developed by Aristot. pol. 7, 1331 a 32–b 3 than the commercial reality of hellenistic Pergamon, as the revised chronology of the Lower Agora suggests (see *infra* n. 27).

⁸ *I.Pergamon* I 40 II. 1–14 [ὁ δ' ἀεὶ λ]αχὼν φορείτω | [χ]λαμόδα λευκὴν καὶ σ[τέ]|φανον ἐλάας μετὰ ταιν[ι]|δίου φοινικιοῦ καὶ λαμβα|νέτω τῶν θυομένων γέ|ρα τὸ δέρμα καὶ κωλέαν | καὶ τῶν ἐργαστηρίων ὧν | ἀνατέθηκα τὴν πρόσο|δον· μισθούτω δ' ἀεὶ ὁ λα|χών, ἐπεσκευασμένα | δὲ παραδιδότω ὁ ἐξι|ὼν ἢ ἀποτινέτω τὸ γε|νόμ[ε]νον εἰς τὴν ἐπι|[σ]κευὴν δαπάνημα. "The allotted (priest) shall wear a white chlamys and an olive crown with a purple ribbon, and he shall receive from the sacrificed animals as perquisite the skin and thighbone and of the workshops, which I (i.e. Attalos I.?) dedicated (to the god), the revenues. The holder (of the priesthood) shall always lease them, and when leaving the office he shall hand them over in well-repaired state or he shall pay the resulting costs for the repair." (cf. *Syll.*³ 1018; Welles, *RC* 24; *LSAM* 11; Pleket 1970, 73; *I.Sardes Suppl.* II p. 106; Bielfeldt 2010, 175 f. with fig. 28). The *ergastēria* were thus considered as continuous sources of revenue and cross-financed the priesthood. For a comparable case in Miletus see *I.Didyma* 479 Z. 9–14, where the revenues from the shops of the famous *stoa* of Antiochos financed construction work at the Didymeion (Meier 2012, 382–387; for other examples, see Ph. Gauthier in *I.Sardes Suppl.* II pp. 101–106).

⁹ The lack of the preface is particularly regretful. Max Fränkel collected the arguments for a date in the reign of Attalos I., "ohne dass freilich eine frühere Entstehungszeit ausgeschlossen wäre" (*I.Pergamon* I p. 37). At any rate, the description of the priest's dress (ll. 1–4) makes an identification of the diety (l. 19) with Zeus is fairly certain and Ohlemutz 1940, 65–79, provided firm grounds for this interpretation.

¹⁰ Robert 1984, 496–499 (SEG XXXIV 1250) with a useful survey of the previous interpretations of the passage (supported by Ph. Gauthier, *I.Sardes Suppl.* II p. 106). The connection between the *ergastēria* (ll. 7–14) and the archaeological remains is an attractive hypothesis and would support the economic function of the thirty-one rooms in the subsctruction as leased workshops. Also the provision to keep the *ergastēria* in good condition would match the context, as these workshops formed significant substructions for the porticus on the square-level. However, Rheidt 1992, 257 (followed by Bielfeldt 2010, 175 f.) ascribes the inscription's content to a building phase in the 3rd century B.C. when remains of *ergastēria* are completely lacking in the archaeological record. At any rate, the epigraphic evidence makes it clear that commercial activities must have existed in this earlier phase.

- ¹¹ Coulton 1976, 68. 274 fig. 102 and Rheidt 1992, 263 f. with fig. 9 adopt the vague statement and hypothetical reconstruction by Schrammen 1906, 105 with tab. 32. More cautiously remains Lauter 1970, 89. These fully reconstructed rooms are excluded here until further evidence is produced.
- ¹² Rheidt 1992, 261–263. 267 with the discussion of a rather on an obscure 'market building' west of the 'Zwölfkammerbau' (supported by Mathys 2012, 261 f.; Laufer 2021, 161–163 who introduces the term "Big Agora" for the area between the Upper Agora and the "Zwölfkammerbau"; *contra* Bielfeldt 2010, 1729.
- ¹³ Boehringer Krauss 1937, 74–81; Wensler 1989; Schwarzer 1999, 274 f.; Emme 2013, 189–196.
- ¹⁴ Boehringer Krauss 1937, 44–46.
- ¹⁵ Bohn 1896, 26–34; with pl. 15–23; Lauter 1970, 89 no. 2a; Köse 2005, 141; Helm-Rommel 2009, 42–46 with pl. 32–37. 95–99. 102–106. 145.
- ¹⁶ Helm-Rommel 2009, 73-82. 87-90. 255-263 with pl. 103. 145.
- ¹⁷ Helm-Rommel 2009, 79 f. 257–259; Radt 2016, 262 fig. 205; Klinkott 1991, 131 f. Due to the location and position, Lauter 1970, 95 decidedly stressed that "die Räume unter der Theaterterrasse natürlich sowieso keine Läden aufnahmen" but certainly are to be interpreted as storerooms. This is perhaps true for the twelve two-storey rooms located below the Middle Terrace (Helm-Rommel 2009, 80). As for the thirty-five rooms facing the Middle Terrace, the wide window on the right of each door rather points to commercial shops (already Helm-Rommel 2009, 259).
- ¹⁸ Helm-Rommel 2009, 89 f. 259 with pl. 35, 1. 97. 103; Pirson 2017, 76–82.
- ¹⁹ Helm-Rommel 2009, 4. 43. 263 f.
- 20 Wulf 1999, 197–199 fig. 79; Schwarzer 2008, 30–41. 44–53. 80; Radt 1977, 305 f. (on the so-called 'Magazingasse'); Filgis Radt 1986, 55 with pl. 58. 59. 80 a.
- ²¹ Wulf 1999, 199-203 with fig. 80; Schwarzer 2008, 88 f.
- ²² Schwarzer 2008, 38 f. 52. 54 with fig. 10; compare the windows of the Theatre Terrace (*supra* n. 17).
- ²³ Schwarzer 2008, 30-36.
- ²⁴ Wulf 1999, 136 f. 142-145 with fig. 70.
- ²⁵ Dörpfeld 1902, 16–26 with pl. 2; Dörpfeld 1904, 114–116 with pl. 7; Köse 2005, 142; Emme 2013, 165–171; Mathys 2012, 259–261; Radt 2016, 87–89; Laufer 2021, 163. First results of the re-investigation by B. Emme and A. Öztürk† are published in preliminary reports (Pirson 2014, 122–131; Pirson 2015, 115–126; Pirson 2016, 147–156; Pirson 2018, 118–127).
- ²⁶ Emme 2013, 169 f. with pl. 91 following Coulton 1976, 68. 273 with fig. 101.
- ²⁷ B. Emme A. Öztürk in Pirson 2015, 118 f.; Pirson 2016, 149–151, and B. Emme in Pirson 2018, 121 (for earlier attempts see Pirson 2008, 102–104). Detailed results can be expected from the announced monographic publication. A late date was already assumed by Pinkwart Stammnitz 1984, 76. For the impact on the urban development see Pirson 2017, 82 f.
- ²⁸ On this area of the city see Dörpfeld 1902, 35 f.; Dörpfeld 1904, 120 f. with pl. 7; Dörpfeld 1907, 188 f. with pl. 14; Salzmann 1991, 440–444; Mathys 2012, 259–261; Pirson 2017, 82 f.
- ²⁹ Dörpfeld 1907, 163-166 with pl. 14; Radt 2016, 86.
- ³⁰ Upper Agora (31), 'Zwölfkammerbau' (12), 'Temenos for the Ruler Cult' (3), Theater Terrace (47), Upper City (29).
- ³¹ supra n. 30 plus Lower Agora (37) and the adjacent area in the north (35).
- ³² On the urban development after 133 BC, see Pirson 2017, 89–96.

- ³³ Upper Agora (31), 'Temenos for the Ruler Cult' (3), Theater Terrace (47), Upper City (5 in the foundations of the 'Gebäude mit dem Podiensaal'), Lower Agora (23 in the southern and eastern foundations). ³⁴ Klinkott 1991, 131–136 and most recently Laufer 2021, 137–144. 265. The architecture of terraced, multi-storey stoai and market buildings was identified as being a typical Pergamene phenomenon and fundamentally studied by Lauter 1970, 86–101 ('Marktgebäude'). His collection of examples from Asia Minor is further completed by Köse 2005, 139–160 ('Pergamene-style market-buildings'), Cavalier 2012, 241–255 ('portique à sous-sol dossé') and Laufer 2021, 63–70. 165–169 ('Terrassenhalle'). At Pergamon, main emphasis was apparently put on the efficient use of highly limited space, e.g. on steep slopes, where firm ground was rare.
- ³⁵ Hoffmann 2008, 35–41; Pirson 2017, 75–86; most recently Laufer 2021, 151–155.
- ³⁶ Radt 2016, 87; Pirson 2012, 195. A comparable picture is developed by Aischin. Tim. 124 who describes "these *ergastēria* along the roads" in Athens (τούτων τῶν ἐπὶ ταῖς ὁδοῖς ἐργαστηρίων).

Image Credits

Fig. 1: By author based on Wulf 1999, pl. 24. – Fig. 2: By author based on Boehringer – Krauss 1937, pl. 72; Schrammen 1906, 96; pl. 1. 21. 22. 24. 32; Rheidt 1992, 264 fig. 9; 281 fig. 15 d. – Fig. 3: By author based on Helm-Rommel 2009, pl. 146; Pirson 2015, 94 fig. 5. – Fig. 4: By author based on Filgis – Radt 1986, pl. 58; Wulf 1999, 200 fig. 80; Schwarzer 2008, 46 fig. 5. – Fig. 5: By author based on Dörpfeld 1902, pl. 2; Dörpfeld 1904, pl. 7; Dörpfeld 1907, pl. 14.

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