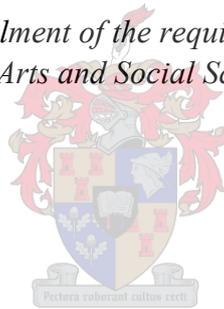


**Growing up Greek:  
The differing journeys through childhood in ancient Athens and Sparta**

Elizabeth Ann Robertson

*Thesis presented in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of  
Master of Arts in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences at Stellenbosch University*



Supervisor: Dr Samantha Masters

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## **Declaration**

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Elizabeth Ann Robertson

## Abstract

Athens and Sparta were the two most prominent city-states during the 6<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> centuries BCE, but their socio-political systems differed markedly. As a result of such radical differences it could be hypothesised that the childhoods and, in particular, the education and socialisation of children, would also differ. The aims of this thesis are: 1. to examine the extent and nature of the differences between the childhood experiences of each group of children from the two city-states, Athens and Sparta, in particular the type of education and socialisation system to which each was exposed; and 2. to discern to what extent and in what way the socio-political system of their respective state had an impact on their upbringing and their journey to adult citizen status.

To meet this goal, this study consulted the works of ancient writers, the research of contemporary scholars, as well as archaeological and visual evidence when available. The scarcity of relevant sources, particularly with regard to Sparta, limited the scope of the research to the children of the elite class of citizens. It was also necessary to differentiate between the type of education and socialisation offered to boys and girls, as these differed significantly.

The method used in this thesis was to construct a list of the attributes which were considered desirable in the character of both male and female 'ideal' citizens of the two states, based on the prevailing economic, social and political establishment of Athens and Sparta. The way in which the child acquired these necessary qualities was tracked from the time of birth and acceptance into the *oikos*, through the individual educational and socialisation system to which the child was subjected, until final conferral of citizenship.

My research concludes that the type of educational systems in Athens and Sparta were indeed different from each other, in their structure, emphasis and in their goals. They also differed in their level of state 'intervention'. Athens provided no state-sponsored system of education for boys and the responsibility for arranging a boy's education rested with the father, while girls were adequately educated in domestic skills within the *oikos*. Spartan children, on the other hand—both boys and girls—grew up within a system of compulsory state-run education which concentrated heavily on physical training at the expense of literacy. The intervention of the Athenian city-state in the upbringing of her children was minimal, whereas the Spartan city-state dictated every aspect of her children's life.

## Opsomming

Athene en Sparta was die twee prominentste stadstate gedurende die sesde en vyfde eeue v.C., maar hul sosiopolitieke stelsels het opvallend van mekaar verskil. As gevolg van sodanige grondige verskille kon daar veronderstel word dat die kinderjare en, veral, die opvoeding en sosialisering van kinders, ook sou verskil. Die doelwitte van hierdie tesis is 1. om die omvang en aard van die verskille tussen die kinderjare-ervarings van elke kindergroep van die twee stadstate, Athene en Sparta, te ondersoek, in die besonder die soort opvoedkundige en sosialiseringstelsel waaraan elkeen blootgestel is; en 2. om te bepaal in watter mate en op watter manier die sosiopolitieke stelsel van hul besondere staat 'n impak op hul opvoeding en hul reis na volwasse burgerstatus gehad het.

Om hierdie doelwit te bereik, het dié studie die werke van antieke skrywers, die navorsing van kontemporêre vakkundiges asook die beskikbare argeologiese en visuele bewyse geraadpleeg. Die skaarsheid van tersaaklike bronne, veral ten opsigte van Sparta, het die bestek van die navorsing tot die kinders van die burgers se eliteklas beperk. Dit was ook nodig om onderskeid tussen die soort opvoeding en sosialisering wat aan seuns en dogters gebied is, te tref, aangesien dit aansienlik van mekaar verskil het.

Die metode wat in hierdie tesis gebruik is, was om 'n lys eienskappe saam te stel wat as wenslik in die karakter van beide manlike en vroulike 'ideale' burgers in die twee state beskou is. Dit is op Athene en Sparta se heersende ekonomiese, sosiale en politieke bestel gebaseer. Die manier waarop 'n kind hierdie vereiste eienskappe verwerf het, is vanaf geboorte tot by aanneming in die *oikos* nagespeur, deur die individuele opvoedkundige en sosialiseringstelsel waaraan die kind onderwerp is, tot die uiteindelijke toekenning van burgerskap.

My navorsing kom tot die gevolgtrekking dat die soort opvoedkundige stelsels in Athene en Sparta inderdaad van mekaar verskil het, in hul struktuur, klem en in hul doelwitte. Hulle het ook in hul vlak van 'staatsinmenging' verskil. Athene het nie 'n staatsondersteunde opvoedkundige stelsel vir seuns verskaf nie en dit was die vader se verantwoordelikheid om 'n seun se opvoeding te reël, terwyl dogters voldoende in huishoudelike vaardighede binne die *oikos* opgevoed is. Daarteenoor het Spartaanse kinders – beide seuns en dogters – binne 'n verpligte, staatsbeheerde opvoedingstelsel grootgeword wat swaar op liggaamlike opvoeding ten koste van geletterdheid gekonsentreer het. Die inmenging van die Atheense stadstaat in die opvoeding van haar kinders was minimaal, terwyl die Spartaanse stadstaat elke aspek van haar kinders se lewens voorgeskryf het.

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## Chapter 1

### Introduction

Although all Greeks shared a common language, albeit with different dialects, common social structures and a common religion, they were not a single nation with an overarching government (Cartledge 1993: 3). Each city-state was a distinctive political unit with its own legal code, its own army, its own government system and worshipped its own pantheon of gods (Garland 2013: 9, 10). Athens and Sparta, the two most prominent city-states of the 6<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> centuries BCE, were markedly different in several aspects. Athens was, in the 5<sup>th</sup> century BCE, a democratic society which participated fully in foreign trade, was open to innovation and generally welcoming to immigrants (Garland 2013:119). Conversely, Sparta was conservative, xenophobic, austere, preoccupied with secrecy and obsessed with martial valour (Cartledge 2002: 24, 3). The prevailing political and social atmosphere in each *polis* would place differing demands on its inhabitants and the type of citizen which each particular state would require to retain its future viability. As a result of the profoundly different environment to which they were exposed as well as the expectations of their future contribution to the *polis*, the children of Athens and Sparta would surely have experienced very different upbringings. It is these differing journeys of childhood that are the subject of this thesis.

Childhood studies and the role of children in ancient societies have become areas of interest for many scholars in recent years. In 2003 the Hood Museum of Art of Dartmouth College produced an exhibition which brought together a unique collection of objects devoted entirely to images of ancient Greek childhood. This exhibition, entitled '*Coming of age in ancient Greece: images of childhood from the classical past*' and the accompanying catalogue, which contained essays by eminent scholars across the inter-disciplinary spectrum of ancient studies, promoted much interest in this previously neglected aspect of Greek social history. However, not one single artefact in this exhibition originated from Sparta. In 2015 a conference entitled *Children in Antiquity: Perspectives and experiences of childhood in the ancient Mediterranean* was held in the Department of Archaeology at the University of Sydney, demonstrating again, the interest in the field and the various *lacunae* in the research.

Golden (1993), Cohen and Rutter (2007), and Beaumont (2015) have produced books specifically focused on childhood in ancient and classical Athens. In these works, and in more generalised contemporary works on ancient Greek society, the anomalies existing in Sparta are mentioned. As no comprehensive study has yet been done which compares the childrearing and education of children in Athens and Sparta, the general impression is that 'childhood in ancient Greece' is taken to mean an Athenian childhood. Yet at the same time, at Sparta, an equally important power in ancient Greece, children experienced a very different type of childhood. My goal is to examine the childhood experiences of children in Athens and Sparta more closely through carefully contextualising each system within the respective society. By comparing the two systems in context, it will be possible to speculate as to the impact the differing political and ideological frameworks had on the children's upbringing, and to what extent they were being 'crafted' into ideal future citizens.

In this thesis then I aim to examine the education of children in the two dominant city-states of the 5<sup>th</sup> century BCE, Athens and Sparta, asking the following key questions:

1. To what extent and in what way did the educational systems of Athens and Sparta differ?
2. To what extent did the state determine the type of childhood experienced by the children who were to become its future citizens? In order to answer this question it will be necessary to investigate to what extent it can be demonstrated that the differing educational systems were influenced by the world-view, political strategy and government system of each city-state.

### 1.1 Hypothesis

In ancient Greece, just as is the case today, childhood was a time of growth and development, enculturation, education and socialisation. A child's individual experience of this stage of life was influenced by a number of factors. Foremost in the variants which differentiated this experience was the *polis* or city-state into which children were born, with its particular world-view, governmental and societal differences and the values and *mores* prevailing within that particular environment. The economic and social class to which their family belonged, the extent and type of education to which they were exposed as well as their gender were also contributing factors to the child's childhood experience. The influences of these variables would contribute to the type of adult the child was to become. The role of the state in maintaining the particular type of citizen-body it required would have a bearing on how the child was reared.

### 1.2 Terminology and parameters

It is first necessary to clarify certain terms and parameters used in this thesis. The term 'childhood' for the purpose of this study refers to the period from when a child is born and is accepted into the *oikos*, or household, through the various stages of development, until the time at which he or she is acknowledged by the *polis* of which he is a future citizen, as having reached full adulthood. In the case of Athenian children, a citizen male was deemed to have reached his legal majority in his eighteenth year, when his name was entered into his *deme* register, the register of citizens maintained by each local district, and became eligible for military training (Golden 1990: 28). However, only at the completion of this two-year period of military service was he considered to be truly a man (Beaumont 2015: 22). A Spartan youth, although he was permitted to marry from the age of twenty, continued to sleep in army barracks and was not granted full citizen rights until the age of thirty (Garland 1998:79). In ancient Greek society a girl was regarded as a minor whatever her age (Garland 1998: 57). Marriage, followed by first parturition, signalled the end of childhood and admitted the girl to the ranks of adulthood (Beaumont 2015: 21). For Athenian girls this was at approximately fifteen years of age but Spartan girls on average married a few years later (Powell 1988: 245).

Within the broader category of childhood, the sub-categories or phases of childhood referred to will rely on Beaumont (2015: 19-20) and Golden (1993: 14-15), whose terms tend to be based on Athenian sources. These are: (1) birth/newborn (*brephos*) and infancy/infant (*nepios*), the earliest phase of life, from birth until the child is able to walk and talk; (2) early childhood, from approximately three to six years of age, a time in which a child (*pais*) began

the process of enculturation into his or her society and the child was recognised as having a wider social persona; (3) from seven years of age, the age till puberty (*pais*); (4) from the onset of puberty to adulthood, when the phases differ and the terminology for male and female children diverges too. In Athens at puberty a girl's status changed into that of (5) a marriageable *parthenos*, and then (6) a bride (*nymphē*) while a boy becomes (7) an *ephebe* when he begins to attain civic and legal rights through entering the *ephebeia* (18-20). Adulthood is signalled by the assumption of full citizen rights having fulfilled his military obligations and qualified for citizenship. In Athens the end of childhood for a female and thus, full adulthood seems to be signalled by the first parturition whereon the woman is called (8) mother (*gyne*) (Golden 1993: 12 – 22; Beaumont 2015: 17-23).

Within this range of childhood categories a child would be constantly exposed to contact and interaction with parents, family members, siblings, peer groups, slaves and teachers. All of these relationships would contribute to the enculturation of the child, the process by which a society's culture is transmitted from one generation to the next (Haviland 1996: 32-37). This includes all contacts which encouraged a growing child to acquire the necessary skills for his or her future in the adult world, whether this was interaction with and imitation of parents, older siblings and other adults within the household, or through the process of play and competition with peers, homosexual relationships, initiation or participation in religious rites and ceremonies. The sum total of all of these activities formed the 'education' and socialisation of the child. The goal of such socialisation is to become integrated into the 'society-at-large', to be accepted as a member of that society and to learn its appropriate behaviours and codes (Damon 2006: 3-4).

This study will focus on the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> centuries BCE, a time of great development in the political and social realms of the two major *poleis*, Athens and Sparta, as these are the two centuries for which the most material is available for study.

While children form an important part of all levels of the social order in ancient societies, little is recorded about the lives of Athenian and Spartan children other than those of the upper classes of society. This *lacuna* is partly due to the general lack of interest in the ancient written sources about any individuals of the lower classes. What little is recorded is written by men, about men and consequently are biased towards the male child. As a result of this limitation of information, this thesis will concentrate, of necessity, on the children of the elite class within these states. The economic and social class to which their family belonged, the extent and type of education to which they were exposed as well as their gender were factors that contributed towards the child's childhood experience, and so it is acknowledged that the results of this study pertain mainly to the upper classes.

### 1.3 Overview of sources

Several types of source material have been integral to this study. The material ranges from primary texts to archaeological evidence, to scholarship across a variety of areas. These sources include those that explore the political and social contexts of the two cities, Athens and Sparta, and those that are more specifically focused on childhood and education.

Primary sources for the economic, social and political situation in Athens include the works of Aristotle, Thucydides, Herodotus and Plutarch's *Lives*, especially the life of Solon, the

lawgiver and poet who came to power at the beginning of the 6<sup>th</sup> century BCE and put in place measures that set Athens on the road to democracy (Garland 2013: 13). As a result of the very nature of Spartan society, namely her insularity, obsessive secrecy and disdain for literacy, there is a lack of a body of textual sources for that city-state. Even Sparta's laws were not committed to writing but were preserved in memory (Plut. *Lyc* 13)<sup>1</sup>. Apart from some fragments of verse by the 7<sup>th</sup> century BCE poets Alcman and Tyrtaeus, most literary sources about Sparta were written by non-Spartans and were shaped to some degree by their disapproval or admiration for Sparta (Powell 1988: 218 – 220). Golden (2003:19) confirms that suspicion, jealousy, as well as long-standing political rivalry and military conflict influenced Greek writers' accounts of life in Sparta.

According to Powell (1996: 220), Plato and Aristotle were intrigued by Spartan political arrangements which each treated with a mixture of severe criticism and deep respect. Plato is believed to have modelled his *Republic* on Sparta and Somerville (1982: 27) states that Aristotle, while approving of Spartan concern with eugenics and childcare, did not hesitate to express his disapproval of Spartan women. Thucydides, himself an Athenian, spent most of his adult life in exile, and although he claimed that this gave him the ability to view contemporary events from both sides, when dealing with Sparta he seems to depart from his normal rigorous procedures of criticism when dealing with certain subjects. Todd (2000: 5) and Powell (1996: 219) are in agreement that in these instances his accounts seem to coincide with the interests of Spartan authorities, but even he admitted the difficulties he faced when informants told divergent stories.

Xenophon's *Spartan Society* and Plutarch's *Life of Lycurgus* provide the most inclusive sources of information on the constitution of Sparta, ascribed to the legendary lawgiver Lycurgus and enshrined in the document called the Great Rhetra (Plut. *Lyc*. 6). However, the Athenian Xenophon must be treated as a potentially partisan source. Exiled from Athens for his pro-Spartan alignment, he was warmly welcomed in Sparta and even granted an estate. Although his writings omit certain failings of the Spartans, they do include much to Sparta's discredit (Powell 1996: 220). Many scholars are also wary of trusting Plutarch for details of events which took place many centuries before his time (Powell 1996: 219-220). His approach cannot be judged as altogether objective. Although he had access to many documents which are now lost, his main reliance was no doubt placed on the works which coincided with his own views. Talbert (2005: xxi-xxii), maintains that Plutarch was particularly concerned to demonstrate Lycurgus' devotion to peace and the creation of a practical and balanced constitution.

With these reservations in mind, the absences of other primary resources require that I rely on the works of these writers in this thesis. In the examination of these sources I will depend on the translations, commentaries and other secondary sources by modern scholars in order to access the reliability of the ancient writers' stances on particular issues.

In addition to literary sources, other kinds of sources also present useful information on ancient Athens and Sparta, and in particular, children and their education. Athens has provided a wealth of archaeological finds which throw light on a variety of aspects of life and

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<sup>1</sup>The translation used for Plutarch's *Lycurgus* is Talbert, R. (2005) *Plutarch on Sparta*.

material culture. In particular, many Attic vase-paintings depict children, their dress, their toys and games and their education. *Stelai* and funerary memorials also give further information on the role of children within the family. The works edited by Neils and Oakley, *Coming of age in ancient Greece: images of childhood from the classical past* (2003), Cohen and Rutter, *Constructions of childhood in ancient Greece and Italy* (2007) as well as Beaumont's *Childhood in ancient Athens: iconography and social history* (2015) will be relied upon for interpretation of such sources.

Archaeological remains from Sparta are extremely limited. The only exception is the large number of votive offerings found at the site of the temple of Artemis Orthia which records witness to her cult in religious and civic life (Pomeroy 2002: 162-3). Lavish grave offerings were forbidden and only men who perished in battle and women who died in childbirth were entitled to have their names inscribed on tombstones (Plut. *Lyc.* 27). This means that archaeology of Sparta is less useful in attempting to reconstruct the lives of ancient Spartan girls or boys, than it is when it comes to Athenian childhoods.

The very 'otherness' of Spartan culture has continued to intrigue scholars for millennia. Fortunately, this has resulted in an abundance of secondary sources as scholars, archaeologists and anthropologists continue to engage in research to unravel the 'Spartan Myth'. Cartledge has produced a number of publications (1977, 1978, 1993, 1998, 2003, 2004) devoted to Sparta which will be relied upon for relevant information. Although the majority of these works concentrate on the militaristic aspect of Sparta and are heavily weighted towards the male sector of society, the female aspects are adequately compensated for in the works of Pomeroy (1994, 1995, 1998, 2002), Katz (1998) and Kennel (2010). Powell's *Athens and Sparta: constructing Greek political and social history from 478 BCE* (1996) offers further information as well as expansion of, or alternative interpretations, of accepted beliefs. Detailed information regarding the education and socialisation of boys at Sparta is given by Combiano (1995), Todd (2000) and Shapiro (2003), amongst others. I will use these sources, together with other relevant literature, to investigate the Spartan attitude regarding children and the type of adult the state intended to produce. Knotterus and Berry's journal article entitled *Spartan society: structural ritualization in an ancient social system* (2002) has proved to be a particularly cogent source.

Vernant edited a particularly useful publication, *The Greeks* (1995), which included articles by Mossé, *The economist* (1995) and Combiano *Becoming an adult* (1995). These articles, together with Garland (1998, 2013), provide relevant and useful details regarding the social, political and economic systems of Athens and Sparta. Neils, in *Children and Greek religion* (2003) provides particularly useful insights into religious practices in the two states. Details regarding spatial divisions of the *oikos* and the construction of the building which constituted the family home, will be drawn from Nevet's publications *House and society in the ancient Greek world* (2001) and *Domestic space in classical antiquity* (2010).

The most useful secondary sources from which I have derived detailed information on the child and his or her role within the Athenian family and ultimately within the *polis*, are Golden's *Children and childhood in classical Athens* (1993) and Beaumont's *Childhood in ancient Athens: iconography and social history* (2015). Golden gives a comprehensive account of the child's role within the family and the community, with particular emphasis on

socialisation and interaction between the child and parents, peers, family members and others. Beaumont discusses in detail the various theories that scholars have proposed in relationship to the child and his or her development and education in ancient Athens. Her alignment with a particular perspective is clearly illustrated with relevant material evidence to support her reasoning. The details provided by these publications will be used in conjunction with selected information from other literary works to supplement my understanding of the education and socialisation of children in the two city-states.

#### 1.4 Thesis outline

The thesis is arranged in the following manner. After Chapter 1, which consists of the introduction to the thesis, Chapter 2 focuses on everyday life in the two *poleis* through the economic, political and social organization of the city-states of Athens and Sparta during the archaic and classical periods. Contrasting the prevailing situation existing within the two *poleis*, and the historical background behind these attitudes, will help to understand the reasons for the open and progressive attitude of Athenian society and attempt to account for the conservative, insular and security-obsessed mind-set of the Spartans. This understanding will provide the key to the characteristics and attributes which each state required of its citizens, and is therefore important in order to create an idea of the broader context that framed the education and upbringing of the child. This chapter includes a comprehensive list of the qualities each *polis* expected of its 'ideal' citizen, and these attributes and the methods of attaining them will be traced throughout the following chapters.

Chapter 3 concentrates on the *oikos*, the basic family unit and where the journey of childhood begins. This includes examination and comparison of the following: the home, family and the role of the *kyrios*. Chapter 4 focuses on early childhood: the infant from birth to six years of age in Athens and Sparta. This chapter includes the birth of the child, the possibility of exposure and the process of acceptance of the child into the family and the wider social community. It also examines the socialising role of the following: play and toys, interaction with parents, siblings and other adult members of the household, gender differentiation, as well as the various rituals associated with the acceptance of the child into the family and community.

Chapter 5 concentrates on boys in Athens and *paideia*; which was the process of education and upbringing designed to mould the character of the boys, the training of physical and mental faculties in order to produce the ideal of the 'beautiful and good' (*kalokagathos*). *Paideia* not only incorporated the teaching of practical subjects, such as literacy and numeracy, physical education, rhetoric and *musike*, but also combined maximum cultural development with a focus on socialisation, as a means to develop a broad enlightened outlook and to produce the ideal member of the *polis*. This chapter includes examination of the types of formal schooling, physical training and competition, interaction with peers and others, homoerotic relationships, rituals marking rites of passage, military training and marriage. Focus is placed on examination of the role of the state in each aspect of the child's progress to adulthood.

Chapter 6 examines the education of boys in Sparta. This includes a discussion on the *agôgê*, the *krypteia* and military service as well as the role of socialisation as an aspect in the

formation of the character of the boys. The role of the *sussitia* is assessed as a source of entertainment, education and a means of social unity and collective orientation. Homoerotic relationships are examined from a pedagogic dimension. The prevailing security situation in Sparta is considered when discussing the role played by the state in the rigid militaristic form of education experienced by boys.

The manner in which each *polis* treated their female children is examined in Chapter 7, with a comparison of the childhood experience of girls in the respective city-states. The final discussion of the differing journeys through childhood is the subject of Chapter 8, together with an assessment of the individual role played by the two states in charting these journeys.



## Chapter 2

### Athens and Sparta: Political and social frameworks

The social, political, economic and religious systems in ancient Greece are extremely complex fields of study, which exceed the scope of this thesis. However, in order to understand how these systems had an impact on the upbringing and character-formation of children, who were to become the future citizens in Athens and Sparta, it is necessary to present a brief overview of these aspects of *polis* life and the broader environment. In other words, these areas are important in so much as they contribute to the socialisation of citizen children. The chapter will also look at the make-up of Athenian and Spartan societies and culminate in descriptions of the ‘ideal adult citizen’, both male and female, in each *polis*, gleaned from readings of ancient sources and the scholarship. The resultant lists will serve as useful criteria against which the upbringing of children – their education in a broad sense – will be measured in terms of the goal of ‘producing/constructing’ future ideal citizens.

Ancient Greek *poleis*, though united by a common language, social and religious structures, were autonomous political units with their own laws, constitution and specific pantheon of gods. There was, before the age of Alexander, no form of central control and inhabitants of these *poleis* observed little sense of greater unity; being ‘Athenian’, ‘Spartan’ or ‘Theban’, etc. first, and only ‘Greek’ occasionally (Garland 2013: 9–10). Temporary and selective alliances and joint strategies only came about when faced by an external threat or moment of crisis, such as the Persian invasion in 480 BCE (Garland 2013: 10). Athens belonged to the Ionian group of states and claimed autochthony, being, according to this claim, the original inhabitants born of the soil of Attica, whereas Spartans were part of the Dorian group of states (Powell 1988: 10). Sparta itself claimed to be the home of Helen of Troy and her deserted husband, Menelaus, the brother of Agamemnon, the Achaean High King of Mycenae (Todd 2000: 13).

Athens and Sparta were the most powerful of the Greek city-states in the Archaic and Classical periods, but, as is well known, they were very different in their outlook and organisation. For example, Garland (2013: 118) describes 6<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> century BCE Athens as a maritime economy, a progressive and open society which participated in foreign trade and was generally welcoming to strangers, especially if they had the skills necessary to benefit the state. Conversely, says Cartledge (2002: 34), land-based Sparta of the same era was conservative, secretive, austere and insular, dismissive of innovation and obsessed with secrecy.

In order to assess the impact of the world-view, political strategy and government system of each city-state on the lives of their children and educational system, it is necessary to examine some of the differing contextual and environmental factors, as well as the political and social composition of each society.

## 2.1 Climate and environment

The climate and environment of Greece had a profound effect upon the inhabitants, particularly their economic and social organization as well as their way of life (Alcock 1998: 13). The climate of Greece is harsh, characterised by hot, dry summers, rainfall which is unpredictable and rivers which may be raging torrents in the winter but which dry up in summer. The soil is generally poor and stony and very little of the countryside is capable of supporting agriculture (Garland 1998: 21). The physical environments of Athens and Sparta contributed to their agricultural efforts, as well as to commercial endeavours.

### 2.1.1 Agriculture and commercial activity in Athens

The soil of Attica was thin and unable to support wheat, but was ideal for growing olives and vines. Athens therefore developed trading links to provide the markets for her olives, olive oil and wine and to acquire the necessary wheat needed to feed her population. Although Athens took little part in the great colonisation movement of the period 730 to 580 BCE, which saw Greek cities established along the coastlands of the Mediterranean and the Black Sea, contact with these colonies created new markets for her commodities as well as developing new tastes for imported goods at home (Garland 2013: 230-231). Although agriculture remained the basis of the Athenian economy, the growth of trade ensured that Athenians enjoyed a much more varied diet and lifestyle than other Greeks (Garland 2013: 231). As commercial activity developed, Athens experienced an increase in the number of foreign immigrants (*metics*) who became an important class of craftsmen and manual workers who undertook the banausic tasks which the Athenians themselves held in such low esteem (Burckhardt 1998: 190-193).

### 2.1.2 Agriculture in Sparta

In the 9<sup>th</sup> century BCE Sparta began to enlarge her landholding by expansion into her surrounding territory, firstly to the north and later to the south. Following the second Messenian war, late in the 7<sup>th</sup> century BCE, Sparta gained control of some of the most fertile land in the Peloponnese and by enslaving the original inhabitants and reducing them to the level of *helots* or slaves, obtained a ready-made, dependent labour force (Kennell 2010: 40-43). Sparta was then in control of the largest city-state territory in the entire Greek world, estimated as 8,000 square kilometres, agriculturally fertile, rich in minerals and securely enclosed (Cartledge 2003: 25). The land consisted of two large riverine plains, the Helos and the Spartan, divided by one of the highest mountain ranges in Greece with large natural deposits of iron ore, and the alluvial valley of the perennial Eurotas river (Cartledge 2003: 25-26). Although by this territorial expansion the Spartans gained prosperity and agricultural self-sufficiency, their treatment of the *helots* was to have crucial consequences for the future of the city-state. The presence of a resentful and frequently insurgent, subject population which out-numbered and surrounded them, yet on whom they were dependent, left the Spartans constantly fearful and anticipating revolt, which was reflected in their increasing isolation and influenced all aspects of their foreign and domestic policies (Powell 1996: 98).

Sparta was a very secretive society, suspicious of strangers and non-Spartans were subject to periodic expulsion (Powell 1988: 214).

## 2.2 Religion

Religion was at the centre of daily life in ancient Greek city-states and a shared religion was a hallmark of Greek identity. Religion was not regarded as distinct or separate from all other aspects of daily life (Garland 2013: 207). The inclusive and polytheistic nature of Greek religion meant that there was a god for all aspects of life, including sickness, health, economic prosperity, fertility of crops, etc. Gods were everywhere and each community was free to choose which gods to worship (Garland 2013: 209). The focus of mainstream Greek religion was not on devotion or belief but on action. It offered little guidance as to behaviour and no explanation for the ordering of the universe or the afterlife, the emphasis being on advancement in this life (Garland 2013: 209). However, some so-called ‘mystery cults’ offered the condition of *olbia* (blessedness) in the hereafter to those who had been initiated into their secret rites. The Eleusinian Mysteries, which were also open to children, were the most celebrated of these mystery cults (Garland 2013: 202). Religion and politics were intrinsically linked; religion focused on relations between men and the gods and was expressed in collective public rituals, especially festivals (Cartledge 1993: 153). Partaking in athletic, musical, dancing and equestrian competitions, which often formed part of these festivals, was a way for Greek youths to honour the gods (Neils 2003: 153) and religion then provided an important framework for the socialisation of children.

### 2.2.1 Religion in Athens

Athenian religion offered a wide choice of deities from which individuals were free to choose on the basis of a number of criteria: family tradition, social status, personal preference and access to a deity’s shrine (Garland 2013: 225). The Athenian household was a religious unit and the head of the household was the priest who made the offerings to the gods. The fire of the hearth was sacred to Hestia, goddess of the hearth, and was the site of the initiation of all new members of the *oikos*, whether new-born infants, brides or slaves (Garland 2013: 142). An Athenian child’s transition from one life stage to another was usually marked by sacrifices and libations dedicated to the family’s particular deity. Participation in family cult activities confirmed a child’s acceptance as a member of that family (Beaumont 2015: 76).

Religion had a cohesive effect on Greek society and in Athens major state festivals were occasions when virtually the entire citizen body came together to honour the gods and provided the main avenue for children to be introduced to the life of the *polis* (Garland 2013: 226; Golden 1993: 41). Athena, the goddess of wisdom, learning and the arts, was the patron of Athens and the main festival in her honour, the Panathenaia, was held in July. This involved a grand procession in which the whole body of inhabitants in Athens participated, including freeborn citizens, women, children, *metics* and slaves, and the statue of Athena was clothed in a new *peplos* believed to be woven by young girls known as *arrephoroi* (Neils 2003:151). Other important festivals were the Anthesteria, the spring festival of Dionysus which was held to celebrate the new wine and the autumn festival of Apatouria, when all male citizens convened in their *phratries* and where infants were introduced to their father’s *phratry* (Neils 2003: 144–145). This was an important step in the development of a child’s

identity. The child's legitimacy, on which his future citizenship depended, was attested to by his father (Beaumont 2015: 68). Attendance at such festivals introduced a child to a wider community beyond the *oikos*. All-women festivals included the Thesmophoria, in the honour of Demeter goddess of agriculture; Haloa, celebrated in January; and Skira, a threshing festival celebrated in July (Katz 1998: 105).

Rituals in honour of a particular deity would involve prayer, sacrifice, pouring a libation or presenting a votive offering (Garland 2013: 210). According to Neils (2003: 158) children, because of their purity and innocence, frequently served as assistants in sacrificial and divinatory rites, as well as extispicy, the foretelling of the future by the examination of the liver of a sacrificial animal. The different rites of passage on the road to adulthood for young boys and girls, which related to their maturation process and important stages of their physical growth and socialization, were celebrated at various religious festivals throughout the year (Neils 2003: 140).

### 2.2.2 Religion in Sparta

The Spartans had a reputation for being exceptionally pious and monumentally superstitious (Cartledge 2004:176). The supposed reason that they failed to arrive for the battle of Marathon in 490 BC was because the phase of the moon was deemed inauspicious (Hdt. 6.106)<sup>2</sup>, and the reason they did not supply a full force to Thermopylae in 480 BCE was because they were celebrating the Carneia festival (Scullion 2007:49; Cartledge 2002: 176). A major Spartan festival was the Hyacinthia and it was the celebration of this event which the Spartans used as an excuse for delaying military assistance to Athens and her allies against Mardonius, in 479 BCE (Kennell 2010: 66). The Spartans relied strongly on military divinations, where the entrails of sacrificed animals were studied to foretell whether a particular military action should be delayed, aborted or avoided (Cartledge 2002: 176). The two Spartan kings occupied the chief priesthoods of Zeus Lacedaemonius and Zeus Uranius and had the sole right to perform public sacrifices at home and all military sacrifices to Zeus Agetor before the army left home and to Zeus and Athena when the army reached the frontier (Kennell 2010: 96). Sparta did not celebrate any all-women festivals of which we are aware, which were usually thought to be connected with fecundity, and the reason for this was believed to be the fact that the fertility of crops and animals, as well as the fruit of the grapevine, was in the hands of *helots* (Cartledge 2002: 177).

## 2.3 Government and political constitutions

Each Greek *polis* was an autonomous political unit and in the 6<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> centuries BCE, the political constitutions ranged from monarchies and oligarchies on the one hand, to a more democratic system, as in the case of the Athenian *polis*.

### 2.3.1 The government of Athens

Little is known of Athenian political history until the beginning of the 6<sup>th</sup> century BCE when, in 594 BCE, according to Plutarch, Athens appointed the poet Solon as archon and authorised him to draw up a new law code to replace the existing rudimentary code attributed to Draco

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<sup>2</sup> The translation used for Herodotus' *Histories* is de Selincourt, A. (1963) *Herodotus: the Histories*.

(Plut. *Sol.* 17)<sup>3</sup>. This was a time of economic hardship, aggravated by drought and famine and many Athenians had become so indebted that they had no other security to offer other than themselves and their families. Many lost their status as free men and had become little more than serfs and some parents were even forced to sell their children into slavery (Plut. *Sol.*13). Notable amongst his many reforms, Plutarch tells us that Solon cancelled all debts and legislated that no Athenian could reduce an insolvent citizen or his family to slavery for default on a debt (Plut. *Sol.*15). He also forbade the export of corn and agricultural commodities other than olive oil, of which Athens had a surplus (Plut. *Sol.* 24). Plutarch asserts that Solon recognised the limit of agricultural production possibilities of the Attic countryside and consequently he encouraged the development of manufacturing industries. He also introduced a law that no son was obliged to support his father in old age if he had failed to arrange for his son to learn a trade (Plut. *Sol.* 22). Solon modified the Athenian system of weights and measures and altered the Athenian coinage to include a new smaller silver drachma which greatly improved trade between Athens and other commercial centres of the time (Mossé 1995: 41). His laws confirmed the right of a man to make a will and if he had no legitimate male heirs, to dispose of his estate as he wished.

Plutarch maintains that Solon established the Council of the Areopagus, although he does concede that this assertion is open to doubt (Plut. *Sol.* 19). The Council was composed of men who had held the position of archon and he also established a second chamber consisting of 400 men; 100 from each of the four tribes, whose function was to deliberate on matters to be brought before the Assembly (Plut. *Sol.* 19). Plutarch also states that one of the most unexpected of Solon's reforms called for the disenfranchisement of any man who remained uncommitted in the case of a revolution. In this way he reinforced the expectation that all citizens should exercise their civic duty and take part in the governmental system (Plut. *Sol.*20).

The reforms of Solon had far-reaching effects on distribution and exercise of political power and the definition of Athenian citizenship (Cartledge 1998: 62). Despite these reforms, the nobles of Athens continued to assert their right to leadership, but tyrants played an important part in the progress towards democracy by serving as a catalyst in the transition from aristocratic to popular rule (Garland 1998: 8–9). In 507 BCE, the politician Cleisthenes undermined the grip of the powerful aristocratic kin groups by revising the system of political identity in assigning the 139 *demes*, the local district to which each citizen had to belong, to one of ten new tribes. In this way the influence of the aristocrats was diluted and they could no longer manipulate or intimidate ordinary citizens and these reforms made the Athenian political system more representative (Burckhardt 1998: 40). In the late 460s BCE Athens took the final steps along the road to a participatory democracy. The *demos*, or citizens, exercised their authority through the *ekklésia*, the voting assembly which met four times a month on the Pnyx, where each citizen exercised one vote and had the right to speak on any subject (*egoria*) (Garland 2013: 21). Athenian citizens valued their individualism and their participation in the government of their *polis* promoted pride in their system of democracy.

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<sup>3</sup> The translation used for Plutarch's *Solon* is Scott-Kilvert, I. (1975) *The rise and fall of Athens; nine Greek lives by Plutarch*.

### 2.3.2 The government of Sparta

The Spartans were unique amongst the Greek states in that they not only retained the monarchy as their system of government, but that this was a diarchy or double kingship. The hereditary kings were each descended from the two ruling houses, the Agiad and the Eurypontid lines (Talbert 2005: xxiv). Xenophon maintains that as a sign of their special status, the kings enjoyed a number of honours and privileges (Xen. *Const. Lac.* 15)<sup>4</sup>. However, these were not god-given rights but were granted by the Spartans themselves as part of a monthly contractual oath sworn by the kings and the five annually elected *ephors*. With this oath the kings pledged to reign in accordance with the city's laws and the *ephors* agreed to preserve the kingship as long as they adhered to this promise (Xen. *Const. Lac.* 15).

The Spartans attributed the foundation of their constitution to the reforms of Lycurgus, an enigmatic and possibly mythical poet and law-giver (Talbert 2005: xx). Although this new constitution was believed to have been introduced around 700 BCE, the bulk of the legislation most probably evolved over many years (Garland 2013: 15). According to Plutarch, the first and most significant amongst Lycurgus' innovations was the establishment of the *Gerousia*, a council of Elders, consisting of the two kings and twenty-eight exemplary citizens over the age of sixty who had completed their period of eligibility for military service and who were elected by the *ekklesia* (assembly) (Plut. *Lyc.* 5-7). Plutarch credits the *Gerousia* as striking a balance by siding with the kings in resisting democracy and in turn reinforcing the people against the development of tyranny (Plut. *Lyc.* 5). The *Gerousia* acted as Sparta's Supreme Court and ultimate arbiter of what was and what was not lawful. So great was its power that it could overturn a decision of the *damos* (Assembly), to which all adult male citizens belonged (Cartledge 2013: 61-62).

Lycurgus was credited with altering the psychological make-up of the citizens, encouraging them to have no desire for a private life and to devote themselves entirely to Sparta (Cartledge 2002: 32). The majority of his reforms were designed to reduce inequality and promote egalitarianism. As one way of doing this, Lycurgus is reputed to have redistributed the land by dividing it into lots which were then allocated to all male citizens (Plut. *Lyc.* 8). With the same egalitarian aim in mind, he reformed the monetary system and made iron spits the only form of currency, a process which had far-reaching effects (Plut. *Lyc.* 9). The sheer weight and bulk of this iron money made it impossible for anyone to amass great wealth and as this currency was worthless outside of Sparta, it also put a stop to foreign trade and the possibility of acquiring imported luxury goods (Plut. *Lyc.* 9). This served to further isolate Sparta from the outside world and according to Plutarch, even her citizens were not permitted to travel freely for fear that they would acquire foreign habits and copy lifestyles different from those at Sparta (Plu. *Lyc.* 27; Xen. *Const. Lac.* 14).

Lycurgus also reputedly introduced the practice of compulsory dining in common messes (*syssitia*), on a frugal diet (Xen. *Const. Lac.* 5). This measure was intended to eliminate extravagant consumption and minimise the influence of the individual family (Plut. *Lyc.* 10). Failure to gain election to one of these messes was tantamount to being excluded from the

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<sup>4</sup> The translation used for Xenophon's *Constitution of the Lacedaemonians* is Talbert, R.J.A. (2005) *Plutarch: on Sparta*.

citizen body, and possibly even the army (Cartledge 2003: 65). Xenophon records that young boys were encouraged to attend these messes in order to benefit from the experience and wisdom of their elders (Xen. *Const. Lac.* 5). *Helots* were brought into the messes and forced to consume quantities of un-watered wine and then perform vulgar and ridiculous songs and dances (Pomeroy 1998: 49). Young Spartans were thus taught the value of drinking in moderation after viewing the spectacle of drunken *helots* (Pomeroy 1998: 49). Every member of the mess was obliged to contribute a fixed amount of foodstuff to his mess and failure to do so could result in the loss of citizenship (Plut. *Lyc.* 12).

Plutarch records that Lycurgus regarded the upbringing of children as the greatest and noblest of responsibilities and his reforms paid particular attention to matters related to the upbringing and education of both boys and girls (Plut. *Lyc.* 14). Lycurgus is credited with introducing the compulsory educational, training and socialisation system known as the *agôgê*, to which all Spartan boys were subjected (Plut. *Lyc.* 29). He is also said to have introduced compulsory education for girls, an innovation unique in ancient Greece as far as we know (Cartledge 2013: 63). Spartan men referred to themselves as *homoioi* (equals), as they had all gone through the *agôgê* system, whose important function was to instil collective values (Todd 2000: 27). Although an admirable goal, the citizen body was not equal; there would always be the ‘haves’ and the ‘have nots’. Despite claims to homogeneity, richer Spartans tended to be more dominant politically and by being elected in greater numbers to the *Gerousia* (Fisher 1998: 84). The supposed uniformity of the messes sought to mask these real social and economic imbalances (Fisher 1998: 211).

Plutarch tells us that a *rhetra* prohibited the laws of Lycurgus from being written down as Lycurgus felt that Spartans should not be constrained by written laws but should depend on education and character training. The laws themselves could be altered as required, subject to the approval of experts (Plut. *Lyc.* 13). Despite the compulsory educational system, Spartans were taught to read and write no more than was necessary, therefore Sparta remained a mainly oral society and literacy was confined to an elite few who would have been able to read any written laws (Plut. *Lyc.* 16).

The laws of Lycurgus described the ‘ideal’ system of government and were not necessarily adhered to in every respect, even Xenophon admits that this was the case, but Plutarch tells us that Sparta was at the forefront of good order throughout Greece for 500 years thanks to the use of these laws (Plut. *Lyc.* 29; Xen. *Const. Lac.* 14).

#### 2.4 Political and social structure of society: Athens

Both Athenian and Spartan society were comprised of a number of groups of people, with differing political and social statuses. These included non-free individuals (slaves), resident foreigners and male and female citizens. It is important to consider the non-free and resident alien populations in the respective cities alongside the citizens, because it was not least of all through these important labour forces that citizens could free themselves in order to engage in other pursuits, such as war and politics.

### 2.4.1 Non-citizens

It was mainly the work done by the non-citizens of Athens that relieved the upper-class citizens of the need to engage in physical labour which they apparently despised and enabled them to enjoy the leisure which they preferred (Fisher 1998: 211). The multi-ethnic nature of the non-citizen group produced the vibrant and cosmopolitan ambience in the *polis*, which expanded the nature of the environment to which young Athenians would have been exposed. The way in which these non-citizens impacted on the lives of Athenian children varied in accordance with the individual role each played in the life of the *polis*.

#### *Metics*

As her commercial importance increased, Athens drew an increasing number of resident aliens, both Greeks and non-Greeks, attracted in the main by the benefits afforded by mercantile enterprises. Known as *metics*, they were obliged to have an Athenian sponsor and to be registered in a *deme*, as well as paying an annual poll tax (*metoikion*) (Finley 1981: 90). They were liable for military service, attended dramatic performances and participated in the religious ceremonies organized by the state, including the procession that formed part of the Panatheniac festival, which indicated that they were integrated to a certain degree into the life of the community (Garland 2013: 117–119). The role played by *metics* in the functioning of the commercial and manufacturing activities permitted upper-class Athenians the degree of leisure which enabled them to spend time in the gymnasium and participate in the democratic processes of the state.

#### *Slaves*

Together with the *metics*, slaves constituted a skilled labour force in Athens. Landowners preferred slaves as they had the great advantage over the free worker in that they were not subject to military conscription (Brown 1965: 13). Domestic slaves served in every capacity, including that of washerwoman, cook, caregiver, handyman, gardener, porter, cleaner, messenger and nurse (Garland 2013: 111). Importantly, a trusted male slave usually filled the position of *paidagogos*, a care-taker who supervised a male child's behaviour, education and safety (Beaumont 2012: 20). Slaves had no legal rights but were the property of their owner and were counted amongst his goods and chattels. Although they could sometimes buy their freedom, they then became *metics* and not citizens (Sowerby 2009: 87–89). Athenian children would have come into close contact with a number of slaves both within and outside the *oikos*, and it has been shown that close relationships regularly developed between children and their slave carers (Golden 1993: 147-148).

### 2.4.2 Citizens of Athens

Just as in other aspects of civic practice and ideology, Athens and Sparta had different qualifications for citizenship. There were differences too between male and female citizens in both *poleis*: in terms of their legal qualifications (ages of attaining citizen status, etc.) but also in perceptions of their ideal nature.

### *Athenian male citizens*

Before the 5<sup>th</sup> century BCE, it seems that male citizens were predominantly referred to as *astoi*, though the term *politai* became the more common word in Classical Athens, as well as the more specific *Athenaioi* (Blok 2017: 162-163). Prior to the enactment of citizenship laws proposed by Perikles in 451/0 BCE, all freeborn adult Athenian males, duly registered with the *deme* and their names recorded in the *politeuma*, the official record of the citizen body, required only single descent on their father's side to qualify for Athenian citizenship (Cartledge 1993: 72). After Perikles' citizenship laws were enacted, a prospective citizen had to be the legitimate offspring of parents who were both Athenian citizens. The right of citizenship went along with the obligation to serve in the army. Having successfully passed his 'scrutiny', a physical inspection before the *deme*, the council and body of jurors, a young man was admitted to the Assembly at age 18, or 20 but was not allowed to serve as councillor or magistrate until the age of 30 (Davidson 2000: 142-3). Although from the age of 18 a man could bring an action at law or defend himself in court, he was not eligible to serve as a juryman before the age of 30 (Katz 1998: 109).

Along with the legal requirements for citizenship, there were also societal and ideological expectations for a male adult citizen. The ideal of *kaloskagathos*, literally a beautiful and good man, sound in body and mind was one which involved both the educational/intellectual and physical realms (Plat. *Prot.* 326A<sup>5</sup>; Neils & Oakley 2003: 244). This meant that a man should be educated in reading and writing, knowing by heart works of the famous poets, which provided unequalled reference points for models of behaviour and values (Plat. *Prot.* 326A; Combiano 1995: 105). An Athenian male citizen was also expected to be able to express himself with flair and eloquence whether in the *ekklesia* or the *dikasteria*, the popular law courts (Hall 2014: 139). Participation in political arenas of the democratic state was both an ideal and an expectation. Citizens were ideally modest and ethical, proud of their individual freedom and in the democratic system itself (Hall 2014: 129; Dobson 1963: 42). Hall (2014: 21) and Combiano (1995: 106) also describe how the Athenian citizen should also be out-going and open to new ideas, but competitive (agonistic) in all spheres, with a passion for excellence (*arête*). This competitive aspect also applied in the area of physical fitness and prowess, and in turn contributed to the overall ideal of *kaloskagathos*. Along with these attributes he should also display piety and participate regularly in religious festivals (Neils 2003: 153). He was expected too to display respect and care for his parents and for his family in general (Katz 1998: 136).

### *Athenian female citizens*

Although they may have had citizen status, Athenian women had no political or legal persona (Garland 2013: 71). Blok (2017: 164) states that while the collective terms *astoi* and *politai* also included women, or rather did not exclude them, the term *astai* could more specifically be used to describe citizen women of Athens. The singular *aste* was, however, used more frequently than the collective *astai* (Blok 2017: 169). In a patriarchal society such as Athens, women were subservient to men and although they qualified for citizenship status, they had none of the political rights of citizenship afforded to male citizens (Garland 2013: 82;

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<sup>5</sup> The translation used for Plato's *Protagoras* is Lamb, W.R.M. (1977) *Plato II: Protagoras*.

Pomeroy 1998: 23; 1994: 62, 74, 98). Their main duty to the state required them to be the wife of a citizen and the mother of his sons to ensure that his household did not die out (Garland 2013: 76; Pomeroy 1994: 60). The survival of each *oikos* in turn ensured the survival of the Athenian *polis*. The most important role she could perform as a citizen then, was to be a wife and mother (Garland 2013: 76; Sowerby 2009: 84; Pomeroy 1994: 62).

The ideal for upper class women in Athens was that, wherever practical, they be confined to the home with few outlets for social activities other than religious festivals (of which there were a considerable number), family funerals and maintenance of the family graves (Garland 2013: 80). The 'ideal' Athenian woman, often epitomised in Thucydides' famous version of the funeral oration delivered by Perikles, was expected to display qualities of modesty, self-awareness (*sophrosyne*) and subservience (Thuc. II. 45<sup>6</sup>; Xen. *Ec.* 7. 14<sup>7</sup>; Pomeroy 1994: 98). Accordingly, she was expected to speak as little as possible, especially to and in front of men (Thuc. II.45; Aristot. *Pol.* 1260 25<sup>8</sup>; Plut. *Conjug.* 32<sup>9</sup>; Xen. *Oec.* 7 5). She should be skilled in weaving, wool-working and the domestic arts, instruction for which she was to acquire from her mother or other female family members within the confines of the *oikos* (Beaumont 2015: 104, 122). She was also expected to display religious piety in worshipping the gods as well as playing a major role in mourning the dead (Foley 2003: 131).

## 2.5 Political and social structure of society: Sparta

The citizens and non-citizens of Sparta fall into similar categories as Athens: free individuals which include citizens as well as the *perioikoi* (resident aliens), and the slave population which was largely made up of the *helots*, the enslaved residents of the conquered territories of Laconia and Messenia.

### 2.5.1 Non-citizens of Sparta

The presence of the non-citizens in Sparta relieved Spartan men of the need to engage in agricultural labour or undertake any form of trade or manufacturing, leaving them free to concentrate their efforts on martial training (Katz 1998: 128; Cartledge 2003: 66-68). The inadvisability of indulging in strong drink would have been reinforced by seeing the behaviour of *helots* who were occasionally forced to do so, and the constant threat of a *helot* uprising would have justified the need to remain physically fit at all times (Kennell 2010: 84). Xenophon says that Spartan girls were relieved of the need to spend as much time in spinning and weaving as their Athenian counterparts, because of the number of slaves available to fulfil this role (Xen. *Const. Lac.* 1).

#### *Helots*

Cartledge (2002: 29) describes the *helots* as 'the single most important human fact about ancient Sparta', because *helots* provided them with the economic basis of their unique lifestyle. Unlike slaves in Athens who had very disparate origins, *helots* were racially homogeneous, being born and bred in the conquered lands (Garland 2013: 131). As farmers,

<sup>6</sup> The translation used for Thucydides' *Histories* is Smith, C.F. (1969) *History of the Peloponnesian war: Book II*.

<sup>7</sup> The translation used for Xenophon's *Economics* is Marchant, E.C. (1968) *Xenophon: Book IV Oeconomicus*.

<sup>8</sup> The translation used for Aristotle's *Politics* is Lord, C. (1985) *Aristotle: the Politics*.

<sup>9</sup> The translation used for Plutarch's *Conjugalia Praecepta* is Warner R. (1971) *Plutarch: Moral essays*.

*helots* produced the bulk of the wealth and agricultural produce upon which the rest of the free population depended (Powell 1996: 98). *Helots* were the property of the Spartan state which assigned them to individual citizens, they had no political or legal rights and could be executed without trial, their only security being that they could not be sold beyond the borders of Laconian lands (Kennell 2010: 81-82). Spartans engaged in systematic humiliation and degradation of *helots*, by regular floggings, enforced drunkenness and obliging them to wear animal skin clothing (Kennell 2010: 83). Incoming *ephors* declared war on the *helots* as a precaution against ritual pollution should anyone kill a *helot* during the course of the year (Kennell 2010: 83-84). This ill-treatment and repression would surely have added to the bitterness and resentment felt by the *helots* and encouraged thoughts of revolt, the very action which Spartans feared the most. Spartan vulnerability against the numerically superior *helots* dictated all aspects of their lives and their response to this threat was to turn themselves into a permanently armed camp (Cartledge 2002: 29).

### *Perioikoi*

Within the Spartan state was a further distinct population group apart from the *helots*, this was the *perioikoi* (dwellers around), who lived in scattered communities throughout Laconia and Messenia. Although freeborn, *perioikoi* lacked citizen rights, their hoplites served in the Spartan army and, unlike the *helots*, they were considered loyal to Sparta (Katz 1998: 128). Their cities were dependent *poleis*, allowed a measure of autonomy, but their foreign policy was controlled by Sparta (Kennell 2010: 88–89). As Spartans were forbidden to engage in any trade or craft activities, *perioikoi* filled the gap as traders and craftsmen. It was the *perioikoi* who are believed to have produced the pottery and the high-quality bronze figurines which were exported throughout the 8<sup>th</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> centuries BCE and who produced the arms and armour essential to the Spartans (Cartledge 2002: 76).

### 2.5.2 Citizens of Sparta

Legitimacy was stressed far less in Sparta than in Athens. Spartan law allowed for a woman to be impregnated by a man other than her husband, with the latter's agreement (Pomeroy 2002: 41). According to Xenophon, many such arrangements developed (Xen. *Const. Lac.* 1). Given the strict insularity of Sparta and the consequent absence of foreigners, both parents would most likely be Spartan citizens, if not married to each other. The emphasis was placed on the military needs of the state for hoplite warriors and less on whether they were legitimate or not.

### *Male citizens: homoioi*

Qualification for citizenship for a Spartan man required the successful transition through the *agôgê* system of education, election to one of the common messes, completion of his military training and acceptance into the army as a hoplite soldier. This would take him to the age of 30 when he qualified for full citizenship and he became one of the *homoioi* ('equals') (Garland 2013: 129).

Only at the age of 20 did a Spartan become a candidate for election to one of the common messes (*phiditia*, *sussitia*). Election was competitive and a single 'no' vote resulted in a candidate being rejected (Plut. *Lyc.* 12). Failure to gain election to any mess at all was equal

to being excluded from the citizen body and, perhaps, also the army. Attendance at the mess for the main meal of the day was compulsory and absence could only be excused if the member was engaged in performing a ritual sacrifice or away on a hunting trip. A man's citizenship depended on his continued ability to maintain his mess membership by contributing a fixed amount of natural produce and Spartans could be deprived of citizens' rights for being unable, for reasons of financial hardship, to pay their mess contribution (Cartledge 2003: 70–72). Demonstrating cowardice was also a reason for disqualification, as the obligation of a Spartan citizen was to bear arms, and if necessary, to die for his country and cowardice negated this duty (Dillon & Garland 2013: 25–26). The punishment meted out to anyone convicted of cowardice was of such severity that a Spartan was believed to consider death to be preferable to life with dishonour (Powell 1996: 230).

The literary evidence, though problematic for its non-Spartan perspective, highlights several key qualities that were expected of an 'ideal' Spartan male citizen. Loyalty to the state and to his compatriots was an important attribute expected of a Spartan citizen. He was expected to put the state first in all undertakings, before obligations to family, friends or wives (Todd 2000: 38; Barrow 2001: 24). Discipline, obedience and courage were concomitant qualities expected of all Spartan citizens (Combiano 1995: 96; Powell 1996: 231), as well as an obligation to maintain physical fitness throughout his life (Davidson 2002: 142). Military pursuits were encouraged to the exclusion of others, and a Spartan citizen was forbidden to engage in any mercantile or manual labour: military training being the only acceptable occupation (Katz 1998: 128). Because of this extreme military ethos, a citizen man was to be educated only to the minimal degree necessary for everyday life. He was, however, expected to be skilled in choral singing which formed part of his military training (Plut. *Lyc.* 16; Neils & Oakley 2003: 155; Powell 1996: 236; Sommerville 1982: 25). Other characteristics that feature as typical of the Spartan male citizen are conservatism and secrecy, coupled with suspicion of foreigners and any innovative ideas (Cartledge 2002: 24, 32; Powell 1996: 214) and a blunt, verbal austerity ('laconic' speech), as manliness was believed to involve the use of few words (Powell 1996: 235). Spartan men were expected to be extremely religious and display great respect for their elders (Hall 2014: 172, 176–8; Davidson 2002: 156).

### *Female citizens*

In the same way as their Athenian counterparts, Spartan women (also referred to as *astai* in some of the ancient sources) could have citizen status but without any of the political rights that Spartan men enjoyed (Blok 2017: 168). However, Spartan girls were unique in Greece in that they mixed freely with boys and benefited from a state-sponsored education (Garland 2013: 129; Pomeroy 2002: 7). According to Xenophon, this education concentrated on physical exercise which was intended to develop strong bodies in order to produce strong children and to prepare the girls for the challenge of childbirth (Xen. *Const. Lac.* 1). Spartan women were not expected to spend their time weaving or producing clothes as this could be done adequately by slave labour (Xen. *Const. Lac.* 1). Spartan women owned their own dowries and were able to own, inherit and control land in their own right, which was not the case in Athens, and this gave them a greater degree of independence and autonomy (Garland 2013: 130).

The ‘ideal’ Spartan woman was expected to, like male citizens, display unquestioning loyalty to the state and, in particular, to encourage the qualities of courage, valour and honour in their children (Dillon & Garland 2013: 132). She was also to maintain physical fitness and to be skilled in athletics and choral singing (Plut. *Lyc.* 14; Pomeroy 2002: 12). Plutarch describes how Spartan women were, unlike Athenian women, expected to be strong-minded and that they were trained and encouraged to speak in public (Plut. *Lyc.* 14). Spartan girls, then, were apparently renowned for their outspoken intelligence (Golden 2003: 21; Pomeroy 2002: 135) and were encouraged to be gregarious with no false modesty (Plut. *Lyc.* 14). A Spartan woman’s household was an important sphere of influence; she was expected to manage the household and property which, unlike her Athenian counterpart, she could own in her own right (Aristot. *Pol.* 1270a1 20; Pomeroy 2002: 80). Like her Athenian counterpart, her primary role was to produce sons and mothers of sons, but this was to be more for the benefit of the state rather than for an individual *oikos* (Cartledge 2004: 175).

## 2.6 Lists of characteristics of citizens

The above survey has highlighted certain conditions and attributes of citizenship that are broadly accepted as characteristic of the ‘ideal’ citizenry of Athens and Sparta. I have rendered the most important attributes in the lists below, and in the following chapters which discuss the upbringing, education and socialisation of children, these qualities will be used as criteria for assessing the extent to which educational systems contributed to the goal of raising citizens of a particular kind.

### Athens

Ideal characteristics for male citizens	Ideal characteristics for female citizens
1. <i>Kaloskagotheia</i>	1. Submissive to male authority
2. Educated in reading, writing, music	2. Skilled in wool-working and running the <i>oikos</i>
3. Eloquence in public speaking	3. Modesty and self-awareness ( <i>sophrosyne</i> )
4. Agonistic (competitive)	4. Fertility
5. Passion for excellence ( <i>arête</i> )	5. Excellence as wife and mother
6. Religious piety	6. Religious piety
7. Respect and care for family ( <i>oikos</i> ) including parents	7. Respect and care for family ( <i>oikos</i> ) including parents
8. Physical prowess and courage	
9. Participation in the affairs of the city	

## Sparta

Ideal characteristics for male citizens	Ideal characteristics for female citizens
1. Loyalty to state and compatriots	1. Loyalty to state and family
2. Obedience and discipline	2. Physical fitness and strength
3. Courage	3. Skilled in managing the household and property
4. Military occupation	4. Strong-minded and outspoken
5. Choral skill	5. Choral skill
6. Conservative and suspicious of foreigners	6. Gregarious
7. Verbal austerity	7. Fertile
8. Religious piety	8. Excellence as mother
9. Respect for elders	

## 2.7 Summary

The differing political, economic and social systems adopted by the two city-states of Athens and Sparta, were dictated to a large degree by their individual environments. Athens was required to import the required foodstuffs which her poor soil could not provide, which led to commercial contact with other countries. Her poor agricultural potential encouraged the development of manufacturing industries, which in turn provided the attraction for multi-ethnic immigrants who contributed to the development of a more diverse and sophisticated population structure. The Athenian political system afforded her male citizens full participation in governmental structures, which led to their developing feelings of pride in her democracy. Athenian children would learn the prevailing social norms and values of their state as taught to them by the preceding generation and by observing how their city functioned. In this way they would acquire the particular attributes which their *polis* expected of the ‘ideal’ future citizen.

Although Sparta was self-sufficient in essential commodities, as a result of her favourable agricultural conditions, the production of such produce was in the hands of the bitter and resentful *helots*. This meant that Spartans were dependant for their very existence on the *helots*, who surrounded and outnumbered them. The anomaly of this relationship was the underlying basis of all aspects of Spartan lives. Their insularity and suspicion of foreigners was engendered by the fear that they would encourage the *helots* to rebel or would foster divisive ideas amongst her citizens. The context then for Spartan children could be described as the complete antithesis of their Athenian counterparts, in many ways. They would have little or no contact with foreigners and experience little influence or ideas other than those of their fellow Spartans. It was deliberate policy to minimise close family ties so as not to distract them from their military obligations to the state. Sparta expected all citizens to fulfil their civic responsibilities and their first loyalty and obligations were always to the state. The ‘ideal’ citizen of Sparta was crafted from a very early age and the qualities required by the state were instilled in the home, the *agôgê*, the *krypteia* and the military.

For children, whether Athenian or Spartan, the process of upbringing, education and socialisation to prepare them for their future roles as citizens, would begin in the home. The following chapters will begin the investigation of the differing education and socialisation of children by exploring the early years of childhood in the two respective *oikoi*.



## Chapter 3

### The *oikos*: home and family

Just as the *polis* represented the outside public sphere of the city, the *oikos* was the private social unit of the family and therefore the first site of the education of the child. The word *oikos* is a broader term than ‘family’, it more accurately translates as ‘household’ (Garland 2013: 63; Cox 1998: 132). There was, in fact, no exact Greek linguistic equivalent for the modern phrase ‘nuclear family’. While the *oikos* includes the family (the householder, his wife, children and various family members living under the roof of the home) it was a more complex term which also encompassed the actual building as well as the slaves, livestock, furnishings, chattels and tools within the home and the lands which comprised the estate belonging to the family (Garland 2013: 63; Nevett 2001: 13). This was the home into which the child was introduced to begin his/ her journey into adulthood. As such it is the physical space as well as the social unit into which the child was born and in which he/she was first socialised and ‘educated’. The nature of the Athenian and Spartan *oikoi* and the activities which took place within them, is therefore relevant to an analysis of these two cities’ respective ‘education’ of children.

#### 3.1 The Athenian *oikos*

According to Pomeroy (1994: 79), in contrast to the admired public buildings of Athens, the residential quarters were dark, squalid and unsanitary. The typical physical unit, the *oikos*, of elite Athenians, consisted of a house, possibly two storeys, founded on a stone socle (base) with walls of unfired mud bricks which offered good insulation against the summer sun and winter cold. A protective coating of lime plaster would protect the exterior walls and a pitched roof of thatch or terracotta tile with overhanging eaves, also helped to prevent rainwater damaging the outside walls (Nevett 2010: 9-10). Even archaeological excavations are unable to provide definitive information as to the configuration of the internal space of the *oikoi*. A comprehensive idealised version of the household is given by Xenophon in his *Oeconomicus*, where the fictional citizen, Ischomachos, introduces his new wife to the layout of his household, describing it in the following terms:

“..it is not adorned with decorations, the rooms were planned and built simply with a view to their being the most advantageous receptacles for the things that would be in them, so that each calls for what is suitable to it. The bedroom, being in an interior part of the house, invites the most valuable bedcovers and implements; the dry parts of the dwelling, the grain; the cool places, the wine; and the well-lighted places, the works and implements that need light” (Xen. *Oec.* IX. 2).

Isomarchos continues in the same description of his house as follows:

“I pointed out to her the women’s apartments, separated from the men’s by a bolted door, so that nothing may be taken out that shouldn’t be” (Xen. *Oec.* IX. 5).

Garland (1990: 138) maintains that, despite there being no archaeological evidence to prove this, scholars were of the view that men and women may have had separate living spaces, the

*gynaikôn* being the women's domain and the *andrôn* the men's quarters. This was based on the fact that Greek men regarded it as a matter of honour that their wives and daughters not be exposed to the public gaze (Garland 2013: 138). More recently scholars have argued that the spatial division of Greek houses was primarily between household members and outsiders rather than by gender lines, or that the gendering of space within the *oikos* was specific to the time of day and situation (Foxhall 2013: 120). Nevett (2010: 55) also points out that as from the mid-5<sup>th</sup> century BCE, children were considered to be legitimate only if born from two citizen parents, increasing stress was placed on legitimacy as a criterion for membership of the Athenian citizen body, therefore separation of the female members of the household from outsiders would enhance the male householder's ability to claim that he was the father of his wife's children.

The *andron* was a room which was, space permitting, at times set aside for *symposia*, a highly ritualised institution, where the male householder entertained his fellow male citizens to evenings of food, wine and entertainment, reclining on couches (Pomeroy 1998: 30). Apart from the social aspect of eating, drinking, playing drinking games and hired entertainers, *symposia* played a significant role in the educational, cultural and political life of the aristocratic Greeks (Garland 2013: 164). Beaumont (2015:126) notes that attendance by adolescent boys on such occasions, not reclining or imbibing but spectating and assisting, would provide no better training for their future role as full *symposia* participants on coming of age. No doubt these young boys would be sent home before the festivities progressed to the stage when behaviour exceeded the bounds of propriety. Presumably, while these *symposia* were taking place, the female members of the household, who were forbidden to attend, would be sequestered in separate quarters away from the eyes of strangers. The only female attendees permitted were flute girls who provided musical entertainment, or *hetairai*, who were hired companions or gifted, charming and accomplished prostitutes (Garland 2013: 84).

Most furniture in the *oikos* was made of wood but as this was so expensive, furniture was extremely sparse and pieces were moved around the house as different needs arose (Garland 2013: 139). Men reclined on wooden or stone couches when eating and drinking and a popular item of furniture was a chair with a curved back and legs, known as a *klismos*, as well as three-legged tables and stools (Garland 2013: 139). Wooden looms for weaving textiles were essential items in every Athenian home and these were used either in the women's quarters or in the enclosed courtyard during warm weather (Pomeroy 1998: 30). A considerable amount of storage was required for foodstuffs, household linens and clothing which had to be protected from the elements, pests and theft. Cupboards were unknown but wooden chests were used to store household items and these could double as seating. And if the home was used for manufacture, tools and raw materials would also need to be stored (Pomeroy 1998: 34). Doors were solidly made and supplied with locks and bars (Garland 2013: 137).

Most households had to collect water from public fountains but some had a well in the courtyard. Personal standards of hygiene varied considerably as few houses had drains for the disposal of waste water. Facilities for the disposal of refuse were almost non-existent which would no doubt have resulted in the accumulation of vast quantities of rubbish. Mosquitoes, flies and rats were prolific and carried various diseases which could result in epidemics

(Garland 2013: 140-141). The survival prospects for babies and infants, who were particularly susceptible to bacterial diseases, would have been jeopardised by such unsanitary conditions.

The *oikos* was often the site not only of the domestic production of food and clothing for use at home but also of commercial production for the cash economy (Pomeroy 1998: 30). The home was also occasionally the workshop and it was here that many fathers passed on the knowledge of their trade to their sons (Combiano 1995: 90). An early apprenticeship served to isolate boys of poor families from their own age group and bind them to an adult world without them experiencing the gradual progression which integrated more elite children into the social, political and military structure of the *polis* (Combiano 1995: 90).

This was the home within which the Athenian child was to begin his or her journey on the road to full citizenship in the *polis*. It was within the confines of the *oikos* that a boy would begin to learn the expected modes of behaviour which he would need to acquire to become the 'ideal' citizen, and a girl would learn the qualities of modesty and reserve that were demanded of females in Athenian society.

### 3.2 The Spartan *oikos*

The lack of available material evidence means that even less is known about households in Sparta than those in Athens. The Spartan social pattern was different to that of Athens in many respects and their respective living space would have reflected this difference. Presumably the building material and construction methods would have been similar in both cities but Plutarch describes the Spartan house as a 'plain common house', the ceilings had to be made with an axe and the doors with a saw and no other tools (Plut. *Lyc.* 13). If the Athenian home was 'dark, squalid and unsanitary', Spartan homes were even more so, lacking even the rudimentary refinements enjoyed in Athens.

Pomeroy (1998: 58) argues that Spartan homes would certainly be less complex and require less internal space than those of Athens. Unlike the Athenian slaves mentioned in Xenophon's *Oeconomicus*, the *helots* of Sparta lived on farms with their families and therefore separate dormitories were not required for household slaves (Pomeroy 1998: 58). Spartan men slept in military barracks until the age of thirty and made only brief visits to their *oikos*, and their main meal of the day was taken in the *syssitia* or common mess, thus reducing the number of occupants of the *oikos* (Garland 2013: 128-129). There was also no need for the *andron* in Spartan households as Spartan men did not indulge in symposium-like drinking parties but their comradeship was celebrated in the compulsory communal dining groups (Nevett 2001: 20). According to Powell (1996: 227), Lycurgus arranged for Spartans to dine communally where they could be observed easily because people within the confines of their own home tended to behave in a more relaxed manner. Powell (1996: 222) further maintains that young and old alike met together at such dining groups, where the prevailing atmosphere was conducive for the young to benefit from the wisdom of their elders and disruptive friction between generations would be minimised. Spartan boys would also listen to stories of courage and bravery which would provide examples of the qualities to which they should aspire to attain. The fact that Spartans did not entertain at home meant that there

was no need for gold and silver cups and lavish table settings, which Plutarch tells us were forbidden by Lycurgus (Plut. *Lyc.* 10, 13).

As *helots* were obliged to provide a fixed amount of food annually, there was no need to have storage space for more food than would be consumed in a year and even this would have been less than the amount for the same duration at Athens because male Spartans did not eat at home (Pomeroy 1998: 58). Spartan clothing was simple and as there was no need to produce a surplus for the market, as was the case in Athens, this meant that the wooden storage chests, so prominent in Athenian households, would not be so essential in Sparta.

Furnishings in the house were even simpler than those in Athens. Plutarch tells us that Lycurgus decreed that there was no place for luxury or extravagance, no beds with legs of silver, nor bedspreads of purple (Plut. *Lyc.* 13).

The Spartan household was not used for commercial purposes of any kind because all labouring activities were delegated to *helots*, and *perioikoi* were involved with the cash economy (Combiano 1995: 91). Spartan males qualified only in military training and therefore their children did not serve apprenticeships but instead their whole upbringing was focussed on preparing for them to eventually take their place in the ranks of hoplite warriors.

The austere, basic and unadorned nature of the Spartan home would prepare the Spartan child for the strict, disciplined and inflexible environment of the *polis* of which they would hope to become a future citizen. The austerity and lack of ostentation or luxury in the *oikos* would mean that they were well prepared for what lay ahead of them.

### 3.3 The Athenian family

At Athens the *oikoi* were the foundation stones upon which the *polis* was built and as such each *oikos*, although different, played an important role. The head of the *oikos* was the senior male member of the family, usually the father, who was known as the *kyrios* (Cox 1998: 134). The role of the Athenian *kyrios* involved the protection of his wife and children, as well as possible children from a previous marriage, and other female relatives who may be resident in the household (Golden 1993: 141-143). These could include an elderly parent and female members of the extended family who for one reason or another were without a husband and who required the protection of a male relative. The *kyrios* was obligated to provide for their material needs as well as representing them in any court proceedings (Nevett 2001: 12-13).

A child, by virtue of its birth had no automatic right of entry into the family. This right, and all major decisions regarding his or her future, rested with the *kyrios*. He literally had the power of life or death over the children in his household in that it was he who made the decision whether a child would or would not be exposed (Golden 1993: 23, 94). Also, although after the laws of Solon were implemented, he could no longer sell his children into slavery, according to Plutarch, a father had the right to enslave a daughter or a sister who was discovered to be no longer a virgin (Plut. *Sol.* 23). Amongst his other prerogatives, he appointed a *paidagogos*, usually an aged and reliable slave, to supervise and, if necessary, discipline his sons; it was the father's decision as to when, and for how long his sons went to school, as well as to whom his daughter would be given in marriage (Golden 1993: 62-3;

Garland 1990: 90,135-136, 214). The *kyrios* also retained the right to instigate divorce proceedings if the alliance arranged for his daughter proved to be unsuitable (Garland 1990: 236-237).

A child's consciousness developed through the emotional relationships he or she developed with the persons with whom he/she shared the household (Golden 1993: 81). The predominance of female members of the *oikos* indicate that young children, who were mostly confined to the *oikos* for their first six years, would be exposed to the influence of a majority of females during their formative years, fathers spending most of their time outside the home, engaged in managing their estates, or spending time in the courts, *agora* or *gymnasia* (Sommerville 1982: 32).

During these early years children would be socialised to understand their role in the hierarchy of the family and would begin to be instructed as to what formed the acceptable norms and values of that family. Within the household a child would learn the qualities of respect, loyalty and obedience towards the father, which were expected in a male-dominated society and which were amongst the attributes required of all citizens (Golden 1993: 102). These and other essential attributes are listed in Chapter 2. In Athens father and son lived under the same roof and probably came into close, if sporadic contact, as the son usually continued to live at home until his marriage at approximately thirty years of age (Shapiro 2003: 107). Interactions between father and son would serve to teach the boy-child lessons as to how to be a man (Golden 1993: 29). He would learn by observation that a father was expected to involve himself in the affairs of the *polis* rather than just the mundane running of the *oikos*, but that, despite his regular absence from home, he retained ultimate authority over and obligations towards the family. In Athens parental discipline could be harsh. Corporal punishment of older children especially, was usually a paternal duty as a father was believed to educate while a mother nurtures (Golden 2003: 25).

Girl children would learn the expected modes of behaviour, such as modesty and restraint, as well as the practical domestic skills which they would need in later life, from their mothers, slaves and other female residents of the *oikos* (Beaumont 2015: 104). These qualities, together with others deemed essential for the character of the 'ideal' female citizen, are listed in Chapter 2. From their observation of the way in which these family members interacted with the father and other male kinsmen, they would soon learn the subservient role expected of the female in the home and eventually the *polis*.

Interaction with siblings would play an important role in the socialisation of children within the family. Close and cordial relationships between brothers were recognized as the ideal at Athens and fraternal ties can be attested to by expressions on tombstones but more often in speeches before Athenian courts (Golden 1993: 115). However, Plutarch points out that enmity could arise for a number of reasons: rivalry for parent's affection, differences in ability or achievement, competition and childhood squabbles between younger and older children (Plut. *Mor.* 478A-492D)<sup>10</sup>. Athenian childhood presented a contrast to the normal relationship between men and women, which was marked by difference and distance, in that brothers and sisters spent much time together before the boys reached the age of 6 years. The

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<sup>10</sup> The translation used for Plutarch's *Moralia* is Cherniss, H. (1976) *Plutarch: Moralia*.

close ties which were established in childhood were often maintained in later life (Golden 1993: 122).

No doubt sibling rivalry also played a role in the nature of interaction between younger boys and girls and the gradual genderisation of their roles would confirm their observations of such interactions between adults within the family.

Pomeroy (1994: 60) states that obligations to family and state were of primary importance in the lives of citizens of Athens and in every generation members of the *oikos* were charged with the perpetuation of the cults of their ancestors as well as the maintenance of their lines of descent. It was in the interest of the family to ensure that individual families did not die out. In families where there were no sons, the daughter could be responsible for perpetuating the *oikos* as family property went to her husband and thence to their child, but she never owned her father's property (Pomeroy 1994: 61). Families were often involved in cult activity and some of these activities revolved around children. Worshipping together not only promoted piety and reverence in the children themselves but also served to strengthen the bonds between family members as well as gained the gods as witnesses to their unity (Golden 1993: 31). Family worship would also serve to affirm the child as a member of the family.

Family life was the necessary foundation for the preservation of a strong *oikos*, which in turn was essential to a strong *polis* (Pomeroy 1998: 37). In Athens, where individualism was held in such high regard, the socialisation and enculturation which children received within the family environment was an essential preparation for their adult roles in later life. Boys would begin to identify with the male members of the family, and girls with the female members. In this way the entrenched behaviours associated with gender roles in life would be perpetuated.

#### 3.4 The family in Sparta

According to Plutarch, the laws ascribed to Lycurgus emphasized communal responsibilities at the expense of the individual family, with the purpose of strengthening bonds amongst members of the larger group (Plut. *Lyc.* 9-16; Pomeroy 1998: 48). Garland (2013: 126) maintains that the Spartan home was hardly a home in the modern accepted meaning of the word as most children spent the majority of their time with their peers and their obligation to the state overrode any duty to family. The Spartan state was determined to minimise the family as a unit of affection or authority but the *oikos* system remained intact despite political attempts to impose a communal family structure (Pomeroy 1998: 61-62; Finley 1981: 28). There are no witnesses to the full operation of the commune as described by Plutarch and the possibility exists that much of the legislation concerning the 'communal family' was observed only briefly or not at all (Pomeroy 1998: 60). If the Athenian *oikos* provided the foundation for the *polis*, at Sparta the role of the *oikos* was the antithesis of this as its existence and functioning was dictated almost entirely by the state.

The occupants of the Spartan *oikos* were in many ways similar to those in Athens, in that there was a predominance of female members. In Sparta the male role model was almost completely absent during the important early years of a child's life as the father did not sleep at home, only occasionally visited the *oikos*, nor did he share meals with the family. Up to the age of thirty a Spartan male slept in military barracks rather than at home; Plutarch states that some men might even have children before they saw their wives in daylight (Plut. *Lyc.* 15).

Shapiro (2003: 107) claims that in Spartan society the bond between father and son was therefore almost non-existent as the father probably had little or no role in the rearing of his children. Nevertheless, the Spartan boy was not lacking in male role models as all males within the *polis* were entitled to act *in loco parentis*, with all the authority and influence that this implied (Xen. *Const. Lac.* 6; Plu. *Lyc.* 15). In this way children were never without supervision.

Spartan mothers were renowned for their wisdom and outspokenness and it was they who would have been the major influence on children within the home during the first few years of life (Garland 2013: 130). Despite their extremely restricted home life, Spartan women were allowed a greater degree of freedom than their counterparts in Athens and much of their time was spent out of doors (Garland 2013: 129). The fact that Spartan women mixed freely in society, were not secluded in any way and, in the absence of men on military duties, exercised considerable authority within the *oikos*, would have provided a strong role model for female children. They were also said to have reared their children according to the customs and expectations of their state and society, enforcing the positive concepts of courage and bravery and discouraging cowardice in their sons who were to be the next generation of Spartan warriors (Pomeroy 2002: 58-59).

Much of the father's authority was usurped to a great degree by the state. A board of elders decided on the viability of a child and whether it should be reared or exposed (Plut. *Lyc.* 16; Garland 1990: 88). The Spartan father did however retain certain rights, such as contracting marriage for his daughters and disposal of his property as he wished and his approval had to be obtained before his wife could be loaned to another man for reproductive purposes (Xen. *Const. Lac.* 1).

The commemoration of ancestors was restricted in Sparta, where the only names permitted on gravestones were those of women who died in childbirth or men who died in battle (Cartledge 2013: 158). This suggests the belief that procreation was of equal importance to the military needs of the *polis* (Todd 2000: 38). However, despite its military preoccupations, Sparta was just as interested as Athens with the preservation of the family, inheritances and estates, as its citizens needed to possess an estate in order to provide the necessary mess dues upon which their very citizenship depended (Dillon & Garland 2013: 131). Because of the Spartan emphasis on the public sphere, private cults were unknown (Pomeroy 1998: 105).

### 3.5 Summary

All children, as the future citizens of both Athens and Sparta, began their lives as residents in an *oikos* and as members of individual families. Their experience within the home and family would provide the foundations for the building of their character, their enculturation into the norms and values of their *oikos* and *polis* and the manner in which they would develop as adult members of society.

Family life in Athens revolved around the home. The *oikos* was a place of production and reproduction, where the family was perpetuated, where textiles were produced, where the family's assets were stored, where Athenian males entertained their friends and often where manufacturing or commercial activities were conducted. It was also where the segregation of the sexes, whether slave or freeborn, was emphasised, the female members being screened

from the sight of outsiders and non-kinsmen. The building, furniture and fittings may have been rudimentary but residents of Athens had access to imported luxury goods which could have enhanced their residential property.

In Sparta the state was meant to take precedence over the individual family and the majority of the laws attributed to Lycurgus reflected this intention, but every family had to have a base and this was the Spartan *oikos*. If the Athenian *oikos* was described as 'dark and squalid', the Spartan counterpart could be described as dark, squalid and spartan. The home reflected the nature of the state, austere and functional. Life in Sparta was conducted mainly out of doors, Spartan women were not segregated from men therefore separate women's quarters were not required, nor was accommodation required for slaves as the *helots* resided on farms with their own families. Spartan men neither ate nor slept at home nor did they entertain in the *oikos*. Manufacturing and commercial activity was entirely in the hands of the *perioikoi* so the home was not used to produce goods for sale. Extra storage was not required as *helots* were obliged to provide a fixed amount of food annually. Lycurgan laws prohibited luxury or ostentation of any kind so the interior of the home would reflect this by its austerity and lack of enhancement.

In Athens the *kyrios* wielded the most influence and authority in the *oikos*, whereas in Sparta the state took precedence in everything. This was particularly obvious in the decision as to whether a child would be accepted into the family or would be exposed. The consequences of this decision would be that a child would begin the journey of childhood within the household or its life would be brought to an abrupt end before it had really begun.

## Chapter 4

### Early childhood: from birth to 6 years of age

According to Golden (1993: 16) and Beaumont (2015:19, 20), in Athens a newborn child would be referred to as a *brephos*, an infant of early years as *nepios* and the word *pais*, when not used to denote a slave or the junior partner in a male homosexual couple, was the word most commonly used to describe a boy below the age of legal majority and a girl before marriage. An Athenian boy who had reached the age of eighteen and been enrolled in the *deme* register, would be referred to as an *epebos* during the two-year period of his military training. From the onset of puberty an Athenian girl would be known as a *parthenos*, a bride as *nymphē* and a mother as *gynē*. (Beaumont 2015: 21, 22).

In antiquity, as is the case today, the early years of a child's life formed the foundation upon which his or her future character and way of life were built. These early years were a time of training and socialization to prepare the individual child for his/her future role as adults (Beaumont 2015: 122). Plato asserted that the first five years of life saw more growth than the next twenty (Plat. *Laws* 7. 788)<sup>11</sup>. In Athens, following the citizenship laws of Perikles in 451/0 BCE, as one of the first qualifications for citizenship, a child had to be the legitimate offspring of parents who were both Athenian citizens. The stigma of illegitimacy does not seem to have been an issue in Sparta, as wife-sharing was said to be an acceptable practice between consenting males and according to Plutarch, adultery was unknown (Plut. *Lyc.* 15; Pomeroy 2002: 4). Qualification for citizenship merely required that the father be a Spartan citizen. Whatever their future role was to be in life, every child began his/her particular journey by surviving the trauma of their birth.

#### 4.1 Childbirth and acceptance into the *oikos*

##### 4.1.1 Childbirth and exposure in Athens

Childbirth was an extremely perilous time for both mother and child and it was estimated that between 10 and 20% of women and babies died in the process (Neils 2003: 143). In the absence of hospitals, most births took place in the *oikos*, and the process was handled almost exclusively by women (Garland 1990: 59-61). Inadequate standards of hygiene, lack of pre-natal care, ignorance of gynaecological processes, together with the fact that the majority of Athenian mothers were barely past puberty when they first gave birth, were contributory factors to the high incidence of maternal and infant deaths (Aristot. *Pol.* 7 1335a 12-17; Garland 1990: 65).

Offerings were made to the foremost goddesses of birth, such as Eileithyia and Artemis, by the mother in the hopes of a speedy and safe delivery (Kamen 2007: 87). After a safe delivery, Athenian mothers and new-born infant were washed in water from a sacred spring to wash away the pollution of childbirth, and the child was wrapped in swaddling bands,

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<sup>11</sup> The translation used for Plato's *Laws* is Saunders, T.J. (1972) *Plato: the Laws*.

known as *spargana* (Garland 1990: 64-65). Swaddling owes its origins to the fear that limbs of new-borns, unless constricted, are likely to become misshapen through violent movement (Garland 1990: 81-82).

Being born, however, was not sufficient to guarantee a child admittance as a member of an Athenian *oikos*, which was the first step towards citizenship. Even babies born to two citizen parents had no automatic right of entry; they first had to be accepted by the *kyrios*. His decision would be based on a number of variables, including the gender of the child and the optimum size of the family (Golden 1993: 23). Beaumont (2015: 90) points out that archaeological evidence for the practise of exposure of infants is non-existent, however, she accepts that literary and documentary sources indicate that exposure of neonates did take place in Athens. She acknowledges that the reasons for and the extent of the practice of exposure give rise to heated debate.

Economic pressures were likely to have been the over-riding consideration involved in the decision as to whether to rear or expose a child (Beaumont 2015: 91; Garland 1990: 86). In ancient times a father had the right to sell his children into slavery in order to pay off his debts. This practice was outlawed by Solon and Combiano (1995:87) suggests that exposure was adopted as an alternative by families who could not afford to rear large families.

Those infants most vulnerable to exposure were deformed, sickly or illegitimate offspring and, according to most scholars, girl babies (Garland 1990: 86). In Athens illegitimate children could not inherit their father's property, and thereby perpetuate his *oikos*, which may have been a further incentive for exposure (Garland 1990: 89). Known as bastards or *nothoi*, these children would otherwise have faced a lifetime of social stigma, insults and economic deprivation (Golden 2003: 22).

Garland (2013: 93) and Golden (2003: 87) both assert that the exposure of female children was likely to be more prevalent than that of males, as girls were considered to be less useful within the family as the capacity for productive labour of a girl was more limited than that of her brothers, and she also had to be provided with a dowry at marriage, a financial consideration which could prove a drain on a family's economic position. Beaumont (2015: 91) however, points out that Athenian law required a testator to divide his family's inheritance equally between his sons. Therefore elite families, wishing to preserve their core wealth and property, were more likely to expose non-firstborn sons. Although a daughter's future husband and children could possibly provide important support, pleasure and in the absence of surviving male offspring, heirs for a girls' natal family, the fact that she would have to be given away to another family could affect the relationship with her own family from birth (Foley 2003: 114). The birth of a daughter rarely received public recognition and the birth of citizen girls was rarely formally recorded by the father's *phratry* (Foley 2003: 114). The general devaluation of women, together with the necessity for the provision of a dowry, meant that families with more than two daughters may have been rare except amongst the most well-to-do (Golden 1993: 86).

Patterson (1985: 105) states that killing or causing the death of a new-born child in the first days of life was quite different, legally and morally, from killing a child who was a recognized and named member of a family. Those exposed were new-borns who had not yet been accepted into the household, therefore there was less feeling of attachment than there

would be to a child that had spent some time with its family. This did not mean that the parents were unfeeling as to the fate of the new-born, but that they accepted what was to them a necessity (Oakley 2003: 178). In Athens abandonment of a neonate was not believed to be the same as causing or willing its death, and some parents may have sincerely believed that they were placing their child into the care of the gods (Garland 1990: 92, 93). Many exposed children were abandoned in well-frequented, public places, such as crossroads or a shrine, perhaps with the hope that it would be retrieved and reared by a childless couple, temple authority or slaver, as opposed to dying of exposure or being killed by wild animals (Garland 1990: 84, 92-93). Exposure of infants was not entirely free from religious pollution and required an act of purification (Patterson 1985: 106).

#### 4.1.2 Childbirth and exposure in Sparta

According to Plutarch, in Sparta the state required that mothers-to-be participate in an arduous physical training programme which included gymnastics, running and wrestling, as well as discus and javelin throwing, so that infants would have a strong start in a strong body (Plut. *Lyc.* 14). Physical fitness achieved in this way was also believed to make childbirth easier (Sommerville 1982: 29). As well as being fitter than their Athenian counterparts, Spartan girls were thought to be better nourished and more mature for their first parturition, therefore avoiding some birth complications (Xen. *Const. Lac.* 1; Pomeroy 1994: 85). This would seem to indicate that Spartan new-borns had a greater chance of being born healthy than Athenian neonates.

In Sparta the midwife was said to have washed the new-born in wine rather than water in order to test its constitution, as the effect of un-watered wine was believed to strengthen healthy children but caused ailing or epileptic children to lose their senses and their limbs to stiffen (Plut. *Lyc.* 16). According to Plutarch, Spartan infants were not swaddled to allow free development of their limbs and physique (Plut. *Lyc.* 16).

At Sparta it was not the decision of the father as to whether or not a child would be admitted to the *oikos*, but this was dependant on the new-born passing an inspection by the board of elders (Golden 2003:19). Sparta was the only Greek *polis* that we are aware of, in which exposure was legally prescribed (Kamen 2007: 89). If economic considerations were the primary motives for exposure in Athens, in Sparta it was concern over the maintenance of the prospective hoplite fighting force which was at the fore.

Plutarch reports that the father of a new-born son (*brephos*), who, unlike his counterpart in Athens, was not legally responsible for its upbringing, was not entitled to make his own decision about whether to rear it (Plut. *Lyc.* 16). He had to present his son to the elders for inspection at a particular place termed a *lesche*, where the elders sat (Plut. *Lyc.* 16). If the child was strong and healthy the elders ordered the father to raise it and assigned it a plot of land (*kleros*). If it was deformed or sickly, he had to expose it at the chasm-like place, called *Apothetae* (Place of Rejection), at the foot of Mount Taygetos (Plut. *Lyc.* 16). This decision was justified by the belief that the life which nature had not provided with health and strength was of no use to itself or to the state (Plut. *Lyc.* 16; Garland 1990: 86-88). Elimination of unpromising male infants was wasteful only of the mother's nine-month investment but meant that the state was not obliged to pay the costs of rearing a boy from whom they were

unlikely to recoup any benefit. This decision also satisfied eugenic considerations. Acquired characteristics, as well as those present at birth, were believed to be inherited, so the infant who failed the initial inspection was eradicated before he could produce children who were likely to inherit his unfavourable traits (Pomeroy 2002: 35).

The Spartan elders' decision of whether to reject a child was based on the need for military manpower; also they were thought to be impartial and lacked the emotional interest of the individual father. In usurping the authority of the father, the Spartan state was reinforcing the idea that the state took precedence over the family (Golden 2003: 19; Garland 1990: 88). Garland (1990: 93), states that in Sparta it was probably illegal to rescue an abandoned newborn since the infant in question had in effect been officially condemned to death.

According to Pomeroy (2002: 36), there is no evidence of systematic female exposure or neglect at Sparta. It appears that girls were not subjected to official scrutiny in the same way as Spartan boys, nor did their fathers determine whether to rear or expose them, but presumably sickly girl babies or those suffering from physical abnormalities would have suffered the same fate as similarly afflicted boys. Plutarch states that girls at birth were simply handed over to the women, but there is no confirmation of this (Plut. *Lyc.* 3). Pomeroy (2002: 35) suggests that, concerned as they were about maintaining the population, the elders understood that the number of Spartiates depended upon the number of child-bearers rather than the number of their inseminators, and that this was why they were loath to eliminate female infants. Plutarch (*Lyc.* 8) and Xenophon (*Const. Lac.* 9) makes it clear that girls were supported by the *kleroi* allocated to their male kinsmen and were not allocated *kleroi* of their own.

#### 4.2 Infancy in Athens and Sparta

As very little information exists regarding Spartan infants, this section will focus mainly on infancy in Athens, with reference to Sparta where possible.

In Athens it was customary to indicate a successful delivery by hanging on the door of the *oikos* a wreath of olive leaves to signify the birth of a boy, possibly to indicate an aspiration for Olympic victories, and a tuft of wool, emblematic of women's work, for a girl (Golden 2003: 16). Such birth announcements appeared only after an earlier positive decision that the infant was to be reared. Apart from serving to announce the safe delivery to those outside the family, it also presumably warned neighbours and non-relatives of the danger of birth pollution (Garland 1990: 75).

A father's recognition and acceptance of a new-born baby (*brephos*) was the first step for membership in the Athenian *polis* (Pomeroy 1998: 23). In the ancient Greek world every life stage transition, including birth, puberty, marriage and death, required a ritual act (Neils & Oakley 2003: 284). Scant ancient literary evidence remains pertaining to mortal, as opposed to mythical, children but archaeological and iconographical sources have provided valuable insights into some of these ceremonies as they existed for Athenian children (Beaumont 2015: 3-4). Unfortunately, little is recorded of the rites of passage of Spartan children. There are several ceremonies within the *oikos* that centre around children and their place in the family, and others that involve children in the religious and social life of the *polis* at large.

#### 4.2.1 Ritual practices within the *oikos*

Once the father decided to rear the child (*brephos*) rather than expose it, and it seemed likely to survive, it was carried, possibly at a run, around the hearth or the family altar, in a ceremony known as the *Amphidromia* (Hedrick 2007: 290; Pomeroy 1997: 68). The hearth was the centre of the home and the sacred site of the eponymous goddess Hestia, one of the twelve Olympian gods and protectress of the home and family life (Morgan 2007: 302). Fire was known as a purifier and so this rite probably signified the end of pollution in the household (Neils 2003: 144). This initiation, or rite of passage, probably ended with a sacrifice as a thanksgiving to the gods (Garland 1990: 93). Various sources record this ceremony as taking place on either the fifth or seventh day after the child's birth and the identity of the person who did the carrying is also questioned, but the general consensus is that it was the father (Beaumont 2015: 67-68; Pomeroy 1998: 68). Friends and relatives sent traditional gifts, such as octopuses and cuttlefish, but did not attend the ceremony unless they had been present at the birth (Golden 1993: 23). While birth marked the physical entry of the infant (*nepios*) into the world, the *Amphidromia* constituted its social identity as a member of its natal family and confirmed its right to life (Beaumont 2015: 68; Garland 1990: 93).

An Athenian baby (*brephos*) was given its name on the tenth day after its birth, at a ceremony known as the *dekatē*. Aristotle affirms that the reason for the delay in naming neonates was because most infant deaths occurred in the first week after birth, so by the tenth day the infant stood a better chance of survival (Aristot. *H.A.* 7.588a)<sup>12</sup>. This was a more formal and festive occasion than the *Amphidromia*, involving offerings to the gods (Golden 1993: 24). Relatives and others were invited to witness and possibly brought birthday gifts (*genethlia*) but importantly it was also an acknowledgement by the father that the child was legitimate and was his own (Neils 2003: 144; Garland 1990: 95). This acknowledgement could be crucial in later years as in Athenian law courts, in cases involving disputed inheritance, it was often one's naming at the *dekatē* that was cited as proof of legitimacy (Garland 1990: 95).

Names were an indication of family membership. Athenians bore one personal name and were distinguished from others by the use of a patronymic, a form of their father's name, and a demotic, which indicated the *deme* to which their family belonged (Pomeroy 1998: 73; Golden 2003: 21). Names ran in families, the father's name or names incorporated common semantic elements (Golden 2003: 21). Boys names tied them securely to their paternal ancestors and less frequently to their maternal ones, so it was usual to name the first son after his paternal grandfather and the second after his maternal grandfather. In Athens, as the names of respectable women were customarily never invoked while they were alive, sources for the study of girl's names are far less than those for boys. The limited evidence available indicates that a girl was given a name derived from the male line, missing out a generation. Thus a firstborn daughter would be named after her father's mother. Few recorded families raised more than one daughter and even if they did so, rarely are the names of more than one known (Pomeroy 1998: 73).

In Sparta the father's names were less commonly used as the father's influence was weaker than at Athens (Golden 2003: 21).

<sup>12</sup> The translation used for Aristotle's *Historia Animalium* is Balme D.M. & Peck A.L. (1991) *Historia Animalium*.

#### 4.2.2 Introduction to the broader community

Once an Athenian infant (*nepios*) had been accepted as a member of his *oikos*, the next step was the introduction to his paternal *phratry* (brotherhood), a pseudo kinship group. Membership of a *phratry* and *deme* (local ward) was inherited from the father and enrolment in the father's *phratry* was an essential step in becoming a full Athenian citizen. The father presented his *nepios* to his *phratry* at the annual autumn festival of *Apatouria*, a three-day *phratry* festival in honour of Zeus, Athena and Hephaestus (Katz 2003: 126-8). The father provided an animal for sacrifice and swore to the legitimacy of the infant (Neils 2003: 145). The importance of the family was demonstrated by the fact that the father had to attest that the infant was the legitimate offspring of his marriage to an Athenian female citizen, and if necessary he had to provide witnesses to the said marriage. The timing of this presentation most likely occurred at the first celebration of the *Apatouria* following the child's birth, but some scholars imply that this could occur later in the infant's life, possibly as late as seven years of age, but a late introduction could be viewed as irregular or suspicious (Golden 1993: 26). Whether or not girls were introduced to the father's *phratry* has provoked much scholarly debate and it is believed that some girls, particularly *epikleroi* (heiresses), may have been introduced, but the very name '*phratry*' (brotherhood) would intimate that girls were peripheral (Beaumont 2015: 68; Pomeroy 1995: 116). The *Amphidromia* was the *brephos*' incorporation into its own family group whereas the *Apatouria* introduced the *nepios* to a wider kinship group (Beaumont 2015: 76).

Another public ceremony in which Athenian children were involved, took place at the great spring festival of Dionysos, known as the *Anthesteria*, where the new wine was opened and tasted (Neils 2003: 145). A child was presented to Athenian society as a ritual participant at the *Anthesteria* for the first time during his third year, and thereafter on an annual basis (Beaumont 2015: 76). On the second day of the festival, known as the *Choes*, or the feast of the wine jugs, drinking contests were held. Children (*pais*) between the ages of three and four received miniature versions of the adult drinking vessels used in these contests and may possibly have been given their first taste of wine (Neils 2003: 145). The *choes* given to children may have been evidence of mimicry of adult activities (Appendix 1. Figs. 1-6) (Golden 1993: 43). Access to wine represented the first step in the integration of a child into the adult world (Combiano 1995:100). The *Anthesteria* was a festival that celebrated new growth and transformation, specifically the grape into wine, but also Athenian infants into the newest members of the community. The importance of this festival as a special ritual for children is attested by the fact that their age was sometimes calculated in '*choes*' (Neils 2003: 146). Beaumont (2015: 76) states that girls were probably equal participants in this celebration, despite the fewer number of miniature *choes* depicting girls as opposed to boys. She concludes that this merely reinforces the higher social value placed on boy children rather than girls, therefore boys were more likely to be given festival gifts than girls. Pomeroy (1997: 118-9), however, suggests that the difference in depictions on the *choes* could be explained by the fact that there might be fewer three-year-old girls in Athens than boys, or that fathers may not have been as enthusiastic to show off their daughters, so did not take them to the *Anthesteria* (Pomeroy 1997: 118-9).

Inclusion in family cults within the confines of the *oikos* and presence as part of a family group at public festivals created a presumption of family membership which was essential for a child's later claim to citizenship (Pomeroy 1998: 69). Membership of cults which exclude others affirms such affiliation and at the *oikos* level, such cults were exclusive (Pomeroy 1998: 69). In Athens the head of the household (*kyrios*) was the chief priest for his family and it was he who determined who would be admitted to the family cults (Pomeroy 1998: 68). Unless they were given up for adoption in later life, the children of the *kyrios* were lifelong members of the family's cult and even at marriage a daughter did not relinquish her membership (Pomeroy 1995: 114). Because the Spartan state was determined to minimise the influence of the family in favour of the state, family cults were unknown in Sparta (Pomeroy 1998: 105).

#### 4.2.3 The infant (*nepios*) within the household

Aristotle maintained that children were incomplete; although they had free will they lacked *prohairesis* (resolve or purpose) and so could not be happy or moral (Aristot. *Eud. Eth.* 7.1240b<sup>13</sup>; *Pol.* 1.1260a). Beaumont (2015: 118) quotes Plato's *Protagoras* in stating that 'as soon as a child understands what is said to him, the nurse, the mother, the *paidagogos* and the father himself struggle that the child may be as good as possible'. Plato stated that luxury made a child bad-tempered, irritable and apt to react violently to trivial things. At the other extreme, 'unduly savage repression turns children into cringing slaves and puts them at odds with the world that they become unfit to be members of a community' (Plat. *Laws* 7.791).

According to Plato, in the early years, the administration of mild forms of discipline was thought to suffice (Plat. *Laws* 7.793E). Punishment, however, did not always warrant violence, naughty children were simply threatened with tales of frightening creatures who carried away bad children (Barrow 2001: 34). Sommerville (1982: 30) however, states that both Plato and Aristotle felt that care should be taken in the stories nurses told to children as tales of the bogeyman (*bampoulas*), which were meant to scare children into good behaviour, might actually damage them mentally. Plato even thought that the most revered of the poets, Homer and Hesiod, ought to be expurgated for children as they portrayed the gods as absurd and even immoral (Sommerville 1982: 30).

In both Athens and Sparta, the first six years of a child's life was spent almost entirely within the shelter of the *oikos* and its environs. Babies who would not sleep were rocked and had lullabies sung to them (Barrow 1976: 34). Plato stated that children, especially tiny infants would benefit both physically and mentally from being nursed and kept in motion, as far as practicable throughout the day and night and even suggested that children should be carried around by their nurse until the age of three (Plat. *Laws* 7.789-790). Very young children (*nepios*) would have had little concept of what went on outside the household and would have come into contact with only the few people who entered or shared it (Golden 1993:51).

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<sup>13</sup> The translation used for Aristotle's *Eudemian Ethics* is Reeve, C.D.C. (2014) *Aristotle: the Ethics*.

### 4.3 Early childhood

Aristotle observes that children at first cannot talk at all and then they stumble in their speech for a long time. They begin by calling every man ‘father’ and every woman ‘mother’ until they learn to whom these special terms apply (Aristot. *Phys.* 1.184bl 12)<sup>14</sup>.

Once a child reached the age of three years, and was able to walk and talk, he/she thereby transitioned from the stage of infancy (*paidion*) to early childhood (*paidarion*). This would continue until the age of six when boys (*pais*) in both Athens and Sparta would begin their formal education. During this period of their lives children were free from obligations to the state and for upper class children, familial responsibilities would probably be minimal, allowing them to spend their time socialising with their siblings and peer group.

Play as a socialization process was an important aspect of childhood in both Athens and Sparta (Neils & Oakley 2003: 199). Plato states that in the fourth, fifth, sixth and even seventh year of life a child’s character would need to be formed while he played and the period from three to six years was to be characterised by games with other children and the administration of mild discipline (Plat. *Laws* 7.794). Both Plato and Aristotle were keenly aware of the important role play took in shaping the character, morals and physical abilities of children and appreciated the educational and socialization value of play (Neils & Oakley 2003: 264). Aristotle believed that from age two until age five the child should continue to exercise through play but both the forms of play and the stories told to children must be supervised by officials (Aristot. *Pol.* 7.17 1336 a). In Plato’s opinion, children love to play and will invent games whenever they come together (Plat. *Laws* 7.797). Aristotle felt that the enthusiasm for play should be diverted into productive channels; play should help identify aptitudes, toys should prepare the child for his or her role in life and skills should be taught with the aid of games (Aristot. *Pol.* 7. 17.1336a). Plato was convinced that children’s games affected legislation so crucially as to determine whether the laws that were passed would survive or not. ‘If you could control the way children play, and the same children always play the same games under the same rules and in the same conditions and get pleasure from the same toys, you’ll find that the conventions of adult life too are left in peace without alteration’ (Plat. *Laws* 7.797).

As with many other aspects of life, little evidence is available for the way in which Spartan children amused himself/herself during the early years.

#### 4.3.1 Toys

Toys are a welcome reminder that parents have long recognized the child’s right to enjoy themselves (Sommerville 1992: 22). The illustrations on various surviving *choes*, given to children at the annual *Anthesteria* festival, are the most comprehensive source of information of children’s activities at specific ages. These portray a range of childhood activities, from crawling infants to the types of toys, games and pets which amused ancient Greek children (Neils 2003: 146). Appendix 1, Pages 47 Figs. 1 to 6 are examples of some of these illustrations. Neils & Oakley (2003: 264) state that while some toys were enjoyed by both sexes, some were gender specific and reinforced stereotypical gender roles, therefore girls

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<sup>14</sup> The translation used for Aristotle’s *Physics* is Wickstead, P.H. & Cornford, F.M. (1968) *Aristotle: the Physics*.

played with dolls and boys with toy carts. However, Beaumont (2015: 131) comments that material records present only an artistic expression of the socially accepted constructs of children's play and that at least in early childhood, male and female siblings would have played together and shared their toys.

The rattle was probably the first toy given to children. Aristotle's approval of the toy was expressed in the words 'children should also have some pursuit: "the rattle of Archytas", which they give to children so they use this and not break anything around the house, should be supposed a fine thing; anything young is incapable of keeping still' (Aristot. *Pol.* 8.6.1340b). These rattles were made of a variety of materials but only the terracotta ones survive. Often formed into the shape of animals, these would appeal to small infants (Neils & Oakley 2003: 265). Those in the shape of a pig may have had symbolic or magical associations as in Sparta it was the custom to sacrifice piglets at the *Tithenides*, a festival of nurses, in order to protect babies in their care. Some rattles contained wolves teeth or coral and the sound produced was probably intended to ward off evil (Neils & Oakley 2003:265).

Once an infant was able to walk, he might be given a toy on wheels to push or pull, or these rollers may have been used to actually teach the child to walk (Oakley 2003: 180). These were often made to represent animals, horses being the favourite. The toy roller was the most common plaything illustrated in Greek art, on vases and gravestones. An example of these rollers is illustrated in Appendix 1, Page 47, Fig. 6. A box or platform could be positioned between the wheels for giving rides to *choes*, pet animals or playmates (Neils & Oakley 2003: 266, 269). Other common toys were clay animals, dolls, balls, tops, yo-yos, hoops, see-saws, and swings as well as small cymbals and other noise-makers. Available literature also mentions kites, boats, and rocking horse, usually homemade (Neils & Oakley 2003: 264; Golden 1993: 54). Strepsiades, the doting father in Aristophanes' *Clouds*, tells how his precocious son used to construct his own toys:

'When he was only knee-high to a grasshopper, he made houses out of clay and wooden boats and chariots from bits of leather, and he carved pomegranates into the shape of little frogs' (Ar. *Clouds* 877-881)<sup>15</sup>.

#### 4.3.2 Games

The socialization process engendered by children's participation in games was an important factor in how they learned to interact with their peers, and within the family brothers and sisters became more closely bonded (Neils & Oakley 2003: 264). Learning that the rules of the game must be obeyed provided a lesson in discipline and respect for the law, while playing team games helped to foster the idea of cooperation and solidarity, attributes required of the 'ideal' Spartan male citizen as described in Chapter 2, Pages 21-22. The game of balancing a stick on the finger while moving promoted agility and control (Appendix , Page 49, Fig. 8) and juggling with balls of wool, apples or similar round objects, (Appendix 1, Page 48, Fig. 7) improved dexterity and hand-eye coordination (Neils & Oakley 2003: 272-273). As children grew older, so their games would become more intricate and serve to improve strength and agility, attributes which would stand them in good stead in later life.

<sup>15</sup> The translation used for Aristophanes' *Clouds* is Henderson J. (2000) *Aristophanes: Lysistrata/ Birds*.

The game of *passé-boule*, featured in Appendix 1, Page 46, Fig. 3, would have involved accuracy as well as ball skills. The game most depicted in art from the 6<sup>th</sup> to the 4<sup>th</sup> centuries BCE is *ephedrismos*. This involved one playmate, while being blindfolded, carrying another on his or her back and the blindfold player having to find a target set on the ground (Appendix 1, Page 46, Fig. 4). This game was played by both girls and boys (Beaumont 2015: 132). One of the most popular games for both boys and girls was *astragaloï* (knuckle-bones), the commonest form were simply the ankle bones of sheep or goats, and children were known to become very attached to their own set of *astragaloï*. (Appendix 1, Page 47, Fig. 5 shows boys engrossed in the game). Undoubtedly, some games were just played for entertainment.

#### 4.3.3 Pets

In addition to toys and games, pet animals would also have kept Athenian children amused (Beaumont 2015: 133). According to the evidence of Attic vases as well as grave stelai, Greek children enjoyed a variety of pets, the most popular pets illustrated were birds, dogs, cocks and rabbits or hares. As well as these standard types of pet, more unusual animals, such as tortoises, weasel and even the spotted cheetah have also been recorded, although the latter was more closely associated with older boys (Beaumont 2015: 133, 134). The Maltese-type spaniel appears to have been one of the most popular breed of dog, Appendix 1, Page 49, Fig. 9 shows a young boy playing with a pet dog. In a grave underneath a house in Athens a pet piglet appears to have accompanied the child into the afterlife and the remains of pet dogs have also been discovered in other children's graves (Oakley 2003: 176).

Cockfighting was a popular spectator sport enjoyed particularly by young boys or even toddlers and cocks were often chosen as pets to encourage aggressive spirit in boys (Neils & Oakley 2003: 282). Birds are commonly shown with children on gravestones and their skeletal remains have been found in children's graves. As well as acting as a reminder of the child's former life, birds were thought to be appropriate companions for the dead because, being able to fly, they were considered able to move between spheres to accompany the deceased (Oakley 2003: 180).

Although little is recorded as to whether children in Sparta were able to enjoy the companionship of pets, Cartledge (2003: 262) states that Spartans took great pride in breeding the highest quality of hunting dogs, therefore it would not be too beyond the bounds of fantasy to imagine that children were able to spend time in playing with the puppies thus produced.

#### 4.4 Religious observance

Religion provided the main avenue for children to be introduced to the life of the *polis* (Golden 1993: 41). Child divinities are unusual in Greek religion, but their very existence at all highlights the special importance that the Greeks accorded to childhood. Personification of youthful gods tend to represent positive qualities and the fact that negative qualities and unpopular divinities are never portrayed as young, provides a clue to the ancient Greek concept of childhood (Neils 2003: 143).

Cult observation is a thread running through the Athenian child's life in both the family and the community. Families sacrificed together and generally included children in cult observation. Such solemn and significant acts would bind together children with those who shared in them. Worshipping together as a family was believed to gain the gods as witness to their unity (Golden 1993: 30, 31, 49). It also laid the foundation for the essential qualities of piety and morality which would be enhanced as the child progressed on the journey to adulthood and which were required attributes of the 'ideal' citizens of both Athens and Sparta as described in Chapter 2.

Children often played important roles in sacrifices and other rituals and, because of their perceived purity and innocence, were often used as a medium for divination. An undefiled or pure boy was considered to be the most auspicious medium for holding the entrails of a sacrificed animal so that they were in no way tainted before divination. Whether they were participants in their own age-related rituals or assistants in adult ceremonies, children played a crucial role in Greek religious practice (Neils 2003: 158,159).

Golden (1990: 44) states that initiation into the Eleusinian mysteries was open to children. However, Beaumont (2015: 160, 161) states that although the issue of whether children other than the *pais aph'hestias* were eligible for initiation is a matter on which no scholarly agreement exists. The *pais aph'hestias*, or hearth child was one of the honorary positions which was held annually by the elected child of a noble Athenian family, who was initiated at the community's expense in order to gain the favour of Demeter by acting as an intermediary between the initiates and the divine, placating the gods like priests who sacrifice on behalf of their cities (Golden 1993: 44).

The *pais amphithalēs*, a child with both parents living, played an important role in the Athenian marriage ceremony. Such a child served as a symbol of one family's good fortune and it was hoped as would bring the blessings of good fortune and fertility for the marrying couple (Beaumont 2015: 162). According to Beaumont (2015: 162), on the evening before the wedding the groom slept at the house of his future father-in-law accompanied by a girl *amphithalēs* and a male *amphithalēs* slept with the bride on her transferral to the house of her new husband. At the ceremony a boy *amphithalēs*, crowned with a wreath of thorns and acorns, distributed bread to the assembled company from a basket which resembled a child's cradle (Golden 1993: 30).

Children were involved in the *Aiora*, part of the festival of the *Apatouria*, a rite in which they sat in swings tied to the branches of trees. This was perhaps a fertility rite of purification (Golden 1993: 43).

Funerals and rituals associated with death are important areas that children were involved in in different ways. Death invaded every ancient Greek household on a regular basis. Life expectancy was low and as men in Athens married later in life than women, it would not be unusual for a father to die before some of his children grew up (Oakley 2003: 163). The funeral in ancient Greece was very much a family affair as family members rather than priests or undertakers were responsible for all aspects of the ceremony (Oakley 2003: 163). Much of the care of the dead was in the hands of female members of the family and from a

young age girls would learn the required observations and the rituals of lamentation from their mothers (Pomeroy 1998: 105, 106). Children were encouraged to attend the funeral of relatives as well as to make the mandatory visits to the tomb, which occurred on specific days or as required. By actively participating in all aspects surrounding the death of a family member, children learnt the rituals of the family cult of the dead (Oakley 2003: 167). Respect and care for parents and family were characteristics expected of the 'ideal' citizens, both male and female, in Athens and Sparta

#### 4.5 Summary

A child in both Athens and Sparta, began its life's journey as a helpless infant, unable to care for itself, but in the following six years he/she developed physically, mentally and socially. These years would be a time of enculturation and socialisation within the *oikos*. Children would learn their role in the family by imitation of the adults with whom they came into contact as well as by playing together with siblings and peers. By the time children reached the end of this six-year period, they were considered to be ready for the next step on the journey into adulthood which would involve greater involvement in the wider community.

Once a Spartan boy reached the age of seven he left the family home for the first time to begin his arduous journey through the compulsory state educational system, and would not return to live at home until after the age of thirty. Similarly, Athenian boys usually began their formal academic education at the same age, but this would depend upon what their fathers could afford or were inclined to pay. However, they would continue to live at home until their marriage, usually in their mid-thirties (Shapiro 2003: 107).

As he left the world of females and embarked on his education beyond the confines of the *oikos*, an Athenian boy may have felt a sense of freedom and independence, or perhaps a feeling of loneliness and abandonment, but the truth was that he would be constantly subject to adult supervision, by either his elders, father, teacher or *paidagōgi* and surrounded by others of his age-group. He was in a true transitional stage, too old for the nursery but not yet old or educated enough to take his place with other citizens in the *polis*.

### Appendix 1



Figure 1: Crawling baby. Attic red-figure *chous*, attributed to the Crawling Boy Workshop, ca 420 BCE. Princeton University Art Museum. Y1953-22.



Figure 2: Miniature Attic red-figure *chous* depicting two boys drawing another in a cart. 425-400 BCE. British Museum. 1910. 0615.5

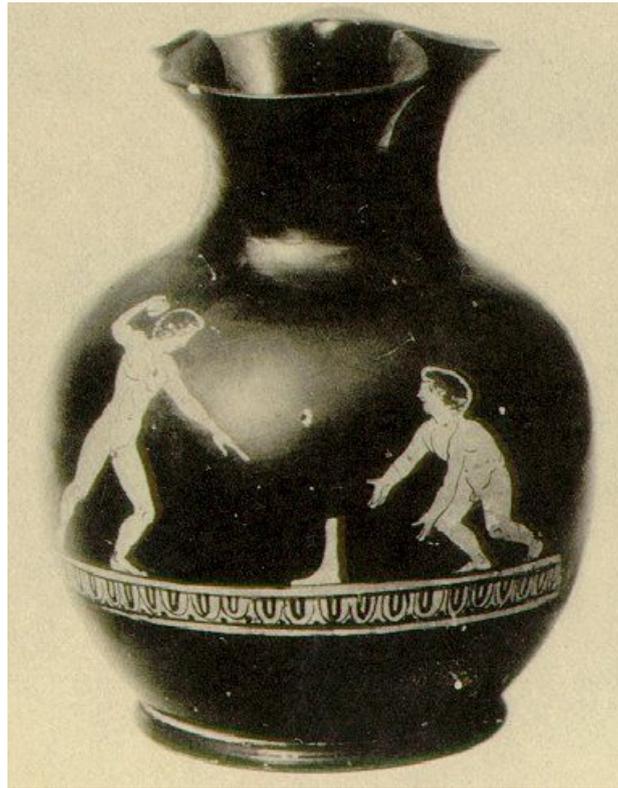


Figure 3: Boys playing passé-boule. Attic red-figure *chous*, ca 425 BCE. New York Metropolitan Museum of Art. 25.78.48



Figure 4: Boys playing ephedrismos. Attic red-figure *chous*, ca 425 BCE. Metropolitan Museum of Art.



Figure 5: Boys playing knuckle-bones. Attic red-figure *chous*, attributed to the Group of Boston. 10. 190, ca 420 BCE. The J. Paul Getty Museum. 96.AE. 28



Figure 6: Boy wheeling his toy roller. Attic red-figure *chous*, ca 425 BCE. Bowdoin College Museum of Art. 1915. 038



Figure 7: Girl juggling. Attic red-figure *lekythos*, ca 450 BCE. Attributed to Karlsruhe Painter. Metropolitan Museum of Art. 41.162.147.



Figure 8: Girl balancing a stick. Attic red-figure *lekythos*, attributed to the Manner of the Meidias Painter, ca 420 BCE. The Minneapolis Institute of Arts. 57.41.1



Figure 9: Boy and dog. Attic red-figure *chous*, ca 425 BCE. Louvre Dept. of Antiquities, Paris. CA 2910.

## Chapter 5

### Education of boys in Athens: *Paideia*

According to Thucydides, Pericles claimed that Athens prided itself on being an open society whose citizens were receptive to new ideas and to learning new skills, they had a marked sense of individual independence and an immense pride in their democracy (Thuc. 2. 34-46). Despite its political ingenuity and educational aspirations, Athens did not implement a comprehensive or compulsory system of education (formal schooling) for their civic responsibilities. Citizens were free to choose what type of education to give their children (Griffin 2001: 24). Among philosophical schools of the 5<sup>th</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> centuries BCE however, was the idea that education, or *paideia*, was an important means through which to produce the ideal type of citizen. *Paideia* had as its goal political man, both beautiful and good, the servant of the *polis*.

Aristotle's statement that just as the 'rattle of Archytas' was for infants to stop them from breaking things, so 'education is a rattle for the young when they are bigger' (Aristot. *Pol.* 1340bl 25), suggests that education was something with which to keep boys occupied while they were growing up. Plato, on the other hand, stated that 'good education [*paideia*] makes good citizens and good citizens, helped by good education, become better than they were' (Plat. *Rep.* 1V 424)<sup>16</sup> thereby claiming that it is fundamental to the *polis*.

This chapter will consider the education – *paideia* – of boys in Athens from the age of six/seven years (the age at which they would begin their schooling) to the age of 20 (when they had completed their military training and were on the cusp of manhood). 'Formal' schooling will be considered, but so too will other institutions that were part of the education of the child in a broader sense, such as physical training, the palaestra, the symposium, pederasty, and the *ephebia*.

#### 5.1 Schooling

Formal education was not compulsory; Athenian schools were privately run and it was the father or guardian who decided when and for how long a boy should be educated (Golden 2003: 19; Plat. *Prot.* 325E). However, knowledge of literature was traditional in aristocratic families and consequently Athenian fathers gave their sons the best education which they could afford (Dobson 1963: 31). Only from the mid-5<sup>th</sup> century BCE did the state intervene by providing education, at state expense, for boys whose fathers had been killed in fighting for the city (Beaumont 2015: 135). Although there were no state schools, basic education of some kind was almost universal during the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> centuries BCE; even Aristophanes' sausage-seller can apparently read and write (Aristoph. *Kn.* 188-189<sup>17</sup>; Hall 2014: 4). By the 4<sup>th</sup> century BCE many citizens acquired some basic form of literacy which enabled them to read their name on lists, or to sign a contract. As limited forms of literacy were spreading, however, Fisher (1998: 218) asserts that Athenians were still exposed to the works of

<sup>16</sup> The translation used for Plato's *Republic* is Richards I.A. (1966) *Plato's Republic*.

<sup>17</sup> The translation used for Aristophanes *Knights* is Merry W.W. (1902) *Aristophanes: the Knights*.

literature mainly by hearing and seeing them performed or recited. Athenian society, then, seems to have remained predominantly an oral culture even in the 4<sup>th</sup> century BCE.

### 5.1.1 *Paidagogoi*

From an early age the sons of wealthy Athenians were given into the care of a trustworthy male slave, known as a *paidagogos*. The *paidagogos* was not a teacher, although he could have educated himself, but his duty was to watch over his young charge, accompany him to and from school carrying his equipment and ensuring that he came to no harm and was not exposed to corrupting influences (Sommerville 1982: 29). The *paidagogos* spent the whole day in the classroom with his charge and supervised his behaviour. Acting as the agent of the child's father or guardian, the *paidagogos* was empowered to deliver suitable punishment when necessary (Barrow 2001: 39). As Athenian men directed much of their energy outside the home and some probably spent very little time with their young sons, these *paidagogoi* may have provided a continuous adult male presence for the young boys. However, they still remained slaves and would generally have been regarded as intellectually and morally inferior to free citizens. Being disciplined by a person of such inferior standing could cause confusion to the child as he gained in maturity (Golden 1993: 155). According to Plato, house slaves may undercut a father's authority and example and '*paidagogoi* have no more taste and judgement than children themselves' (Plat. *Rep.* 8.549e; 3.397d). Nevertheless, regular appearances in the epigraphical and literary record demonstrate that high regard and deep affection sometimes developed between slaves and their former charges and this included paying for the slaves' funeral and commemoration (Foxhall 2013: 97).

The role of the *paidagogos*, like the role of ever-present and under-valued teachers, presents a curious contradiction; that Athenians, who believed that association and mimicry were essential elements in upbringing and education, should assign their children to the care of slaves and other individuals who, by their own perceptions, were patently unsuited to be models or mentors (Golden 1993: 148). Xenophon tells us that Lycurgus was critical of societies like Athens 'who claim to give their sons the finest education, yet as soon as they are able to understand what is said to them, immediately put them under the care of servants as tutors and at once despatch them to school to learn reading, writing and music and the art of wrestling' (Xen. *Const. Lac.* 2).

### 5.1.2 The school

Aristotle notes that: 'up to seven years, [a child] must necessarily have its rearing at home' (Aristot. *Pol.* 1336bl 40). At approximately seven years of age an Athenian boy was deemed old enough to embark upon his formal education and he was sent to school. The evidence of school scenes on Attic pottery (such as figure 10 of Appendix 2, Page 60.) attest to some form of education outside the home as early as the beginning of the 5<sup>th</sup> century BCE (Garland 1993: 62). Schools were private enterprises, established and run for profit by individual entrepreneurs who followed their own curricula and methods (Golden 2003:17). Athenians did not talk about going to 'school', but rather going to the house of this or that teacher. Most teachers probably had a room hired for the purpose and in which they taught a number of children. Although Herodotus mentions an incident in 494 BCE when the roof of a school

collapsed, where one hundred and twenty children were doing their writing exercises, it was more likely that perhaps ten or less attended one teacher (Hdt. VI. 27; Barrow 2001: 36).

In the schoolroom the seating seems to have been in the form of benches or stools, but rather than using desks it seems pupils learnt to write on wooden tablets covered in wax which were held on the knee: Fig. 11 of Appendix 2, Page 60, clearly suggests this scenario (Barrow 1996: 39). Considerable textual evidence remains of the accoutrements of school life, such as writing tablets, papyri, styli, pens and inkpots but no desks or tables (Neils & Oakley 2003: 198). Visual evidence may support this; the vase-painting from an Attic red-figure kylix attributed to the Eucharides Painter, shows a boy of school-going age working with his tablet and a stylus on his lap (see Appendix 2, Page 60, Fig. 11). The only official control the city exercised over the school, as far as we know, was a moral one. Solon had made it unlawful for schools to open before day-break or to remain open after dark on the grounds that in the night hours boys might be exposed to corrupting influences (Aeschin. 1. 9-12)<sup>18</sup>. Lessons took up the morning and boys would go home at lunchtime and return to school in the afternoon for physical exercise or further tuition (Barrow 2001: 34). Each day was the same and there were no Sundays to give a weekly day of rest but the many religious festivals gave a welcome relief (Dobson 1963: 34). For this reason the month of February (*Anthesterion*) seemed to become in practice one long unofficial holiday (Barrow 2001: 46). The ‘mean man’ of Theophrastus’s character sketches is described in the following way: ‘when his son is ill and has to miss a few odd days from school he is very careful to subtract the appropriate amount from the teacher’s pay. And of course during *Anthesterion* he saves money by not letting his son go to school at all on the few days that are not festival days’ (Thphr. *Char.* 30)<sup>19</sup>. This suggests that teachers were paid per day that they taught, but it also tells us that the month of *Anthesterion* was filled with holidays, and therefore non-school days.

### 5.1.3 The teacher

The status of teacher in Athens appears to be ambivalent. Despite the fact that Athenians placed such emphasis on education, and insisted that the teachers to whom they assigned this responsibility, should be well-qualified and responsible, teachers were not often given the respect which their position might have demanded (Aeschin. 1. 9-11; Barrow 2001: 16-17). To be a teacher in Athens meant a lack of any significant status. This attitude is summed up by the orator Demosthenes who, when insulting his enemy, Aeschines, is reported as saying: ‘You were brought up in total poverty. You actually helped your father sweat it out in the schoolroom, grinding the soot for the ink, scrubbing down the benches and sweeping the room ... You were booed at – I did the booing; you taught the ABC – I was the pupil’ (Dem. 1. 257-261)<sup>20</sup>. It must be taken into account that Aeschines is deliberately insulting his opponent in the case, and may be overly harsh and exaggerating for effect. However, he also comments more generally about teachers. Aeschines says that teachers, despite being dependent upon a good reputation for their livelihood, were not really trusted or trustworthy, and that the laws concerning the opening and closing of school were because ‘nobody trusts the schoolmaster alone with his pupils in the dark’ (Aeschin. 1. 9-11). Even though Aristotle

<sup>18</sup> The translation used for Aeschines *Against Timarcus* is Adams C.D. (1948) *The speeches of Aeschines*.

<sup>19</sup> The translation used for Theophrastus *Character 30* is Ussher R.G. (1960)

<sup>20</sup> The translation used for Demosthenes is Saunders, A.W.W. (1975) *Demosthenes and Aeschines*.

grouped teachers with gods and parents as those whom it is wrong to contradict, he also acknowledged that there were some children who did not wish to be ruled, nor to submit to authority, even in school (Aristot. *Rh.* 2.1398b 12; *Pol.* 1295b 15)<sup>21</sup>. Plato regarded the failure of pupils to heed their teachers as a step on the road to tyranny (Plat. *Rep.* 8.562C-563A). According to Protagoras, parents urged teachers to concentrate more on good behaviour (*eukosmia*) than academic progress and the teachers did as they were asked (Plat. *Prot.* 325d). These same teachers, who were treated with so little respect, were the ones to whom Athenian parents entrusted their sons on a daily basis.

In discussing education Aristotle notes that it was customary for boys to be taught literacy—which probably also included a degree of numeracy – as well as physical education and music (Aristot. *Pol.* 1337b 25). Images of boys at their lessons in reading, writing, recitation, singing, playing the lyre or flute or exercising, are frequently depicted in Attic red-figure pot painting (Beaumont 2015: 137). Instruction of boys in literacy and numeracy, as well as imparting to them knowledge and committal to memory of the great works of Greek poetry, was done by the *grammatistes* or letters teacher. According to Golden (1993: 65), methods of instruction stifled originality and self-expression, relying instead on mimicry and memory. Writing was done on wax-covered tablets following the furrows of an inscribed alphabet and tracing letters sketched in wax using a stylus (Golden 1993: 65). Writing tablets had two leaves connected by a hinge and could be closed to protect their waxed surface. The closed tablets were fitted with a handle to facilitate carrying (Beaumont 2015: 143). Once the pupil had made reasonable progress he was allowed to use ink and papyrus and when sufficiently familiar with his letters, he learnt to read. The *grammatistes* probably also taught the boys very basic mathematics, no more than counting, addition, division and multiplication, using an abacus (Barrow 2001: 40). However, the real value of the *grammatistes*' teaching was the reading and learning of the great works of Greek poetry and prose, especially Homer's *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. Protagoras states: 'when the children have learnt their letters and are beginning to understand the written word as well as the spoken, they are made to learn by heart the famous poets, whose works contain sound advice and good stories, as well as praise of the heroes of old, so that the child is inspired to imitate them' (Plat. *Prot.* 325e). The goal then, according to Plato, is to learn about the behaviour of the great heroes of old, and to imitate such worthy behaviour, so the purpose is strongly moralistic. Having learnt their lessons, pupils were made to recite long passages with appropriate delivery and gesture (Dobson 1963: 37). The reason for such memorisation was that in Homer the boys could see how men ought to behave and follow this example (Barrow 2001: 40).

The teaching of the *grammatistes* shared common ground with the *kitharistes* or music teacher, who together with teaching the boys to play the lyre, *kithara* and *aulos*, also educated them in poetic recitation to the accompaniment of music (Beaumont 2015: 142). Education in reading, writing and music was considered to be essential for the character of the 'ideal' Athenian citizen as discussed in Chapter 2, Pages 21,22. Protagoras tells us that 'in this way they become more cultured, more controlled and better balanced people, and their behaviour is all the better for it. For the truth is that the whole of one's life benefits from a calm, well-ordered personality' (Plat. *Prot.* 326a). It was considered by the Athenians to be one of the accomplishments of a gentleman, or well-educated man, to sing and play the works of the

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<sup>21</sup> The translation used for Aristotle's *Rhetoric* is Kennedy G.A. (2007) *Aristotle : on rhetoric*.

poets. Not only were the poems themselves considered to be educational but it was believed that the mere sound of music could have a great effect on the mood and character of the listener (Barrow 2001: 42). So strongly did Plato believe in such properties of music that he wrote: ‘a new style of music is to be guarded against at all times. For whenever new styles of music are introduced they bring with them new styles of behaviour and new beliefs’ (Plat. *Rep.* 424c). Music lessons were believed to do for the soul and character of a man that which gymnastics did for his body and Plato believed that anyone who could not sing or dance in a choir was simply not educated (Barrow 2001:42). Participation in music was amongst the essential attributes of the ideal Athenian citizen listed in Chapter 2, Pages 21, 22.

Just as the *grammatistes* and the *kitharistes* together were thought to develop a moderate and disciplined mind and character in the boy through the study and emulation of the great poets, so the *paidotrope* was meant to develop a sound and healthy body through physical training so that they ‘may not be compelled through bodily weakness to play the coward in war or on any other occasion’ (Plat. *Prot.* 326A). The *kaloskagothas*, beautiful body and mind, was considered to be amongst the most important qualities which constituted the character of the ‘ideal’ Athenian citizen as discussed in Chapter 2, Pages 21,22.

From the age of about twelve, boys were taken to the *palaestra* or wrestling school, by either their father or *paidagogos* (Barrow 2001: 43). Here they would be trained in running, long jump, throwing the discus and javelin, as well as boxing, wrestling and the *pankration*. The latter was an all-inclusive type of fighting with few holds barred, but as the contest took place in muddy ground, the brutality of this event was somewhat lessened (Barrow 2001: 45). Several depictions exist of boys involved in various athletic activities as well as participating in wrestling matches (Appendix 2, Pages 62,63, Figs.13 & 14).

Exercise and music were recognized as the ingredients that formed the model citizen. According to Aristotle: ‘expertise in letters and drawing [while] useful for life and having many uses, gymnastics [contribute] to courage’ (Aristot. *Pol.* 8 1337bl 25). Although the *paidotribes* trained the boys in athletics and gymnastics, his most important role was to instil in them the need and ability to maintain and care for their bodies. In this way the three disciplines were intended to produce in Athenian boys a healthy mind in a healthy body with the values and behaviour appropriate to the ideal future citizen as described in Chapter 2, Pages 21,22.

## 5.2. Discipline and punishment

The stress placed on discipline and punishment reflects one of the goals of Athenian schooling, to produce citizens with the hoplite virtues of courage and self-control rather than skills (Golden 1993:65). These virtues are amongst the qualities required of the ideal citizen which are described in Chapter 2, Pages 21,22. Corporal punishment was common and teachers imposed their authority through beatings (Golden 1993: 64). Boys learned that actions had consequences and those who misbehaved faced a severe beating from their father, teacher or *paidagogos*. As Plato described: ‘if he obeys, well and good, if not he is straightened by threats and blows, like a piece of bent or warped wood’ (Plat. *Prot.* 325c). Beaumont (2015:119) records five examples showing punishment of mortal boys in vase painting iconography, datable to the latter half of the 6<sup>th</sup> century BCE, and all depicting

small, male figures being beaten with a sandal (See Appendix 2, Page 61, Fig. 12 ). In scenes on Attic red figure pottery, the equipment used to represent a schoolroom scene often show typical tools of classroom discipline, such as a cane and sandals (Beaumont 2015: 143).

### 5.3 Higher education

The duration and level of an individual boy's education was dictated by the socio-economic standing of the family and there was no minimum period of education (Beaumont 2015: 135). As with elementary education, higher education was dependent on the economic status of the family and the amount the father was prepared to pay for the education of his son.

Only from around the mid-5<sup>th</sup> century BCE did any kind of higher education become available in the form of instruction in philosophy and rhetoric. Philosophers began to establish themselves in the Athenian public sphere as specialists in youth instruction (Beaumont 2015: 135). Rhetoric was first taught by the Sophists although its importance was already evident in Homer, where the ability to be persuasive in public is a prized asset among leading aristocrats. This newer form of education began to hold intellectual capacity with higher regard than the physical, but this caused controversy between those who held to the older form of education and those who believed that education should be a tool to develop the whole man, including his mind. According to Garland (2013: 167-8), the Sophists were roundly condemned by Socrates who regarded their training as antithetical to the pursuit of philosophy. He did so in part because they took a relativist stance on morality whereas he, and his pupil, Plato, believed that virtue was non-negotiable (Garland 2013: 167). Socrates' method of teaching was to ask questions of his pupils and then demonstrate that the several answers received did not fit together. Socrates stated that 'human wisdom begins with the recognition of one's own ignorance' (Kraut 2017: 1).

The art of public speaking, or rhetoric, was an important attribute for any young man who perhaps intended to enter the political arena or simply as a future citizen. Pericles emphasised the expectation that all Athenian citizens should be prepared to take part in the affairs of the *polis*: 'unlike any other nation, [Athens regards he] who takes no part in these duties not as unambitious but as useless' (Thuc. 2.34-46).

### 5.4 Socialization and competition

Socialization played a major role in the education of the future citizens of Athens and competition and reward were features of all areas of Athenian life. Athenian boys were expected to take their place in the community by passing through a number of stages together with their peers (Beaumont 2015: 18). Schools were important areas of peer interaction and as boys would probably have attended schools in their own neighbourhood, they would have come into contact with other boys from this area. As boys grew older so the nature of interaction with their peers would also change. No longer would they be satisfied with the innocent amusements and playthings of infancy, their games would take on a more agonistic nature, involving greater strength and skill. A competitive spirit was one of the essential qualities required of the 'ideal' Athenian citizen. Beaumont (2015:131-2) reports depictions of boys playing with *astragaloi* (knucklebones) on pot painting (See Appendix 1, Page 47, Fig. 5), as well as terracotta figurines, and in particular an image, dating to about 500 BCE,

carved in relief on a statue base, depicting youths involved in a ball game reminiscent of today's game of hockey (Beaumont 2015: 133-4) (see Appendix 2, Page 63, Fig. 15).

Boys also met and matched themselves with one another through musical and athletic competitions at the city's major religious festivals. Here they mixed under close adult supervision according to terms established by the *polis* (Golden 1993: 65). Attendance at cult and religious festivals played a major role in the process of socialization and ritual defined and marked the significant stages of the boy's maturation. Their participation in religious rites, together with family members, further reinforced their position as legitimate members of a particular *oikos* and cult activity brought them into community life by preparing them for their future (Golden 1993: 41, 46).

As boys advanced in age and ventured further from the female-dominated atmosphere of the *oikos*, their horizons would have expanded and they could not avoid being exposed to the cosmopolitan nature of Athens, whose multi-ethnic residents were drawn from all areas of the known world. Not only would this provide the youth with a living geography lesson but could also foster pride in their city which was able to attract such a diverse assortment of people anxious to settle there. According to Thucydides, Pericles drew attention to the cosmopolitan nature of Athens in his funeral oration: 'Because of the greatness of our city the fruits of the whole world flow in upon us, so that we enjoy the goods of other countries as freely as our own' (Thuc. 2. 34-46).

Festival contexts provided the opportunity for many types of competition. On the occasion of musical contests, choirs of boys were prepared by teachers under the watchful eye of *chorēgoi*, citizens over the age of forty, wealthy enough to pay for the preparation and training of the choir and who provided their own house for the purpose (Combiano 1995: 106). These competitions, set amongst the city's celebration of its gods, must have given the boy singers a sense of pride in belonging to the community and contributing to its welfare (Golden 1993: 67). At the Panathanaea boys competed in events featuring singing and playing the *kithara* (lyre) and the *aulos* (double flute) and could win cash awards. Young boys also performed synchronized dancing to the music of the double flute (Neils 2003: 154). In the choruses boys would share accommodation with others from their own tribe but also with boys of another tribe. In this way a boy's circle of acquaintances would expand beyond those of his immediate family and neighbours. Since the tribe was the basic organizational unit of the Athenian army, this boyhood identification with the tribe could improve military morale and effectiveness when these boys became adult soldiers (Golden 1993: 67).

In Athens, athletics was also a major part of a number of religious festivals and taking part in such competitions was a way in which Greek youth honoured the gods (Neils 2003: 153). Sport provided boys with the opportunity to identify their place within the community but also to escape from it. In local competitions for Athenians, they competed against their fellows in individual sports and joined with their tribesmen in team events. In the celebrations of the Panathenaia and the great Panhellenic games they faced competition from Greeks from all over the Mediterranean world (Golden 1993: 67). Winners at these games won prizes which included large jars of olive oil and their triumph was a source of pride for their communities (Golden 1993: 71). Competitiveness was one of the qualities listed in Chapter 2, Pages 21,22, as being a necessary characteristic of the 'ideal' Athenian citizen. Well-off boys

were at an advantage in athletic festival competitions in that they had the resources which could support special diets and trainers, as well as time to exercise and travel to competitions (Golden 2003: 18).

The gymnasium and palaestra (wrestling grounds) were not only used for athletics training and competition but were also places of socialization, frequented mainly by the wealthy citizens of Athens. This was where boys and youths trained to be men and compete as citizens, athletes and soldiers (Foxhall 2013: 126). As much of an Athenian boy's time, especially amongst the elite, was spent in the gymnasium, it was also an ideal site for the formation of homosexual partnerships (Golden 1993: 60).

Another form of physical activity which was also competitive was horse-riding. Boys learned to ride from an early age so that they could compete in various events in equestrian competitions and later in life to hunt or ride around their estates or to town for pleasure or business. These young riders could qualify to become members of the elite Athenian cavalry military unit (Neils & Oakley 2003: 254). According to Plato, training in the art of horsemanship was a desirable element in the education of young boys from citizen families (Plat. *Laws* V11 794C).

### 5.5. The *Symposion*

The characteristic evening activity of the (elite) Athenian male was the traditional drinking party or *symposion*, a ritualised institution of eating and drinking which Plutarch described as 'a passing of time over wine, which, guided by gracious behaviour, ends in friendship' (Plut. *Mor.* 621). While the symposium was originally associated with the aristocracy (6<sup>th</sup> century BCE), it is an institution that some scholars argue became 'democratised' in the 5<sup>th</sup> century BCE and that attendance at these sympotic events was widespread (Lynch 2007: 247). While every care was taken to protect a young boy from corrupting influences: he must not go out at night and he must not attend performances of a comedy and 'education would make them immune to the harm that arises from such things', a boy could, it seems, accompany his father to a dinner party (Aristot. *Pol.* 1336 bl 15). In the company of adults he must not speak unless spoken to and must preserve modest and unobtrusive behaviour and he was probably sent home before the progress of the festivities was such as to cause the relaxation of the manners of his elders (Plat. *Rep.* 1V 425; Dobson 1963: 43). According to Beaumont (2015: 126), attendance at a *symposion* by an adolescent boy could be the best training for his life as a future citizen. By watching and listening to the wisdom of his elders, and assisting with the evening's activities, though without reclining or drinking, he would gain an understanding of what would be required of him as a full *symposion* participant in later life.

### 5.6 Pederasty

In Athens homosexual relations played a decisive role in the introduction of a youth into adult life. It was difficult for an Athenian youth to have sexual contact with free girls or women, especially amongst the upper classes. The ready availability of sexual contact with household slaves lessened its significance and emotional hold (Combiano 1995: 103). It was mainly in homosexual relations that Athenian boys could achieve sexual intimacy with other Athenians (Golden 1993: 57). Often the teen-aged years following puberty were when the future Athenian citizen entered a pederastic, homosexual relationship with an adult male.

This relationship with an older male citizen represented his rise to a higher level of social interaction, as well as probably constituting his sexual initiation, it also introduced him to the behaviour, standards and knowledge he should aspire to emulate on reaching adulthood (Beaumont 2015: 21-22). The all-male atmosphere of the gymnasias and the games, which accompanied something of a cult of the nude, male body, aided the cultural acceptability of certain forms of homosexual relationships between men and youths (Fisher 1998: 213). Such relationships were acceptable only when asymmetrical, when it involved a younger and older man and when it had a pedagogical as well as a sexual dimension (Combiano 1995: 102; Golden 1993: 58-59). The protocols of such pederastic relationships required modesty and reluctance on the part of the younger partner (*eromenos*), whose favours were usually solicited through courtship gifts from the older partner (*erastēs*). Such relationships, requiring both leisure time and wealth, were thus limited to the upper classes (Katz 1998: 126). As soon as a boy's beard began to grow he abandoned his status as the loved one, and as he became an adult he would assume the role of the lover, acting as an adviser and role model for a younger protégé. Involvement with a well-connected or gifted partner may have proved socially and politically advantageous, not just for the boy but for his entire family (Golden 1993:59).

### 5.7 *Dokimasia*

The wealthy Athenian boy enjoyed a long adolescence involving a gradual acculturation to the civic and social responsibilities that marked the adult's public life. At the age of 16 the youth was re-introduced and officially admitted to his father's *phratry* (Beaumont 2015: 22). His father would swear an oath to his legitimacy and the adolescent's hair would be cut in a ritual known as the *koureion*. This symbolic hair-cutting ritually marked and celebrated the youth's pubescent state and his unfolding transition from boyhood to manhood (Beaumont 2015: 22). In his 18<sup>th</sup> year he was enrolled in his family's *deme* as an Athenian citizen and acquired voting rights and obligations. His successful enrolment was preceded by his first scrutiny, known as *dokimasia*, which amounted to a formal examination of his legitimacy and claim to citizenship status, as well as his biological maturity (Beaumont 2015: 19). Failure to pass this scrutiny meant that the youth was returned to the ranks of the boys (Davidson 2000:143). The next time that a citizen would undergo such a scrutiny would be when he was being considered suitable to hold a particular office, at which time he would also be quizzed on his lineage, life and character, and in particular whether he showed respect and care for his parents, one of the qualities sought in an 'ideal' citizen as listed in Chapter 2, Pages 21,22.

### 5.8 The *Ephebeia*

Once an Athenian youth was accepted by his *deme*, he was then required to fulfil two years of military service as an *ephebos*. According to Beaumont (2015: 22) it was only from 370 BCE that military service became mandatory but most modern scholars agree that the *ephebeia* already existed in some form during the 5<sup>th</sup> century BCE. This was the first occasion on which the state intervened in an Athenian boy's life and also the first occasion that he spent a protracted length of time away from his family and amongst his peers (Neils & Oakley 2003: 310). During the first year the *ephebes*, after a tour of the sanctuaries, were installed in

garrisons in Piraeus and received complete military training (Aristot. *Ath. Const.* 42 2-5)<sup>22</sup>. The second year they passed in review and received the shield and lance of the hoplite warrior from the state before marching through Attica and being stationed in rural fortresses (Garlan 1995: 71). According to Aristotle, after the second year the *ephebes* were obliged to take a sacred oath of loyalty to the Athenian state in the temple of Aglaurus, in which they vowed:

‘I shall not disgrace my sacred weapons nor shall I desert my comrade at my side whenever I stand in the rank. I shall fight in defense of both sacred and secular things and I shall not hand down a fatherland that is reduced in size but one that is larger and stronger. I shall be obedient to the laws that are established and to any that in the future may be wisely established. I shall honour the sacred rites that are ancestral’ (Aristot. *Const. Ath.* 42 2-5).

This vow is an important indicator of the values of the Athenian *polis*: in addition to loyalty, courage and comradeship are emphasised, as well as obedience and respect for law and religion. As a culmination of the *ephebia*, it is also a likely indicator of the kinds of values inculcated during the 2-year military service.

This liminal period, when the youth was cut off from his former life yet not fully accepted into his new role, also served to further emphasize the transition from adolescent youth to early manhood. Although with *deme* registration he had officially become an Athenian citizen, many of the legal and civic rights and obligations were almost immediately suspended for the period of his military service. Only when this service was completed was the youth considered to be truly a man (Beaumont 2015: 22).

## 5.9 Summary

During his two years as an *ephebe*, the youth not only received military training and fulfilled his duty to the state, but also acquired the virtues of steadfastness, courage and loyalty. These attributes, together with the qualities inculcated during his earlier years of formal schooling, such as competence in literacy and numeracy as well as proficiency in music and the ability to express himself eloquently, hopefully resulted in the development of the ‘beautiful and good man’, the *kaloskagothas*. Athletic competition, especially when part of religious festivals, not only fostered his agonistic tendency but was a means to serve the gods and display his piety. Education in rhetoric and public speaking helped to prepare him to fulfil his civic responsibilities and participate in the political functioning of the *polis*. Respect for his parents and other elders would be continuously reinforced throughout his childhood by socialisation within the *oikos* and the wider community. These were the qualities required of an ‘ideal’ citizen of Athens as listed in Chapter 2, Pages 21,22. An Athenian’s education did not end with his acquisition of citizenship, but was considered to be a life-long process whereby he would learn wisdom from his elders as well as from his own experiences.

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<sup>22</sup> The translation used for Aristotle’s *Constitution of the Athenians* is Kenyon F.G. (1912) *Aristotle on the Athenian constitution*.

## Appendix 2



Figure 10: School scene. Attic red-figure kylix, signed by Douris, ca 490-480 BCE. Berlin, Staatliche Museen, Antikensammlung, F 2285.

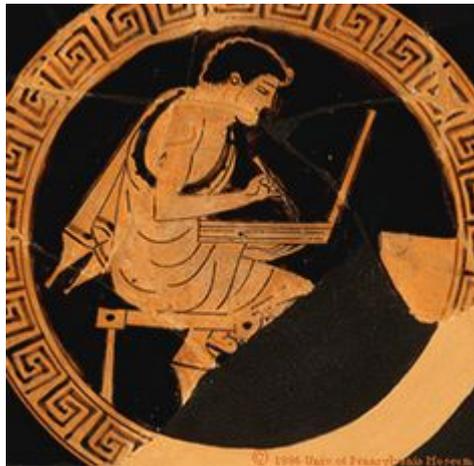


Figure 11: Youth writing. Attic red-figure kylix, attributed to the Eucharides Painter, ca 480 BCE. University of Pennsylvania, Museum of Archeology and Anthropology, MS 4842.



Figure 12: Boy being hit with sandal. Attic red-figure *pelike*, last quarter of 6<sup>th</sup> century BCE. Rome, Museo Nazionale. XXXXO.73



Figure 13: Boy practising with discus. Attic red-figure tondo of a *kylix*, ca 510 – 500 BCE. Inscribed 'Kleomelos is beautiful'. Paris, Louvre Museum 7246.



Figure 14: Instructor watching boys wrestling. Attic red-figured kylix, ca 450 BCE. University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology. MS 2444



Figure 15: Hockey game. Attic marble statue base carved in relief, ca 500 BCE, Athens, National Archaeological Museum 3477.



## Chapter 6

### The education of boys in Sparta

A Spartan boy's preparation for his future role in life began at the moment of birth, and as discussed in Chapter 4, the acceptance of the Spartan child into the home and *polis* was not automatic. His viability as a future hoplite warrior was judged and if the outcome was positive, he was allowed to live. This decision was made by representatives of the *polis* and not by his father, as was the case in Athens. As a means of shaping his personality, his upbringing for the first seven years was one of austerity and discipline rather than indulgence (Cartledge 2013: 63). In a similar manner as boys in Athens, at the age of seven years he began his formal education. This, however, was where the similarity ended. While Athenian boys remained part of their own *oikos*, the Spartan citizen boy was taken from his home environment, for good, to embark on the compulsory communal educational system known as the *agôgê* (Cartledge 2013: 63; Plut. *Lyc.* 16; Xen. *Const. Lac.* 2). This environment would instil the values necessary for life as a future Spartiate.

#### 6.1 The *Paidonomos*

According to Plutarch, under the laws of Lycurgus no Spartan father was permitted to decide upon the education of his own son (Plut. *Lyc.* 16). Nor was the child committed to the care of a slave *paidogogos*, or any paid or hired tutor, as in Athens, but was placed in the charge of a man known as the *paidonomos* (Trainer-in-Chief). The *paidonomos* belonged to the group of citizens from which the highest office-holders were appointed (Plut. *Lyc.* 16; Xen. *Const. Lac.* 2). He was assisted by a squad of young attendants, equipped with whips, who were responsible for helping to keep the children in order (Xen. *Const. Lac.* 2). Xenophon states that such supervision resulted in the high degree of combined respect and obedience found in Sparta (Xen. *Const. Lac.* 2). Respect and obedience were amongst the foremost qualities considered necessary in the character of the 'ideal' Spartan citizen, as listed in Chapter 2, Pages 21,22.

#### 6.2 The *agôgê*

From the age of seven a Spartan boy became a member of a group, known as an *ile* (pack or troop) in which he spent his entire waking day, living, playing and learning together with his age-mates (Plut. *Lyc.* 16). Plutarch (*Lyc.* 16) adds further details: in charge of each troop was an older boy who had shown the soundest judgement and the best fighting spirit, known as a *bouagor* (herdsman) and in overall control of the whole herd was a young man, the *eiren*, over the age of 20, chosen for his courage and good moral character. The boys listened to him, responded to his instruction or faced punishment and this training encouraged a culture of ready obedience, discipline and resourcefulness (Plut. *Lyc.* 16). These attributes also featured prominently in the qualities required of an 'ideal' Spartan citizen as described in Chapter 2, Pages 21-22.

The system was collective, hierarchical and progressive and was designed to stress courageous competitiveness and physical development, qualities which were also desired in the ideal citizen (Knotterus & Berry 2002: 13-14).

According to Plutarch, the *eiren* treated the boys as lackeys and made them serve his meals (Plut. *Lyc.* 17). Older boys were obliged to provide the firewood to make their common meals and younger boys to provide vegetables, which they could only acquire by theft (Plut. *Lyc.* 17). Plutarch continues to describe how after meals an *eiren* could call on any boy to sing or to answer a question, which involved the need for a well-considered but brief reply (Plut. *Lyc.* 17). Failure to provide an adequate response was considered to show lack of ambition and could be punished by a bite on the thumb, the symbolism of which is unclear. An *eiren* could punish boys in front of the elders without interference, but later he had to justify his actions to the same elders and was judged on the appropriateness of his actions (Plut. *Lyc.* 18). In this way it was demonstrated that under the system of multiple supervision, even the supervisors might be under supervision themselves (Knotterus & Berry 2002: 17).

### 6.3 Education and training in the *agôgê*

Both Plutarch and Xenophon offer detailed information about the nature of life and training in the *agôgê*. Plutarch describes how training in the *agôgê* involved a system of reward and punishment and, as boys increased in age, so physical training became more strenuous (Plut. *Lyc.* 16). The boys' heads were shaved; they often exercised naked and slept on beds made of reeds which they cut themselves from the banks of the river Eurotas (Plut. *Lyc.* 16). Xenophon (*Const. Lac.* 2) adds further details about austere conditions and practices, such as that Lycurgus insisted that boys did not wear shoes as this would make their feet soft. According to Xenophon, Lycurgus thought that going barefoot would enable boys to walk uphill with greater ease and come down hill in greater safety and the boy who was used to going without shoes would jump higher and run faster than those with shoes (Xen. *Const. Lac.* 2). Boys were apparently allowed only one garment to wear year round so that they would be better prepared to endure heat and cold, and they were fed a minimum amount of food so that they would become used to not having enough to eat, as well as to make what rations they had last longer (Xen. *Const. Lac.* 2). They were then, apparently fed a plain diet but were taught to accept any type of food available. Lycurgus was said to consider that this diet was preferable as it would produce healthier, slim bodies and make the boys grow taller rather than one which simply filled them out (Xen. *Const. Lac.* 2). These factors indicate that simplicity and austerity were dominant themes in the training process (Knotterus & Berry 2002: 16).

The education experienced in the *agôgê* focused mainly on physical training, intended to harden the body, teach the young to endure pain and foster the strength and endurance that would be required of a hoplite warrior (Kamen 2007: 90). From an early age boys received militaristic training which involved staged battles or brawls, as well as gymnastics, wrestling, formation movement, sword play and throwing the javelin (Marrou 1982: 21; Combiano 1995: 97). Great importance was given to developing strength through sports such as hunting and athletics, and ball games, which were dependent on team spirit, were particularly popular occupations (Knotterus & Berry 2002: 15). Many of these activities occurred as group activities which demanded loyalty to and sacrifice for the group and allowed opportunities for promotion to higher ranking positions within social units (Knotterus & Berry 2002: 14). Competition played a major role in all activities and records of the Olympic games reveal that for many years Sparta produced champion athletes who won many prizes (Barrow 2001: 29).

Group loyalty was one of the characteristics required of the ‘ideal’ Spartan citizen as discussed in Chapter 2, Pages 21-22.

The Spartans were portrayed as being the most warlike and also the most musical of people (Plut. *Lyc.* 21). Boys were given instruction in singing, dancing and playing of musical instruments such as the *aulos* (flute) and *kithara* (lyre) (Cartledge 2013: 178-9). Spartan boys took part in choral singing at religious festivals and as Spartans were said to be extremely pious and devout, this was their way of serving the gods (Cartledge 2004: 176). Religious piety was one of the requirements of the ‘ideal’ Spartan citizen as discussed in Chapter 2, as were choral and militaristic proficiency. As in athletics, Sparta held a dominant position in teaching choral songs that were intended to teach patriotism and morals (Neils 2003: 155). The fragmentary poetry of the Spartan lyric poet Tyrtaeus is a good example of the type of ‘patriotic’ songs that were taught to young and old Spartans alike (Cartledge 2013: 98). Hall (2014: 171) suggests that the songs of Tyrtaeus prepared Spartan youths for their military future and listening to them may have been compulsory for trainee Spartiates. According to Plutarch, for the most part, these were songs of praise for those who had died for Sparta, condemnation of cowards and promises to be brave (Plut. *Lyc.* 21). Dancing consisted mainly of ritualized line-dancing to marching rhythms which imitated the actions of soldiers (Knotterus & Berry 2002: 24). Training in this coordinated rhythmic movement helped to prepare the future Spartan warriors for the ordered advances and complicated manoeuvres required in battle (Cartledge 1977: 15-17; Xen. *Const. Lac.* 11).

As a result of the paucity of extant Spartan literature, the question arises as to whether Spartans were literate (Powell 1996: 234). Scholars are divided on this question and ancient evidence concerning the Spartans’ writing and reading of literary texts is limited (Millender 2001: 126). According to Plutarch, Spartan laws were not written down as it was believed that a stronger commitment to their principles would remain securely fixed if they were embedded in the citizens’ character by training rather than by a sense of compulsion (Plut. *Lyc.* 13). Plutarch’s assertion was that ‘Spartan boys learned to read and write only as much as was necessary’ and ‘they originally learned their letters for practical purposes’ (Plut. *Lyc.* 16; Plut. *Mor.* 237A). Plato stated that Spartans had little reason to learn to read as their laws were few and these they learnt by heart (Plat. *Hip. Maj.* 285c). Plato also asserts that Spartans had nothing to do with commerce or accounts and very few of them could count (Plat. *Hip Maj.* 285c)<sup>23</sup>. Powell (1996: 236) argues that the Spartan authorities believed that reading might promote political disunity and that books imported from outside of Sparta would bring in alien ideas. Private reading of diverse material might have encouraged divergent opinions, which would undermine the homogeneity of character that the embattled state required (Powell 1996: 236). For similar reasons, foreigners were treated with suspicion and subjected to frequent expulsion from Sparta (Powell 1996: 214). Conservatism and suspicion of foreigners were typical characteristics of Spartan citizens (as discussed in Chapter 2, Pages 21,22). Cartledge (1978:37) asserts that the simplicity of the alphabet made it possible for the ordinary Spartan to acquire a rudimentary knowledge of reading and writing but literacy at Sparta remained very thinly spread and deep literacy was the preserve of an elite at the highest levels of the state. This did not mean that that Sparta was entirely without a literary culture but that it was predominantly oral. Boys were made to memorize and recite the epics

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<sup>23</sup> Translation used for Plato’s *Greater Hippias* is Fowler, H.N. (1970) *Plato IV: Greater Hippias*.

and histories of the past so that they might remember and emulate examples of heroism while on campaign (Sommerville 1982: 25).

Plutarch claims that ‘no teacher of rhetoric trod Laconian soil’ (Plut. *Lyc.* 9). This statement may not have been strictly true but Spartans certainly became well-known for their disdain for prolixity and the development of a concise style of speech involving few words. Boys were taught the value of silence and when they did speak, to give well-considered, pithy answers using a minimum of words (Plut. *Lyc.* 19, 20). The ‘ideal’ Spartan citizen was expected to practice the use of this particular way of speaking (as discussed in Chapter 2, Pages 21,22).

#### 6.4 Discipline and punishment

In Sparta all male citizens were entitled to discipline any boys with whom they came into contact and Spartan boys were encouraged to break ties with their natal families and consider all men of their father’s age as *in loco parentis* (Cartledge 2013: 63; Xen. *Const. Lac.* 6). This effectively meant that boys were never without supervision and necessary punishment, either from the *bouagor*, *eiren*, *paidanomios* or any passing citizen, which promoted a greater sense of respect in the boys (Xen. *Const. Lac.* 2).

According to Xenophon, Lycurgus did permit boys to supplement their meagre diet by stealing food from fields, gardens or the men’s messes, to stave off hunger and starvation, but those who were caught faced a severe beating (Xen. *Const. Lac.* 2). Theft offended against two ideals of Spartan society: obedience and respect for elders. However, on the other hand, stealing could also be justified in that it encouraged cunning, caution and resourcefulness; all useful military attributes (Powell 1996: 231). Boys who were caught were punished not for stealing but for being incompetent thieves (Xen. *Const. Lac.* 2). Obedience, discipline and respect for adults, particularly parents, formed some of the essential characteristics of the ‘ideal’ citizen, as described in Chapter 2, Pages 21,22.

Punishment was often extreme. At the festival of Artemis Orthia it was a matter of honour for the boys to see how many cheeses they could snatch from the altar while they were being whipped by others (Xen. *Const. Lac.* 2). This extreme exercise demonstrated that graduates of the *agôgê* could endure torture if captured but it also taught the participants that they gained prestige by enduring pain (Xen. *Const. Lac.* 2). It was not unknown for one of them to die as a result of the flogging, but if he did so without making a sound, he was hailed as a hero of the state (Plut. *Lyc.* 18; Sommerville 1982: 25). Courage and discipline were two essential qualities required of the ‘ideal’ Spartan citizen as discussed in Chapter 2, Pages 21,22, and these were developed through the strict rules of the *agôgê* training.

#### 6.5 Socialization

According to Plutarch, the Spartan state discouraged the development of strong family ties and encouraged devotion to the Spartan *polis* rather than individualism (Plut. *Lyc.* 24). Consequently, from the time a Spartan boy entered the *agôgê* at the age of seven, until he reached the age of 16, contact with his family was minimal. His time was spent with his age-mates, eating, sleeping, playing games and training together as well as participating in group competition (Plut. *Lyc.* 16). The boy who distinguished himself in these and related activities

would be rewarded for his efforts. A collective orientation was reinforced by the fact that many of these were group activities and demanded loyalty to and encouraged sacrifice for the group (Hodkinson 1983: 248-9). Inter-group rivalry was encouraged and each group attempted to prove itself superior, even coming to blows at times (Xen. *Const. Lac.* 4). These activities would have reinforced the qualities of courage and competitiveness as well as loyalty to the group, described in Chapter 2, Pages 21,22, as being essential attributes expected of Spartan citizens.

All male Spartans, as a condition of citizenship, had to belong to a common mess at which they ate their main meal of the day (Knotterus & Berry 2002: 20) and this was an extremely important aspect of their socialisation. These dining groups, *sussitia* or *syskania*, were the main source of entertainment and social interaction. Unlike the Athenian *symposia*, where attendance was restricted to a particular age group, according to Xenophon, Lycurgus mixed all ages together on the premise that it would be educational for the youngsters to benefit from the experience of their elders (Xen. *Const. Lac.* 5). Plutarch states that boys frequented the messes to hear political discussion and witness the type of entertainment suitable for free men (Plut. *Lyc.* 12). Each member of the mess was obliged to contribute the same amount of food which was used for the common meals, which were far from lavish (Plut. *Lyc.* 12). This served as a lesson to the boys which emphasised the themes of social unity and a collective orientation as well as other qualities such as austerity and simplicity with which younger boys were becoming all too familiar (Knotterus & Berry 2002: 23). Spartans disapproved of excessive drinking and young boys were made aware of the consequences of doing so. Plutarch describes how during festivals *helots* were forced to drink quantities of un-watered wine, considered to be anathema to civilised Greeks, and then brought into the messes to demonstrate the evils of drunkenness to the young Spartans (Plut. *Lyc.* 28; Kennel 2010: 84).

## 6.6 Adolescence

According to Xenophon, Lycurgus appreciated that when boys reached adolescence they became self-willed and liable to arrogance and craving for pleasure (Xen. *Const. Lac.* 3). In order to counteract these tendencies, he decreed that this would be when they were given the greatest amount of work and were occupied for the maximum amount of time (Xen. *Const. Lac.* 3). Anyone who attempted to avoid this work would gain no further honour, a threat which would lead to loss of reputation not only for the boy, but also for his family. To reinforce a sense of modesty and respect, boys were instructed to remain silent, to keep their hands inside their cloaks and their eyes on the ground when walking in the street (Xen. *Const. Lac.* 3). According to Hall (2014: 172), respect and deference for elders was ingrained in young Spartans and they were expected to make way in the street and give up their seats for their elders. These attributes too formed part of the characteristics expected of the 'ideal' citizen, as discussed in Chapter 2, Pages 21,22.

### 6.6.1 Homosexuality

Once he had reached puberty, every young Spartan boy was encouraged, or perhaps required, to receive a young adult warrior as his lover (Plut. *Lyc.* 18). In this way Sparta may have made compulsory something which was optional, or merely permitted in other parts of Greece (Neils & Oakley 2003: 20). The older partner was referred to as an 'inspirer' while

the junior partner was known as the ‘hearer’ (Cartledge 2013: 64). The relationship was probably sexual but, according to Cartledge (2013: 64) this was not always the only, or even always the major objective. Powell (1996: 224) states that, according to Xenophon, Lycurgus encouraged association between man and boy when it was the boy’s character that was admired but decreed that lust for a boy’s body should be utterly rejected (Xen. *Const. Lac.* 11).

The emotions promoted in the younger boy probably equated to hero-worship whilst the older partner acted as a mentor to him and was responsible for his conduct. (Golden 2003: 20). The pedagogic dimension is demonstrated in the story of a young boy who made the mistake of crying out in pain during one of the brutally physical contests which marked the progress through the *agôgê* (Plut. *Lyc.* 18). This offended against the strict Spartan code of self-disciplined silence. It was not the boy himself who was punished for this breach, however, but the punishment fell upon his older lover for having failed to educate his beloved correctly (Cartledge 2013: 64; Plut. *Lyc.* 18). The importance of such relationships may be seen in their continuing power to create networks of political patronage (Todd 2000: 36).

### 6.7 *Krypteia*

There is very little primary source material concerning the *krypteia*. Despite this paucity of resources, most scholars do not dispute its existence. Plato presents the first evidence in describing the Spartan ‘secret service’ which ‘involves a great deal of hard work and is a splendid exercise in endurance’ (Plat. *Laws* 1.633) However, he does not actually describe the purpose of the *krypteia*, although Plutarch (*Lyc.* 28), describes the conduct of its members, he also does not state the intention behind the *krypteia*. Scholars have suggested that it could have been an initiation rite, a mechanism simply to suppress the *helots* or perhaps a scouting police force to patrol Spartan territories or a combination of all three. Cartledge (2013: 64, 220) states that the task of its members was to control the *helots*, as well as to prove their readiness for the responsibilities of warrior manhood. Plutarch admits that the Spartans’ treatment of the *helots* was callous and brutal, but states that he doubts that the *krypteia* was actually instituted by Lycurgus as, in his estimation, Lycurgus’ disposition was mild and fair whereas the *krypteia* was a foul exercise (Plut. *Lyc.* 28).

According to Garlan (1995: 71), at the end of a ten-year period in the *agôgê*, where young boys had undergone tests of endurance, fought simulated battles and employed cunning as a tactic, the best of the *eirenes* were chosen to become members of the *krypteia* (hidden ones). They were sent out alone into the most remote regions of Spartan territory, without supplies, armed only with a simple dagger, instructed to remain hidden during the day, venture out only at night and feed themselves by looting (Garlan 1995: 71). Their task was to police the *helots*, against whom the *ephors* had already declared war, killing any they found outside after dark or any who appeared to have a well-developed physique (Plut. *Lyc.* 28; Garlan 1995: 71). During this service in the *krypteia* a youth developed resourcefulness and self-reliance but would also have become aware of the benefits of loyalty and support of the group of which he had been deprived. This two year-phase of segregation removed the youths from the company of boys and prepared them for their admittance to the community of adults. The youths were ritually re-incorporated back into society, perhaps at the festival of Hyakinthia,

as future hoplites (Kamen 2007: 93). The *krypteia* dramatized this abandonment of childhood and began the preparation for warrior manhood (Combiano 1995: 97).

### 6.8 Military service

Between the ages of 20 and 30 a Spartan ‘youth’ was in an intermediate position. Although he was an adult, he was still not considered to be a man, he was not qualified to hold an office, nor did he qualify for full citizenship and yet he could apply for membership of a *sussitia* (Hall 2014: 173). For the next ten years he lived in military barracks and was not entitled to a private life (Plu. *Lyc.* 24). He was allowed, and was indeed encouraged, to marry but he was not permitted to live with his wife. According to Plutarch he visited his bride secretly on brief occasions purely for procreation purposes (Plu. *Lyc.* 15). Contrary to usual Greek practice, he grew his hair long, a practice which according to Xenophon, Lycurgus believed gave the warriors a taller and more noble and fearsome appearance and which Aristotle admired as long hair was incompatible with manual labour (X. *Const. Lac.* 11; Arist. *Rh.* 1367a). He also donned the distinctive red Spartan cloak, the colour of which was chosen because it was the greatest contrast with any female dress and which some scholars claim was designed to disguise blood stains (X. *Const. Lac.* 11; Powell 1996: 240). At the age of 30 a Spartan reached adulthood in the eyes of the state and could finally accept the full responsibilities of citizenship (Garland 2013: 129).

### 6.9 Summary

From a young age a Spartan male was indoctrinated into accepting obedience and discipline and his early years of socialization in the *oikos* reinforced these attributes. His years in the *agôgê* however, were where he learned and developed the attributes of courage, loyalty to the group and resourcefulness. His time in the *krypteia* and the military further developed a Spartan youth’s patriotism, courage, secrecy and cunning. Maturity increased his respect for elders and the gods and taught him the economy of the spoken word, all of which were attributes required of the ideal Spartan citizen.

## Chapter 7

### Education of girls in Athens and Sparta

The life of Athenian and Spartan girls were similar in some ways but there are also notable differences in their upbringing, education and in the perception of their natures. For both of them their ultimate goal in life was the role of wife and motherhood. They could achieve citizen status but this did not gain them the rights of citizenship that male citizens enjoyed. The primary difference between the girls from the two *poleis*, was the way in which they were perceived and treated by the male citizens of their respective states.

#### 7.1 Education of girls in Athens

Obligations to family and state were the strongest compulsion in the lives of Athenian citizens, both male and female. An Athenian girl could gain citizen status with the birth of her first child, preferably a boy, but this did not confer full citizenship rights: she could not take any part in the political process, hold public office, serve on a jury, vote or serve in the military (Golden 1993: 38). Nor could she buy, sell or own land or have control of property and her involvement in any contract was restricted to those valued at less than a *medimnus* of barley (Isaeus 10.10)<sup>24</sup>. Foxhall (2013: 57, 94) states that this would probably have been sufficient value to allow for small everyday transactions but that wealthy girls would probably not have gone to the *agora*, or market, at all and certainly not unaccompanied.

Aristotle stated that men were inherently superior to women therefore it was natural that men should control women in a properly ordered society (Aristot. *Pol.*5.1254bl). Submissiveness to male authority was one the most prominent characteristics required of the 'ideal' female citizen of Athens (as described in Chapter 2, Pages 21,22). Athenian law tended to regard all women as children, having the legal status of a minor. Although males came of age at eighteen years, girls never did; the childbearing wife was really a child herself in the eyes of the law (Pomeroy 1994: 74). The principle duty towards the *polis* of all Athenian girls was the production of legitimate heirs to perpetuate the *oikos* of her husband; the combined total of all *oikoi* comprised the citizenry of the state (Pomeroy 1994: 60).

##### 7.1.1 Formal schooling

Although at the age of seven a boy would leave the confines of the *oikos* and the world of women to begin his formal education, it was considered necessary to educate girls purely in domestic matters, such as weaving, spinning, supervision of slaves and basic household management. As these skills could all be imparted by their mothers or other female members of the household, Beaumont (2015: 104) argues that it was unlikely that many girls were schooled outside the home.

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<sup>24</sup> The translation used for Isaeus is Forster E.S. (1943) *Isaeus*.

Attic vase paintings, such as the scenes shown in Appendix 3, Page 89, Figs.17 &18, show women reading but no actual school scene showing girls exists (Neils & Oakley 2003: 247). Foxhall (2013: 55) notes that images of girls reading (as in Figs.17 & 18, Page 89) as well as playing instruments which have been taken to show that girls of wealthy families might have lessons at home. She adds however, that these are not the only possible interpretation of these scenes, and they could plausibly represent supernatural figures such as Muses. Beaumont (2015: 148) cites a singular vase painting that shows what appears to be a girl carrying writing tablets by a strap, being led by another girl of the same size (Appendix 3, Page 88, Fig. 16). This scene, which may then indicate female participation in literacy, but not the locale in which she learned it, is unique in suggesting any kind of formal schooling. McNiven (2007: 84-90) proposes that this may represent an older sister playing the part of a *paidagogos*, although, as the vase takes the form of a *kylix*, used for wine at an all-male symposium, Golden (1993: 74) proposes that the ‘student’ could actually be an educated *hetaira*, the only category of woman known to be educated outside the home, rather than a respectable girl.

Most likely, female education was a random and individual affair and took place largely in the home, either under the instruction of a closely watched private tutor, or more casually as second-hand instruction from a more formally educated sibling, or the household *paidagogos* who may well have developed at least basic literacy skills from attending the boys’ lessons (Beaumont 2015: 146-7). That formal education was less important for females than for males is suggested by Xenophon, who sets education for boys in opposition to close protective guardianship for girls (Xen. *Mem.*1.V.2)<sup>25</sup>.

### 7.1.2 Education in the home

Since Athenian citizen girls could not look forward to the type of public career that brought status to boys, it was considered sufficient for them to be instructed in the domestic arts by their mothers or other female members of the *oikos* (Pomeroy 1994: 74). In preparation for their adult roles, girls were instructed in the art of spinning and weaving; they probably also gained hands-on knowledge of child-care and food preparation (Beaumont 2015:122; Golden 1993: 33). Skill in wool working and household management were attributes required of the ‘ideal’ female Athenian citizen as described in Chapter 2.

Textile production was a very important feature of the *oikoi*, which was undertaken mostly, but not exclusively, by women. According to Foxhall (2013: 55-56), girls probably did not begin learning to weave until they were at least 11 or 12 years of age because they would not have been physically large enough to work at the loom. They would however, have been taught at a much younger age, to prepare fibres by carding and spinning. For some girls weaving skills may have been the upper limit of their education; Xenophon’s Ischomarcus claimed that when he married his wife she came to him knowing nothing other than how to produce a cloak (Xen. *Oec.* 7.3.6).

<sup>25</sup> The translation used for Xenophon’s *Memorabilia* is Treddenick H & Waterfield R. (1990) *The conversations of Socrates*.

Girls were schooled by their mothers in suitable womanly behaviour such as modesty and self-awareness (*sophrosyne*), control of their appetite (Xen. *Oec.* VII. 6), as well as recognising the importance of saying as little as possible, especially to men (Pomeroy 1994: 98). These were essential modes of behaviour expected of the ‘ideal’ female Athenian citizen as described in Chapter 2. Unlike Athenian boys, an important part of whose education concentrated on the persuasive use of rhetoric in order to gain a fine reputation amongst men, girls were expected to be silent and submissive (Pomeroy 1994: 74, 98). Aristotle reinforced the need for women’s silence when he stated that ‘silence is a woman’s ornament’ (Aristot. *Pol.* 1.1260a.30). Ischomachus was said to have had to teach his wife how to talk as she had been brought up to ‘see, hear and speak as little as possible’ (Xen. *Oec.* VII. 5, 10). Xenophon’s Critobulus, the foil for Ischomachus, admits that there is no one to whom he entrusts more important matters but with whom he has less conversation, than his wife (Xen. *Oec.* III.12-13). According to Plutarch ‘a woman should speak only to her husband or through her husband’ (Plut. *Conjug.* 31-32).

The issue of female literacy is contentious and unclear. Some Athenian women were known to be functionally literate but these were the exception and as mentioned above, if girls did learn to read and write it was probably within the confines of the *oikos* (Golden 1993: 74). By the second quarter of the 5<sup>th</sup> century BCE at least some Athenian girls are believed to have received some tuition in literacy (Beaumont 2015: 146). Powell (1996: 342) states that a fragmentary quotation attributed to Theophrastos, a 4<sup>th</sup> century BCE writer, teacher and associate of Aristotle, includes the words: ‘in the case of women, education in literacy seems to be most essential [in] that it is useful for household management’. However, the fragment goes on: ‘further refinement [in education] makes women too idle in all other spheres, turning them into chatterboxes and busybodies’. Plato stated that women were less intelligent than men and Aristotle appears to have been in agreement with this (Plat. *Rep.* 455c-e; Aristot. *Pol.* 1254b; Aristot. *Poet.* 1454a)<sup>26</sup>. The wife of Xenophon’s Ischomachus (Xen. *Oec.* VII. 36) could probably read and write, as amongst the household tasks which she was assigned was to make an inventory of all household utensils. She must also budget carefully so that ‘provisions stored for a year are not used up in a month’ (Xen. *Oec.* VII. 36). Powell (1996: 342) and Combiano (1995: 93) quote a fragment attributed to the of 4<sup>th</sup> century BCE poet Menander, which says ‘teach a woman letters - a serious mistake - like giving extra venom to a vile snake’. (Pomeroy (1994: 56) points out that Athens, the city whose men would be responsible for the most notable artistic creations in Classical Greece, produced no female poets that we know of.

For Athenian girls learning to dance was probably of greater significance than acquiring literacy but how they acquired these skills is less certain. While formal training would have been provided for those who danced professionally, girls of citizen families probably received their dance tuition in the domestic context at the hands of their older female relatives (Beaumont 2015: 149, 152). Girls of wealthy families probably also learned to play the lyre as they had the leisure time and the resources to do so (Beaumont

<sup>26</sup> The translation used for Aristotle’s *Poetics* is Halliwell S. (1995) *Aristotle’s Poetics*.

2015: 147). Ritual singing and dancing was of significant importance in the life of adolescent girls and while performance accompanied the celebration on many ritual occasions, female choral participation in Athens was noticeably less institutionalised than that of boys and than that of girls elsewhere in the ancient Greek world (Beaumont 2015: 165-6). Although girls learned to dance well before they reached puberty, it was only when they gained *parthenos* status that their group dances gained any significance in the ritual context, whether secular, performed on occasions such as weddings or religious festivals, or enacted in honour of the gods (Beaumont 2015: 168).

### 7.1.3 Socialisation

Girls in Athens spent their early childhood years within the *oikos* and it is likely that male and female siblings played together and shared their toys and games. From the age of six boys and girls began to follow separate gender-specific paths, boys with boys and girls with girls (Plat. *Laws* 794c). It was from this time that socialisation of the young in preparation for their future adult roles began to impact increasingly on their experience of childhood and its social perceptions (Beaumont 2015: 104, 131). Athenian ideas on the sexes' separate spheres, generally kept boys and girls apart outside the home. Most girls' contacts were with kin or neighbour, which reflects their smaller social world. Even with the daughters of other families, a girl's involvement was more limited than her brother's with other boys (Golden 1993: 72, 74). Girls must have spent some time at practice for choral singing, which would have brought them into contact with other girls, but they probably did not spend time away from home as boy choristers did, nor did groups of girl choristers take part in competitions (Golden 1993: 76). Until a girl reached puberty, her life was essentially a continuance of growth and development within the paternal *oikos*. The critical change in her social image, and on which her future life-course relied, happened at puberty when she became a marriageable *parthenos* (Beaumont 2015: 105). While her male contemporary was still living at home and developing mental and physical skills, the adolescent Athenian girl was already married and possibly had young children (Pomeroy 1994: 74).

According to Llewellyn-Jones (2003: 4) scholars have argued for several decades to try to explain the dichotomy between the perceived ideology of female seclusion and its practical enforcement. It is generally accepted that the social ideal, which consigned men to the public and women to the private realm, was an ideal rather than a reality and may have actually encompassed a minority of well-to-do women (Katz 1998: 130; Powell 1996: 338-9). Women of all classes were obliged to leave the house on occasions for a variety of reasons: for religious observations, funerals, collecting water, shopping, as well as simply to earn a living. Aristotle sums this up by saying 'how is it possible to prevent the wives of the poor from going out?' (Aristot. *Pol.* 4.1300a).

Athenian men were very protective of the safety and chastity of their wives and daughters and a man's honour was intrinsically bound up in the sexual purity of the women of his family and it is for his reputation that women needed to be socially and sexually controlled (Llewellyn-Jones 2003: 156). Avoidance of any kind of perceived sexual

impropriety was best ensured by complete evasion of male company (Llewellyn-Jones 2003: 157).

From the archaic era the veiling of women was routine and was probably adhered to by most women as a matter of daily practice (Llewellyn-Jones 2003: 315). The veil created an invisible barrier that functioned as a 'portable form of seclusion' which preserved a woman's *sophrosyne* (modesty, virtue and self-awareness), yet allowed her to leave the confined world of the *oikos* in order to fulfil her social responsibilities at religious festivals, family visits, midwifery obligations, funerals, as well as her lifelong requirement to tend the graves and perpetuate the memory of the deceased ancestors of the *oikos* (Foley 2003: 131). It kept women out of the public world of men but allowed them a degree of social freedom and movement in that same world (Llewellyn-Jones 2003: 315). Modesty and self-awareness (*sophrosyne*) were essential qualities required of the ideal female Athenian citizen as described in Chapter 2, Pages 21,22.

Seclusion protected females from unwanted attention and was also a solution to the problem of paternity in an open society such as Athens, where foreigners (barbarians) were present, where men were constantly seeking to enhance their honour at the expense of another man's and where wives were often little more than adolescents (Pomeroy 1998: 21). Under the laws of Pericles, Athenian citizenship was valid only when the prospective citizen was the legitimate male offspring of a father and mother who were both citizens (Aristot. *Pol.*1275b). A man could only be certain that he was the father of a child if he had sole access to the reproductive potential of the mother.

To be out-of-doors meant that females could be the prey of potential rapists and seducers, therefore in well-to-do households it was ideal for most females to remain indoors (Davidson 2000: 143). Solon's nominal fine of 100 drachmae for rape seems only a mild deterrent (Plut. *Solon* 23). Even mundane errands, such as collecting water, was preferably done by slaves, which removed any possibility of social mingling for elite girls with their peers at the well or water fountain. Similarly, everyday shopping was also done mostly by men as the financial transaction involved was considered too complex for a woman, as well as the wish to protect her from the eye of strangers and dealings with shopkeepers (Katz 1998: 115).

Women and girls were not only preferably unseen but also unheard. They were represented in court by their fathers or guardians and respectable women were never referred to by name (Katz 1998: 107-9). When it was necessary to designate a particular female, she was identified by her relationship to her *kyrios*: father, husband or her son (Brulé 2003: 115). In Pericles's funeral oration it was stated that the duties of women were 'to be least talked about by men, whether they are praising you or criticising you' (Thuc. 11.46).

As part of his extensive legislation that regulated all aspects of life in Athens, particularly for women, and the abolition of self-sale and sale of children into slavery, Solon retained the right of fathers and guardians to sell an unmarried girl who had lost her virginity (Plut. *Solon* 23). Pomeroy (1994: 57) states that women are a perennial source of friction

amongst men and Solon's legislation aimed to keep them out of sight and limit their influence. In homes which did not have a men's room (*andron*) for entertaining male visitors, female members of the household would retire to the privacy of another room in order to avoid being seen by male visitors who were non-family members (Pomeroy 1998: 30). It was public festivals, which joined girls from many *oikoi*, which provided the most opportunity for an Athenian girl to see herself in a social context outside the woman's quarters, as a member of a larger group than her own household (Golden 1993: 49).

#### 7.1.4 Religious festivals

It was in the ritual sphere that Athenian girls enjoyed a variety of privileges and derived civic pride from the status which indicated they were a distinct and distinguished social group (Golden 2003: 16; Katz 1998: 103). Religion also played an important role in the socialisation of girls and in teaching them their roles and responsibilities in the *polis*. Ideally women and girls were completely absent from the arena of public business and commerce but they played a significant role in many of the state's religious festivals (Fisher 1998: 213). In Athens the ritual life of girls was far richer than that of boys. In the sacrificial procession of the *Panathenaia*, celebrating the birthday of Athena, the city's tutelary deity, girls from noble families preceded those of ordinary citizen class (Katz 1998: 103). Girls performed a number of ritual functions at various festivals: such as weaving the new *peplos* for the statue of Athena in the Erechtheum, washing the cult statue, grinding the corn for the ritual cakes offered to Athena or Demeter, or serving Artemis as acolytes in her sanctuary at Brauron. Some carried special ritual olive branches as they processed to the temple of Apollo Delphinios where they offered propitiatory prayers (Katz 1998: 103). The ages and designation of the girls involved in some of these rituals are listed in a speech by the woman's chorus in Aristophanes' *Lysistrata*, which describes an idealised type of *cursus honorum* for a young girl:

‘As soon as I was seven I was an *arrhēphoros*. Then at ten I was an *aletris* for the foundress, and shedding my saffron robe I was an *arktos* at the Brauronia. And once I carried a sacred basket, a fine girl wearing a chain of figs’ (Aristoph. *Lys.* 641-647)<sup>27</sup>.

Not every girl could become an *arrhēphoros* as only two, or possibly four, were chosen, *aletrides* were restricted to girls of noble birth and ‘playing the bear’ (*arktos*) was determined by the socio-economic means and status of the girl's parents (Beaumont 2015: 169-184). It is likely that the distinctions conferred on the few chosen were meant to stand symbolically for the ritual importance to the city of its young girls as a group (Katz 1998: 103). Being chosen to serve in such ways was a source of pride for girls throughout their lives, as well as bringing honour to their families (Golden 2003: 16). Religious piety was one of the essential qualities expected of the ‘ideal’ female Athenian citizen as described in Chapter 2. In order to safeguard her passage from childhood to womanhood, an Athenian girl and her family would make votive offerings to deities of health and

<sup>27</sup> The translation used for Aristophanes' *Lysistrata* is Henderson J. (2000) *Aristophanes: Lysistrata/ Birds*.

transition. In the event of a girl's early death, the erection of a grave *stèle* depicting the deceased holding such a votive would thus indicate the child's pious observation of proper ritual (Beaumont 2015: 131).

From a young age Athenian girls would be taught by their mothers to honour the family cult of ancestors and the correct procedures to be followed and the ritual laments to be sung when death occurred within the family (Oakley 2003: 164). From the 6<sup>th</sup> century BCE attendance at funerals was restricted to certain categories of women under sixty but children were permitted to attend. This provided a further legitimate opportunity for women to leave the *oikos*, as did the mandatory visits to the tomb on certain days (Oakley 2003: 165,167). In the patriarchal system prevailing in ancient Athens, this meant that after marriage the family cult that a girl served was not of her own ancestors but those of her husband and this could change again on remarriage following widowhood or divorce.

### 7.1.5 Marriage

Marriage and motherhood were considered the primary goal of every female citizen (Pomeroy 1994: 62) and it also effectively marked the end of the girl's childhood. According to Foxhall (2013: 30-33), marriage was a political relationship which had an impact on the state as well as being a private social arrangement between two families. Marriage was an institution indispensable for the transfer both of property and citizen status from one generation to another and thus for the replication of the Athenian citizen body and its material means of sustenance (Foxhall 2013: 33).

The first step in the marriage process was the betrothal (*engue*). This could take place when the girl was as young as five years and the transaction took place in front of men who served as witnesses (Pomeroy 1998: 36). The marriage was a contract between the father or guardian of the bride and the groom or his father. The marriage arrangements were usually made on the basis of economic or political considerations to which the girl was not party (Pomeroy 1994: 64). The onset of puberty for a girl confirmed her biological potential to have children and thereby transformed her social status into that of a marriageable *parthenos* (Beaumont 2011: 21).

Llewellyn-Jones (2003: 247) suggests that a young girl was probably first veiled at menarche as a mark of her transition to adulthood. On the eve of her marriage, before donning the special wedding veil at the beginning of the wedding rituals, when she would become a *nymphē* (bride), she offered her veils to a goddess, along with her dolls and childhood clothing (Llewellyn-Jones 2003: 247). She also cut and dedicated her hair as part of this rite of passage. Not only was hair a practical means for making status change visible, but according to Langdon (2007: 184) it was also charged with metaphoric reference to fertility and sexuality.

Athenian brides (*nymphai*) were usually between the ages of fourteen and fifteen years and they were obliged to marry the man their male relatives had selected for them (Foxhall 2013: 33). Aristotle stated that marriage at too young an age could result in the death of both mothers and children in childbirth (Aristot. *Pol.* 7. 1335a). Marriage

between relatives was common and was a way of consolidating the resources of the family (Pomeroy 1994: 64). However, marriage in Athens would only be considered fully legitimate if both bride and groom were of free status and, after 451/0 BCE, both partners had to be of Athenian citizen status (Foxhall 2013: 33).

Often the groom was old enough to be the girl's father and they may never have set eyes on each other prior to the marriage. This age difference, together with the naiveté of the bride, did not encourage the growth of intellectual or affective bonds between the married couple and may have resulted in feelings of condescension and paternalism on the part of the husband (Pomeroy 1994: 74; Combiano 1995: 94). From the man's view point, his wife was not his equal and marriage was rarely intended to be an affectionate partnership but was merely a legal means to perpetuate his *oikos*. Apollodorus summed up this attitude towards women in the following words;

‘Heitairas we keep for pleasure, concubines for attending day to day to the body and wives for producing heirs and for standing trusty guard on our household property’(Dem. 59. 122)<sup>28</sup>.

Foxhall (2013: 32-33) cautions that we should not assume that marriage was devoid of emotion: as early as the *Odyssey* the affective bond between husband and wife is celebrated as the household's source of strength (Hom. *Od.* 6.182-5)<sup>29</sup>. Grave inscriptions often attest to love for wife or husband but it would be naïve to take these as precise representations of the truth (Lefkowitz 1983: 44). Lefkowitz (1983: 31-47) also draws attention to how marital affection is portrayed in several literary works: Penelope remained faithful to her husband, Odysseus, for twenty years despite his absence, and he in turn was prepared to forsake Calypso in order to return to Penelope; Euripides' *Alcestis* was prepared to die for her husband Admetus and he in turn acknowledges that ‘even in death you will be called my wife’(Eur. *Alc.* 2. 273-280)<sup>30</sup>. However, these are all the words of men and the woman's voice is silent but it is not impossible that genuine affection did develop between husband and wife.

The marriage celebration (*gamos*) consisted of sacrifices and a procession from the house of the bride's parents to the groom's house. This public event created many witnesses who could testify in the future if legitimacy of the marriage was questioned, that the wedding had taken place. The bride would be heavily veiled but spectators would be aware that the daughter of a man, whose name was announced, was marrying a man whose name was also announced. The name of the bride would not be mentioned (Pomeroy 1998: 36). With the birth of the first child, preferably a boy, which usually followed within two years of the marriage, the status of the girl changed from *nymphē* to *gyne* and her childhood came to an end (Beaumont 2015: 21). Excellence as a wife and mother were desirable qualities expected of the ideal female Athenian citizen.

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<sup>28</sup> The translation used for Demosthenes *Against Nearea* is Murray A.T. (1964) *Demosthenes IV: Private orations*.

<sup>29</sup> The translation used for Homer's *Odyssey* is Murray A.T. (1966) *Homer: the Odyssey*.

<sup>30</sup> The translation used for Euripides' *Alcestis* is Hamilton R. & Haslam M.W (1980). *Euripides: Alcestis*

Foley (2003: 122) states that marriage would involve the girl, barely out of childhood, leaving her natal *oikos*, often moving a considerable distance away, entering alien surroundings to become the wife of a stranger and embark on this new role without the support system of her own family. This process may occur more than once in a girl's life as, owing to the age difference between husband and wife, she could possibly become a widow while still a young woman or her husband could divorce her. She would return to her father's *oikos* while a new marriage was contracted, leaving behind her children who belonged to the *oikos* of her deceased or divorced husband (Pomeroy 1998: 27). She would then be obliged to move to the home of her new husband and the process would begin again. This would indicate that a female was only ever a temporary resident in any *oikos*, which would surely have been a factor in the manner in which she was regarded by its male members and this would have impacted on her own perceptions of her self-worth (Foley 2003: 114). Marriage also did not involve a change or improvement in her legal or political status, for wives were as subordinate as daughters, it merely involved a change in control, the husband simply replaced the father as a woman's *kyrios* (Neils & Oakley 2003: 310).

According to Plutarch, Solon limited the size of dowries in Athens, but the dowry system nevertheless prevailed without apparent limits (Plut. *Solon* 20; Pomeroy 1998: 55). A girl's dowry remained intact throughout her lifetime to be used for her support. In addition to her dowry a bride may have a small trousseau, limited by Solon to three dresses and other goods of little value, which remained her property at the conclusion of the marriage (Plut. *Solon* 20; Pomeroy 1994: 63). According to Foxhall (2013: 110-111), the goods which were normally part of the trousseau were made up of jewellery, textiles and personal attendants which could all have been given to the bride by her father, husband or other male kin.

In Athens only males were legally able to inherit but in families with no surviving sons, the daughter was regarded as 'attached to the family property', hence the name *epiklēros*. However, she never truly owned her father's property but acted as a conduit to retain the property within the family. On the death of her father it was the duty of the nearest male kinsman to marry her (Pomeroy 1998: 37). The amount of wealth that accompanied the heiress was a significant factor in attracting competition for her hand. A poorer heiress might inherit nothing more than her father's debts but the state obliged her next-of-kin to marry her himself or provide her with a sufficient dowry in order for her to attract a husband (Pomeroy 1998: 37-8).

## 7.2 Education of girls at Sparta

Unlike Athens, Sparta was not an open society. Constantly at war internally with her *helot* subject population, she viewed outsiders as opponents rather than opportunities. Spartan girls were similar to their Athenian counterparts in that their destiny was to be wives and mothers; however, their role was not only to produce heirs for the continuation of a single *oikos*, but to contribute warriors of a particular kind for the security and propagation of the state. Spartan girls were unique in the ancient Greek world in that they were believed

to be the only ones to benefit from a state-sponsored educational system (Pomeroy 2002: 3). This system, with its emphasis on physical exercise, was influenced by a eugenic goal; to provide the fittest mothers who would in turn produce the fittest children - the future hoplite warriors (Xen. *Const. Lac.*1).

### 7.2.1 Formal education for Spartan girls

The educational system devised for girls at Sparta was similar to that for boys but was a selective and less arduous version which emphasised physical training. This was in contrast to girls in Athens who were more sedentary (Sommerville 1982: 26). Spartan boys were required to leave home at the age of seven years to begin their participation in the *agôgê*, to learn the survival techniques and skills they would need as hoplites. Girls on the other hand, completed their education while continuing to reside at home, training to become the type of mothers who would produce the best hoplites and mothers of hoplites (Pomeroy 2002: 4). Schools such as those in Athens, did not exist in Sparta and Spartans themselves undertook most of the pedagogical tasks but they were known occasionally to have invited a few foreigners to teach the young (Pomeroy 2002: 3).

It is believed that literacy at Sparta was confined to a small elite group (Pomeroy 2002: 5). The literacy level of girls may well have been superior to that of boys, whose education was devoted to learning military skills, leaving little time for the liberal arts (Pomeroy 2002: 8). Spartan girls spent more time with their mothers and other female relatives yet devoted very little time to domestic tasks, which were undertaken by *helot* slaves. As they were believed also to marry at a later age than girls in Athens, this gave them more time to devote to their education (Pomeroy 2002: 5). They could possibly have learned reading and writing from their female associates. Anecdotes about Spartan mothers sending letters to their sons, urging them to be brave, also suggest that literacy was not unknown amongst women (Pomeroy 2002: 8). Spartan girls were known for their self-confidence and they had a reputation for forthright speaking, even in front of men (Hdt. 5.51, 7.239. 3-4). Plato states that Spartan women take pride in education and goes on to praise their skills in philosophical discussion (Plat. *Prot.*342d). Spartan girls were trained and encouraged to speak in public, praising the brave, reviling cowards and bachelors (Plut. *Lyc.*14). The 'ideal' female citizen of Sparta was expected to be strong-minded and outspoken. This distinguished her from Spartan men who did not debate in law courts or in the General Assembly, and from Athenian girls who were expected to remain silent and not speak, especially in front of men (Xen. *Oec.* 7.5).

Athletics and physical training, however, apparently formed the basis of girl's educational system and their participation in such activities was probably unique in the Greek world. Xenophon states that Lycurgus 'instituted physical training for girls, not less than for boys, and for them to have contests of speed and strength with one another' (Xen. *Const. Lac.*1). Plutarch gives further details of the girl's curriculum, mentioning running, wrestling and throwing the discus and javelin (Plut. *Lyc.*14). Competitions in racing and trials of strength were part of the girl's educational system (Xen. *Const. Lac.*1; Aristot. *Pol.* 1269b). Spartan girls were expected to maintain physical fitness and strength to be

considered ‘ideal’ citizens. Unlike their male counterparts, Spartan girls were not trained for actual combat. Plato, Xenophon and Aristotle complain that they were no better prepared than other Greek women in defending their country (Plat. *Laws* 806a; Aristot. *Pol.* 1269b; Xen. *Hell.* 6. 5. 28)<sup>31</sup>. Some of the skills in which the girls were trained would have been useful in hunting, such as running and throwing the javelin, and it is possible that they participated in this sport (Pomeroy 2002:18). Spartan women, as well as men, were actively involved with horses: riding, driving horse-drawn vehicles and competing in equestrian events. Bronze votives found at the sanctuaries of Orthia and Menelaion depict female figures riding astride and side-saddle (Cartledge 2003: 33; Pomeroy 2002: 19-20). The poet, Alcman, wrote a work entitled ‘The Female Swimmers’, and examples of Laconian vase paintings of nymphs or girls swimming, could indicate that Spartan girls were also proficient in this skill (Pomeroy 2002: 13). Spartan girls’ physical education was said to have eugenic considerations as by being strong mothers they would give birth to strong children and would face the rigours of childbirth in a more relaxed manner (Plut. *Lyc.* 14).

Spartan girls were also taught to sing, dance and play musical instruments. The poet Alcman wrote lyrics for choruses of Spartan girls (*Partheneion*), which were intended to teach patriotism and morals, stressed competition among its members both as individuals and as participants in groups of rival choruses (Pomeroy 2002: 8). These choruses were performed at festivals by a choir of adolescent girls as part of their initiation (Golden 1993: 76; Neils 2003: 155). In Chapter 2, Pages 21,22, choral skills are listed as attributes expected of the ‘ideal female Spartan citizen. Aristophanes, although he could not have been a witness, refers to maidens dancing on the banks of the Eurotas (Aristoph. *Lys.*1307.10).

### 7.2.2 Socialisation of Spartan girls

According to Pomeroy (1998: 50; 1994: 55) Spartan girls were highly valued, admired and loved by both men and women. Consequently, unlike their cloistered counterparts in Athens, there was no attempt made to conceal female members of the family from men who were not their relatives. According to Plutarch, from an early age girls mixed freely with boys without shyness and enjoyed a teasing relationship with them (Plut. *Lyc.*14). It is also possible that they shared the same exercise ground (Pomeroy 2002: 14). The fact that both were frequently nude bore no hint of immorality; rather it encouraged simple habits and gave the girls a taste of male gallantry (Plut. *Lyc.* 14). This frequent contact with their male counterparts may have provided girls a basis upon which to make informed choices of future potential spouses (Pomeroy 2002: 34). It also raises the possibility that females were regarded with greater respect than their contemporaries in Athens.

According to Cartledge (2004: 32-3) and Golden (1993: 76), Spartan girls were gregarious and mixed with their peers in choruses and with Spartan females from other groups at religious festivals and athletic competitions. These out-going and sociable

<sup>31</sup> The translation used for Xenophon’s *Hellenica* is Brownson C.L. (1944) *Xenophon’s Hellenica Books VI & VII*.

qualities displayed by Spartan girls were essential attributes required of the ‘ideal’ female Spartan citizen as discussed in Chapter 2, Pages 21,22. The fact that public displays of wealth were prohibited and Spartan girls were forbidden to wear jewellery or grow their hair long would also have minimised the element of female competition based on appearance (Kennel 2010: 167-68). In Sparta girls and women were free to form homosexual relationships and Plutarch states that such relationships were so highly valued that respectable women would have love affairs with unmarried girls (Plut. *Lyc.*18).

### 7.2.3 Spartan cults

In Athens, domestic cults were important and women played a significant role in mourning the dead. In Sparta, however, where emphasis was on the public sphere, private cults were unknown (Pomeroy 2002: 105). Spartan cults for women reflected their society’s emphasis on female beauty, health and fertility. As part of their religious experience, Spartan women and girls sang, danced, raced, feasted, dedicated votive offerings and wove clothing for cult images of the gods. Unlike their counterparts in Athens, Spartan girls’ cultic experience involved more opportunities for racing than for weaving (Pomeroy 2002: 105-6).

Spartan maidens sang and danced annually as part of the cult of Artemis Orthia at her sanctuary alongside the Eurotas, as a rite of passage from childhood to adulthood (Pomeroy 2002:107). Girls and women also performed lewd dances in honour of Artemis, celebrating her as a fertility goddess (Pomeroy 2002: 108). They also played an important role at the Hyacinthia, the annual three-day communal festival of Sparta celebrated at Amyclae, where they wove the chiton for Apollo (Paus. 3.16.2)<sup>32</sup>. Every fourth year the college of sixteen women at Elis organised choral competitions between choirs of maidens, in honour of Hippodamia and Physcoa, which was thought to be a pre-matrimonial rite and at which Spartan girls successfully competed. Racing at the Heraea was also a cult activity at which Spartan girls excelled, being the equivalent of the Olympic competition held for men (Pomeroy 2002: 24, 113). It was only at these races that Spartan girls wore the distinctive short *peplos* with the right breast exposed (Pomeroy 2002: 114).

### 7.2.4 Marriage

According to Cartledge (2003: 158), in Sparta adultery was not punished or even legally recognized, but marriage was considered a prerequisite for legitimacy of offspring, and only marriage between two Spartans was legally acceptable.

Spartan girls were said to be several years older than their Athenian counterparts, at the time of marriage, ‘not when they were slight or immature, but when they were in their prime’ (Plut. *Lyc.*15). The bridegroom was also usually younger than Athenian grooms, being in his early twenties. The smaller age differential would have provided the basis for a potentially more harmonious marital relationship. Spartan girls may even have had

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<sup>32</sup> The translation used for Pausanias is Jones W.H.S. (1926) *Pausanias: Description of Greece*.

some say in the choice of husband or would at least have stood the chance of encountering him, at festivals and during exercise, before the marriage was contracted. Spartan men also lived in barracks until the age of thirty so it is likely that a girl would not be required to leave her family home, at least for the early years of her marriage or until she became pregnant (Pomeroy 2002: 44).

Spartan marriage ceremonies were reputed to have taken several forms, some similar to those practised in other *poleis* and some unique to Sparta. In the former, based on the perpetuation and prosperity of an individual *oikos*, personal inclinations and ambitions determined the choice of spouse. In the latter, where the aim was the production of children for the good of the state, the state provided incentives for marriage. In both systems women were active participants (Pomeroy 2002: 39). Plutarch describes a marriage by capture where a girl would be ‘captured’ by a ‘bridesmaid’, her hair would be shaved and she would be dressed in men’s clothing and left on a mattress in a dark room. The groom would enter the room, consummate the marriage and return to sleep with his usual mess group (Plut. *Lyc.*15). The groom would continue to visit his bride in secret, while continuing to sleep with his male contemporaries in barracks, as it was considered disgraceful to be seen entering or leaving his wife’s room (Xen. *Const. Lac.*1). The bride was complicit in these arrangements, helping to plan where and when to meet (Plut. *Lyc.*15). Pomeroy (2002: 42) suggests that this ‘capture’ of the bride was a ritual enactment of a pre-arranged betrothal. The secrecy of the ceremony meant that if the bride did not become pregnant the marriage could be inconspicuously annulled without public dishonour and the bride could try again to prove her fertility with another husband (Pomeroy 1994: 38). Another novel form of marriage by capture is described by Pomeroy (1994: 37), where young men and women were shut up together in a dark room and each man lead home whichever woman he caught. This reinforces the belief that young, egalitarian Spartans saw each other mainly as sexual partners in the main aim of marriage, to produce children who would be potential warriors, and that all women were considered equally attractive (Powell 1996: 223).

Plutarch maintains that there was no notion of adultery at Sparta, however, Xenophon states that an elderly or impotent husband could introduce to his wife, a young man whom he admired, in order to produce children as heirs for his *oikos* (Plut. *Lyc.*15; Xen. *Const. Lac.* 1.). Similarly, a man who wished to have children but did not want to marry, could have children with any fertile woman whom he admired, subject to her husband’s consent (Xen. *Const. Lac.*1). Pomeroy (1994: 37) finds it difficult to believe that Spartan women, who were notoriously outspoken and assertive, would passively submit to being loaned as child-bearers to others, unless they themselves had some say in the arrangements. Indeed, Xenophon maintains that just as men want to acquire brothers for their sons, women want to have two households (Xen. *Const. Lac.* 1). Sommerville (1982: 27) states that other Greeks considered these practices odd and it is not clear that it ever really seemed natural or became common among the Spartans themselves. It may have been that the interests of the community took precedence over the ego of Spartan men so that they would have

little jealousy and their wives would have little aversion to such arrangements (Sommerville 1982: 27).

Although it was thought that Lycurgus outlawed dowries, by the end of the 5<sup>th</sup> century BCE, if not earlier, most Spartan women had dowries. Aristotle complained that Spartans gave large dowries and thought it would have been better to have none or for them to be small or even moderate (Aristot. *Pol.*2.9.1270a1). Unlike at Athens, Spartan girls owned their own dowries which, together with their ability to own land, added to their favourable financial position and consequently enabled them to be more assertive (Powell 1996: 245-6). As Spartan men were continually absent from the home, either because they still resided in barracks or had military commitments, Spartan girls enjoyed a degree of autonomy in the *oikos* unparalleled elsewhere in the Greek world. Unlike Athenian girls, Spartan girls were not dependent upon their dowries for their support and sustenance as the *kleros* system provided a set allocation of food for each man and his wife (Plut. *Lyc.* 8).

Inheritance of property was a concern when it came to marriage. In the absence of a male descendant a Spartan girl could become an heiress (*patrouchos*), the means by which her father's lineage was perpetuated, and it was thought essential that she married appropriately for this reason. If her father had not made arrangements for her marriage before his death, the king alone designated her legal guardian, adjudicating between rival claimants and affording the successful claimant the right to marry her himself or to choose who her husband should be (Kennell 2010: 97). Only unmarried girls were subject to the laws governing *patrouchos* (Pomeroy 1994: 61). These rules also contributed to Spartan women's accumulation of land and heiresses were numerous as citizen men were lost in battle, left for mercenary service or failed to meet the census requirements for full citizenship (Hdt. 6.57.4-5). As Spartan citizenship was dependent on fixed amounts of produce from land, acquiring a wife with her own estate would have been an attractive proposition (Kennell 2010: 168). This was a double-edged sword as a wife who brought her husband great wealth could also exercise power over him with the threat of divorce (Powell 1996: 246).

#### 7.2.5 Motherhood

Although the birth of a son and heir would have been celebrated, the birth of a Spartan daughter was also recognised as being important for the continuation of the *polis*. Infants were exposed or abandoned only if they were obviously deformed or unfit and therefore unlikely to benefit the state, rather than for purely economic reasons. The decision for such rejection was taken by the elders of the state, therefore removing the guilt and responsibility from the parents (Plut. *Lyc.*16). Mothers who died in childbirth were the only female citizens entitled to have their name inscribed on a gravestone (Plut. *Lyc.*27). The only other recipients of such honours were men who were killed in battle, so in this way women were elevated to the same status as warriors as they were both thought to have died in the service of the state. Spartan mothers were said to have enforced the concepts of valour and honour in their children, and encouraging bravery in their sons. So

committed were they to breeding the new generation of soldiers but also ensuring that they did their duty to Sparta, they were said to rejoice instead of mourn at a son's glorious death in battle (Dillon & Garland 2013: 132). This demonstrates the characteristics of loyalty to state and family as well as fertility and excellence as a mother, attributes considered necessary for the ideal female Spartan citizens (See Chapter 2, Pages 21,22).

### 7.3 Summary

Although Athens was an open and cosmopolitan *polis*, the Athenian girl was isolated from its influences. Sequestered behind the walls of the *oikos* she was unseen, unheard and unacknowledged. No matter what her age, she had the legal status of a child, subject to the control of her father, husband or adult sons. Her whole life was decided by men, indeed, her very existence was as a result of a decision to rear her taken by her father. In Sparta it was the *polis* that was isolated and secluded, so although a Spartan girl had greater freedom of movement and association within society, this freedom existed on a much smaller stage. However, Spartan girls were generally revered and respected and it is believed that they were less likely to be abandoned at birth than their male counterparts.

Athenian girls were not afforded a formal education as it was thought that all they required to know could be adequately imparted by their mothers within the confines of the home. Modesty and silence were among the foremost attributes that were stressed in this domestic education. Participation in religious festivals and funeral rites were amongst the few occasions when an Athenian girl could legitimately leave the *oikos*. Spartan girls enjoyed a state-organised education, focused though it was on eugenic considerations in the interest of the state. Physical exercise was the primary focus of this education and she engaged in various games alongside boys of her peer group, as well as participating in sporting competitions against other *polis*. Spartan girls were also renowned for their outspoken and assertive characters and the fact that they showed no undue modesty in dress or conduct.

The choice of who would become an Athenian girl's husband rested with her *kyrios* and her future happiness was dependent upon the character of the man chosen. Married when she was barely out of childhood to a much older man who she may have never met, she may have had to move a considerable distance from her family support system. She would have little or no say in the survival of any children which she may have. In the event of breakdown of the marriage, these children would remain in the *oikos* of their father, while she would return to her natal home. In effect, an Athenian girl existed to supply legitimate heirs for her husband's *oikos* and her personal happiness was of little consequence and in many ways she experienced less freedom than the slaves she was supposed to supervise.

At marriage, a Spartan girl was said to be older than her Athenian counterpart and her future husband was also usually closer to her own age. As she had been used to mixing freely with boys, it is likely that she already knew the man she was to marry. Her developmental maturity and physical fitness helped to reduce the trauma and potential danger of childbirth. Her pride in serving the state would have helped her in facing the

possibility that her infant sons would be judged unlikely to be capable of benefitting the state and would therefore be abandoned. She may even have been prepared to produce children for men other than her husband in the interest of maintaining the population of the state. The fact that she owned her own dowry and her ability to own and manage property and land, together with her autonomy within the *oikos* in the frequent and prolonged absence of her husband, would have helped her to develop a self-confident and assertive personality.

As both Athenian and Spartan boys spent their infant years within the *oikos*, in the absence of a male role model, their mothers were probably the primary care-givers and therefore the most prominent influence on their formative years. As far as Athenian boys were concerned, this would have meant that they were guided and instructed by a very young and naïve female, who was afforded little respect, reverence or honour by the *polis*. Spartan boys on the other hand, benefitted from the influence of mothers who were more mature, physically fit, were regarded with greater esteem and were worldly-wise within the limits of Spartan society.

### Appendix 3



Figure 16: Girls going to school (?). Attic red-figure kylix, attributed to the Painter of Bologna 417, ca. 460 BCE New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

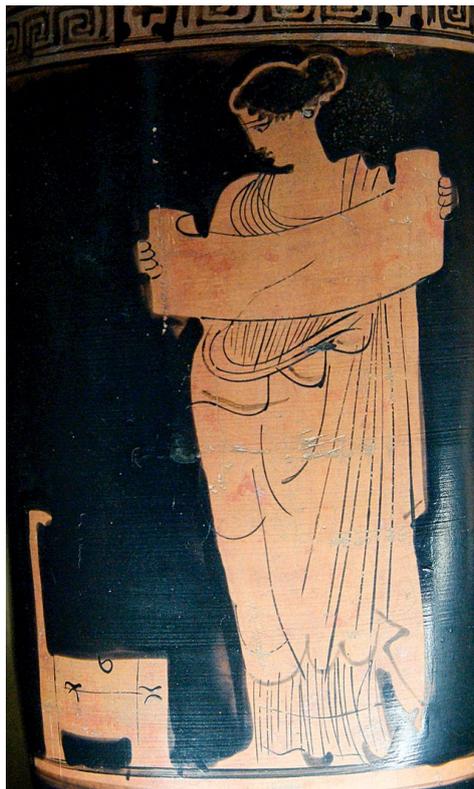


Figure 17: Woman reading scroll Attic red-figure *lethykos*, ca 435 – 425 BCE. Klügman painter. Paris. Louvre. CA 2220



Figure 18: Woman reading. Attic red-figure *hydria*, ca 440 – 430 BCE. Group of Polygnotos Painter. Vari, Attica.

## Chapter 8

### Conclusion

The goal of this thesis was to examine the education of children in the Greek city-states of Athens and Sparta in the 5<sup>th</sup> century BCE. As education was broadly defined as all interactions which enabled a child to acquire the necessary skills for his or her future in the adult world, this study involved the investigation of a range of activities and processes of socialisation. It also used a range of evidence, which included primary texts in translation and works by contemporary scholars but also archaeological and visual evidence where possible. The research questions were twofold. 1. The first question was to ask to what extent and in what way the educational systems of Athens and Sparta differed. This involved tracing the development of the child through various phases and the parallel modes of education and socialisation in order to assess the extent of similarity or difference. From the outset it was necessary to treat boys and girls as distinct categories, since childhood in each society was ‘gendered’ and their educational trajectories differed in varying degrees. 2. The second question was to investigate to what extent the state itself in each polis determined the type of childhood experienced by the children who were to become its future citizens, in other words, the extent of state intervention in upbringing and socialisation of children in Athens and Sparta. In investigating this question it was necessary to explore how the world view and political ideology of each city-state influenced the educational systems, either directly or indirectly through other modes of socialisation.

#### 8.1 The differing systems of education and socialisation in Athens and Sparta

The results of the study revealed that, as hypothesised, there were distinct differences between the childhoods experienced in Athens and in Sparta: it was clearly noticeable that when compared, significant differences in the education ‘systems’ in Athens and Sparta could be described. These are both in terms of the structure of the schooling, but also in terms of what are manifestly the goals of the two systems. This is true also of other modes of socialisation, which include physical exercise and training, dining, and religious activities. ‘Gendered’ differences were also, as expected, significant. Boys in Athens and girls in Athens were exposed to different kinds of upbringing and socialisation, both structurally and in terms of emphasis. This was largely determined by their ideal future roles in the *polis*. The same is the case for girls and boys in Sparta, though their future roles were different from Athens. The difference between boys and girls, and between children in Athens and Sparta was harder to identify before the age of about 7 years when in both city-states boys began their formal training, and the socialisation of girls and boys diverged in more visible ways.

As newborns and infants, children faced a variety of risks and challenges; being accepted into the household was one of them. Exposure, though a contentious topic in the scholarship, was theoretically available to Athenian fathers as a way of controlling the size, make up and financial security of the *oikos*, but in Sparta, this role was usurped by the state. This signals an important trend that was noticeable throughout this research: that in Athens the type of upbringing and education of children was largely dictated by the parents (especially the *kyrios*), while in Sparta, the state was the most significant determinant of a child’s childhood.

The education of boys (*paideia*) in Athens though considered important, and advocated in particular by the political philosophers as being necessary, was not compulsory and the quality and duration of schooling was dictated by the financial and social status of the family. Schools were private enterprises, established and run for profit by individual entrepreneurs who followed their own curricula and methods (Golden 2003: 17). The *kyrios* made the decision as to when a boy should go to school, how long this schooling should last and whether or not he would have the benefit of higher education which, from about the mid-5<sup>th</sup> century BCE, included instruction in rhetoric and philosophy (Beaumont 2015: 135). The art of public speaking was indispensable for any young man who perhaps intended to enter the political arena or simply as an Athenian citizen who was expected to take part in the affairs of the *polis* (Barrow 2001: 53, 54). The state then, did not have official control of an ‘education system’ and education of the Athenian boy, was an individual arrangement and a family concern (Golden 2003: 19). The Athenian boy continued to live at home and thereby, was still an integral part of *oikos* life. In addition, he was exposed to and socialised into the broader *polis* through visits to the gymnasium, attendance at symposia and other religious and social activities and culminating in the two year *ephebia* which served as the bridge between childhood and adulthood. The ultimate aim of the Athenian educational and socialization process was to produce the *kaloskagathos*, a beautiful and good man, sound in mind and body (Neils & Oakley 2003: 244).

The Spartan *agôgê*, was, by contrast, compulsory, collective and state-run. A Spartan father was not allowed to choose how his son was to be educated and Spartan children were indoctrinated into courage and obedience from a very early age through the *agôgê* system. At the age of seven Spartan boys were obliged to leave the *oikos* to sleep in dormitories with their age-mates and subject to the control of the state. The *agôgê* was collective, hierarchical and progressive and was designed to inculcate obedience, courageous competitiveness, physical development and loyalty to the state (Knotterus and Berry 2002: 13, 14). While Athenian boys remained a significant presence in the life of the *oikos*, according to Plutarch, the Spartan state discouraged the development of strong family ties and encouraged instead complete devotion to the Spartan *polis* (Plut. *Lyc.* 24). A Spartan boy’s socialisation consisted of spending time with his age-mates, sleeping, eating, playing games and training together and contact with his family was minimal (Plut. *Lyc.*16). In Sparta the ultimate goal of the educational system was to produce physically fit and trained hoplites to man the army which would protect Sparta from the threat of internal revolt by the *helots* as well as external threats against the state.

No sources suggest that any facility for formalised education was provided for girls in Athens and this is likely tied to the premise that their future role in the political life of the *polis* was primarily that of mothers of future citizens. Instruction in household management, it was believed, could be adequately imparted by mothers and other female members of the household (Beaumont 2015: 104). It is possible that girls did learn to read and write through the services of a private tutor, informal instruction from male siblings or perhaps from an educated slave but there is no concrete evidence, either literary, visual or archaeological, to support this (Foxhall 2013: 55). Their lack of formal education, however, did not necessarily make Athenian girls less important members of their *oikos* or *polis*. Their ‘education’ and socialisation took different forms and had different goals. Girls, for example played a

significant role in many of the state's religious festivals and their ritual life was far richer than that of boys (Fisher 1998: 213). Girls were instructed by their mothers as to the correct procedures and rituals to honour the dead and attendance at funerals and mandatory visits to the family tombs merged the duties of the *oikos* with those of the *polis* (Oakley 2003: 165). Marriage and motherhood were considered to be the primary goal of every girl in Athens (Pomeroy 1994: 62) and as with all other major decisions concerning her life, her *kyrios* chose the man who was to become her husband. Marriage involved the girl, leaving her natal *oikos* to join the *oikos* of her husband, and her childhood would come to an abrupt end with the birth of her first child (Beaumont 2015; 21).

On the other hand, as far as we are aware, Spartan girls were unique in ancient Greece in that they enjoyed a formal education, and that this was, it seems, state-sponsored. This involved a eugenic dimension with an emphasis on physical fitness in the belief that fit mothers would produce fit children. Spartan girls were not required to spend their time in spinning, weaving and other domestic responsibilities as these duties were consigned to the slave population. This meant that they spent less time within the *oikos* which allowed them a greater degree of free time which they may have spent in acquiring a degree of literacy (Pomeroy 2002: 5). Unlike their male Spartan counterparts, and girls in Athens, Spartan girls were trained in public speaking and were apparently renowned for their outspoken assertiveness (Plut. *Lyc.* 14). Spartan girls were believed to have mixed freely with non-kin boys and may have already known the boy they were eventually contracted to marry (Plut. *Lyc.* 14). Just as in Athens, marriage and motherhood was considered to be the destiny of all Spartan girls, and the end of their childhood, but they were probably a few years older at the time of marriage than their Athenian counterparts (Plut. *Lyc.* 15). Motherhood and the production of Spartiate soldiers were priorities for Spartan women, and they then in turn inculcated the values of courage and patriotism in their sons and daughters.

## 8.2 The extent and nature of state intervention in the education and socialisation of children in Athens and Sparta

Athens in the 5<sup>th</sup> century BCE was a progressive and democratic society which was open to innovation, trade and intellectual exchange. The functioning of resident *metics* (aliens) and slaves in the commercial and manufacturing sphere freed Athenian males to participate in the democratic processes of the state and exercise their rights to address the assembly (*egoria*) which was both an ideal and an expectation of the *kaloskagathos* (Hall 2014: 129). The ideal female citizen was the wife who knew her place in the *polis* as nurturer and producer of citizens. However the production of this kind of citizen man and woman was not officially controlled by the state. It was with the head of the *oikos*, the *kyrios*, and to a lesser extent his wife, where the true influence on the nature of childhood was invested (Cox 1998: 134). A strong *oikos* meant a strong *polis* and in a typically patriarchal fashion the male head of the family made all the major decisions on behalf of those under his roof (Nevett 2001: 12-13). As a freeborn male, the head of the *oikos* was aware of the norms and values of the *polis* and what society expected of the children in his care. As with his right to expose a child or grant it a childhood, he also made the decision as to when and where his son would go to school, how long his schooling would last. The only official control the state exercised was in the opening and closing hours of the schools (Aeschin. 1.9-12). Girls were trained in modesty,

silence and control of her appetite by her mother and other female members of the *oikos*. (Xen. *Oec.* 7, 5, 10; Pomeroy 1994: 74, 98).

In Athens the state was removed from the childhood experience in that it determined the legal requirements for citizenship but thereafter it interfered as little as possible in the rearing of its future citizens. Individualism was prized and it would appear that socialisation was of greater importance and took precedence over a legislative alternative. The norms and values of the Athenian *polis* were inculcated in her future citizens by family, friends, teachers and military training, with little direct intervention by the state.

Sparta emerges, in this study, as in many ways the antithesis of Athens, being politically controlling, insular, conservative, xenophobic, austere and obsessed with security and martial valour (Cartledge 2013: 24, 32). This obsession with aggression was to some extent a political necessity and function of Sparta's reliance on the *helot* population, the enslaved original inhabitants of the land. The *helots* may have provided the Spartans with the economic basis of their unique lifestyle but they also posed the most significant threat to this lifestyle (Powell 1996: 98). The constant fear of revolt of the numerically superior *helots* dictated many aspects of Spartan life. The need to produce a constant supply of physically fit and trained hoplite warriors to man the army to defend the state was the first consideration of the Spartan state (Kamen 2007: 90). As a result of her pressing military needs, the state realised that education could not be left to the whim of individual families. Instead the state conceptualised, and controlled the future citizens through the compulsory *agôgê* system, to which all male Spartans were subjected and which was a precondition for citizenship (Plut. *Lyc.* 16).

The provision of a state educational system for Spartan girls, concentrating on physical fitness, is one of the key differences between Athenian and Spartan girls. Its goal and design was, it seems, to promote the eugenic premise that fit mothers would produce fit children to serve the state as future hoplite warriors, or to be the mothers of such warriors (Plut. *Lyc.* 14). Ideological principles that viewed book learning and intellectualism in a negative light are motivated by the suspicion that could introduce ideas contrary to the teachings of the state (Powell 1996:236). The Spartan state controlled every aspect of a child's life from birth to adulthood, usurping the influence of the individual *oikos*. This includes the education of girls and boys and the various means of socialisation of children.

It can be concluded that key differences in education and socialisation exist between the two city states, Athens and Sparta. It can also be concluded that these differences are tied to the outlook of the two city-states, which determined the different attributes each expected of its future citizens. The varying political, economic and social systems dictated the type of citizen that each city-state required or preferred. This thesis has demonstrated that the type of educational system Athens and Sparta followed respectively was instrumental or at least useful in producing the qualities that each required of its future citizens but that the degree of state control differs considerably

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