

BLACKWELL COMPANIONS TO THE ANCIENT WORLD

A COMPANION TO  
**ANCIENT  
EDUCATION**

EDITED BY  
W. MARTIN BLOOMER



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TO ANCIENT EDUCATION**

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# A COMPANION TO ANCIENT EDUCATION

*Edited by*

W. Martin Bloomer

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# Introduction

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*W. Martin Bloomer*

The second-century CE essayist and ironist Lucian recounts in a dream how two ladies came to vie for his attention: Paideia (education) promised the not so diligent schoolboy fame and fortune in the future, while Technê (the vocational maestra) had material rewards at hand. A great deal of misty nostalgia fills and thrills the audience, that is, all those who care about Lady Paideia. As scholars we hope not to be engaging in fictitious dreams about the greatness of our subject, but we may be forgiven if we think there is something of abiding value in how the Greeks and Romans organized their educational cultures. When as a society we ask such questions as what should the young read, who should teach them, where, or at whose expense, we are tightly in the grip of the ancient theoretical and practical debates about the right education. Yet in approaching the topic of ancient education, many have not seen the variety of practices that made up ancient educations. Educational nostalgia encourages the teacher or student, whether in the days of late antiquity or in the European Enlightenment, to imagine that the classical is new again. Indeed, by sitting in school and reading the old texts, it is easy, almost natural to identify with the protagonists of those texts. School compositions—writing a speech in character, for instance—can even encourage such identifications. Classical education has often been a stirring call to the van, to educate today's youth in the way that one was educated or wished to have been educated or that one imagines across the span of millennia that Plato and Xenophon, Cicero, or the young Augustine were taught in Athens, Rome, or Carthage. There is in education a strong desire to repeat—to repeat the way it was for us, our parents, or grandparents, or for aspirational ancestors.

Advocates of a classical education can thus be calling for a return to Athens or Rome, but quite often, such advocacy is more negative than positive. The new old education being proposed is a turn away from disapproved movements such as scholasticism or decadence or modernism or, as in the hands of contemporary homeschoolers, the state provided curriculum and institution. But aside from the fun that Lucian is having with all the serious-minded champions of liberal education, the tug of the two ladies reminds

us that Paideia inherently involves a choice of life and values. She can be parodied as an exclusionary and domineering mistress, but there is considerable bite to this parody. No single education has served for all. Many do not have the opportunity, time, and resources to pursue the deferred good that a long education in literature and history and philosophy, with some math and science and perhaps music promises to be. Maybe too, her lofty methods and purpose are simply another craft, different but no better in kind than the manual crafts of the artist and artisan. Lucian had been anticipated by Isocrates (see Muir below), who had flatly declared in his first educational writing, *Against the Sophists* (ca. 390 BCE) that the primary problem in education was that teachers have a poor reputation because they promise that education can attain much more than it can actually do.

Ancient education draws some of its grandeur, like an aging diva, from those who remember her in her prime. Memory may be unreliable—for, after all, memories of childhood education are often told pointedly by adults to children. In addition, great ancient theorists have encouraged a veneration for the old curriculum. Historians of education and proponents of classical education follow in the traces of Plato, Quintilian, and Plutarch. In the enthusiasm to recover ancient education (and classical culture more generally), adulation works at cross purposes with a properly historical understanding of the old curriculum. But the fans do not deserve all the blame. Education is something of a diva, which is to say, that the institution of education is particularly adept at generating explanations for its own existence and practice. This is again a reflex of its tendency toward replication—many social, political, and religious institutions are concerned with their own survival, but the school gets to practice this each day. Every class of students is encouraged to learn and very often encouraged to see the sometimes harsh practices of learning as necessary. To recover education is in some fundamental way to refound society. Such a recuperation can be a great, productive force or at least one of those sustaining hopes of a society: perhaps the current generation of those to be educated can be so trained as to make them better than the present. What that “better” means is a vexed issue: more pious, more civic, more informed, more critical, more imaginative, or perhaps only better informed on topics that someone or some tradition or some institution deems necessary or important. The reasons to study ancient education are thus complex and fascinating, especially because we—all of us students—are involved in the institution we examine, and our involvement includes hope for the old lady. The historian of education must be alert to the presumptions and normative judgments, past and present, about the value, purposes, and universality of classical education.

The two most famous twentieth-century histories of classical education illustrate the fascinating ideological impulses in studying and writing of education, and also the mature state of the subject. To take the latter first: the study of Greek and Roman education has benefited from the great flowering of classical studies in Europe since the Renaissance. For many generations have treated paideia, a Greek-style education in the liberal arts, as classical culture. This is no longer so as ancient culture is now understood in more rigorous historical and anthropological modes, but generations of scholars had sought in ancient education the ideals and techniques for their ages and for their own intellectual and ethical formation. These same two mid-century works show also the deep ideological divisions inherent in describing educational practice and theory. Werner Jaeger’s *Paideia* (published and enlarged from 1934 in Berlin to 1947 in the United States)

brims with the hope that Greek cultural history can renew the decadent West, although it must be said his emigration and growing antipathy for National Socialism only tempered in part what seemed even then an unrealistically nineteenth-century enthusiasm for a national culture. Henri Marrou's *History of Education* (originally Paris 1948) is far less philosophical—he does not so much write about the evolution and triumph of ideas as trace early practices growing toward systematization and universality. Far richer in detail and process, and still of fundamental importance, his magnum opus, it must be said, flattens out the complexity of ancient educations to something like an imperial system. The wealth of studies that have followed have been enriched by the turn to social and institutional history. In addition, a sensitivity to the agents and kinds of education not noticed by the ancient theorists has greatly improved our understanding of ancient education and the ancient world.

The present volume, conscious of the luminaries who have come before, offers a reassessment of the breadth and purposes of education in ancient society. This volume demonstrates the array of instruction that ancient Greeks and Romans deemed sufficiently valuable to merit special techniques or at least special materials, venues, or teachers. The various chapters aim to bring before the reader the educational systems from the return of literacy to the Greek world in the eighth century BCE to the (partial) collapse or transformation of the Roman order in the fifth century CE. The full map of the topic should track at least thirteen centuries of students, at first in the Greek communities about the rim of the Mediterranean and then extending and contracting with military, political, and cultural conquests to Egypt and North Africa, most of what we now call Europe, Asia Minor, and the Levant. Ideally, the reader should be led through the schools of Hellas and the schools of the Roman empire, introduced to the methods of inculcating literacy and numeracy, and given some notice of the higher or supplementary educations in music, mathematics and science, and athletics. The 33 chapters of this volume present the interpretations of leading scholars on essential aspects of this grand history. Yet the narrative of this history is here scrutinized in ways that reveal the debts and affinities of educational practice to those of other civilizations. This volume takes up the fundamental and traditional question of how Greeks and Romans educated (mostly elite) children in skills of literacy and numeracy and yet also considers the larger set of topics and methods for formal instruction (e.g., the education of slaves, of apprentices, education through toys and games).

The contributors to this volume have been careful to ask what education was thought to be doing and what it was doing. The chapters attend to the complexity of the ancient phenomena of education and to a lesser degree to the ongoing influence and importance of their topics. The myth-making that accompanies ideas about education is perhaps most acutely felt in the stories of the origins and transfer of education (see Griffith, Maras, and Sciarrino especially) and in those groups or figures singled out as exceptions (preeminently symbolic groups—famously the alleged differences between the Athenians and the Spartans; see Kennell and Powell—and symbolic educators, most famously Socrates; see O'Connor). As a handbook, however, this volume and the chapters just noted are most concerned with the breadth of phenomena that made up ancient education. Thus, the chapter on the coming of education to Greece (Griffith) describes in detail the relations to the Near Eastern civilizations that invented, revised, and transmitted writing and a special schooling in writing for various religious, political, and

diplomatic purposes. In the ancient Near East, education had already been conducted in a non-native, archaic language often for a scribal class in service to a palace bureaucracy. The adaptation of this system for the Greek city state and its citizen class is a cultural transformation of enormous significance, but other educations, musical and martial especially (see Hagel and Lynch, and Bannard), benefited or were influenced by changes brought about by the new system of education in literacy and numeracy. In similar fashion, Maras broadens (and complicates) what we thought we knew about the coming of education to Rome by describing the world of Italic literacy and education from the seventh century BCE.

In such richly comparative and synthetic accounts, the singularity alleged for Greece or Rome may recede, but we gain a more precise understanding of the relation of education to the specific social, cultural, and religious life of the societies. Those readers interested in following the historical developments of education may choose to read sections two through five, which move from the world of the sophists in early classical Greece through the Hellenistic period to the city of Rome and then again more broadly to the worlds of Greek and Roman late antiquity. The discussions of the material realities deriving from the Hellenistic schools in section four, while deeply aware of historical changes, attempt to describe the experience of schooling in the ancient school. A separate section of seven chapters has been reserved for "Theories and Themes of Education," which treats the greatest theorists of education. Here too, the education of women is discussed, in part because it was an issue of great interest to the ancient theorist and in part because it does not properly belong to the final rubric of non-elite and non-literary education. This final section treats directly the range of educational spheres in the ancient world that had been neglected in great measure and even directly belittled by the champions of liberal education. In studying these, we may have an antidote to the claims of liberal education that troubled Isocrates and Lucian and also strong evidence for the variety of agents, materials, and spheres of life that pursued trainings essential to their ancient societies.

PART I

**Literary and Moral Education in  
Archaic and Classical Greece**

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## CHAPTER 1

# Origins and Relations to the Near East

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*Mark Griffith*

### 1. General Issues: Neighbors, Greeks, and Cultural Contacts

This chapter aims to set the stage for our investigation (in the next chapter) of the earliest forms of Greek training and education for the young, by providing a sketch of the relevant features of those neighboring societies with which Bronze and early Iron Age “Greeks” are known to have had significant contact. Sometimes it is possible to identify likely connections and derivations for early Greek practices from among those Near Eastern neighbors and predecessors. Even when such direct connections are absent, useful analogies and contrasts may often be drawn. In the case of some of these societies, their educational practices are well known to specialists in those fields, though this knowledge is not widely shared by Classicists. In other cases, the evidence is much scantier altogether, but can be supplemented by comparative material or by plausible inference from later periods. Overall, the remarkable range of institutions and techniques that we find operating in these regions should serve as a valuable reminder of the diversity and complexity of the Near Eastern and Mediterranean cultures out of which Western civilization first began to take shape, and of the many different strands and impulses that came together in the earliest “Greek” educational systems.

It has long been recognized that during both the Bronze Age (the so-called “Mycenaean” culture, ca. 1650–1200 BCE) and during the Archaic period (ca. 800–450 BCE), Greek architecture, visual art, technology, religion, mythology, music, and literature absorbed multiple influences, at different times and places, from Egypt, Anatolia, the Levant, Crete, Cyprus, and elsewhere (Vermeule 1972; Hägg and Marinatos 1987; Laffineur and Betancourt 1997; Morris 1992; Burkert 1992; West 1971, 1997; Kingsley 1995; Franklin 2007; Haubold 2013). Those same regions also present us with distinctive administrative and educational programs that were essential to their operations

and character, and these will be discussed in what follows. I shall also briefly examine two more distant cultures: the Mesopotamian societies of Sumeria-Babylonia-Assyria and the Vedic-Brahmanic educational system of N. India, whose direct connections with Aegean (and specifically Greek) society during these periods are much less certain. In both cases, their educational systems were so elaborate, long-lasting, and influential that they deserve our close attention, whether or not we can demonstrate their direct impact on Greek culture before the Hellenistic period. By contrast, we know much less about the social structure and institutions of those northern and western neighbors (especially Thrace, Scythia, Italy, and Sicily) with whom Greeks certainly enjoyed extensive cultural contact from at least the eighth century BCE on, through settlement, trade, slavery, mercenary employment, etc. Our ignorance is due in part to the fact that literacy was not yet developed in those regions. But we are still able to recognize in certain cases the origins of some important new kinds of specialized training and instruction that filtered through to other regions of Greece during the Archaic period, sometimes with quite radical consequences.

Scholarly opinions continue to diverge sharply, not only about the nature and degree of contact between these neighboring societies and the earliest Greeks, but also concerning the continuities between Bronze Age (Mycenaean-Minoan) Greek culture and that of the Archaic period. This is not the place to attempt to resolve all these questions (though we will have to consider some particular cases as we proceed, especially in the next chapter). But it would surely be a mistake to attempt any comprehensive account of early “Greek” education without considering the practices of their predecessors and neighbors. So even though parts of this chapter and the next must necessarily be speculative and/or lacunose, the investigation nonetheless seems relevant and worthwhile.

## **2. Mesopotamia (the Sumero-Babylonian-Assyrian Educational System)**

“In the Near East of the 2nd millennium BCE, high culture was Mesopotamian culture ... All civilized peoples borrowed the cuneiform system of writing and basic forms of expression from the Akkadian language culture of Mesopotamia” (Beckman 1983: 97–98). The cuneiform (“wedge-shaped”) script was first developed by the Sumerians in the late fourth millennium BCE, and was subsequently taken over by the Babylonians to write their own Akkadian language. A Sumero-Babylonian curriculum of scribal training came into existence toward the end of the third millennium BCE at Nippur, and was extended, perhaps on a smaller scale, to other Mesopotamian cities such as Sippar, Ur, and Kish. This cuneiform-based system was subsequently adopted by several other Near Eastern and Anatolian peoples, remaining in use continuously throughout the Bronze and early Iron Ages (Falkenstein 1954; Kramer 1963: 229–249; Sjöberg 1976: 159–179; Vanstiphout 1979, 1995; Veldhuis 1997, 2014). It is found not only in Mesopotamia itself—throughout the Old Babylonian period (c. 2000–1600), the Kassite dynasty (ca. 1530–1150), and the reign of Nebuchadnezzar I (1125–1105), into the era of neo-Assyrian ascendancy (ca. 880–660) and the Chaldean “neo-Babylonian” period (625–539, including Nebuchadnezzar II)—but also, in essentially



the same form, in the Bronze Age Hurrian-Hittite, Luwian, and Ugaritic kingdoms of Anatolia and the Levant (discussed later). Even in areas and at periods when Babylon itself was of negligible importance, and even among peoples that spoke quite different languages and already possessed strong cultural traditions of their own, the Sumero-Babylonian scribal system was often superimposed. For over 2000 years, Akkadian (= Old Babylonian, a Semitic language fairly closely related to Hebrew) was thus used as the international language of diplomacy and business, as well as high literary culture, throughout the Near East. So, for example, when the eighteenth dynasty of Egypt ruled the East in the latter half of the second millennium BCE, they did so by means of Babylonian cuneiform. It was not until ca. 900 BCE that, in the Levant and other Western areas, Aramaic superseded Akkadian as the international diplomatic language. In the Achaemenid Persian Empire, both were used, in addition to Old Persian written in cuneiform (see the following text, p. 21).

In general, we may distinguish between two types of teaching within this far-flung and long-lasting Babylonian system: formal schooling and apprenticeship.

Formal schooling follows a more or less set curriculum and is visible in the archaeological record by a concentration of scribal exercises and textbooks. Apprentices, on the other hand, immediately or almost immediately start writing documents, following the example of the master. The most elementary phase of such apprenticeship (the introduction to making tablets and writing cuneiform signs) may not have followed any particular program. The apprentice watched and imitated, the master checked and corrected ... in the same way as one would learn to be a potter, a farmer, a musician, or a government official. Apprenticeship may be visible in the cuneiform record in badly shaped tablets with random signs, in accounts that feature oddly round numbers or have vital information missing, or in letters that exist in multiple duplicates. (Veldhuis 2014)

Examples of the curriculum for the full-scale Babylonian scribal program, known as *Eduba* (literally “Tablet House,” or School), are preserved from the Old Babylonian period (c. 2000–1600) at Nippur, Ur, Sippar, and Kish, each containing thousands of tablets of remarkable uniformity and systematic completeness, written in over 500 different hands. The subject, and to some degree the language, of instruction in these school tablets is Sumerian, a non-Semitic language that had not been spoken for centuries but that was regarded as the proper conduit for many of the most revered and traditional texts and rituals. Thus, those students who undertook not simply to learn basic writing in order to conduct their family’s daily business, but to become true members of the scribal class, learned first how to make the wedge-shaped (cuneiform) signs; then to write out and memorize lists of morphemes, phonemes, proper names, and words, both common and rare, with their Akkadian meanings (Vanstiphout 1979; Veldhuis 1997, 2006). After intensive study of Sumerian grammar, the most advanced students finally proceeded to the composition of “real” Sumerian, and to the reading and interpretation of classic Sumerian poetical and literary texts, including details of theology, astrology, and ritual. The whole *Eduba* system at its highest levels was thus radically bilingual, constantly switching back and forth, even within the same text, between Sumerian and Akkadian. (In some periods and regions, however, especially in the less ambitious schools, there was much less attention paid to Sumerian, and the focus was more on the practical use of Akkadian; Van den Hout 2008; Cohen 2009; Veldhuis 2011.)

The assigned readings and practice exercises, in addition to lists of gods, technical terms, divination and legal procedures, etc., included proverbs and such canonical classics as *Gilgamesh*, as well as other epics, hymns, and wisdom texts. The rudiments of counting, accounting, and measurement were also taught (in cuneiform Akkadian); and some students went on to study the preparation of administrative documents, including various aspects of agronomy, trade, law, and letter writing. Advanced students would also copy actual inscriptions by former kings, real and imaginary, incantation texts, and other specimens of the religio-literary heritage (Veldhuis 1997; Veldhuis and Hilprecht 2003–2004; Charpin 2008; Gesche 2001).

The seventh-century BCE library of the neo-Assyrian king Assurbanipal at Nineveh seems to confirm the longevity and continuity of this curriculum and of the literary tradition. Although no “school” texts have been discovered there, many specialized types of documents were assembled, dealing with astronomy, extispicy (studying divination from animal entrails, above all the liver), exorcisms, medicine, and texts for “singers, lamenters, appeasers,” who performed to lyre, lute, or drum accompaniment (Starr 1983; Nougayrol 1968: 25–81; Burkert 1992; Morris 1992, with illustrations; Parpola 1993; Kilmer 1997; also Cohen 2009: 38–40 on the distinctions and overlaps between diviners and scribes at Late Bronze Age Emar). In general, it seems that this library was assembled in order to demonstrate the king’s masterful control of all human knowledge since the beginning of time—a holy mission for which the scribes were essential (Vogelzang 1995, Zamazalová 2011).

Modern scholars who studied the Nippur materials and other sources for the Eduba scribal system used until recently to imagine that the “Tablet House” must have been a relatively large building devoted to the teaching of a numerous class, all together. But it has become clear that, in fact, the teaching normally took place in a single room of a domestic house, usually one on one between a master scribe and his young student, often his son (Robson 2001; Tanret 2002; Veldhuis 2014). Particular families thus tended to perpetuate their monopoly of scribal expertise, and their expertise and influence might extend for centuries (Lambert 1957; Olivier 1975; Charpin 2010; Veldhuis 2011). They might also act as secretaries and advisors to kings, judges, and priests, in a broad range of ritual, scientific, and political contexts (Robson 2011; Michalowski 1991, 2012). Sometimes their advice and rival interpretations appear to have been presented in a quasi-competitive public arena, and skill at oral disputation and interpretation was highly regarded. Preparation for such situations was sometimes included in the Eduba educational program, and examples are preserved of “oral examinations” of students by their teachers (Falkenstein 1954; Sjöberg 1975; Vanstiphout 1995; Veldhuis 1997).

Overall, this Sumero-Babylonian scribal program, promoting as it did, in its fullest and most complete versions, correctness of linguistic expression, the preservation and interpretation of canonical texts in a “dead” language, and the perpetuation of a specialist, culturally “superior” literate class that largely controlled the religious, legal, and often political life of a far-flung imperial power, bears obvious resemblances to the standardized instruction in Latin that dominated European schools from late antiquity until the modern era. Both systems served to provide a common literary-bureaucratic language of formal communication between elites and administrators over a geographically and linguistically disparate area, and also to separate the fully literate class sharply from the rest. Whether the elites themselves (kings, priests, and their families) were generally

literate and able to participate effectively in scribal culture is a matter of continuing discussion among scholars. Some (e.g., Landsberger 1960: 110–118) have claimed that only three Babylonian/Assyrian kings between 2100 and 700 BCE were truly literate. But there is a growing consensus that, in fact, quite a high proportion of Mesopotamian rulers, judges, priests, and ambassadors could read cuneiform and were interested in literary matters (Charpin 2008; Frahm 2011). Indeed, during the Old Babylonian period, it is claimed, “Writing had deeply penetrated into the ruling social class ... The degree of literacy among the elite ... was much higher than during most of the Middle Ages in the West” (Charpin 2010: 128). Two famous examples of proudly literate monarchs used to be cited as exceptions that prove the rule of elite illiteracy: King Šulgi II of Ur (c. 2010 BCE) and the neo-Assyrian king Assurbanipal (reigned c. 668–627 BCE), each of whom boasted ostentatiously of his unusual degree of learning and literacy. An Old Babylonian hymn attributed to Šulgi states: “I am a king ... I, Šulgi the noble, have been blessed with a favorable destiny right from the womb. When I was small, I was at the academy, where I learned the scribal art from the tablets of Sumer and Akkad. None of the nobles could write on clay as I could ...” (see, e.g., Veldhuis 2014). But it appears that in fact these two individuals, while exceptional, represent more of an ideal than an aberration: many other kings participated more or less expertly in the composition, assessment, and appreciation of Akkadian-Sumerian writings. In other cases, to be sure, the king’s energies were more focused on the military and leisure arts than on reading and writing. It is unclear in those contexts whether music and orally performed poetry were generally part of a royal education or were assigned instead to professional performers (Kilmer 1997; Vanstiphout and Vogelzang 1996; Michalowski 2010).

Clearly there were differing degrees of literacy, both among elites and at lower levels of society (Veldhuis 2011). The reading and writing of cuneiform script at the basic level, i.e., learning to shape the clay tablets, manipulating the incisor so as to make the tiny wedge marks, and memorizing the commonest syllabic signs, was not in itself especially difficult (modern Western claims about the revolutionary effect of the invention of the—simpler—alphabetic writing system often overstate this factor); but the full-scale *Eduba* training was lengthy and arduous. Scribes had to control at least two, and often more, different languages and deploy over 300 separate syllabic signs. In addition, administrative documents often involved extensive technical terminology and specific formulas of address and expression. In some cases, therefore, the division of authority between (literate) scribes and the (generally illiterate, or semiliterate) political and military rulers seems to have been a delicate and unstable matter, especially when, as often, the rulers wished to accumulate for themselves especial legitimacy and prestige through claims to tradition and divine favor, as recorded in ancient texts whose preservation and interpretation were monopolized by the scribes (Veldhuis 2011; Michalowski 2012).

Over the centuries, of course, the purity and correctness of old Sumerian and Akkadian were not perfectly preserved, even within the *Eduba*. The artificial Sumerian that was taught there ended up being far removed from the original living language; and various regional adaptations of Akkadian (especially in the West) often deviated markedly from the Old Babylonian forms (see later in this chapter, on Late Bronze Age Emar: Cohen 2009). Here again, the analogy with medieval Latin suggests itself: regional, more “vulgar” versions of Akkadian could be taught and written that did not come close to the complexity of the “ideal” Sumero-Akkadian fluency of an expert scribe.

In relation to Bronze Age and Archaic Greek culture, some interesting questions present themselves. How widely read, and for what purposes, were the Sumero-Akkadian epics and other high-canonical texts that were copied so assiduously in the scribal training system all over the Near East? How large was the audience of competent readers of Babylonian literature (Charpin 2008; Veldhuis 2011)? Was the reading, writing, and archiving of such poems as traditional “literature” an entirely separate process from the oral performance and enjoyment of them in public contexts? And in what forms and through what channels did Greeks eventually come into contact with these works, as they certainly did, at some point(s) in the growth of (what eventually became) the Hesiodic, Homeric, and Aeolic-lyric traditions (Speiser 1969: 119–120; Olivier 1975; Walcott 1966; West 1997: 586–630; Haubold 2013)?

### 3. Anatolia (Hittites, Hurrians, Luwians, and Others)

Anatolia was inhabited during the Late Bronze Age by dozens of distinct, but interlocking, kingdoms, townships, and chiefdoms. Two peoples, or cultures, stand out, however, for their long-term prominence and for their interactions with early “Greek” communities: the “People of Hatti” (Hittites), whose center of power was located in Eastern Anatolia (capital at Hattusa, 150 miles east of modern Ankara) and the “People of Lawan” (Luwians), who occupied much of Western Anatolia. (On Hittites and Luwians as administrative/cultural units or population groups, rather than peoples, see Bryce 1998; Kuhrt 1995; Melchert 2003: 1–3.) In both cases, exchanges of goods and skills with the West are documented, and also from time to time direct diplomatic relations and military conflict, especially between the Hittite king and the *Abhiyawa* (“Akhaians,” whether based in Ionia, Rhodes, Cyprus, or the mainland). We also find *Milawata* (= Miletus) and *Wilusa* (probably = “Ilion,” i.e., Troy) attested in Mycenaean, Hittite, and Luwian documents.

The Hittites comprised a combination of several different Semitic and Indo-European languages and ethnicities, out of which a powerful kingdom was forged during the seventeenth century BCE (Bryce 1998: 7–20; Drews 1988: 46–73). By the fifteenth and fourteenth centuries, their rulers controlled much of the surrounding area. From the numerous cuneiform tablets that have been excavated from Hattusa, we see that this culture also incorporated many features of the Hurrian civilization of Mitanni. Thus, some documents are composed in the “Nesite” language (the term the people of Hatti themselves use for what we now call “Hittite”), others in Hurrian, and others still in Akkadian/Sumerian—all written in cuneiform. By contrast, all public monuments were inscribed instead in Luwian, a language closely related to Hittite and already widely used elsewhere in Anatolia, in a hieroglyphic (pictographic) script.

Although no actual “schools” or scribal exercises have been found at Hattusa, the Hittites appear to have adopted the traditional Sumero-Babylonian scribal system, at some periods directly from them, at others perhaps via the Levant or Hurrian neighbors. Students were thus required to learn to write three or even four languages in cuneiform: Hittite, Hurrian, Akkadian, and Sumerian (Beckman 1983; Bryce 1998: 416–427; Van den Hout 2008), with the Sumero-Babylonian “classics” (epics, wisdom texts, hymns) by now being transmitted and taught in a fixed, quasi-canonical form. Messengers,

craftsmen, and other specialists (medical, diplomatic, musical, divinatory) were exchanged between the Assyrian, Babylonian, and Hittite courts, as well as between Egypt and Hattusa; and it is probable that other Bronze Age Aegean and Anatolian peoples were thus connected too (Beckman 1983; Grottanelli 1982; S. Morris 1992; Burkert 1992; Cline 1995).

Unlike some of their Babylonian and Assyrian counterparts, there is no evidence that Hittite kings and warrior elite shared in any of this extensive multilingual program of reading, interpretation, and composition (Olivier 1975; Landsberger 1960: 98; Van den Hout 2008). Their chief focus instead was warfare, diplomacy, and hunting, including archery, horses, and chariots: one set of texts (authored c. 1400 BCE by Kikkuli, from Mitanni) provide detailed instructions for the correct training regimen for chariot horses. The king and queen also presided over elaborate musical/ritual performances, involving singers and instrumentalists from many different localities performing in different styles (Schuol 2002; Bachvarova 2008). One curiously mundane instruction manual specifies in minute detail exactly how the royal guards are to escort the king out of his palace, onto his mule-drawn cart, to the law court where he is to preside; and then back again, apparently now in a horse-drawn chariot: the instructions even explain what procedures should be followed if one of the soldiers finds himself overcome by diarrhea or the need to urinate (Güterbock and van den Hout 1991). Clearly this was a society in which all aspects of public life were subject to regulation and training. Athletics too were prominent in some Hittite religious ceremonies; and ritualized consumption of wine was highly valued, with a special status assigned to young elites as “cup-bearers.” In many of these features, the similarities between Hittite and Mycenaean and/or “Homeric” Greek culture are striking.

Included within the Bronze Age Hittite empire and extending further both to the west and the southeast in Anatolia were Luwian speakers, who occupied much of the area that later (after the fall of the Hittite empire) became Cilicia, Lycia, Caria, Lydia, and Ionia. Some of these Luwian peoples, who, unlike the Hittites, do not appear ever to have comprised a single kingdom or state, were also in regular contact with Egypt, Ugarit, and Cyprus, and intermittently with the *Abhiyawa*, too. The Luwian language—and scripts—seems to have been widely used throughout Anatolia, and contact between Luwian speakers and Greek speakers in Western Anatolia must have been widespread and constant. The rise of Miletus, in particular, in the Archaic period (after an earlier period of Bronze Age prosperity) certainly owed much to such cosmopolitan connections (Boardman 1980: 28, 48–50, 240–243; Greaves 2002; Niemeier 2004). But we lack extensive archives of Luwian texts or large building complexes, and our knowledge of “Luwian” culture as such is rather limited (Melchert 2003).

Following the disintegration of the Hittite empire (c. 1200 BCE), a number of smaller kingdoms emerged in Anatolia and the Levant, and from the ninth to seventh centuries the growing power of Assyria affected these regions (and their Greek inhabitants) as well. Particularly significant for the development of Archaic Greek culture were the “Neo-Hittite” or “Phrygian” kingdoms based at Karkemish (on the border of modern Turkey and Syria) and at Gordion (near modern Ankara)—the latter the home of the wealthy king known to the Greeks as Midas and to the Assyrians as Mit-ta-a (Gunter 2012: 797–815). In the seventh to sixth centuries the Lydian empire, centered in Sardis (western Anatolia) absorbed the areas previously controlled by the Phrygian kingdom,

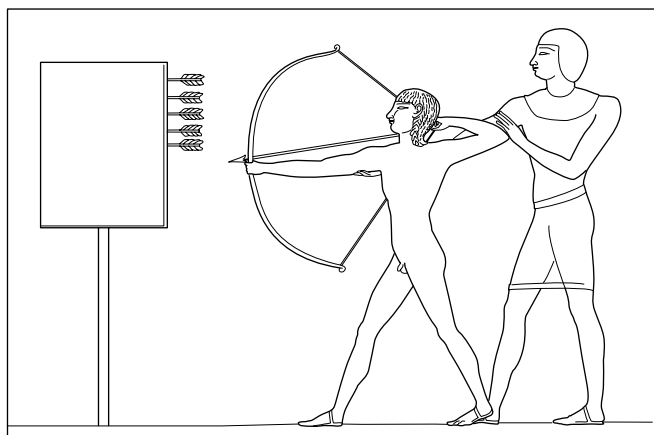
with a resultant blending of Phrygian, Lydian, Assyrian, and Greek elements (Burkert 1992; Franklin 2010). The Phrygian language (which is closely related to Greek) was but one of several different languages and scripts that coexisted within the region, while to the south and east, especially within the Assyrian imperial regime, Aramaic was increasingly taking over from Akkadian as the *lingua franca* of diplomacy and international correspondence. Hieroglyphic Luwian continued in use for many years throughout Anatolia as the chief writing system for everyday transactions (Gunter 2012; Melchert and Hawkins in Melchert 2003). It may well have been through Luwian intermediaries that the Ionian, Cypriote, and Euboean Greeks of the early Iron Age first became familiar with some of the canonical Sumerian/Babylonian myths (epics, theogonies, creation stories, etc.).

## 4. Egypt

The functions and education of scribes and priests in Egypt bore many similarities to those of the Sumero-Babylonian tradition (Brunner 1957; Wilson 1960; Williams 1972; Olivier 1975: 55–56; Zinn 2013). In both cases, those who mastered the intricacies of the writing system (which for the Egyptians entailed both formal hieroglyphics and the cursive “hieratic” script) could aspire to positions of responsibility and power unavailable to the illiterate. Through intensive exercises on potsherds and limestone flakes, and later on papyrus, the children learned, both by copying and by dictation, to write letters, perform elementary mathematical and geometrical calculations, and also to reproduce and understand the classical Middle-Egyptian texts whose language grew to be increasingly far removed from that of everyday society. At the more advanced level, some scribes of the later second millennium also learned cuneiform Akkadian, since this was the international language of diplomacy and commerce (see earlier pp. 8–12; Williams 1972: 219–220; Zinn 2013: 2322–2323).

Instruction in other activities and skills is also attested, primarily for children of the nobility: swimming, certainly for boys and perhaps for girls as well (Zinn 2013: 2319–2320); and an extensive range of musical and dancing skills, especially for women (Manniche 1991; Zinn 2013: 2320–2322). Several forms of boys’ and men’s athletics were also practiced, including wrestling. Archery and horse riding were especially valued by the ruling class, both for warfare and for hunting; and a number of monuments depict royalty shooting at enemies, game, or fixed targets (sometimes with an instructor guiding the king’s arm: see Figure 1.1)—scenes that might remind us of some of the exploits of Odysseus or Heracles (Brunner 1957; Wilson 1960; Decker 1995; Walcot 1984; and see Chapter 2). Unlike Babylon, Assyria, or Hattusa, where warrior-kings were generally illiterate and the sacred hymns and epics were sung aloud by the priests and/or poet-musicians to larger audiences, Egyptian royalty appear to have educated their own children to be literate, and they took some pride in the mastery of letters. Nonetheless, at times the scribal/priestly control of ritual and knowledge grew to the point that, as often in Mesopotamia, it usurped large areas of the royal authority.

Direct influence of Egyptian literature and educational practice on Bronze Age or Archaic Greece is hard to trace; the evidence is less plentiful and clear-cut than in the case of Anatolian and Ugaritic-Phoenician contacts. Yet when we observe the extensive



**Figure 1.1** The young future King Amenophis/Amenhotep II is instructed in archery by his tutor Min, mayor of Egyptian Thebes. Rock relief from Tomb TT109, Thebes; Middle Kingdom Egypt, ca. 1350 BCE. (Drawing by Elizabeth Wahle, after an engraving from *Description de l’Égypte* (1809–1829) Antiquities II, plate vol. II, planche 45, “Thebes, Hypogées.”)

Minoan, Mycenaean, and Archaic Greek borrowings from the Egyptians in the areas of architecture, painting, sculpture, and medicine, we should not rule out such possibilities in the world of letters and ideas too, whether directly or through Cretan, Rhodian, and/or Cypriot intermediaries (Boardman 1980; Bernal 1991; Burkert 1992; S. Morris 1992; *Aegaeum* 18 (1998) *passim*; also Bass 1989).

## 5. The Levant (Ugarit and Other Canaanites; Israel)

The period ca. 2000–600 BCE witnessed frequent shifts of power, populations, and contacts throughout the Levant, as empires (Assyrian, Babylonian, Egyptian, Hittite, and Iranian) contracted and expanded while individual city-states, pastoral tribes, and small kingdoms struggled to maintain their own distinct identities. These regional processes often involved the collection, adaptation, and dissemination of traditional lore and “literature” of many kinds, including prescriptive ritual, hymns and mythological narratives, and moral “wisdom” and practical instruction (the Hebrew Bible being the most conspicuous and best-preserved example of such a tradition). In some cases, specialists were trained to be the preservers and interpreters of the community’s traditions; however, the evidence for this and for actual “schools” is scanty.

*Ugarit*: The fullest archaeological record from the Levant, and the most significant for the study of early Greece, is to be found at Ugarit (modern Ras Shamra), in northwest Syria. Between ca. 2000 and 1180 (when the Sea Peoples destroyed the city), Ugarit, whose inhabitants appear perhaps to have been Amorites, grew to be a thriving cosmopolitan trading center, one of many independent Levantine city-states in contact with Egypt, Mesopotamia, and (from c. 1600) Anatolia and the Aegean (Boardman 1980: 35, 54; Burkert 1992; Kuhrt 1995: 300–314; Dietrich and Loretz 1995). By roughly 1300 BCE, a 24-letter cuneiform alphabet was developed for writing religious and

mythological texts in Ugaritic (a northwestern Semitic language closely related to, but distinct from, Phoenician and Aramaic: Lipinski 1981; Segert 1963). Many clay tablets, which included both detailed instructions for cult practice and traditional narratives of the gods and epic heroes (including *Gilgamesh* and the other Sumero-Babylonian classics) written in Akkadian or Ugaritic, were deposited in the temple library of the high priests of Baal and Dagan (Pritchard 1969; Smith and Parker 1997; Wyatt 2002).

The king of Ugarit, assisted by an extensive hierarchy of priests and attendants of various titles and functions, presided over the ritual life of the community, which, as at Babylon and Hattusa (discussed earlier), included lengthy ceremonies of purification, musical and hymnic performances, and divination. Banquets and ceremonial drinking were prominent, as were extispicy, magical and necromantic incantations of various kinds, and possibly even dramatic performances. The scribes of Ugarit employed the Akkadian language (written in cuneiform) to conduct most of the diplomatic and mercantile business; but in addition some could read Egyptian hieroglyphics and hieratic script, as well as Hittite and Hurrian cuneiform (Van Soldt 1995). Their Syrian and inland neighbors to the north and northeast spoke a variety of northwest Semitic dialects (which eventually coalesced into Aramean), and at least some of Ugarit's merchants must also have been able (from ca. 1500) to communicate effectively with the *Abhiyawa* and other Greek-speaking and/or Minoan traders and raiders (perhaps with the help of Linear A and/or B script, or one of the Cypriot syllabic scripts).

In addition to the Sumero-Babylonian "classics" and the particular sacred instructions of the local Canaanite religion mentioned earlier, we possess fragmentary remnants of specifically Ugaritic epics that provide interesting analogies with those of the early Greeks (Smith and Parker 1997). Whether professional poets, singers, and other itinerant storytellers and purveyors of wisdom existed we do not know; but it seems likely (West 1971, 1997; Grottanelli 1982; Burkert 1992: 24–35; Cline 1995; Van Soldt 1995; Bachvarova 2008).

Another site of almost comparable importance is Emar (in northeast Syria), where a thirteenth-century BCE Amorite community is found recording numerous private, judicial, real estate, marriage, and other documents, as well as literary and lexical texts and ritual instructions for local cults, in what appears to be a somewhat decentralized scribal culture that also retains elements of the old-style Mesopotamian training. Here it is possible to identify two somewhat distinct traditions of scribal training and practice, employing differently shaped tablets, slightly different dialects, and distinctive versions of the cuneiform symbols: one (the "Syrian" tradition) based more closely on the old Sumero-Babylonian Eduba tradition, the other (the "Syro-Hittite" tradition) incorporating more elements from Hittite administrative habits and conventions. Some of the scribes here seem actually to have been Babylonians or Assyrians (Cohen 2009, especially pp. 46–65 on schools and scribal exercises).

In addition to Ugarit and Emar, sites at Ekalte and Alalakh have yielded further texts; and doubtless other similar communities existed too in that region that have not yet been discovered and excavated. At Amarna (Egypt, c. 1350 BCE), the writing exercises that have been found are more basic and largely eschew Sumerian, restricting themselves to Akkadian; in that context, the more prestigious applications of writing were presumably conducted in hieroglyphics (as discussed later in the chapter). All in all, it is clear that the arts of cuneiform writing and scribal expertise were widespread and somewhat variable;



but the basic components enabled extensive exchanges of knowledge, literature, and ideas, as well as local administration and record keeping, all over the Near East.

*Israel:* During the period ca. 1300–1000, the “people of Israel” gradually emerged as a distinct culture, assimilating and adapting elements from the multifarious Canaanite cultural heritage that surrounded them. To what degree this assimilation involved the use of writing (on materials now lost: e.g., vellum and/or papyrus), and how systematically the key texts and sacrificial procedures were studied and taught, cannot be determined, since alphabetic Hebrew inscriptions and *ostraka* only begin to appear in significant numbers from c. 1000 BCE, while the biblical texts themselves—which were probably not written down in their present form until the sixth century BCE and later—contain descriptions of events and institutions of the earlier period only in intermittent, and sometimes anachronistic, detail. Religious training of some kind was certainly practiced from an early date, and internal references within the Bible appear to describe apprenticeships of adopted “sons” with individual master-priest/prophet figures: for example, Samuel with Eli (1 *Samuel* 1–3), David with Nathan (2 *Samuel* 12.24–25), “sons of the prophet” building a schoolhouse (2 *Kings* 6.1ff), “Jehoidada the priest instructed <seven-year-old Jehoash>” (2 *Kings* 12.3), Elijah-Elisha (1 *Kings* 19.19–21, 2 *Kings* 2.1–18); and also age groups of boys assigned to one or more teachers or tutors: for example, Reheboam “took counsel with the young men who had grown up with him” (1 *Kings* 12. 8–14; cf. 1 *Kings* 22. 26 = 2 *Chron.* 18. 25), “tutors/guardians of the 70 sons of Ahab” (2 *Kings* 12.3), etc. (Olivier 1975, 58–59; Van der Toorn 2007).

By the time of the regimes of David and Solomon (ca. 1000–922 BCE), or perhaps somewhat later (eighth to seventh centuries), as an increasing need was felt for trained staff to manage the kingdom(s) and communicate with outside powers (Assyrians, Babylonians, Egyptians, Persians), a broader schooling in administrative procedures, law, ritual, and justice, was developed. This training took place largely, perhaps exclusively, in Jerusalem (and after the division of the kingdom, also at Samaria in the north), where the “sons of the king” were educated together with those of other leading functionaries. As in the Babylonian system, scribal/diplomatic expertise tended to run in particular families (Lemaire 1981: 54–57; Gordis 1943, 1971; Mettinger 1971: 19). Scholars disagree as to how extensive Israelite schooling and priestly training were, but the curriculum was probably much simpler and more limited in scope than the elaborate Near Eastern *Eduba*: for not only was the 24-character Hebrew alphabetic writing system much easier to learn and use than cuneiform or hieroglyphics, but the economic, diplomatic, and bureaucratic transactions of this small kingdom were much less complex than those of the Mesopotamian or Egyptian empires. (Arguing for a rather extensive statehood and bureaucracy, formal educational system and regional schools: Williams 1972; Mettinger 1971; Lemaire 1981; Van der Toorn 2007; Demsky 2012; cf. too Rollston 2010; *contra* Dürr 1932; Gelb 1963; Golka 1983; Crenshaw 1985; and esp. Jamieson-Drake 1991, who argues that only small-scale elementary schooling occurred outside Jerusalem.)

In its most developed form, the Israelite educational system seems to have consisted of several small provincial schools (often connected with military fortresses) that provided elementary training for boys (but probably not girls) in reading, writing, time reckoning, arithmetic, music and singing, and basic etiquette. At the next (“secondary”) level, regional centers (Lakish, Hebron, etc.) may have offered a broader range of texts and procedures to be studied, including bureaucratic exercises, salutations, and copying of

formulas and messages, as well as rote learning of canonical texts, as part of the inculcation of national traditions, geography, and ritual procedures. Those who were being trained for the priesthood would receive special instruction (perhaps as residents in the temple) in sacrificial procedure (cf. *Leviticus* chs. 1–7), which would involve botany and zoology (and butchery); the calendar and the liturgy (though apparently not astronomy); hygiene, medicine, and ritual cleansing (e.g., *Lev.* chs. 13–15); the organization of the sanctuary, furniture, etc.; and musical chants (cf. 1 *Chron.* 16.4–7, 25.1–8)—most of which practices and types of expertise find close parallels at Ugarit, Emar, and in other northeastern contexts (Van der Toorn 2007). As in the Babylonian system, a senior scribe might act as virtual “secretary of state” and advisor to the king (2 *Sam.* 8.16, 1 *Chron.* 27.32), and might live in the royal palace (*Jer.* 36). Those devoted to the life of an individual prophet might serve as apprentices to a “master” or “father,” whose “school” maintained the memory and teachings (and in the later period, expounded and commented on the specific, fixed text) of, for example, Elijah, Amos, Hosea, or Isaiah (e.g., 2 *Kings* 8.4, *Jeremiah* 26.17–18, *Isaiah* 8.16ff., and Josephus, *Autobiog.* 2.10–12), rather like a Greek philosophical community or mystery cult devoted to Pythagorean, Orphic, Platonic, or Epicurean wisdom) or an Indic *asram* (below).

## 6. India

The Indian educational system has long been renowned for its antiquity, complexity, and refinement. But tracing its early evolution presents large problems, as no written documents exist from earlier than the sixth century BCE, and the archaeological record leaves much open to interpretation. Many aspects of the early periods of Indian history remain obscure and controversial, and as with ancient Israel, both ancient and modern accounts are often colored by nostalgia and/or ideological bias. Nonetheless, certain general tendencies and particular institutions can be tracked, at least from ca. 600 BCE onward, constituting an elaborate and relatively stable system that suggests several interesting points of comparison—and possible connection—with ancient Greece.

Between ca. 3000 and 2000 BCE, the culture of the Indus Valley civilization operated at a level of complexity, stability, and sophistication comparable to those of Mesopotamia and Egypt. The surviving written documents from this period have not been securely deciphered, but they seem to be in one or more “Dravidian” languages (i.e., related to the language family that now dominates in South India: Emeneau 1954; Erdosy 1995). Subsequently—by some still-undetermined point between 2000 and 800 BCE—a self-styled ruling elite of Sanskrit-speaking “Aryans” (lit. “Companions”) emerged into prominence, whether through invasion from the north or west, or as a result of gradual cultural assimilation (Drews 1988: 62–66, 139–146; Erdosy 1995). Their language and certain features of their religion belong to the Indo-European family and show particularly close resemblances to those of early Iran. During the period ca. 1000–800 BCE, hundreds of traditional Sanskrit hymns (many of them probably composed much earlier) were collected to form the *RigVeda*, a process apparently carried out by a number of prominent North Indian priestly families. These hymns, supplemented by the mystic-philosophical *Upanishads* (probably composed ca. 700–400 BCE) and a number of prose instruction manuals (*Brahmanas*) governing ritual practice, came to form the core

of the higher-educational program that was developed over the succeeding centuries and that persisted into the modern era (Altekar 1965; Keay and Karve 1964; Olivelle 1993; Scharfe 2002).

The development of this elaborately restrictive and prescriptive educational process seems to have coincided with the evolution of the Indian “caste system” into its full rigor and institutional force. Although this caste system is unique to India, it presents certain striking analogies to Greek and Roman practice. The division of the population into three endogamous classes of “priestly-sages” (*Brahmans*), “warrior-nobles” (*Kshatriyas*), and “farmer-producers” (*Vaisyas*), along with a fourth class of “laborers” (*Sudras*), who were mythologically explained as being born respectively from the mouth, arms, thighs, and feet of the original (quasi-Promethean) Man, Purusha (*RigVeda* 10. 90. 12), is paralleled, for example, in Plato’s *Republic* (philosopher-kings, warrior-guardians, producers, and slaves) and Aristotle’s *Politics* (Book 7 1328b-29b), as well as in certain aspects of Roman religious and political organization. It also seems to have been closely mirrored in Old Avestan (Iranian) culture, and some scholars have argued for a Proto-Indo-European origin for these social structures (Dumézil 1957; cf. Benveniste 1969; *contra*, Beard and Price 1998: 14–16). Connections between Indic and Iranian sacred teachings may also during the Achaemenid period (sixth to fifth c. BCE) have been fostered at the northern Indian educational center of Taxila (Altekar 1965: 104–110; Scharfe 2002: 140–142), and it may have been in fact the Persians who reintroduced the use of writing into India. But the three-caste system may not have been entrenched at such an early period in India: for example, Megasthenes in his *Indica* (c. 300 BCE) apparently described not three but seven castes or classes (Diodorus Sic. 2.40).

The education of the young in India involved a lengthy “rite of passage” (*Upanayana*, lit. “handing-over” to the master-teacher (*guru*), as at *RigVeda* 10.109.5; 3.8.4-5; *AtharvaVeda passim*), by the end of which the young man was regarded as “twice-born” (*dvija*); a ceremonial “returning-home” (*Samavartana*) marked the completion of his training. In the early period, the *Upanayana* was (at least notionally) open to all three of the upper castes, and the range of subjects was quite broad; but as the third caste (*Vaisyas*) gradually sank closer to the level of the *Sudras*, the distinction, exclusivity, and mutual interdependence of the top two classes increased (as we find, for example, in the narrative epic *Mahābhārata*; and, e.g., *RigVeda* 1.1, *Satapatha Brahmana* 11.6.2.10, *Chānogyā Upanishad* 5.3. 1–7; *Kaushitaki Upanishad* 1; Olivelle 1996, xxxiv–xxxvi). Chieftains might keep a Brahman in their retinue as priest and teacher, and members of both castes were described as engaging in debates. The Brahmanic training became ever more specialized and recherché, while the lower classes received only a rudimentary training in non-Vedic literature and ritual, and *Sudras* were expressly forbidden to learn Sanskrit or even to listen to Vedic recitation. Thus, higher education was quite exclusive, maintaining the mutual interdependence and reinforcement of military-political and religious hegemonies. The soldier-ruler (*Kshatriya*) curriculum aimed to train future kings and administrators, and included agriculture and cattle-breeding, criminal law, and other aspects of administration in addition to the *Vedas* and higher philosophy, while Brahmanic education concentrated more intensively on the latter, as well as matters of ritual and linguistics. This curriculum continued through the medieval period into the modern era (Mookerji 1969; Keay 1964; Olivelle 1996; Scharfe 2002).

The *Gurukula* system of master-pupil training underwent changes as the centuries passed, but certain aspects remained constant (though some degree of idealization and nostalgia may often be present in the description that our sources provide). Study with the master usually entailed going to live in his house, which was thus a kind of “boarding school,” usually comprising 15–20 students, or disciples, of various ages. Among Brahmans, formal education was expected to begin around the age of 8; among Kshatriyas and Vaishyas around 12, though these ages may have fluctuated. Strict celibacy was required of all students; often, completion of the training brought with it betrothal and marriage, so that the *Samavartana* (graduation ceremony) represented in every sense a “coming of age.” The full training was expected to last at least 8 years, sometimes as long as 15 or 20. According to some, each Veda was supposed (ideally) to take 12 years to learn properly; so mastery of all three primary Vedas might presuppose a 36-year period of training. Later Indian tradition specifies a sequence of four “stages” (*Asrama*) of Brahmanic life: “training” (*Brahmasarya*) = youthful education; “house-holding” (*Ghasthasrama*) = working and raising a family; “forest-retreat” (*Vanaprasthasrama*) = ascetic withdrawal from social bonds; and “renunciation” (*Samnyasa*) = preparation for the release of death. In that system, each stage is supposed to last 25 years.

The Brahmanic curriculum was based primarily on intensive oral study of the Sanskrit *Vedas*. The use of writing was forbidden: the student was required to learn by heart (ideally) an entire *Veda*, comprising many thousands of lines, with minute attention to exact pronunciation and accent, which he would do by repeating word for word after his *guru*. As classical Sanskrit came to be less and less familiar even to the well educated, six *Angas* were taught as aids to Vedic study (pronunciation, ritual, grammar, philology, prosody, and astronomy); and in addition to the sacred Sanskrit texts themselves, 18 particular fields or “skills” (*Silpas*) were designated, which included singing, dancing, painting, mathematics, agriculture, magic, commerce, law, archery, and snake-charming/toxicology. In the later periods at least, 64 separate *Kalas* existed for women to learn, including several for reading, writing, poetry, music, toiletry, cooking, garland making, bed preparation, and costume. More or less elaborate systems of physical training (wrestling, martial arts, gymnastics, ascetic techniques, yoga, etc.) also seem to have existed, whether or not these were closely integrated into the religious program of Brahmanic education (Deshpande 1992).

By 600 BCE or so, if not earlier, the Vedas (lit. “Knowledge:” *ved-* = I-E \**vid-*, Greek *eid/oid-*) had been organized into four separate collections, each with its own specialist priests. The *RigVeda* was the oldest assemblage, comprising 1017 hymns, by now arranged in ten books (*mandalas*). These hymns contained between them a huge amount of ritual language and procedure, and no single guru or priest could begin to master all the relevant formulas and techniques. A system of departmentalization ensued, and three separate types of priestly training evolved. The *hotr* priests concentrated on reciting the *Rig Veda*. The *udgatri* priests were responsible for singing the melodies for the *Soma* ritual (= mainly Book 10 of the *RigVeda*), which were collected into the *SamaVeda*. The *adhvaryu* priests specialized in the manual arts of sacrifice, as selected from the *RigVeda* to form the *Yajurveda*. In a somewhat separate tradition, another class of priests specialized in magic spells, healing, and sorcery (*sakha*) through the study and practice of the *AtherVeda*, whose texts are not derived from the *RigVeda*, but from other sources. All these priesthoods were restricted to Brahmans, and in each case the object of study was

a combination of the Vedic hymns themselves, together with the voluminous prose commentaries (*Brahmanas*) that had grown up around them. A full-scale sacrifice (usually paid-for by a Kshatriya elite) required the presence of all three types of priest (reciter, singer, and manipulator), together with numerous attendants for each, and another chief priest to oversee the whole ritual.

Local variations existed between different “schools” (*charana*), and one Brahmanic family might specialize in a few particular hymns, thus developing a monopoly of expertise in every aspect of ritual and linguistic interpretation of those texts. In a less technical vein, the mystical-philosophical *Upanishads* were studied too, along with the long and immensely popular epics (*Mahābhārata*, *Ramāyāna*), which only attained their final form ca. 300 BCE, but are certainly based on much older oral narrative traditions.

For non-Brahmanic students, and even the non-priestly members of the Brahmanic caste, the *Sutras* were developed, a kind of “wisdom literature” containing condensed, aphoristic instruction in conduct and knowledge that often themselves required lengthy commentary from experts. Thus, the Brahmins’ stranglehold on knowledge and authority was absolute. As the language and original context of the *Vedas* became ever more remote from contemporary experience, Brahmanic scholars developed extraordinary skills at linguistics, debate, logic, and mystical philosophy, which would be enhanced by deep study of the *Upanishads*, as well as the *Silpas*. Learned debate was highly prized, and the subtleties of interpretation, allegorization, and mystification were endless. The analogy with fourth-century Athens (Plato’s Academy, Aristotle’s Lyceum, Epicurus’ Garden) or Hellenistic Alexandria (Ptolemy’s Mouseion) is obvious—with the big difference that the Indic system continued to eschew writing completely.

## 7. Iranians (Elamites, Avestans, Medes, Persians) and Scythians

The difficulties of investigating the early history and cultures of those interrelated peoples who ranged over the areas to the north of Greece (Scythia, Thrace, and Cimmeria) and those who, further to the east (as Medes and Persians), eventually built an empire that came into recurrent conflict and interdependence with them, are even more intractable than in the case of India. For, like the classical Sanskrit *Vedas*, the Old Avestan hymns (*Yashts*) and instructions for worship (*Yasna*)—parts of which seem linguistically to be at least as old as the *Vedas*—were not written down, but learned and studied orally for centuries; and the revolutionary religious teachings of Zarathustra (an eastern Iranian prophet whose date is very uncertain: Bronze Age? or as late as the sixth century BCE?) are not preserved in anything like their original form. (Later tradition mentions an original copy written in gold on ox skins, which Alexander the Great allegedly destroyed.) Old Avestan (a northeastern Iranian dialect, with strong connections to Sanskrit) never found a script, as far as we know. The Achaemenid kings employed cuneiform script for their inscriptions in Old Persian (a western Iranian dialect), while also employing Akkadian, Elamite, Aramaic, and Greek in their diplomatic correspondence and publications. Only much later, in the sixth century CE it seems, was an edition of the Avestan *Yashts* and *Gathas* written down, in the Pahlavi script: bits of this edition were eventually

conveyed in the ninth century by Zoroastrian immigrants into India, who were thenceforth known as “Persians” (Parsis), and these bits appear to be the source of our extant fourteenth-century manuscripts (Malandra 1983: 3-31).

The name “Iran” comes from Old Avestan *airyana waejah* = “territory of the Aryas (‘our people’):” that is to say, the place and (some of) its inhabitants were identified by the late-second millennium BCE as belonging to a people whose language and institutions were closely related to the Sanskrit-speaking occupants of northern India (Benveniste 1969: 1.367–373; Deshpande 1995: 67–84; for the archaeological and historical evidence, Drews 1988; Phillips 1972: 39–53). Whether this reflects an “Indo-Aryan” invasion at some point between 3000 and 1500 BCE, or a gradual process of cultural and linguistic assimilation, we do not know. But in either case, the possible cultural connections between these emergent “Iranians” and their distant, but linguistically related, neighbors—Indic, Hittite, and Greek—are intriguing (Boyce 1975 and 1982; Malandra 1983: 3–31; Gnoli 1980, 1989; Wiesehöfer 1996).

The extant “Songs” (*Gāthās*) attributed to Zarathustra preach a fervently monotheistic—or dualistic—doctrine, in which AhuraMazdā, heavenly god of truth and light, together with other minor divinities and angels of good (the *Aburas*), engages in a cosmic struggle against the evil “gods of the Lie” (*daiwas*, demonic cousins of the benevolent Sanskrit *devas*; cf. Latin *deus*). Zarathustra rails against the iniquity of improper sacrificial practices and theology, and against the forces of the Lie, in a message that in due course seems to have influenced, whether directly or indirectly, such Greek men of wisdom as Pythagoras, Heraclitus, Parmenides, and Empedocles—as well as subsequent Gnostic and Manichaean (Christian) and Islamic sects.

Pre-Zarathustran Indo-Iranians were apparently nomadic or semi-nomadic pastoralists, for whom the herding and plundering of cattle were of central economic and ideological value. As in the case of the Hittites, innovations in the use of horses and chariots assisted them in extending their power westward and eventually building an empire, and horsemanship and military prowess (especially archery) continued to be highly valued into the Achaemenid period (Knauth 1976). The Iranian polytheistic worldview was never fully superseded by Zoroastrian monotheism or dualism: like the Brahmanic religion of Vedic India, it involved devotion to sacred fire, the religious use of an intoxicating-stimulating drink (Avestan *haōma* = Indic *sōma*), elaborate rules of animal sacrifice, and a strongly reciprocal relationship between humans and gods. Extensive sacred regulations and rituals were observed, and it seems (though direct evidence is lacking) that expert priests must have formed a distinct social class, apart from warriors and herdsman, as they did in India. In the sixth and fifth centuries, the Achaemenid regime apparently managed to combine some elements of Zarathustra’s reforms, including elevation of AhuraMazdā to supreme status and a dualistic vision of light/good vs. darkness/evil, with elements of the older polytheistic system.

In all of this it is unclear how the Median (W. Iranian) *magoi* fit into the picture. The term originally meant simply “priest,” and their presence within public religion during the Achaemenid period was ubiquitous (Herodotus 1.132). Both Greek and Persian sources represent these *magoi* as exercising a strong degree of control over many areas of Persian cultic (and even political) practice in the fifth century BCE, but they do not appear to have been Zoroastrians—indeed, Herodotus nowhere even mentions the existence of Zarathustra or Zoroastrianism in the course of his long descriptions of

Medo-Persian religious beliefs and rituals. Some of the *magoi* (who need not have been a tightly knit group, but may have embraced a wide range of beliefs and practices) were engaged with the cult of fire, cosmic cycles of psychic rebirth, purification techniques, and demonic invocations of various kinds, none of which seem to fit exactly with Zarathustra's preachings, though they were often the object of considerable interest to Greek healers and dispensers of wisdom (Allen 2005: 122-31; Malandra and Stausberg 2004; cf. Bidet and Cumont 1938). It is also far from clear in what ways and to what extent the distinctive doctrines and training systems of other communities that came to be included within the Achaemenid empire (e.g., Babylonian, Israelite, or Indic) may have impacted Medo-Persian scribal and ritual culture.

First-hand—but also propagandistic—evidence for the overall worldview of the Achaemenid ruling elite comes to us from two famous monuments: one is the so-called “Cyrus Cylinder” (539 BCE), written in Akkadian to celebrate Cyrus I's peaceful capture of Babylon (“Marduk, the great lord, moved the noble heart of the people of Babylon to me ... and the shameful yoke was lifted from them ... Their buildings, which had fallen, I restored. Marduk, the great lord, rejoiced in my pious deeds ... etc.”). The other is the huge and lengthy trilingual inscription carved between 521 and 517 BCE into the cliffside of Mt. Behistun (Bisitun) on Darius I's orders. Parallel versions of the text are written in Elamite, Babylonian (Akkadian), and Old Persian, and multiple copies were circulated around the empire in Aramaic and other languages (Allen 2005: 37–43.) The text affirms Darius' righteous devotion to AhuraMazdā and his success in defeating numerous misguided rebels and usurpers all over the empire, some of whom are described as “Followers of the Lie.” But the Achaemenid kings generally seem to have exhibited little of Zarathustra's single-mindedness or ferocity of language and religious zealotry (Zaehner 1961: 154–72; cf. Boyce 1982; Gnoli 1989; Malandra 1983), following instead Cyrus' policy of allowing different communities to maintain their own divinities and cults (such as those of Marduk in Babylon) and combining these comfortably within their own polytheistic system (Allen 2005; Malandra and Stausberg 2004).

As their empire grew, the Medo-Persian royalty and aristocracy acquired enormous material and cultural wealth, especially from their conquest of Babylon, Assyria, Lydia, and Egypt. Opulent refinements to their previously austere lifestyle were introduced and disseminated, while the vigorous manly pursuits of horses, archery, and hunting continued to be highly valued. Herodotus' summary of Persian pedagogy (1.136) thus seems dimly to reflect the Achaemenid combination of aristocratic-militaristic pragmatism with religious fervor: “The period of a boy's education is between the ages of five and twenty, and they are taught three things only: to ride, to use the bow, and to speak the truth”—if we may take “speaking the truth” (*aléthizesthai*) here as representing a Greek's view of Iranian devotion to AhuraMazdā and opposition to the forces of the Lie (cf. Xenophon, *Anabasis* 1.9.3; *Cyrop.* 1. 2. 2ff; Wiesehöfer 1996: 79–89).

To the north and west of Iran itself and closer to mainland Greece, increasing contacts during the ninth through seventh centuries between Greek colonists and Scythians and Thracians resulted in a population of “mixHellenes,” or “Hellenoscyths,” some of whose customs and beliefs infiltrated more widely into mainstream Greek culture (Meuli 1935; Burkert 1962; Boardman 1980: 256–264; Rolle 1989; Kingsley 1995). Further south, Greeks in Anatolia and adjacent islands during the sixth century came to be exposed to

new scientific and religious ideas as well as sophisticated leisure practices derived from Lydia and beyond (notably Babylonia and Assyria, both by now part of the Achaemenid Empire). Thus, elite Greeks liked to recline at the symposium, adopt luxurious dress and hairstyles, jewelry, and perfumes, and devote themselves to horse training and hunting, all very much in the manner of their eastern and northern neighbors (Burkert 1992; Kurke 1992; M. Miller 1996; Pritchett 1997: 191–226); and the instruments and tunings employed by Archaic Greek musicians were likewise largely derived from Anatolia and Thrace (and hence ultimately from Mesopotamian tradition), as the Greeks' own musicological traditions about the kitharists Orpheus and Terpander and the auletes Marsyas and Olympus, and likewise several of the surviving scraps of Sappho's and Alcman's poems, all confirm (Franklin 2007).

The Scythians, Thracians, and Medo-Persians were also regarded by Greeks of the Classical period as the source of powerful ritual practices for healing and affecting the human soul, and even for recovering it from beyond the grave. Herodotus mentions such virtuoso figures as Anacharsis (Hdt. 4. 46, 76–77), Zalmoxis (4.94–96), Abaris (4.36), and Aristean (4.13–16), whose reputations for aerial tele-travel, resurrection, wisdom, magic, and healing spread all over Greece; and there were many other less celebrated practitioners—in some cases whole families of them (Hdt. 4. 67–69, 4. 73–75; Meuli 1935; Rolle 1989: 93–95). A shaman's training is long, peculiar, and often arduous: some have seen elements of such training in the traditions surrounding Orpheus, Pythagoras, Empedocles, and their various (numerous, but never mainstream) Greek followers (Burkert 1962; Kingsley 1995).

## 8. Cyprus

In the Bronze Age, the multicultural cities of Cition, Enkomi, Salamis, and Paphos flourished through immigration and trade, developing distinctive adaptations of Levantine styles and engaging in vigorous initiatives of their own to the West and East (especially Ugarit). Cyprus (or, as it was known to neighboring societies, Alashya) as a whole remained relatively impervious to the destruction that overwhelmed the Mycenaean palaces ca. 1200 BCE, and the level of culture in the early Archaic period remained high there, especially as a result of Phoenician settlement and contacts (Boardman 1980: 36–38; S. Morris 1992: 102–113, 127–129; Karageorghis 2002). Several Eastern cults seem to have been introduced into Greece via Cyprus (notably, those concerning Aphrodite, Adonis, and Apollo); and in general this was a polyglot and multicultural collection of communities. Cyprus developed and maintained its own writing systems (first Cypro-Minoan, a script adapted from Cretan Linear A, c. 1500–1100, as yet not deciphered; and then an adaptation of this into another syllabic script that was used for writing Greek from the eleventh to fourth centuries BCE). The alphabet was not adopted until several centuries later than in the rest of Greece, and then ran concurrently with syllabic Cypriot for several generations. Though relatively little is known about the particular lifestyles or educational institutions of the different Cypriot communities, the island clearly was one of the most receptive and productive sites of cross-fertilization between East and West, from the Minoan period right through into the sixth and fifth centuries.



**FURTHER READING**

The Near Eastern scribal training, in all its dimensions, has been much studied: Vanstiphout 1995, Robson 2001, Veldhuis 2006, 2014, Charpin 2008, Radner and Robson 2011 are good places to start. For overviews of Near Eastern and Anatolian prehistory and history, Kuhrt 1995; for Hittite history and culture in general, Bryce 1998; and for Hittite incorporation of Mesopotamian scribal culture, Beckman 1983; for the Luwians, Melchert 2003; for Egypt, Zinn 2013. On Indic education, Altekari 1965, Keay and Karve 1964, Olivelle 1993, Scharfe 2002. On Iranian culture, Zoroastrianism, and the Magi, Malandra 1983, 2004, Allen 2005, Wieshöfer 1996.

For the larger questions concerning cultural contact between Greeks and the Near East, see especially Hägg and Marinatos 1987, Laffineur and Betancourt 1997, Morris 1992, Burkert 1992, West 1971, 1997, Franklin 2007, Haubold 2013.

[*Note:* The combined reference list for chapters 1 and 2 will be found at the end of Chapter 2.]

## CHAPTER 2

# The Earliest Greek Systems of Education

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*Mark Griffith*

### 1. General Issues: Minoans, Mycenaeans, and the Earliest “Greeks”

Once developed, the Classical Greek and Roman program of rhetorically oriented education, with its regularized techniques of instruction and clearly articulated philosophy and goals, possessed a remarkable uniformity and continuity, and we can chart in some detail the processes of its increasing systematization and homogenization, from the later fifth century into the ripe Hellenistic system and beyond. But for the earlier periods, from the Bronze Age to the mid-fifth century, the picture is very different. Any attempt to investigate the various training systems through which the Greeks of the Bronze and early Iron Age prepared their children for adult life is much more frustrating and speculative, though in some respects the topic may be no less important for our understanding of classical culture and of Western traditions of pedagogy and social policy.

In this chapter, I will outline what we know, or surmise, about the various interlocking systems of Bronze Age and Archaic Greek training and instruction, leading up to the beginnings of the classical “school.” The chronological span to be covered is huge (ca. 1800–450 BCE) and the quantity and types of evidence that we possess are extremely variable—and often completely lacking. For the Bronze Age, we have to rely mostly on visual and archaeological evidence; for the Archaic period, literary texts are available too, providing multiple—often quite colorful and detailed—perspectives, though their degree of historical reliability is often open to question.

As we noted in Chapter 1, many questions remain as yet unanswered (and scholarly opinions are often sharply divergent) concerning the precise geographical and cultural origins of the earliest identifiable Greek-speaking people(s), as also about the nature and extent of contact between them and other Near Eastern and northern cultures. We do not know what the Greek-speaking inhabitants of the Bronze Age Aegean called

themselves, or even if they had a single name. (Hittite documents refer to *Abhiyawa* (probably = Achaeans); *Iawones* (= Ionians) are mentioned in the context of Hittite, Egyptian, and Canaanite culture (e.g., the Biblical “*Men of Iavan*.”) Later, the term *Hellènes* is used in Homer to refer only to the Myrmidons (= Thessalians; *Il.* 2. 684), while *Achaioi*, *Argείοι*, or *Danaoi* are the usual Homeric terms for “the Greeks” as a whole (see Thucydides 1.3). In Hesiod *Works and Days* (528, 653), *Hellènes* and *Panhellènes* appear to mean “the Greeks” in general; but ancient scholars argued about this issue: see Strabo 8. 6. 6. (= Hesiod fr. 130 M-W, Archilochus fr. 102 West). Only in the fifth century was *Hellenes* (with *barbaros* as its opposite) apparently adopted as the universal term for all “Greek-speakers” (cf. Hecataeus, *FGrHist* 1 F 1, Theognis 781, and Herodotus, *passim*). Not only these names, but also the different dialects of the Greek language, variant letter forms of the alphabet, multiple religious cults and divine epithets, and many other cultural markers remind us that “the Greeks” of the Archaic period were still far from being unified in their cultural practices and attitudes. And the further question, whether Archaic Greek institutions and practices were largely continuations of those of the Bronze Age or newly developed from scratch (and/or in response to contact with neighboring cultures), adds additional uncertainty to our discussion, as this chapter will make clear.

## 2. Minoans and Mycenaeans

The so-called “Mycenaean” culture of Bronze Age Greece presents tantalizing challenges for modern scholars. Although fairly extensive remains of buildings, grave goods, ceramics, and even written documents (in Linear B script) survive from the period of the flourishing palace culture (ca. 1600–1200), and we can trace a strong degree of linguistic continuity between those documents and the texts of Homer, Hesiod, and other poets and inscriptions from the eighth through seventh centuries BCE, we have no Bronze Age Greek “literature” as such, and it is very unclear how much of this society’s traditions and institutions survived the destruction of those Mycenaean palaces (ca. 1200–1150) and persisted into the Geometric and Archaic periods. Scholars disagree strongly about this question, and interpretation is made all the more difficult by the fact that so many Classical Greek myths were based on events, places, persons, and institutions that were supposedly set in that very same Bronze Age culture. In this section, I will discuss Mycenaean—and also Minoan (Cretan)—training and educational practices, in so far as these can be recovered and understood, both because they are of intrinsic interest and because they seem in some cases to present possible prototypes or origins of later practices that become recognizable, even prevalent, in some parts of Archaic Greece. For the most part, I leave open the question to what degree any of the similarities between these Bronze Age and Archaic practices were the result of continuities maintained throughout the Dark Age, or rather whether instead they were mere coincidences or imaginative reinventions by Archaic Greek communities of their (lost, mythical) Bronze Age past.

We begin with the Minoans, who were not Greeks (their language as written in the Linear A script has not been deciphered, but is certainly not Indo-European), but who contributed significantly to the formation of Bronze Age Greek palace culture. Crete occupied a central geographical, economic, and artistic position in the Aegean during

the early and mid-second millennium, with increasingly large and imposing palaces constructed at Knossos, Phaestos, Mallia, Zakros, and elsewhere on the island (while similar “Minoan” palaces are found also on Thera, Melos, Ceos, Cythera, Rhodes, and other sites: Krsyszowska and Nixon 1983; Hägg and Marinatos 1987; also *Aegaeum* 12 (1995) and 15 (1998) *passim.*). From ca. 1600 BCE, this brilliant and cosmopolitan Minoan civilization began to exercise strong influence on the Bronze Age Greeks, and after the mid-fifteenth century when Mycenaean Greeks invaded Crete and took over the central administration of Knossos, the influences operated in both directions. Indeed, it is often difficult or impossible to distinguish clearly between “Minoan” and “Mycenaean” institutions—especially when much of the evidence comes from written documents (the Linear B tablets from Knossos, Pylos, Thebes, and elsewhere) that post-date Mycenaean occupation of the palace at Knossos.

In any case, even under Mycenaean domination of the palaces, the rest of the population of Crete maintained many of their own traditions and institutions—including their language and writing system (Linear A). Following the destruction and abandonment of Knossos and Phaistos (ca. 1200 BCE), many of the other Cretan communities continued at a relatively high level of prosperity throughout the later Bronze and early Iron Age, with a greater degree of continuity than we find on the mainland. Colonization from Dorian cities in the Peloponnese injected new vigor in the ninth through eighth centuries; however, by the mid-Achaic period (after ca. 600 BCE), Crete was suffering a decline in population and reduced contact with the outside world, and became for a while a cultural backwater.

The Bronze Age Minoan palace culture brought into existence an extensive administrative bureaucracy, one key component of which was the maintenance of written records. The Minoans seem to have been the inventors of writing in the Aegean, and in time, the Minoan scripts were taken over by other peoples, such as the Cypriots and the Mycenaeans. Unfortunately, the early scripts of Crete (Pictographic and Linear Script A) cannot as yet be deciphered; scholars can only read those (Greek) documents written in Linear B, from the period of Mycenaean domination, and these tablets were merely short-term inventories written on reusable soft clay, which accidentally came to be baked hard in a destructive fire and thereby preserved. As compared with the surviving cuneiform texts from Ugarit or Hattusa, they are therefore less broadly informative about the culture at large.

At Knossos and other Cretan palaces, we find a highly developed system of workshops, storerooms, distribution points, and ceremonial activity, monitored by a skilled administrative and scribal staff using first the Linear A script and later (under Mycenaean Greek control) Linear B. On the mainland, the economy and administrative structures of Pylos, Thebes, and Mycenae were smaller and less complex, but organized on similar lines. In both contexts, it seems, the shepherds, farmers, craftsmen, and record keepers were themselves for the most part free laborers, though they were required to contribute a portion of their production to the palace. We may assume that in most cases, as in the Mesopotamian scribal system (see Chapter 1), they trained their own children in their craft, on the job, though some of these “children” of master craftsmen were adopted or immigrant apprentices who were sent to them specifically to learn their trade (Chadwick 1976: 135–158; Killen 1964: 1–16; Bloedow 1997: 439–447; in general *Aegaeum* 16: 1997).

As for the scribes, at Knossos almost 100 separate hands have been distinguished among the 3369 surviving Linear B tablets. This represents the number of scribes active in the palace complex during the last few weeks before its destruction (Bennett 1966: 295–309; Olivier 1967; Chadwick 1976: 15–45; Palaima 1988: 172, 187; Palaima 2011). Both Linear A and B seem originally to have been designed for writing with a brush or pen, not an incisor, and even the tapering wooden blade styluses used for clay tablets were easy to manipulate (Palaima 2011: 111–112 with illustrations); so the scribes' formal training need not have been so lengthy as for the full-scale cuneiform *Eduba*, given the less demanding technique of inscription and the much smaller number of symbols required (ca. 90 for Linear A, 88 for Linear B, plus some pictograms). At Pylos, where the layout of the storerooms and archives is much better preserved, 25 hands are responsible for most of the 1107 tablets, among which three main “styles” of handwriting can be distinguished, perhaps representing three “master-teachers” or supervisors (Bennett 1958: 328–333; Palaima 1988, 2011). Palm prints on the surviving clay tablets indicate that they were hand-fashioned by ten or so individuals, some of them eight- or nine-year-old children. Presumably these were apprentices to the scribes; but no “schoolrooms” containing inscribed potsherds or other specimens of elementary practice texts have been discovered at any of the Cretan or Mycenaean sites (in contrast to Babylonian and Israelite finds—or later Greek). Probably the training occurred one-on-one and somewhat informally, focused on the practical record keeping that seems to have been the scribes' chief duty (compare Veldhuis 2014). Computation was certainly taught as well as writing, and the system of weights and measures in the Linear B records is similar to that found at Ugarit and elsewhere in the Eastern Mediterranean (Vermeule 1972; Alberti et al. 2006).

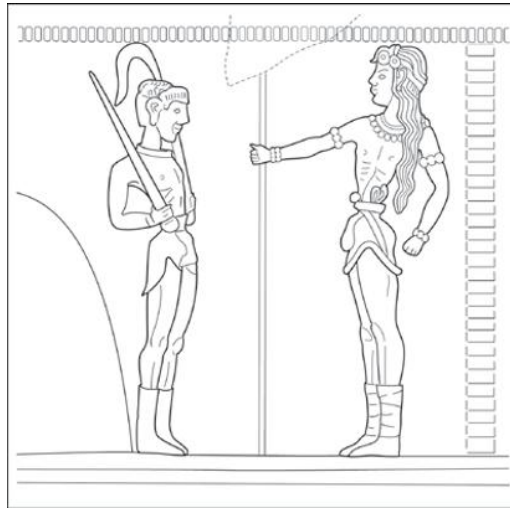
We do not know whether scribal education included literature, such as “wisdom” texts or any of the Sumerian-Babylonian or Canaanite classics. Unlike their Hittite contemporaries, the Linear B scribes rarely signed their own names, and no word for “scribe” has been identified; so it appears (from our admittedly very limited evidence) that their social status and influence were smaller than in the Near East and Egypt. And it is not even certain that all of these were full-time “scribes;” some may themselves have performed the supervisory and organizational tasks whose results are recorded in the documents. Nor do we know how many Greek-speaking (and -reading) inhabitants there were on Crete, or even on the mainland. The scribes and rulers may have been linguistically distinct from the majority of the population, like some of the Akkadian-writing scribes at Hattusa and Emar.

The royalty, priests, warriors, and other members of the Minoan elite may not themselves have needed to put their hands to writing, any more than their Hittite counterparts; and their education probably emphasized other, nonliterate activities geared more toward public performance (see the following text). The Mycenaean overlords who took over Knossos after ca. 1450 BCE certainly give no indication of being literate: Linear B writing at Knossos or on the mainland is never found outside the palace complex and is very rarely used for anything other than inventories, whereas the relatively frequent occurrence of Linear A writing in several locations outside the storerooms (and outside Crete, too) suggests that writing was more widespread in Minoan society. The Minoan palace culture appears to have given its elite a prominent role to play in public ritual, both in ceremonies held indoors in their “Throne Room”

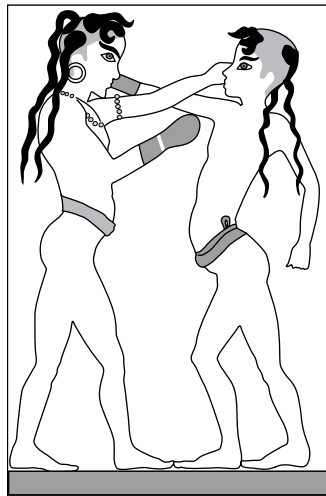
and also in large-scale performances including music, dance, and athletics conducted in front of the whole town, comparable to some of the Hittite or Ugaritic activities, though stylistically quite distinctive. (Marinatos 2010 argues that Minoan religion should in fact be regarded as typical of “the Near Eastern *koiné*,” but most scholars regard this as overstated.) Young men—and perhaps women too—are shown leaping stylishly over wild bulls (a ritual also performed among the Hittites: Schuol 2002), and boys engage in formalized group fights and individual boxing bouts (Figure 2.1b; Miller 2004: 20–26). Archaic and Classical Greek literary sources (Homer, Plato, Ephorus, etc.) describe the Cretans as particularly devoted to choral song and dance (e.g., Homer, *Iliad* 18.590–605); and the Minoan evidence is consistent with these accounts (Morris 1992: 12–14; Marinatos 1999; Younger 1998; Schuol 2002). The large numbers of equally well-dressed participants depicted in the various Knossan and Theran frescoes suggest that the Minoans included a relatively large segment of the community in their public performances (Marinatos 1987; Davis 1987). On the mainland, there is less evidence of this emphasis on ceremonial display, and the architecture of the palaces provides less opportunity for it. Nonetheless there, too, the Linear B documents record the scribes’ supervision of extensive sacrificial activity and feasting (Chadwick 1976: 69–77; Palaima 1995, 2011).

Many of the young Minoan male and female performers display distinctive hairstyles that appear to represent gradations of age and seniority (Figures 2.1a, 2.1b) (Säflund 1987: 227–233; Koehl 1986: 100–103; Davis 1987; Chapin 2009, who points out differences between the more homogeneous Theran and more disparate Cretan depictions of male children and adolescents). Sometimes the young men and women are shown holding and/or drinking from distinctive conical cups, which appear to have played a significant (sympotic, erotic?) role in the ceremonies (Figure 2.1a). Some scholars interpret these features as evidence of age-group rituals and celebrations, antecedents to those more certainly attested on Crete and Thera during later periods (eighth through fourth century). We do not know whether these Minoan rituals involved a concomitant “pedagogy,” as they certainly did during the Archaic period, nor whether a comparable institution of homophilic pairings of senior and junior “comrades-at-arms” was also in place: images such as Figure 2.1a (the *Chieftain Cup* from Bronze Age Agia Triada) have been thus interpreted, in light of Archaic practices on Crete and Thera (e.g., Figure 2.2) (Koehl 1986; Säflund 1987; Marinatos 1999; Lembessis 1976; and in general Jeanmaire 1939; Sergent 1986; Schnapp 1997; Verbruggen 1981; Griffith 2001). Several of the classical myths associated with early Crete, such as Theseus’ adventure with the Minotaur and the invention of the “crane dance” (*geranos*), likewise suggest that adolescent dance rituals and other ordeals and training ceremonies for *kouroi* (young men) may have been socially important.

The prominence of wine, drinking cups, wine pourers, and sympotic relations in Cretan cult and art is notably congruent with the ritualized wine consumption described in the Homeric poems (and even in Plato’s *Laws*). Wine was not so used by all peoples of the Indo-European language family (Indic and Iranian ritual, for example, revolved rather around the *sóma* drink, which was probably made from the ephedra plant); and of the other Near Eastern cultures among whom wine was highly valued, the Egyptians seem to have had quite different drinking habits from those of the Greeks. The

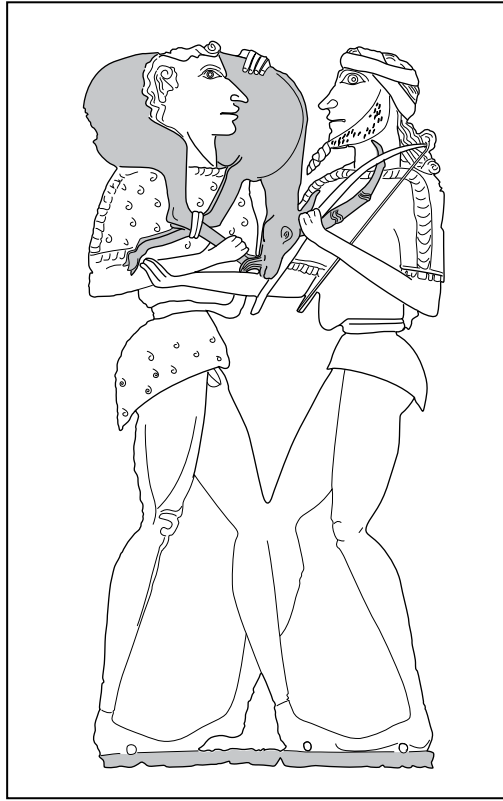


**Figure 2.1a** Relief figures of two elite adolescents, both with distinctive hairstyles, one more senior and authoritative looking than the other: the so-called “Chieftain Cup.” Middle-Late Minoan stone conical drinking cup from Agia Triada, Crete, ca. 1500 BCE (now in the Archaeological Museum, Herakleion). (Drawing by Elizabeth Wahle.)



**Figure 2.1b** Two Minoan boys with distinctive hairstyles, boxing. Fresco from West House, Thera (Santorini), ca. 1600–1500 BCE (now in the National Museum, Athens). (Drawing by Elizabeth Wahle.)

Mesopotamians drank mostly beer; and the Scythians drank beer and mead. More similar to the Greeks and Minoans in their ritualized wine-drinking practices were the Amorite inhabitants of Ugarit; however, it is the Hittites who seem to have been closest of all, and the Greek word for “libation” (*spendein* = “pour,” whence *spondai*) is cognate with Hittite *sipandi* (Burkert 1985; Murray 1990). If elite Greek drinking rituals were derived



**Figure 2.2** An affectionate pair of youths, one bearded, the other not, embrace decorously as a gift of captured game (wild goat) is exchanged. Dedicatory bronze plaque from the sanctuary of Aphrodite and Hermes at Kato Simi Viannou (Crete), ca. 650 BCE (now in the Louvre). (Drawing by Elizabeth Wahle.)

from Anatolia, then it is not improbable that Crete played a role in the process of adoption, and the youthful cup bearers represented in Minoan art may well have been participating in a quasi-educational and institutionalized process of “serving” the adults for a period before coming of age, as is attested in several regions of Greece (including Crete) during the Archaic period (see the following text).

Modern scholars are generally hesitant to recognize continuities between Minoan and Archaic-Classical Cretan practices, given the 400- to 500-year interval of “darkness” that followed the collapse of the palace culture, preferring mostly to attribute the Cretan phenomena noticed by later Greek commentators—“herds” of boys, mess halls, mass marriages, pederasty, dying Zeus, Kouretes, etc.—entirely to the Dorian Greek colonists of the eighth century and to later imaginative retrojections. Yet Minoan culture did not evaporate completely after 1200 BCE (any more than Hittite and Luwian or Babylonian culture did), and some elements of their elaborate programs of adolescent training and performance may have persisted without interruption (Lembessis 1976)—though in modified forms, and perhaps for different deities and social purposes—into the Archaic period, to which we will now turn.



### 3. Archaic Greece

Accounts of “ancient Greek” history and culture often begin with Homer and the Archaic period, reckoning that all our Bronze Age material amounts to no more than “prehistory.” Whether or not one decides that Mycenaean society (discussed earlier) is relevant and important, the evidence presented by the Archaic (Iron Age) period presents problems of its own, and it is notoriously difficult to reconstruct the lifestyles and educational institutions of the various Greek communities that evolved during the period before the development of the Classical (rhetoric-based) educational system in the mid-fifth century BCE. The archaeological record is very patchy, and most of the surviving written documents that were composed before the fifth century are poetic texts, often highly fictionalized and/or fragmentary, and thus of limited value for the reconstruction of actual social practice. Scholars necessarily have to draw from the Homeric epics, Hesiod, scraps of lyric and elegiac poetry, sculpture and vase paintings, as well as Herodotus’ wide-ranging *Histories* (written in the mid- to late fifth century) and other later (and often highly opinionated) witnesses such as Xenophon, Plato, Aristotle, and even Plutarch, while recognizing that all these witnesses have their own distinct agendas that may lead us far astray from the original practices and mentalities that we are trying to investigate.

By the seventh century at least, and in some cases much earlier, Greek-speaking communities were sprinkled across a wide area, from the Black Sea to Egypt and Libya, and from Cadiz and Marseilles to Cyprus, Syria, and the Ukraine. Among these communities, there was much cultural variation, so we should hardly expect pedagogical practices to have been identical. The terms *Hellènes* and *barbaroi* did not establish themselves as a conventional polar opposition (Greeks versus non-Greeks) until after the Persian invasions (490–480 BCE); and we cannot be sure that, for example, Ionians and Dorians of the ninth or eighth centuries would necessarily have thought of themselves as even speaking the “same” language (any more so than, say, Phrygian, which was quite closely related). *Hellenismos* as a cultural project, i.e., as a self-conscious effort to define and consolidate a uniform “Greek” identity, may be said to have begun in earnest only in the sixth or even fifth century BCE; and the “classical education,” based primarily on competence and correctness in Greek (and later Latin) language skills, was itself a key element in the formation and maintenance of that identity (cf. Ar., *Politics* 7 and *Rhetoric* 3; Quintilian, *Inst. Or. passim*). Nonetheless certain common patterns and tendencies can be observed in the earlier period, along with some features that belong more distinctively to one or other particular community.

The Archaic period of Greece was one of steadily increasing economic prosperity, and also of flux, instability, and innovation. At its opening, in the ninth through eighth centuries, the “chieftains” or “lords” (*basileis*) and noble families (*agathoi, eupatridai*) in each village, region, or larger town, mostly lacked the resources, administrative frameworks, and sophistication of their Bronze Age predecessors and lived at a level of culture barely higher than that of the rest of their agricultural and artisan neighbors. Members of elite families often performed mundane and practical tasks side by side with the lower classes, both on the battlefield and in agriculture and certain crafts. (Thus, for example, Homer’s Odysseus is an accomplished plowman, gardener, cook, butcher, leather worker, carpenter, shipbuilder, and pilot; and the Phaeacians are their own gardeners and sailors.)

So there was probably little room for any distinctive education for elites; and no writing system existed, as far as we know, for any users of Greek before the eighth century. But as wealth increased, inequalities of wealth increased, too, and the nobles, like any ruling class, needed to develop an ideological and performative basis for their authority. In addition to the maintenance of a more or less exclusive military elite, this ideological apparatus took the form of new mythologies, cults, burial customs, genealogies, and a more distinctive leisured lifestyle and associated performance modes. The several different components of this lifestyle (discussed later) each entailed a more or less distinct training—often within the constraints of the newly emergent polis, an environment in which, by the fifth century at any rate, ostentatious elite display might be regarded with a mixture of admiration and resentment or suspicion (Pleket 1975; Bugh 1988; Kurke 1992; Golden 1998; Christesen 2012).

Modern scholars have debated the degree to which Archaic Greek communities were organized in general by age groupings and whether or not adolescents of either or both sexes were required to undergo a definitive *rite de passage*. The issue is not simple. Certainly differentiation, and to some degree segregation, by age group was common in particular activities (military training, athletics, dance choruses, certain religious ceremonies), while boys and girls did normally have to pass through particular ritual procedures before being accepted as full, adult members of their community. But these rituals could and did take several different forms. There was no *single* universal training or ceremony—except, perhaps, marriage as constituting the transition from girl (*parthenos*, *korê*) to woman/wife (*gynê*)—that transcended all the others in importance and thereby constituted “the” rite of tribal passage for all, such as has been observed in certain other traditional societies around the world (Dodd and Faraone 2003). It is more helpful to think of these Greek processes overall as a series of “rites of institution,” rather than a definitive “rite of passage” (Bourdieu 1991; Griffith 2001; Christesen 2012; etc); and for each young man or woman we might say that it was the aggregation of such institutional processes that constituted his or her adult identity and status. Within the limited amount of surviving evidence, we find a fair degree of uniformity as to the general types of these institutions throughout the Greek world, though Sparta, Crete, and Athens each manifests unique details. So, in so far as “education, training” (*paideia*, *agôgê*) involved the process of preparing boys and girls for and through successful participation in these various institutions, we may talk of an Archaic Greek educational “system,” even while taking care to specify the several divergent, or even competing, paths that might lie open to them.

For the majority of the non-elite population, of course, “education” consisted largely in acquiring the basic skills appropriate to the type of labor and expertise of one’s family’s occupation: farming, manufacture (textiles, ceramics, metals, carpentry, etc.), retail trade, transportation, music, and so on. One learned these skills as a child working with one’s father or mother and other family members; or as an apprentice to a master craftsman or factory owner. There was no need for any school, nor in most cases for literacy or general training. Certain specialized crafts, such as those of a healer, prophet, or scribe, might involve the study of particular texts or bodies of expert lore (see pp. 35–36): but none of these trainings in the Greek context seems to have been nearly as elaborate and extensive as those of the Mesopotamian-derived or Indic equivalents. Greek priests were not highly specialized, and there were no esoteric sacred texts to be learned.

Furthermore, alphabetic writing was far easier to acquire and use for bureaucratic purposes than Linear B (which had died out with the collapse of the Bronze Age palace culture), let alone cuneiform or hieroglyphics. The alphabet was first adopted by Greeks probably in the late ninth or early eighth centuries (possibly earlier), from a northwestern Semitic source, probably Phoenician (Lipinski 1988), and its use spread slowly and unevenly, but steadily, during the seventh and sixth centuries (Woodard 1997). Presumably in port cities and multi-ethnic regions such as Cyprus, Crete, Caria, Sicily and South Italy, Olbia, Libya, etc., it was not uncommon to find people who could translate and write in more than one language and script; however, we have remarkably little evidence of this in our Greek sources (though one of the terms used in early mentions of Greek alphabetic writing is *poinikazein* (“to write <like a> Phoenician”: Jeffery and Davies 1970). Otherwise, degrees of literacy varied greatly, and it is impossible—though many have tried—to determine how widespread reading and writing were at any point in antiquity. From the Archaic period, we do possess a number of brief exercises (mainly on pots) in which writers are practicing ABGDE, etc.; but no evidence of formal schools or scriptoria exists before the sixth century (see later text).

The case of *healers* (*iatroi*) may have been somewhat special, in involving a more specialized training (see Chapter 28). In the *Iliad* (4.192–219 and 11. 830–832), the Centaur Chiron is mentioned as the teacher not only of Achilles but also of Asclepius, whose sons have inherited their father’s expertise in “gentle remedies” (*êpia pharmaka*) and the treatment of wounds. According to other traditions, Asclepius acquired his medical expertise directly from his father, Apollo; and associations of Asclepius’ supposed descendants (*Asklêpiadai*) continue to compile and transmit their knowledge and techniques, and to train their successors, for centuries to come. In the Classical period, the Hippocratic covenant requires a young doctor “to hold him who has taught me this art as equal to my parents and to lead my life in partnership with him ... and to treat his offspring as equal to my brothers ...” (*Hipp. Oath* 5–7; Edelstein 1967: 40–48; Burkert 1985: 214–215 with Near Eastern parallels). In the *Iliad*, these techniques include minor surgery and knowledge of pain-killing and remedial herbs for application and ingestion, similar to what was taught in the Indic *Gurukula* (see Chapter 1, pp. 20–21). In certain regions (especially to the north, where Thracian and Scythian contacts were strong), we encounter from at least the sixth century the use of incantation, trance and incubation, root cutting, ingestion of psychotropic plants, and other specialized techniques, including necromancy (Burkert 1992: 55–75).

The extant collections of written herbal and dietary remedies, case histories and attempted cures, anatomical descriptions, physiological speculation, and surgical interventions, all ascribed to Hippocrates of Cos (fifth century BCE), were apparently composed by multiple authors over several centuries (fifth through third centuries BCE). Some of the material may be much older, and particular similarities suggest that there must have been contacts between the folk-medical and professional traditions of the Greeks and those of Egypt and Babylonia (esp. Assyria), where written documentation was extensive, though Greek medicine seems to be distinctive in its attention to diet and in recording detailed case histories. Formal “schools” of Greek doctors are not attested until the fifth century (at Cos and Cnidos), but associations or sects of

healer-seers (*iatromanteis*) and purifiers may have existed previously in several locations (Lloyd 1987; Kingsley 1995). Herodotus' account of the career of Democedes (late sixth until early fifth c.) offers an informative perspective (Hdt. 3.125, 129–138): after learning the arts of medicine in the Pythagorean city of Croton (southern Italy), he built his reputation first in Aegina, then in Athens, Sardis, Samos, and eventually Sousa, where he proved his superior skill by successfully treating both King Darius and Queen Atossa, and also made friends with Egyptian doctors who were in service there. He eventually returned to Croton. Whether or not all the details of Herodotus' narrative are reliable, this portrait of transferable professional skills, and of a cosmopolitan and cooperative community of physicians, is consistent both with the Near Eastern evidence of specialist doctors, seers, and exorcists who are sent from one court to another by rulers as gifts or favors (e.g., Hdt. 3.1; Kilmer 1997; Kuhrt 1995: 306), and with Homer's reference to itinerant *démourgoi* (*Od.* 17.382–386; Burkert 1992: 9–87).

One essential measure of masculine excellence (*aretê*) was, of course, military achievement, together with prowess at activities of similar kinds such as athletics and hunting. Formal military training, such as formation drills, tactical exercises, or nautical maneuvers, was not highly developed in the Greek world (see Chapter 34); but solo exercises, such as throwing a javelin, or dancing or running in heavy armor and/or wielding a shield, were highly regarded as demonstrations of youthful skill and strength. Skill at archery had by now a more ambiguous status: bow and arrows were widely used, both in battle and in hunting, but the ideology of Greek polis-culture generally assigned archers, along with other lightly armed soldiers (peltasts and slingers), less value in comparison to the dashing cavalry (*hippeis*) and stalwart, spear-wielding heavy infantry (hoplites). It is striking that archery, though included as one of the events in the Funeral Games for Patroclus in the *Iliad*, did not merit inclusion in the Olympics and other Panhellenic contests of the Archaic and Classical period, though in later periods archery contests did take place in some regions of Greece (e.g., Larissa in Thessaly) and archery teachers were employed to instruct advanced teenagers in the fourth century and Hellenistic ephebic program (see Chapter 11; Miller 2004: 145, 187). At all periods, mythical figures such as Heracles, Philoctetes, and Odysseus, as well as Apollo himself, were reminders of the immense prestige that royal/heroic archers had once held in Greek culture, as they continued to do among Egyptian, Assyrian, Indic, and especially Persian nobility (see Chapter 1, pp. 14–15, 20, 22–24; and Chapter 1, Figure 1.1).

Horse training (Figure 2.3) and horse riding (which might often include hunting deer or boar) occupied many elite young men (Anderson 1961, 1985), helping to prepare them for service in the cavalry on the battlefield while also providing conspicuous opportunities for displays of wealth and style. (Horses were expensive to maintain, and rarely used within the labor force: mules, donkeys, and oxen were preferred for this.) Even more prestigious, for the families that could afford it, was chariot racing, though this was of no practical value at all since chariots, which had been important in Bronze Age warfare, were now purely for ceremonial use, and the actual drivers in major festival competitions were usually slaves or hired professionals (Golden 1998; Miller 2004).



**Figure 2.3** An adolescent boy is instructed in horsemanship (including mounting and controlling two horses at once). Athenian red-figure kylix (cup) ca. 500 BCE, attributed to Onesimos (*ARV*<sup>2</sup> 324, 61; Munich 2639). (Engraving by A. Frisch, *Archaeologische Zeitung* 43 (1885) Plate 11.)

Athletic training and competition provided a controlled, relatively nonviolent, and highly ritualized mechanism for fostering, testing, and rewarding several of these manly talents (though not archery), especially among the young, and by the sixth century athletics were widely practiced among Greek elites everywhere. The Panhellenic “circuit” games (held every two or four years at Olympia, Delphi, Nemea, and the Isthmus) brought huge prestige to victors and their families; likewise the Panathenaic games at Athens. In general, Greek athletics fostered homogeneity and group consciousness among the (exclusively Greek, largely aristocratic) participants, along with a willingness to obey rules and undergo discipline and an exhausting regimen, even while also promoting a spirit of intense individual competition. Athletic contests involved no team sports: instead they were tests of individual physical prowess—running, long jumping, boxing, wrestling, javelin – and discus – throwing, as well as chariot races. While none of these events was of direct military use, they all fostered strength, coordination, and quickness, and required considerable practice, often under expert guidance from a trainer. Elegance of deportment, grooming, and movement was fostered, too: mere brute strength, though effective for the “heavy” events (boxing and wrestling), was not so highly valued for most adolescents. Athletic training in the gymnasium and stadium (Figure 2.4), always performed naked and sometimes to the accompaniment of music, allowed a young man to develop and show off his smooth, well-proportioned, and suitably muscled body, meticulously groomed and enhanced by a carefully applied mixture of oil and fine sand—a body that in itself was a marker of social distinction and a source of erotic appeal to both men and women (Golden 1998; Scanlon 2002; Christesen 2012). The gymnasium served thus both as a kind of school and as a social meeting place, or even a pickup venue. It is unclear to what degree boys and youths were separated from adults there: in the Classical period, such separation seems often have been quite carefully enforced; but in earlier times the arrangements may have been more haphazard, though boys and adolescents



**Figure 2.4** Adolescent boys practice their athletic skills in the *palaistra* (wrestling school) under the supervision of adult gym trainers. Athenian red-figure cup ca. 500–450 BCE, attributed to the Antiphon painter (*ARV*<sup>2</sup> 340, 73; Florence, Museo Archeologico Etrusco: 9B38). Upper band (a): one boy is preparing to wrap his fists in boxing-glove thongs; two are engaged in the *pankration*, with a trainer (*paidotribes*) refereeing. Lower band (b): two boys are wrestling, supervised by another *paidotribes*; one (perhaps a slave?) is preparing the ground with a pickax, probably for long jumping, while another boy is donning his boxing thongs. (From E. Gerhard *Auserlesene griechische Vasenbilder*, Berlin 1840–1843, vol. 4, plate cclxxiii Figure 1.)

were often attended by a chaperone/tutor (*paidagōgos*, as depicted in the school scenes in Figure 2.5; Miller 2004).

Girls and women in most Greek cities did not participate in athletics, though there were exceptions (Golden 1998: 123–140): most notably Sparta, where they ran races and trained in public—a practice that Athenians and others regarded as disgusting. Elsewhere young girls’ choruses and other ritual performances (e.g., the “Little Bears” celebrating Artemis at Brauron, in Attica) could involve running and vigorous dancing; but for the most part women were expected to keep their bodies covered in public and to move in more demure and self-contained ways (Christesen 2012; Calame 1997; Scanlon 2002; Dillon 2002).

In relation to these various forms of elite training discussed thus far, it is hard to know what to make of the “knightly education” (as Henri Marrou termed it) that we find mentioned in the Homeric epics and elsewhere in Greek literary and artistic tradition, notably in the context of Achilles, Jason, and other mythic heroes. The figure of Chiron the noble centaur is especially prominent, receiving Achilles as a baby or child from Peleus and/or Thetis, raising him in the wild, and teaching him not only how to hunt

(a)



(b)



**Figure 2.5** Scenes from a schoolroom: boys are instructed in the lyre (*lura*), pipes (*auloi*), reading, reciting, and writing. Athenian red-figure kylix (cup) ca. 500–480 BCE, signed by Douris (ARV<sup>2</sup> 431, 48; Antikensammlung, Berlin inv. no. F2285). (Drawing from E. A. Freeman *Schools of Hellas*, London 1922, Plates 1a and 1b.) Upper Band: Aulos lesson (double pipes), and writing lesson, with folded writing tablet, as well as lyre and geometrical ruling square depicted above. The figure to the right with a stick is probably the boy's tutor/chaperone (*paidagōgos*). Lower Band: Lyre lesson and singing/poetry recitation lesson with teacher's papyrus roll; above are depicted more lyres and an ornamental manuscript basket. Again, the boy's tutor sits close by.

but also many other kinds of military, artistic, medical, and ethical excellence (as he does for other heroes, too). Xenophon (*Cyn.* 1) lists over twenty heroes who were tutored by Chiron (Marrou 1956: 7–13, Jeanmaire 1939: 290–291; Beck 1964, 1975: figs. 1–21; Schnapp 1997: 437–452). The heroic world is in many respects idealized and fantastic, and there are several different–incompatible–pedagogical models that seem not to concur with this one. In the *Iliad*, for example, Phoenix, who resides in Peleus' house as a combination of guest-friend and retainer or dependent, has served as nurse and tutor to

the baby Achilles, and now accompanies him on campaign to Troy (*Iliad* 9.432–635; Achilles addresses him as “Dad” (9.607 *atta*)), while in the *Odyssey* Mentor (at times impersonated by Athena), a respected older friend of Odysseus, supervises and escorts Telemachus as he begins to make his way in the adult world, rather as a Roman uncle or family friend ushers his young ward through the *tirocinium fori* or *militiae* (Bonner 1977: 84–85). In both poems, Nestor, too, as father and revered elder statesman, gives practical and moral instructions to his son (Antilochus, or Peisistratus), like the Roman Cato (Plut., *Cato* 20; Bonner 1977: 10–14). Chiron is distinguished from these others by reason both of the comprehensiveness of the “curriculum” that he covers, and because he is clearly demarcated as a professional, a specialist in education, living separate from the royal household.

In its range, as well as location and context, the training that Chiron provides resembles that of an Indic Brahman to a warrior-king (*ksatriya*: see Chapter 1, pp. 19–21): prolonged association with an older, sanctified teacher in the wilds (forest, mountainside, or cave), training in both spiritual and martial arts (including archery and riding, but not writing), and a strong connection to the divine. Whether or not Bronze Age and/or Archaic Greek rites of passage may lie in the background, it is tempting to see here a mythic memory of an ancient Indo-Iranian (even Indo-European?) institution—while these poetic and iconographical representations of the imaginary heroic past may in turn have contributed to the continuation (or recurrence) of ephebic rituals and homophilic older–younger pairings in later periods (Jeanmaire 1939: 290–291; Bremmer 1980; Schnapp 1997: 437–457). By contrast, the family-based pedagogy represented by the purely human figures of Phoenix, Mentor, and Nestor offers alternative models that are probably more firmly rooted in the actual Greek practices of the time.

Organized age-group and adolescent performances of various kinds for boys and girls are well documented for the Archaic and early Classical periods. The most striking and distinctive manifestations of these are reported from Sparta and Crete, and scholars ever since Plato, Xenophon, and Ephorus in the fourth century have tended to concentrate excessively on these; but on the broader scale we can say that extensive—and formative—age-grouped training of a kind that we may term “pedagogical” was operative all over Greece. But, as noted earlier, it can be disputed whether any of these institutions amounted to an actual “rite of passage” in Arnold Van Gennep’s classic definition, and also how much of an “educational” process was involved in each of them. The institutions varied considerably in kind and in duration, with some rites involving a program of training extended over several years, others occupying merely a few days of ceremonial activity (Dover 1989; Hamilton 1989; Calame 1997; Padilla 1999; Dodd and Faraone 2003).

Most of the “pedagogical” age groupings that we know about, i.e., those involving extended periods of training and shared activities, were quite selective, distinguishing their members more or less sharply from others to whom such a pedagogy was not granted. Thus, they do not seem to have amounted to a universal initiation rite. Instead, there were several different “rites of institution” (in the terminology of Bourdieu 1991) through which select groups were trained, prepared, and hailed into membership of their particular social classes and adult functions. Some of these institutional processes were compulsory, others voluntary: some not quite either. Some were publicly administered



(i.e., by the polis and its officials); others privately organized and funded, by families or particular groups (Griffith 2001). Some were restricted to citizens; others were open to a broader cross section of the community.

There are no direct allusions in Homer or Hesiod to institutionalized age groups or rites of passage. But a number of formulae and contexts involving “youths” (*kouroi* or *neoi*) are mentioned that suggest many of the distinctive features that are later encountered among Archaic choruses and age-specific “herds” (*agelai*), and we should perhaps recognize these *kouroi* as occupying a specific category of elite “warriors-in-training” (Jeanmaire 1939: 11–111; Brelich 1969). *Kouroi* may be chariot drivers for senior warriors; they serve wine at banquets (*Il.* 1.465, 470; 10.175; *Od.* 1.148, 3.339, 21.271); as a group they sing the paian to Apollo (*Il.* 1.472–4); they engage in competitive “speech” (*muthoi*) with one another; *kouroi próthēbai* dance skillfully (*Od.* 8.262–3); youthful competitions in archery are mentioned in both poems (*Il.* 23.850–83, *Od.* 8.214–228, cf. Telemachus at *Od.* 21.118–135 and 13.364–365). Other Homeric passages refer to formations of dancers (*Il.* 18.561–605), and to other groups of young women singing and playing together (e.g., those led by Nausicaa, Persephone): these could be regarded as adolescent choruses, or merely as informal groups. In Hesiod’s *Theogony*, Hecate is said to be *kourotrophos* (“nurse of young men”: *Th.* 429–452). On the other hand, the word *kouros* is also often used in Homer to mean simply “boy,” as it is in Linear B and in Classical Greek; it is not heavily marked as having specific social or ritual connotations.

Many Greek myths lend themselves to being read as adolescent rites of passage (Sergent 1986; Padilla 1999), with the young hero or heroine facing deadly challenges, overcoming (or in some cases succumbing to) these challenges, and “returning from death/the underworld” into a new status (adult warrior/king, and/or marriage): Theseus, Jason, Heracles, Hippolytus, Persephone, Atalanta, Iphigenia—the list is almost endless. In this chapter, however, we consider only institutionalized groups and types of training for the young that are clearly attested in non-fictionalized accounts. These fall into four main categories: (a) choruses; (b) military commensality (mess halls, etc. = *syssition* or *andreion*, including the *ephēbeia*); (c) drinking clubs (*symposion* and *betaireia*); and (d) schools (*didaskaleion*). Other religious and craft associations (*thiasos* or *orgeon*) seem not generally to have been organized by age nor to have involved systematic instruction or training (Jones 1999; Parker 2005).

In general, eligibility for these age groupings was restricted to a minority of the population (e.g., Hodkinson 1983; Kennell 1995: 115–142; Christesen 2012 for Sparta; Cole 1984; Sourvinou-Inwood 1988 for Brauron). The process of institution thus involved both inclusion and exclusion: as members of a collective “dance-company” (*choros*), “herd” (*agelá*), “club” (*betaireia*, *syssition*), or “formation” (*taxis*), etc., the young women or young men became homogenized and integrated as “equals” (*homoioi*, *homēlikes*), sharing similar costume, hairstyle, performance techniques, and verbal codes, while at the same time differentiating themselves from all others whose age, gender, ethnicity, or social status barred them from membership. The place where the group met (a shrine, stadium, grove, dining room, wilderness) was likewise reserved (if only temporarily) for their exclusive use, with the help of ritual language (especially oaths, songs, and purificatory slogans), special foods, objects, perfumes, and liquid offerings.

Often, a more senior officer (“chorus-leader” or “supervisor”) was appointed to preside over the group’s activities (Kennell 1995; Calame 1997).

Within each group, there might be individual competition, and in some cases a “leader” was selected from among the young members, as in Alcman’s Maiden Songs discussed later and in Herodotus’ account of Cyrus’ upbringing (Hdt. 1.114–116; Cartledge 1981; Jones 1999: 223–227). There might be specific athletic, aesthetic, sexual, gastronomic, or musical challenges to face, involving special prizes, a favored position in the formation, or other marks of honor. The very exclusivity of the group—its guarantee of privilege and its immunity from external intervention—made this internal competition safer and less threatening, though still potentially full of tension and passion; and the group’s collective distinction and success in competition against other groups would reflect credit on all its members, even the less prominent. Thus, future habits of hierarchy, mutual trust, and shared or alternating leadership were instilled and institutionalized.

Along with athletics (discussed earlier), the most distinctive feature of Archaic Greek pedagogy was perhaps its emphasis on song, poetry, and dance, which were all conventionally regarded as sponsored by the Muses and not clearly separated from one another either in theory or in practice (and hence collectively referred to as *mousikê*). This “musical” emphasis came by the end of the fifth century to be subsumed increasingly into, and to some degree replaced by, the study and practice of the “liberal arts” in general and rhetoric in particular—a process memorably staged in the debate between the old and new education in Aristophanes’ *Clouds* (421 BCE: see later text, page 48). As we noted earlier, it is not clear whether this focus on musical performance by the young was already present in the Bronze Age, or whether, like athletics, it was a particular development of the Archaic period itself. Minoans on Crete and Thera seem to have paid more attention to musical activities than Mycenaean Greeks, and in the Homeric and Hesiodic poems Achaeans seem somewhat less involved in choruses, musical acrobatics, singing, and ball games than Trojans, Phaeacians, or Cretans (or than the Olympian gods).

In Homer, elite men and women are entertained at dinner by a professional singer (*oidos*), such as Phemius or Demodocus, though the Shield of Achilles does depict two musical scenes involving a larger number of performers: in one, a boy (*pais*) plays the lyre and sings the “Linos-song” while maidens and youths (*parthenikai kai éitheoi*) harvesting the vintage “followed him with singing and shouting, and skipping with their feet” (18.561–572); in the other, a dance floor (*choros*) contains formations of young men and women, together with two acrobats (*kubistêtêres*) (18.590–605). Here, too, the musical direction appears to come from a professional soloist (singer-lyrist). When withdrawn from the war, Achilles sings quietly of heroic exploits (*kleâ andrôn*, *Iliad* 9.189–191) to himself and Patroclus; but none of the warrior-chieftains is found singing in public. This distinction between professional expert performance (with or without chorus) and informal solo recital persists throughout the Archaic period and beyond. Every well-brought-up Greek man and woman was expected to be able to recite from Homer, Hesiod, and Archilochus (and in later centuries, to sing the “three of Stesichorus,” along with stanzas or snatches of other lyric and elegiac “classics,” accompanied either by his or her own lyre playing or by someone else’s; to dance competently both in a group and solo (Lawler 1964; Lonsdale 1993); and to possess basic

skills as an instrumentalist, mainly on the lyre; perhaps also on the pipes (*auloi*). (Figure 2.5 depicts boys receiving instruction in recitation and instrumental performance.) But expert performance in public on the big concert lyre (*cithara*) or pipes was usually a professional's job.

Sometimes we encounter signs of a contradiction between martial and athletic prowess, on the one hand, and music, on the other, as if these are regarded as alternative priorities rather than a complementary pair. Thus mythical figures such as Paris or Aegisthus are represented as being soft, licentious, and cowardly—and musicians—while Heracles is shown killing his music teacher, Linus. More often, the two types of activity are comfortably combined: shield dances, citizen choral competitions, and pipe accompaniment to such activities as athletic training and rowing in a trireme (warship), all indicate that music could be completely “manly”—and the lyre- and cithara-playing god Apollo was as much a patron of musical performance as the Muses were. By the sixth century, several of the individual areas of musical and poetic performance were developing (like athletics) in increasingly specialized directions, involving separate venues of performance and training: not only “singers” (poets), but also professional rhapsodes, auletes, citharodists, choreographers, mimes, and magicians were competing for fame and prizes (see Chapter 27). Thus, by the mid-fourth century, we find Aristotle recommending that boys should only study the lyre or *cithara* enough to become discriminating judges of the technique of others, and this preference for *krisis* (appreciation, discrimination, connoisseurship) over *práxis* (practical skill, virtuosity) eventually came to apply to *mousiké* in general, as it did also in the realm of athletics (Ford 2002). Thus, the “history” of ancient Greek education is often narrated as a steady diachronic progression, from the “performance culture” of the Homeric/Archaic age, with its emphasis on bodily and musical achievement and self-presentation, to the intellectual and verbal focus of the first true schools and the Classical development of rhetoric and literary study—a progression, as Henri Marrou termed it, from the “noble warrior” to “the scribe” (Marrou 1956: xiv). This narrative has a sound logic to it, but it runs the risk of understating the continuities between the Archaic and Hellenistic periods and the continuing expectations of accomplished self-presentation in the gymnasium or school or courtroom and in oral (rather than written) performance that persisted throughout antiquity.

As Plato argues in the *Republic* and the *Laws*, one of the chief social functions of music and dance can be to build community and to shape the participants' bodies, minds, and emotions into a shared and “harmonious” set of behaviors and habits (*ethé* or *hexis*), a process often facilitated through the mechanisms of religion, i.e., sacred songs and dances (Calame 1997; Lonsdale 1993; Christesen 2012). Group performance of songs and dances (*choros*) in ancient Greece was ubiquitous, conducted in honor of numerous different deities on all kinds of occasions (Kowalzig 2012). Choruses were usually gender specific, though their performances might often be watched by the whole community, male and female. Three main age groups for choruses were commonly distinguished: “children” under 13 (*paidés*, often undifferentiated in gender), “youths/maidens” aged from 13 to 17 or so (male *neanaii*, *kouroi*, *ephéboi*, *meirakia*, *éitheoi*; female *parthenoi*, *korai*, *neanides*, *nymphai*), and adult “men/women” (*andres/gynaikes*) (Calame 1997: 26–30; Brelich 1969). As in the case of military training, the exact age divisions could vary, and might be

based either on appearance or on date of birth. The Spartan gradations in Xenophon's day considered all those aged 7 to 18 as *paides*, 18 to 19 as *paidiskoi*, and 20 to 29 as *hébontes* ("young men"); later, additional subdivisions were introduced (Calame 1997: 158–159; Kennell 1995). But in most Greek communities, a general distinction between "adolescents" (*kouroi*, *ephéboi*) and "young men" (*neoi*) usually persisted.

It is this middle category, adolescents around the age of puberty, that seems to involve the most obviously "educational" process, though the "children," too, were obviously acquiring habits of obedience, conformity, and deportment that would have a lasting impact. The normal size for choruses of young men or women was between eight and fifteen members (Calame 1997: 21–25). An adult instructor and/or organizer (and choreographer?) was usually in charge, a male for a male chorus, and either a male or a female for a female chorus (Calame 1997: 66–72). In addition, within the group itself there was usually a "chorus-leader" (*chorégos*; or in Sparta *bouagor* = lit. "ox-herd-leader"), who might be slightly older than the others, or of higher social status, or selected on the basis of looks and accomplishments (Cartledge 1981; Calame 1997: 43–73). The other members were "equals" (*homoioi*, *homélukes*) and the chorus training, including melodies and dance steps performed in unison, were designed to promote "like-mindedness" (*homonoiia*) and uniformity of appearance and deportment (Christesen 2012).

Of the particular "curriculum" that was followed within a choral group, apart from the songs, races, and dances, etc., that would be publicly performed in the final ceremony, we have disappointingly little detailed knowledge. According to Plato, Aristotle, and others from the fourth century and later, the curriculum should include reading and writing, as well as study of the lyre and aulos, dance, and athletics. But we do not know whether letters were, in fact, taught to choruses in the seventh and sixth centuries: songs and dances would doubtless have been learned directly, without need of any script. In some communities, at least by the fifth century, buildings of some kind—*stadium*, *palaistra*, and *gymnasion*, even perhaps a schoolroom—would have existed separately from the dance floor where the choruses met and trained; however, the distinction between "school" and "chorus" may not have been always clear-cut (see later text).

Usually an adolescent chorus' ritual activity would culminate in a public performance in honor of their designated divinity, and this might mark the "passage" to adult status, with attendant expectations of marriage (for females) and military service, civic duties, etc. (for males). We possess substantial papyrus fragments of a couple of songs, originally composed by the poet Alcman for a chorus of maidens (*parthenoi*) to perform in seventh-century Sparta: the singers compare themselves and their two leaders, Agido and Hagesichora, to racehorses and praise the speed, hair, and beautiful voices of their own group of ten as it competes with rival choruses (Alcman, frs. 1 and 2). The girls appear to be dedicated to Artemis while also looking toward Aphrodite and imminent marriage. Sappho's female community on sixth-century Lesbos may have been similarly oriented (Calame 1997; Stehle 1997; Williamson 1995). For young men's choruses, the patron deity was usually Apollo (under his cult title Karneios or Delphinios), Hermes, or Dionysus; and for the first two of these, athletic performance might sometimes have been an alternative to choral dance. Among both female and male choral groups, same-sex romance and short- or longer-term pairings between chorus members seem to have been widespread and generally approved (as with the military mess-hall groups discussed later), though the proper degree of physical intimacy was not universally agreed upon.

Likewise the degree to which such pairings should include more or less formal and practical instruction as well as general mentoring and role modeling from an older to a younger chorus member—of the kind famously described, for example, in Plato’s *Symposium* and Xenophon’s *Constitution of the Lacedaemonians*—might vary considerably (Cartledge 1981; Halperin 1990, 2005; Davidson 2007; Williamson 1995; Hubbard 2003; and see below; and pp. 46–47).

Once they reached the age of puberty, Greek boys generally ceased to eat meals with their mothers and the other women. (Greeks of the Classical period sometimes asserted that aristocratic—and Persian—boys continued to spend too much time at home with their mothers, and consequently developed cowardly and luxurious habits: for example, Hdt. 1.136, Plato, *Laws* 694a–695c, [Aristotle] *Ath. Pol.* 35.2). In less well-off families, presumably the boys usually ate and spent their time henceforth with their fathers and fellow laborers or apprentices. But among the more affluent, men were often organized into associations, either officially by the polis, or informally among themselves, for the purpose of eating and drinking together on a regular basis. In some cities a commensal institution existed specially for late-teenagers (“ephebes”), as an introductory stage in their military service. The question of how formal and institutionalized these commensal and ephebic training regimes may have been at different dates and in different Greek city-states has been hotly debated (Jeanmaire 1939: 421–427, 540–558; Hodkinson 1983: 251–254; Murray 1990; Jones 1999: 284–287, 308–330, 316; Kennell 1995; Pelekidis 1962; Vidal-Naquet 1986; Sinclair 1988: 55–61; and see Chapter 11).

The Spartan constitution (from at least the mid-sixth century onward) was peculiar in requiring all Spartiate males to continue eating and sleeping together in common mess halls (*phiditia* or *sysitia*) from adolescence through the age of thirty, even if they were married. Boys were divided into several different age groups, and the exceptional austerity and discipline of their physical training were famous (Kennell 1995: 115–142; Marrou 1956: 14–25), as were the homosexual pairings among the teenagers, with the older one taking responsibility for teaching the younger one how to become a proper Spartan man (Xen., *Lac. Pol.*; Plutarch, *Lyc.*). Less austere and prolonged than the Spartan system, and thus perhaps a more typical example of Greek practice, was the Cretan institution of the “men’s hall” (*andreion*), as it is described by Ephorus and Aristotle (*FGrHist* 70 F 149 = Strabo 10.4.16–22; *Ar. Pol.* 2.5.1263b37–64a1, 2.10.1271b20–72b23, cf. *Eth. Nic.* 1.8.1102a8–12). Here, boys would first be selected as wine servers (standing while the full members reclined—like Ganymede among the Olympian gods, or Sappho’s young brother Larichus at Mytilene: Sappho fr. 18); later, according to Ephorus, after a period of homosexual courtship and initiation in the company of an older partner in the countryside (perhaps illustrated in Figure 2.2), they would each return as “distinguished” (*kleinoi*) members of the *andreion*. At this point, they would also get married in a mass ceremony: we are not told whether the brides had received a comparable ritual preparation. In this traditional Cretan system, as described in the fourth century—so perhaps anachronistically—an extensive educational curriculum of reading, writing, music, dance, and athletics was provided in the early stages (sometimes involving inter-group contests and even mock battles), with the focus subsequently shifting to military, sympotic, and erotic activities. In earlier periods one may assume that the training was less systematic and less focused on letters.

In fourth-century Athens, an elaborate institution of *ephebeia* (training for eighteen- to twenty-year-olds) is attested as a special kind of military service: the adolescents swore an oath of loyalty to the city; special officers were appointed (*didaskaloi* = “teachers,” *sophronistês* = “supervisor,” *kosmêtês* = “keeper-of-order”); they trained in light-armed weaponry, were subjected to endurance tests in the countryside, and assigned guard duties at border forts, before making their “passage” into full adulthood, i.e., becoming hoplites and voting citizens. The evidence consists primarily of twenty-eight Attic inscriptions dated between 334/3 and 322/1 BCE (cf. Tod (1948) #204), together with [Ar.] *Ath. Pol.* 42. But it is not clear how systematic the institution of ephebic military service had been in earlier centuries at Athens, nor whether other cities had similar systems. By the fourth century, certainly, the Spartan *krypteia*, Cretan *kleinoi*, and Athenian *ephebeia* each combined elements of a rite of passage with full-scale physical and military training, and some scholars have argued that these all were continuations of traditional Archaic (or even older) practices. But others have insisted that some of them might be specific innovations of the fifth or even fourth century (Sinclair 1988: 55–61). By the third and second century, certainly, the Athenian *ephebeia* had become little more than a prep school for the wealthy (even including some non-Athenians), with gym and schoolrooms (Marrou 1956: 105–112). At this late date, it was no longer expected of every male citizen that he should be prepared at short notice to fight in the army; war was less common and was conducted increasingly by mercenaries. But in the seventh through fifth centuries, things had been very different: the city’s survival and prosperity depended on the citizen army and navy, and a man’s reputation was intimately bound up with his courage and military record. Youthful training was presumably designed accordingly.

The “higher education” of the male members of the Archaic Greek elite seems largely to have been obtained at drinking parties and dinners (Reitzenstein 1893; Burnett 1983: 8–9, 31–32, 121–181; Schmitt-Pantel 1990, 1992; Murray 1990; Schnapp 1997: the educational function of adolescent drinking is described at Plato *Laws* 1.645c–650b, 2.671a–674, Xenophon *Lac. Pol.* 5, and [Ephorus] Strabo 10.4.16–22). Earlier, as children in grammar school or at home, they would have learned to read and write, to recite Homeric and Hesiodic poetry, and to manage rudimentary skills of drawing, singing, and lyre playing (as described at Aristophanes, *Clouds* 959–1023, Aristotle, *Pol.* 7–8; see Figure 2.5); they might also have learned a little geometry and arithmetic. The teachers would in most cases have been slaves or lower-class free professionals. As members of choruses, boys and girls alike would have sung and danced both traditional and new compositions, learning to move in formation and to present themselves elegantly and attractively in public. But it was among their adolescent and adult “comrades, buddies” (*hetairoi*), exercising during the daytime in the gymnasium or on military duty, and later in the afternoon/evening enjoying a shared dinner followed by wine drinking (*symposion*), as they reclined around the mixing bowl (*kratêr*) in a “men’s hall” (*andrôn*) or dining room of a private house, that adolescent boys learned the finer arts of sophisticated conversation, literary and musical analysis, eulogy and personal ridicule, sexual seduction and resistance, and stylish self-presentation. A man’s sympotic companions, together with his extended family, were likely to form the nucleus of his lifelong associates and political allies; and often they might train and fight alongside one another as well in the hoplite phalanx or cavalry. Any gathering of a “men’s group” might therefore double as a military and a social—and educational—occasion (Cartledge 1981; Murray 1990).

Most sympotic groups (which, like choruses, seem normally to have included between 8 and 20 members) met in a private, non-civic space. The members were conventionally considered (at least temporarily) to be “equals” and took turns in performing solo songs, speeches, and other forms of entertainment. It is not clear whether women’s sympotic groups also existed; a small amount of visual evidence seems to suggest this, though scholarly opinions differ as to whether the participants depicted are citizen women or courtesans (*hetairai*). Some of the poems of Sappho have been interpreted as being composed for sympotic performance (Williamson 1995; Parker 1993). But usually ritualized wine drinking was regarded as a masculine privilege. The topics of sympotic song and discussion tended to be affirmative of group solidarity, and they were often heavily moralistic and prescriptive (as the surviving poetry of Alcaeus, Xenophanes, Theognis, and others attests). Often there is an erotic current too, and sexual education went hand in hand with other elements of adolescent socialization. Although some sympotic “clubs” seem to have consisted entirely (like choruses) of age mates, others included a greater mixture of generations: adults and more experienced adolescents would take the conversational lead, while the younger novices were expected to remain largely silent and modestly receptive of their elders’ wisdom and/or romantic attentions.

#### 4. Literacy and Early Greek “Schools”—*grammatistês*, *kitharistês*, *paidotribês*

It is hard to determine from the primary sources, whether literary or visual (mainly Athenian vase paintings), at what date the first paid teachers in Greece began to operate schools and how these early schools functioned (Grasberger 1864; Ziebarth 1914; Marrou 1956: 9–40; Delorme 1960: 3–92; Beck 1964, 1975; Immerwahr 1964, 1973; Harris 1989: 15–17, 56–62, 96–102). Did these early teachers follow the same model as became standard from the fourth century onwards, with separate instruction in the three main areas of writing (*grammata*, often including some basic mathematics and/or drawing too), music (*kitharistikê* and *aulêtikê*), and physical training (*gymnastikê*)? The archaeological evidence is scanty. A “school” did not always occupy a special building of its own: letters, arithmetic, and geometry could be taught in any room large enough to contain benches for the students, while music, dance and athletics could be practiced in any gymnasium or palaistra, or on any flat piece of ground large enough for a chorus to train on. Indeed, Greek has no regular word for “school” at this period: students are said to go “to the teacher’s” (*eis didaskalou*), “to the writing-teacher’s” (*eis grammatistou*), “to the lyre-teacher’s” (*eis kitharistou*), “to the trainer’s” (*eis paidotribou*), or else to the palaistra or gymnasium (e.g., Aristoph., *Clouds* 964, 973; Xen., *Lac. Pol.* 2–3, Plato, *Prot.* 325e–326b). Thus, to some degree the question of whether or not, for example, Sappho’s circle, or Pythagoras’ constituted a “school” is moot—or should be rephrased to ask, “Was s/he a teacher?” (To which the answer would have to be, in both cases, yes.)

It was perhaps the institution of cash payment and a fee-charging teacher that specifically demarcated a “school” as such—a process that also assigned the teacher to a social category distinctly inferior to that of the “chorus-master” (*chorêgos*, *chorodidaskalos*)

or the “supervisor” (*paidonomos*) of a mess hall or the head of a *thiasos* or club, where contributions were usually made in kind (or in some cases by the city itself). The negative connotations of cash payment for teaching were in due course mobilized (by Plato and others) against the traveling rhetoric-teachers (sophists), who offered more advanced instruction in topics covered at the elementary levels by the *grammatistês*. Because they charged money, rather than sharing in a familial or reciprocal *charis*-based relationship with the adolescents who studied with them, they could be accused of a kind of educational prostitution, “selling” wisdom to all comers. But over the next generation or two (i.e., by the mid-fourth C.), such complaints largely evaporated, and the teaching of rhetoric for pay became quite respectable. A few educational theorists of the fourth century (notably Plato, *Laws* Book 7 and Aristotle in his *Politics*) proposed that the city should subsidize schooling at all levels for all citizens; but there is no credible evidence that such legislation was ever passed anywhere, even in the Hellenistic period, though individual philanthropists did sometimes subsidize a local school (e.g., Polythrous, in third C. BCE Teos: *SIG* 3. 578; Ziebarth 1914: 54–59; Harris 1989: 96–102).

By the late sixth century at least, some recognized schools and school buildings did exist; and by the end of the fifth century, they were quite widespread, at least in urban communities. Yet rather few literary or epigraphical texts before the fourth century refer explicitly to schools or paid teachers. (The chief relevant texts are Hdt. 6. 27. 1; Thuc. 7. 29; Aristoph., *Clouds* 961–1100, *Knights* 987–996, 1238–1239; Plato *Prot.* 325e–326b, *Charmides* 159c; Xen., *Lak. Pol.* 2. 1; Isocrates, *Antid.* 267.) Little credibility can be attached to the stories concerning legislation for public education by Solon (Plut., *Solon*) or Charondas of Catana (Diod. Sic. 12.12.4, 13.3–4.) Visual representations of school scenes begin to appear after ca. 500 BCE, mainly on Athenian red-figure vases (e.g., Figure 2.5), and these grow increasingly common during the course of the fifth century (collected by Beck 1964: 320–346, 1975: #349–373; Immerwahr 1964, 1973). A remarkably large number of fifth-century Athenian vase paintings show women reading (as in Figure 2.6); sometimes these are labeled “Muses” or “Sappho,” but sometimes they appear to represent contemporary wives, daughters, and mothers, or *hetairai* (Harris 1989: 106–108; Dillon 2014). Women are never represented reading and writing with a professional teacher, however, as boys often are; but music and dancing are a different matter (Beck 1975: #360–365, 391), though again it is often unclear in such cases whether the singers are supposed to be Muses (+ Apollo) or human chorus members (+ poet), and whether the dancers are “respectable” citizen girls or *hetairai*.

Were all three “subjects” (letters, music, gymnastics) generally taught together in school to a single age group, or did the youngest students begin with the *grammatistês*, and only later progress to the *kitharistês* and *paidotribês*? The evidence is not consistent. One of the key passages (from Plato’s *Protagoras*) has been interpreted both ways (*Prot.* 325e2–326b7; see too Plato, *Laws* 7. 809e–810b; Marrou 1956: 116–117, 142–144; Booth 1985). In the “old-style education” described in Aristophanes, *Clouds* 961–1100, there is no mention of the *grammatistês*, but rather only of the *kitharistês* (964) and *paidotribês* (973; also *gymnasion* 1102). Perhaps this is because the youths are already past the age of learning letters—yet they are still referred to as *paidês* (963) (Dover 1968: lviii–lxiii). A famous Attic cup (*kulix*) painted by Douris ca. 500 BCE (Figure 2.5) represents boys in school: one is receiving correction of a writing exercise (on a wooden





**Figure 2.6** A woman reads from a papyrus roll, in the presence of other women; apparently a domestic scene. Red-figure hydria (water jar) ca. 450 BCE, painted “in the manner of the Niobid Painter” (ARV<sup>2</sup> 611, 36; London, British Museum Vase E90, registration number 1885, 1213.18). (Photo courtesy of the Trustees of the British Museum.)

tablet), one apparently reciting a text (while his teacher follows from a papyrus book roll), while two others receive *aulos* and lyre instruction; the boy’s tutor-chaperone (*paidagōgos*) sits close by. The scene is most naturally taken to indicate that letters and music were taught at the same establishment and to children of the same ages; but even here a sequential process is not impossible, if the illustrations are intended to show the various stages in one boy’s education. Two of the teachers are bearded, two unbearded; but the boy looks physically the same (hair, face, dress) in all four activities, except that when playing the lyre he removes his cloak from his shoulders). The background is further decorated with lyres, a book roll, a book basket, a measuring square, and a writing tablet (Booth 1985).

Outside the larger towns and cities, there cannot always have been suitable buildings and professional personnel available to provide formal instruction. Even small-town schools must have been (at best) quite rudimentary, and the *grammatistēs* and *kitharistēs* may often have been the same individual. Likewise, by no means did every community boast a separate *gymnasion* or *palaistra* before the fourth or third century (Delorme 1960; W. A. Harris 1989: 15–17 presents a low assessment of levels of literacy and schooling, especially among the rural populations of Greece in the Classical and

Hellenistic periods; likewise Thomas 1992; both challenging the more optimistic picture of Marrou 1956; Havelock 1982: 185–188; and others, mostly focused on Athens.)

Relative and absolute numbers for school attendance and literacy are almost completely lacking. Herodotus (6.27.1) says that 119 out of 120 boys died in a school in the capital city of Chios “as they were being taught letters”; and 60 boys on the island of Astypalaia were allegedly killed by an enraged Olympic boxer (Pausanias 6.9.6–7). Both these events supposedly occurred during the 490s BCE, but the numbers are not above suspicion (Harris 1989: 57–58). It is hard to see how 120 boys could effectively be taught letters at the same time under one roof, given the normal class size attested in other contexts and the usual practice of close attention from teacher to individual student in copying and correcting letters, critiquing recitations, and administering rewards and punishments. Perhaps these were several choral groups assembled for basic instruction.

It is probable that by the end of the fifth century, if not before, even among the less bookish Greek communities such as Sparta and Crete, rudimentary instruction in letters was routinely provided to the children of the well-to-do, whether or not it was continued past the elementary stage. Athens was particularly focused on writing, and hundreds of sixth- and fifth-century inscriptions, carved on rocks by shepherds in the Attic countryside, have been discovered in recent years by Merle Langdon (as yet, unpublished); several of them specifically boast of their author’s skill at writing. But we can only guess what proportion of poorer families in Greece sent their sons to school, especially in the villages and countryside. In the small Boeotian town of Mycalessus in 413 BCE, there was apparently more than one well-attended “boys’ school” (*didaskaleion paidón*, Thuc. 7.29). But in contrast to Near Eastern practice (or the Hellenistic and Roman periods), relatively few Archaic Greek abecedaria and school exercises survive from any locations (Jeffery and Johnston 1990). Such writing as is represented on vases, metal tablets, and potsherds indicates that the level of accuracy and consistency (spelling, morphology, dialect) was quite low. “Correctness” of written expression was apparently not a high priority—nor was calligraphy—in contrast to oral recitation and performance skills, in which ignorance, clumsiness, or improper pronunciation attracted ridicule and public disgrace.

There is no evidence for girls attending schools outside the home to learn letters or music, though, as we noted earlier, domestic scenes of women reading and/or playing musical instruments are popular in fifth-century Athenian art, and a certain number of elite women clearly did attain a high level of literary and musical accomplishment (Immerwahr 1964, 1973; Beck 1975; Harris 1989; Dillon 2014; and see Figure 2.6). In Attic tragedy, Phaedra can write (Eur., *Hippolytus*), but Iphigenia apparently cannot (Eur., *IT* 584–585; cf. too Clytaemestra at *IA* 115–123, 891). In some cases, performance in choral and cultic age groups may have contributed to greater literacy; in others, instruction and practice took place within the home (as, for example, for Ischomachus’ teenage wife in Xenophon’s *Oeconomicus*). Plato’s recommendation of full inclusion of girls in the educational system (*Republic* Book 5) was eccentric, presumably inspired by Sparta’s example of girls’ choruses and female athletic training in the *gymnasion* and *palaistra* (Cartledge 1981; Scanlon 2002). Here again, however, we face the recurrent difficulty of distinguishing between domestic and choral contexts for learning on the one hand, and a formal “school”

program on the other. Teachers there certainly were for girls who wanted to read and write, but about “schools” we are much less well informed.

## 5. Conclusion: The Origins of “Classical” Education

By this point, we have encountered many of the key components of the educational curriculum that came to be established by the mid-fourth century BCE in Athens and elsewhere as the “classical” Greek—and eventually Roman—model: a combination of physical, verbal, and intellectual training, with an increasing focus on purity and correctness of linguistic usage (*Hellenismos*, *Latinitas*) and oral speech making; close attention to masculine deportment and self-presentation, particularly as institutionalized in the wrestling floor (*palaistra*) and exercise area (*gymnasion*)—or, for the Romans, the bathhouse—and the development of a canon of prime texts that every educated Greek and Roman should know and should be able to recite and discuss with some degree of authority.

The great historian of Classical education, Henri Marrou, characterized the development of all the higher cultures of the ancient world as passing “from” a warrior culture to a scribal culture (Marrou 1956: xiv–xviii, 3–25, and *passim*). But, as we noted in Chapter 1, this does not accurately describe the societies of ancient Mesopotamia and Anatolia—in which the scribal culture was already highly developed by 2000 BCE or earlier (see earlier text), but fairly separate from the activities of the ruling elites—nor does it adequately describe the developments of classical or even Hellenistic Greece. “Warrior” culture may indeed have been displaced onto mercenaries and centurions; but Greek and Roman elites for the most part never became “scribes.” They used written as well as spoken words; but most of them (despite the examples of, e.g., Thucydides and Plato, Cicero and Seneca the Younger) sought to make their mark in the world as speakers and performers, not writers. Their “live” performances were the key to their social success or failure.

From origins that in the Bronze (Mycenaean) and early Iron Ages were probably not much different from the practices of Minoan, Anatolian (Hittite, Luwian), or even Iranian elites, the Greeks by the fifth century had developed and refined distinctive athletic and musical trainings that offered access to somewhat broader segments of their communities and that had collapsed the distinctions between a sedentary, indoor scribal culture and the more public and physical regimes of politics, war, and male demonstrations of personal prowess. Because there was no specialized class of expert scribes (as there was throughout the cuneiform world of the Near East) nor of religious and ritual experts (as there was in, e.g., India and many parts of the Levant and Mesopotamia; perhaps also in Persia), a common and identifiably “Greek” regime was available to any (males) who had the leisure and means to pursue it. (Probably if we had better evidence about Lydian culture of the 7th–6th centuries, we would find several features of this “Greek” regime anticipated there.) By the later fifth century, in a process accelerated by the newly professionalized teachers of rhetoric and political arts whom we call “sophists,” the emphasis on music and dance (*mousikê*) was somewhat diminished (certainly in Athens—though about other regions, the evidence is too skimpy for us to judge), while oratory, literacy, and verbal expertise in general (*rhêtorikê*)—both in performance and in aesthetic

and critical appreciation (*krisis*)—loomed larger in the education of at least some of the more ambitious and sophisticated young elites.

But the pace and prevalence of this process have often been exaggerated by modern scholars. “Music” and athletics did not die out. In fact, choral groups continued to perform all over Greece well into the Hellenistic period (Calame 1997; Wilson 2000; Kowalzig 2012; LeVen 2014), and conversely, a relatively small proportion of Greek men studied oratory to the highest levels in the manner prescribed by Protagoras, Isocrates, Aristotle, Cicero, or Quintilian, though, of course, our surviving literary sources tend to emphasize their number and social importance. The leisure arts of athletics, horseback riding, hunting, and the symposium continued to be practiced, not only by the less urbanized elites of, for example, Macedonia, Thessaly, and Sparta, but also by many highly “educated” Athenians, Syracusans, Ionians, etc., in general. The plays of Aristophanes (especially the *Clouds* and the *Frogs*) reveal vividly how wide and varied the range of educational and aesthetic sophistication must have been among the Athenian population at large: intellectuals in general (especially Socrates) and various new musical, poetic, and rhetorical styles are constantly being ridiculed, yet some members of the audience are expected to have purchased books containing the written texts of their favorite poets and thinkers. And even while audiences flocked to the theater to watch and listen to Euripides’ and Menander’s displays of verbal and critical subtlety, the traditional “gymnastic” activities of physical and vocal self-presentation continued to be crucial for a man’s advancement in almost all walks of life. “Manliness” was highly prized, even when it had come to be measured (as in the rhetorical schools) in terms of vigorous and rigorous argument, elegant verbal style, a strong voice, and dignified performance/delivery (Greek *hypokrisis*; Latin *actio*).

In the course of this evolution of distinctively Greek educational methods and focus, it appears that (at least in the areas of Greece for which we possess most information) the learning of foreign languages and writing systems was not a priority. Whereas we can be sure that a fair number of Bronze Age Greeks in Crete, Cyprus, the Levant, and western Anatolia must have been conversant with cuneiform texts in one or more languages (see earlier text) and/or with hieroglyphic Luwian texts too—along with the scribal systems that taught these languages—by the late Archaic period, it looks as if the Greek language and the use of the alphabet had grown further apart from those Near Eastern main-streams, at least on the mainland. At the edges of the Greek world, things must have been different; and especially with the rise of the multilingual and highly inter-connected Achaemenid empire, translators certainly existed between Greek, Aramaic, Phoenician, and even cuneiform Akkadian and Old Persian, as well as Luwian and Phrygian. Likewise to the West: speakers/writers of Etruscan and other Italic languages were certainly mixing with Greek speakers and Phoenicians in many parts of Sicily and Italy. Much of the “new” wisdom that we find entering into Greek culture during the sixth and fifth centuries (e.g., the ideas of several of the so-called “Presocratic” scientists and philosophers) clearly came, by one means or another, from these neighboring cultures—possibly even from as far away as India and Iran in some cases (Burkert 1992; West 1971; Kingsley 1995). But the surviving evidence is frustratingly small.

For most Greeks of the Classical period, however, education was a monolingual affair; and the sense of a distinct and exclusive “Hellenic” identity was further reinforced by the Persian invasions of the early fifth century. The imagined contrast between Greek

toughness, inventiveness, and independence of spirit and “Asian” softness, conformism, and servility became a cliché (McCoskey 2012), as was the notion that this contrast was due both to nature (*physis*, including climate and geography) and to culture (*nomos*, including customs of training and performance for the young). Thus, the classical education came to see itself as training its students to be both manly and free, and also distinctively Greek (Gleason 1994)—and thus essentially different from the peoples of the rest of the world. For this, expertise in handwriting was not important (so, not a “scribal” culture); but control of one particular language (or for the Romans, two—both Greek and Latin), used in a particular way, along with a particular type of body and voice, were all required for the fullest development of a “free man.” Education in the “liberal arts” was now becoming systematized and institutionalized.

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### FURTHER READING

On the “performance culture” of Minoan Crete and Thera in general, see Krzyszkowska and Nixon 1983, Younger 1998, Marinatos 1999, 2010. For an up-to-date discussion of formalized age groups and age rituals, there is Chapin 2009; for speculations about institutionalized same-sex pairings, see Koehl 1986, Sergent 1986. On the Linear B scribes and their training, mainly at Knossos and Pylos, see Olivier 1967, Palaima 1988, 2011. On continuities between Bronze Age and Archaic social practices, especially on Crete, see (archaeological) Lembessis 1976; (mythological and institutional) Willetts 1962, Nilsson 1972, Bremmer 1980, Sergent 1986, Marinatos 1999. But most scholars nowadays are quite skeptical: see Sjörgren (2013) for discussion and references.

On Greek athletics in general, both their history and their sociology, see Miller 2004, Golden 1998, Christesen 2012; on female athletics, Golden 1998, Scanlon 2002. On early Greek choruses and social formation of the young through dance and performance, see Lonsdale 1993, Calame 1997, Christesen 2013; also the anthropologically inflected analyses of Naerebout 1997. On the question of Archaic Greek age groupings and “rites of passage” of one kind or another, the scholarly literature is vast: particularly recommended are Jeanmaire 1939, Calame 1997, Kennell 1995, and (generally skeptical) Dodd and Faraone 2003. On Greek “pederasty” (same-sex erotic pairings), see Cartledge 1981, Dover 1989, Halperin 1990, Williamson 1995, and the collection of sources in Hubbard 2003. On early Greek alphabetic writing, see Jeffery and Johnston 1990, Woodard 1997; for different accounts of the impact and extent of literacy in Classical Greece, see Immerwahr 1964 and 1973, Havelock 1982, Harris 1989, Thomas 1992; and for female literacy, Beck 1975, Dillon 2014.

PART II

# Accounts of Systems



## CHAPTER 3

# Sophistic Method and Practice

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### 1. Problems with the Sophists

The term “sophists” refers to certain Greeks active in the latter half of the fifth and early fourth centuries BCE. Beyond this, the phrase is problematic. Much of the difficulty relates to Plato’s influential appropriation of the term and criticisms of the men to whom he applies it. Hence, in order to make headway in an inquiry into sophistic method and practice, we need to engage with Plato’s treatment and attempt to transcend it.

Before turning to Plato, let us briefly note what I will call the “general sense” of the word “sophist.” “*Sophistês*” derives from the noun “*Sophia*,” which means “knowledge, wisdom, expertise, specialized skill or craft.” The suffix “-*tês*” indicates a practitioner or participant in a sphere of activity designated by the nominal root. A sophist is, therefore, someone who engages in or practices wisdom, knowledge, expertise, or a specialized skill or craft. As such, “sophist” has very broad application. It includes, among others, politicians, poets, philosophers, craftsmen, soothsayers, and diviners. This is too broad to permit a meaningful inquiry into sophistic method and practice.

By contrast, in Plato’s hands “sophist” acquires a narrow Athena-centric sense and also, crucially, a pejorative one. The following conditions are essential to this Platonic conception. The sophists are foreigners. They travel to Athens offering instruction or cultivation in *aretê* (excellence). But they are incapable of providing what they claim to. Hence, the sophists are pseudo-practitioners of *sophia*. Furthermore, they offer their instruction for fees. Their motive is to make money, and they target wealthy and naive Athenian youths. In short, the sophists are unethical as well as incompetent.

The opening scene of Plato’s *Protagoras*—arguably the most important ancient text in which the sophists are represented—well conveys this critical, indeed, hostile attitude. An aristocratic Athenian youth Hippocrates approaches Socrates in great excitement after learning that the famous Protagoras of Abdera has recently arrived in Athens and is staying at the house of his wealthy patron Callias. Hippocrates claims that he will pay

whatever he can to acquire Protagoras' *sophia*. Socrates warns Hippocrates against submitting his soul or mind to such men. He compares the sophist to an itinerant huckster who touts his wares regardless of their value.

In Plato's sense, the sophists are, then, not even a subset of the sophists in the general sense. Moreover, as pseudo-wise men, Plato's sophists either lack methods and practices or employ duplicitous ones. Giving an account of such sophistic method and practice would be analogous to giving an account of either blundering or stealing. Indeed, Aristotle's logical treatise *Sophistic Refutations* is devoted to exposing and clarifying argumentative fallacies.

Since neither Plato's nor the general sense of "sophist" encourages an account of sophistic method and practice, it is questionable whether there is an alternative approach. The following discussion offers a sort of middle course by suggesting alterations to Plato's sense of "sophist" that in turn yield a subset of sophists in the general sense. What is ultimately important here, however, is not to decisively lay claim to a revamped use of "sophist"; it is to clarify why and how Plato appropriated and distorted the term as he did, to consider to what extent those he branded "sophists" were guilty of his charges, and to situate their actual contributions within the cultural and intellectual currents of their day. By this means, we may offer a sensible account of sophistic method and practice.

## 2. Plato's Sophists

Let us begin with the principal figures Plato identifies as sophists. For now I will call them "Plato's sophists." In *Protagoras*, Protagoras of Abdera (c. 490–420), Hippias of Elis (c. 470–400), and Prodicus of Ceos (c. 460–390) are the sophists Hippocrates and Socrates encounter when they arrive at Callias' house. In addition, scholars consistently include Gorgias of Leontini (c. 483–375) and Thrasymachus of Chalcedon (c. 459–400) among prominent sophists Plato features in his dialogues, specifically in *Gorgias* and *Republic*, book 1. In Plato's corpus, Thrasymachus is, in fact, nowhere called a "sophist." However, he satisfies Plato's conditions for being one. A significant part of Plato's *Gorgias* is devoted to a discussion of rhetoric, Gorgias' special so-called craft (*technê*). Within the discussion, Socrates initially, carefully distinguishes sophistry from rhetoric (464b–465d). He maintains that both are debased forms of politics in that they seek to please rather than to improve citizens. Rhetoric is a debased form of legislation; sophistry, a debased form of judicial administration. According to this passage, Gorgias is not a sophist. On the other hand, later in the dialogue, Socrates overturns his earlier distinction and asserts that rhetoricians are sophists (520a–b). Moreover, in several other dialogues, Gorgias is mentioned, in passing, among others as a sophist. Finally, Gorgias also satisfies Plato's conditions for being a sophist. Consequently, I will include Gorgias among Plato's sophists and return to the relation between rhetoric and sophistry later.

Plato's view that the sophists were foreigners in Athens is misleading. When they were in Athens, Plato's sophists were foreigners. But none of them spent most or even much of their lives in Athens. Protagoras, who was an associate of Pericles and Callias, probably spent the most time in Athens of any of Plato's sophists. We know of at least two visits he made. We know of only one visit Gorgias made to Athens. He seems to have been particularly active in Sicily. Given Elis' alliance with Sparta during the Peloponnesian



War, it is unlikely that Hippias spent much time in Athens in the last decades of the fifth century. Plato, of course, focused on the sophists in Athens because he was especially concerned with their influence on the young men of his city-state. Generally speaking, however, Plato's sophists traveled throughout the Greek Mediterranean, wherever opportunities existed, and they were welcomed.

Plato's sophists sought fees and were paid. As such, they were itinerant professionals—at least, they engaged in itinerant professionalism. But itinerant professionalism had a long history in the Greek world, extending as far back as the epic-singer Demodocus in Homer's *Iliad*. Between the eighth and fifth centuries BCE, there were itinerant professionals of Greek and non-Greek origin working throughout the Mediterranean; for example, in the fields of poetry, music, painting, and sculpture; architecture and engineering, medicine, athletics, soldiery, soothsaying and divination; and in crafts of all kinds: ceramics, masonry, metallurgy, and smithery. Such figures traveled to courts, city-states, and festivals. They were paid or otherwise remunerated for their labor, works, and compositions; for public performances, readings, or displays, as well as for private instruction.

Plato's sophists were not even especially distinctive insofar as the activities for which they were paid principally involved speech or writing in prose form. For example, the historian Herodotus was paid for public readings; Stesimbrotus of Thasos was paid for lectures on Homer's poetry; and there is evidence that the philosopher Zeno of Elea was paid for instruction.

I assume that cultivating *areté* or making (young) men good or better was one among several of Plato's sophists' objectives. Such a good-making objective is compatible with other objectives, for example, making money, entertaining or giving pleasure, fostering diplomacy, and self-aggrandizement or self-perfection. Furthermore, the concept of a good-making objective need not be construed narrowly as an ethical or moral one. When he uses the term "*areté*," to mean "excellence" or "goodness," Plato specifically means "human" excellence or the goodness "of a man." But according to traditional Greek views, physical health, beauty, or strength are also constitutive of the excellence or goodness of a human or man, as are so-called external and relational goods such as wealth, political power, social status, and glory.

Plato himself is principally interested in the cultivation of the *psyché*. Accordingly, he focuses on his sophists as cultivators of the *psyché*. Certainly, Plato's sophists did—once again, among other things—contribute to the cultivation of the *psyché*. But Plato's distorting influence operates here too. The theoretical dichotomy of body (*sôma*) and *psyché* was achieved in the latter half of the fifth century. Socrates seems to have been a key figure in the process, and Plato and his philosophical heirs concretize this distinction. The word "*psyché*," which they employ and which may be rendered as "soul" or "mind," can cover the animating or vital force of a living being, its emotionality, motivation, and character, as well as its intellect and cognitive capacities. It is unclear, however, whether all of Plato's sophists subscribed to the distinction between body and *psyché* so conceived or employed the term "*psyche*" to refer to the substance, faculty, or complex of faculties responsible for all of the psychological or living functions just enumerated. Furthermore, even when their activity did involve cultivation of the *psyché*, Plato's sophists still might not have viewed this as their goal. For example, some might have viewed their goal as facilitating the attainment of political power or honor, in which case cultivation of the *psyché* would be instrumental.

Translators of Plato often render the word “*arête*” not as “excellence,” but as “virtue,” meaning “ethical or moral virtue.” In doing so, however, they obscure something momentous: the distinctiveness of Socrates’ claim that ethical virtue constitutes the value of a human being. Furthermore, Socrates maintains that ethical virtue is knowledge of a certain kind, namely, knowledge of good and bad. It is precisely this that Socrates and Plato conceive as *sophia*. Consequently, in denying that the sophists possess *sophia*, Plato and Socrates are precisely denying that they possess ethical knowledge. Of course, Socrates himself lacks *sophia*. But in contrast to the sophists, as Plato portrays them, Socrates is made to acknowledge this lack, indeed, to highlight it.

Now, if human or manly cultivation solely consisted in the acquisition of ethical knowledge or ethical virtue, Plato might have some grounds for disqualifying his sophists as cultivators of the *psyché*. But, momentous as Socrates’ conception of *sophia* and cultivation is, why should we accept such a narrow view? Setting aside the controversial claim that ethical virtue is a kind of knowledge, there are various ways of cultivating humans and citizens aside from improving their virtue. The smooth functioning of societies requires from their members more than ethical virtue, however crucially it requires that.

Contra Plato, I assume, then, that incompetence or lack of integrity is not a distinctive feature of his sophists. In this respect, Plato’s sophists do not differ from other philosophers, cultivators, educators, specialists, or consultants. Rather, it is Socrates’ and Plato’s conception of “*sophia*” as ethical virtue, conceived as ethical knowledge, their view of themselves as “*philosophoi*,” lovers of *sophia*, and of their intellectual activity as “*philosophia*,” the desire for and pursuit of *sophia*, that is anomalous. Later I will consider the extent to which Plato’s sophists were, in fact, concerned with ethics. Presently, granting that they possessed *sophia*, at least in a sense that does not entail ethical virtue or knowledge, the modified Platonic sense of “sophist” refers to a set of late fifth- and early fourth-century Greek men who engaged in itinerant professionalism and whose activity principally involved speech and writing in prose form, one of whose objectives was to impart *areté* to (young) men or to make them good or better.

Because of their success and, of course, the negative impression it made on Plato, we have more information regarding Plato’s sophists than others. Hence, I will continue to focus on the method and practice of these men and hereafter simply refer to them as “sophists.” In the next section, I discuss the wide range of their activity and, more briefly, the roles of rhetoric and ethics within that activity. Toward the end of the discussion, I briefly touch on some lesser-known sophists and their works.

### 3. The Sophists’ Activities

It is helpful to distinguish what I will call “kinds” of sophistic activity from contents of sophistic activity. Among kinds, we may distinguish three: first, presentations, performances, or displays to audiences; second, composition and dissemination of written works; and third, private instruction. These kinds may be conceived more succinctly as public oral, public written, and private activities. One might also distinguish public from private written works, at least, written works for general audiences and written works for specialized audiences. But I will stick with the trifold distinction. One may also distinguish sub-kinds of public oral activity. For example, it is one thing to give a presentation at a Hellenic festival

such as the Olympic games or a state-sponsored civic occasion such as a military funeral; it is another to present before a smaller and narrower assembly of guests at the home of a patron or in an athletic training ground, that is, a gymnasium or palaistra.

In a number of his dialogues, Plato portrays the sophists presenting or having just presented in private homes and gymnasia. It appears that a question- and-answer period typically followed such presentations. These events could serve as advertisements for or preliminary to private instruction, but they could also be ends in themselves. We also know that the sophists presented on a larger scale. For example, Gorgias once delivered Athens' annual funeral oration to honor military victims and at least once a speech at the Olympic games. Hippias also presented at Olympia, perhaps on multiple occasions.

The practice of presenting or performing at civic or Hellenic events appears closely related to ambassadorial service. Indeed, most of the sophists served as ambassadors. Consider Hippias' claims in Plato's *Hippias Major*: "Whenever Elis needs to conduct any affairs with other city-states, she always comes to me first out of all the citizens and chooses me as an ambassador" (281a). Compare also Socrates' response: "That man Gorgias, the sophist from Leontini, arrived here from his home as an ambassador on public business, since he was the ablest of the men of Leontini at conducting communal affairs, and he seemed to speak excellently in public; yet also, in private, by giving demonstrations and associating with the young men, he made and received a great deal of money from our city. Or take that friend of ours Prodicus—he often went to other places on public business; and the climax was when he recently arrived from Ceos on public business: he spoke in the Council and ... <gave> private demonstrations ..." (282a–c).

In addition, we have several testimonies regarding other political and diplomatic activities of the sophists. In a speech at the Olympic games in 408 BCE, Gorgias exhorted the Greek city-states to pursue concord (*homonoia*) and to collaborate against the threat of the barbarians. Around 413, Thrasymachus composed a speech, delivered to the citizens of Larisa, encouraging resistance against the Macedonian King Archelaus. And in 443, at the request of the Athenian statesman Pericles, Protagoras apparently composed laws for the Athenian-led Panhellenic colony of Thurii.

Evidently, the goals of the various kinds and sub-kinds of sophistic activity differ, even when they are complementary or overlapping. Moreover, event-type or activity-kind and -content are clearly interrelated. The sophists responded to the varied interests of their audiences, patrons, and clients. Versatility and polymathy would, thus, be among the keys to sophistic success. For example, testimonies suggest that Gorgias could extemporize on any subject presented to him. Likewise, in Plato's *Hippias Minor*, Hippias explains: "I travel to the solemn assembly of the Greeks at Olympia ... and present myself at the sanctuary as both a speaker, on whatever subject anyone wishes from those that I have prepared for demonstration, and as ready to answer whatever anyone wishes to ask me" (363c).

Hippias, in particular, was famed for his polymathy. His skills and competencies apparently extended beyond the verbal and intellectual. Consistent with his high, perhaps supreme estimation of the virtue of self-sufficiency (*autarkeia*), Hippias is said to have once presented himself at the Olympic games with metal, ceramic, textile, and leather works he had crafted himself (*HpMi* 368b–d). Hippias also speaks of his various poetic compositions: epic, tragic, and dithyrambic. In addition, we have independent testimony that Hippias composed elegiac verses for a monument dedicated at Olympia

commemorating a chorus of boys drowned at sea (Pausanias, 5.25.4). In light of this, the activity of the sophists was not even limited to writing and speech in prose.

The content of the sophists' writings was also highly diverse. For example, an ancient catalog of Protagoras' works includes, among other things: *On Wrestling*, *On Mathematics*, *On the State*, *On Ambition*, *On the Original State of Things*, *On What is in Hades*, and *Opposing Arguments* (also known as *On Truth*). Put succinctly, albeit anachronistically, the range of subjects here appears to include philosophy of mathematics, political theory, ethics, cosmology or social anthropology, eschatology, and epistemology.

Now, one must treat ancient catalogs carefully, at least for three reasons. A title may not refer to an authentic work or to any work at all. One work may pass under multiple names. And the basic content of works cannot straightforwardly be inferred from the titles. *On Wrestling* is a good example of this last problem. One might think that Protagoras' text was a manual on wrestling. (In fact, in Plato's dialogue *Lysis*, Socrates describes the character Mikkos, the trainer and owner of the wrestling school where the dialogue is set, as a sophist 204a.) But comments on Protagoras' text in Plato's *Sophist* suggest otherwise. Two characters in this dialogue, the Eleatic philosopher and Theaetetus, are discussing the areas in which sophistic instruction enables students to become good debaters or speakers: "(E): Those things that concern technical skills both in general and specifically, and which are needed for arguing against any actual practitioner ... (T): I take it you mean Protagoras' work on wrestling and other technical skills" (232d). Presumably, then, Protagoras' text was not a how-to manual on wrestling, but a manual on or perhaps demonstration of speaking effectively about wrestling and other technical skills.

I have already noted Hippias' polymathy. He appears to have been particularly noted for astronomical and mathematical studies. For example, at Callias' house in Plato's *Protagoras*, Socrates observes: "Various people were sitting around Hippias on benches. They appeared to be asking questions concerns natural science and astronomy, while he, sitting on his chair, clarified and explained each of the things they asked about" (315c). In his *Commentary on Book I of Euclid's Elements*, Proclus mentions Hippias' contribution to the solution to the geometrical problem of trisecting a rectilinear angle, using a curve called the "quadratrix" (Friedlein 272.3–10).

One of Hippias' works is referred to as *Collection* (*Synagogé*). Bruno Snell and others have compellingly argued that this text is the earliest example of doxography. That is, Hippias' *Collection* consisted of a collection of Hippias' predecessors; opinions on subjects in natural science or philosophy. Clement of Alexandria appears to preserve its opening words: "Of these things, some may have been said by Orpheus, some by Musaeus briefly in various places, some by Hesiod and Homer, some by other poets, others in prose works of Greek and non-Greek writers; but by putting together the most significant and kindred items, I will compose a discourse that is both new and varied" (*Strom.* 6.15).

Hippias also appears to have composed historical and chronological works. One of these consisted of a list of Olympic victors. In Plato's *Hippias Major*, Hippias explains that when he travels to Sparta, the Lacedaimonians desire to hear him speak about the genealogies of heroes and men and how city-states were founded in ancient times, "in a word, all ancient history" (285e). In addition to indicating Hippias' interest or competence in history of certain kinds, this passage also corroborates the point that the sophists tailored their presentations to their audiences.

In a celebrated scene of Plato's *Protagoras*, Socrates and Protagoras offer competing interpretations of a poem, Simonides' ode to Scopas. The discussion is initially motivated by Protagoras' claim that the ability to discuss poetry is the central constituent of a man's education. Whether or not the historical Protagoras thought this, commentary on and explication of celebrated works within the Greek poetic tradition figured prominently within sophistic activity. This practice was continuous with the centrality of poetry in primary Greek education and culture broadly. Such commentary and explication was diverse, including semantic, linguistic, and stylistic points, as well as interpretation of broader content. For example, Protagoras is known to have distinguished different kinds of speech-act, including commands and prayers. Aristotle, who reports this, also informs us that Protagoras applied some of these distinctions in a criticism of Homer's diction (*Poetics* 1456b).

Prodicus was especially famed for his contribution to the study of what the Greeks called "correctness of words" (*orthotés onomatôn*). Testimonies indicate that he offered introductory and advanced lectures on the subject, charging distinct fees for each. Once again, this exemplifies the interrelation of activity type, activity content, and activity objective. In one parodic passage of *Protagoras*, Plato alludes to Prodicus' interest in semantic distinctions by having the character Prodicus rattle off subtle distinctions between near synonyms. I myself have argued that Prodicus was not interested in clarifying subtle distinctions in meaning according to common usage. Rather, he was interested in reforming linguistic usage to correspond to distinctions between natural kinds. For example, Galen reports that Prodicus, in his work *On Human Nature*, distinguished two kinds of phlegm and applied distinct terms to each (*nat. fac.* 2.9).

Generally speaking, the sophists' intellectual interests correspond to those of the so-called Presocratics and other intellectuals of the late Archaic and early Classical periods. Protagoras' epistemological work *On Truth* appears to be a critical response to Parmenides' *On Being*. Gorgias' *On Non-Being* is also a response to Parmenides. Arguably, Protagoras' *On Mathematics* involved criticism of the Eleatics or Pythagoreans. Hippias' astronomical work is continuous with earlier philosophical explanations of the cosmos, in addition to contributing to the increasing development of astronomy as a specialized discipline. As Galen's report indicates, Prodicus' *On Human Nature* is likewise continuous with earlier philosophical explanations of human physiology, while also contributing to the, already to some degree autonomous, discipline of medical theory. In composing or at least presenting work on the foundations of city-states, Hippias' contribution continues the tradition of historical writing, in particular, traditions of local and regional history and geography. Hippias' doxographical work was original, but later developed into an important philosophical and medical genre, especially by Aristotle and the Peripatetic school.

The sophists' contributions are comparable, for example, to those of their contemporary Democritus of Abdera (c. 460–370), who is invariably classified as a Presocratic philosopher and never as a sophist. In his *Lives and Opinions of Eminent Philosophers*, Diogenes Laertius' catalog of Democritus' works includes, among others: *On Those in Hades*, *On Manly Excellence*, *On Contentment*, *On the Cosmos*, *On the Planets*, *On the Nature of Man*, *On Geometry*, *On Poetry*, *On Homer*, *Medical Regimen*, and *On Fighting in Armor*. As such, I do not hesitate to identify the sophists as philosophers. Indeed, some of the ancients did as well. Protagoras is included among philosophers in Diogenes

Laertius' *Lives*, and the entry for Prodicus in *Suda* describes him as both “a natural philosopher and a sophist” (DK 84 A1).

I have yet to discuss Gorgias and Thrasymachus' writings and thus to comment on the relation between sophistic activity and rhetoric. The sophists are often treated primarily as teachers of rhetoric. Most of them undoubtedly made important contributions to this domain, at least in some sense of the word “rhetoric.” I have already mentioned some of Protagoras' and Prodicus' contributions to literary and linguistic theory. Other works by Protagoras, for example, *On Wrestling*, *The Art of Controversy*, *Instruction Book*, and *Lawsuit about a Fee*—assuming these were at least authentic, if not all distinct works—were evidently rhetorical in some sense. But Gorgias and Thrasymachus stand out among the sophists for their contributions to the art of public speaking. At least, with the exception of Gorgias' *On Non-Being*, the only works of Gorgias' and Thrasymachus' of which we have knowledge are orations or speeches.

In recent decades, however, numerous scholars have compellingly argued that the sophists' contributions to rhetoric have been misunderstood: for the most part, the sophists did not create theories of rhetoric or communication. Rather, for the most part, they developed styles of public speaking, which served later figures such as Aristotle and Anaximenes as grounds for theorizing. As such, the so-called rhetorical manuals (*rhētorikai technai*) typically associated with the sophists in great measure consisted of speeches, which students could memorize, study, and emulate. The only qualification I wish to make to this thesis—and the reason I have qualified my claims by repeating the phrase “for the most part”—is that the view that the early works were only performance texts is probably too extreme. Some *technai* could have contained some commentary on the authors' objectives or theoretical views, limited though these might be. Moreover, even if they lacked such commentary or explanation, private instruction in public speaking must have consisted of something more than handing the student a collection of speeches, telling him to memorize and study the content and then create his own speech. Given what we know of the contemporary Greek intellectual turn to theorize and given the competition for students, these manuals and the living teaching of expertise in speech could not simply have been a kind of exemplary *epideixis*. A teacher who is also something of a salesman must provide his audience with a rationale for his own excellence and distinctiveness.

For convenience, it may be helpful stipulatively to distinguish “rhetoric” as referring to the theory of public speaking from “oratory” as referring to the skill or practice of public speaking, whether or not theoretically informed. Undeniably, teaching oratory was one of the sophists' principal occupations. For example, in Plato's *Protagoras* Protagoras explains that if Hippocrates becomes his student, one of the main things he will learn is to become effective as a public speaker (319a). After all, most wealthy Greek youth aspired to political power; and given the political and social conditions of the ancient Greek world, oratorical competence was essential to that end. In their professional capacities, the sophists were responding to market demands. Although there evidently was demand for all of the other subjects they offered, effective oratory was the central skill their private clients sought.

Finally, to what extent were the sophists cultivators of ethical virtue? Evidence indicates that they were cultivators of ethical virtue to some extent. Protagoras' *On Ambition* and *On the State* appear to be ethical or ethical-political works. Of course, they might be

exemplary speeches on those subjects intended for oratorical training. But Protagoras' creation of laws for Thuri indicates that he had substantive political views. The Great (political) Speech that Plato gives the character Protagoras in *Protagoras* must in various ways correspond to views of the historical Protagoras. There is also an intriguing ancient testimony that most of Plato's *Republic* was based on Protagoras' views.

Hippias seems to have composed an ethical work entitled *Neoptolemus*. Plato has him describe it in *Hippias Major*: "Just now I have made a great impression in Sparta speaking about the activities a young man must pursue. I have a discourse on the subject ... My setting and the starting point ... are something like this. After Troy was taken, the tale is told that Neoptolemus asked Nestor what sort of activities are noble ... After that, the speaker is Nestor, who teaches him a very great many noble customs. I presented this discourse there and expect to present it here the day after tomorrow in Phidostratus' schoolroom" (286a–b).

Hippias' *Neoptolemus* is comparable to the most celebrated of the sophists' ethical works, Prodicus' *Choice of Heracles*, which Xenophon paraphrases in his *Memorabilia*. In his work, Prodicus presented the mythological hero Heracles as a young man at a crossroads poised to choose a path of life. Feminine figures representing Excellence (*aretê*) and Depravity advertised their respective courses. Depravity tries to lure Heracles with the promise of sensual pleasures. But Excellence responds with the claim that a life of civic responsibility and duty offers distinct pleasures of its own: "The young enjoy the praises of their elders. The old are glad to be honored by the young. They recall their past deeds with pleasure, and they take pleasure in doing their present deeds well" (*Mem.* 1.2.23).

Insofar as they composed and disseminated ethically didactic works, the sophists' contributions in this domain might be thought similar to those in the art of public speaking. That is, they might have contained relatively little abstract or principled justification and explanation and instead have been basically exhortatory and directive. In short, such works might not have been predominantly a-theoretical. If so, then Plato's criticism of the sophists' lack of *sophia*, even in the sense of ethical *sophia*, could be understood more deeply as follows. For Plato, ethical knowledge requires the ability to justify and explain one's position. For instance, central to such justification and explanation is the ability to define one's ethical terms. Plato's criticism of the sophists' lack of *sophia* and incapacity to make men good would, then, be explicable, if not defensible, according to this peculiar sense of "*aretê*."

This rather speculative interpretation of the sophists' ethical works is, however, open to doubt. There is reason to believe that at least some of the sophists' ethical compositions were relatively theoretical. The strongest evidence for this claim comes from two anonymous works, widely agreed to have been composed in the late fifth or early fourth century and invariably included in collections on the sophists: the *Double Arguments* (*Dissoi Logoi*) and *Anonymus Iamblichi*. Passages constituting the latter have been preserved in a chapter of the neo-Platonist Iamblichus' *Exhortation to Philosophy*. Their content concerns the means by which a young man may achieve success in his pursuit of "wisdom, courage, eloquence, or excellence (*aretê*)" (1.1). Significantly for our present point, the content is presented as a continuous argument. That is, the text does not merely exhort its reader to a certain end by certain means, but attempts to justify the grounds for adopting certain means to attain desired ends, invoking substantive ethical and political principles along the way.

Philosophical argumentation is even more conspicuous in the *Double Arguments*. This work, remarkably different in form from the *Anonymus Iamblichi*, primarily consists of pairs of pro- and contra-arguments for various ethical, political, and indeed metaethical theses. The first three pairs concern the relation between opposed evaluative or normative properties. For instance, the first engages the question whether “the good and the bad are one thing ... or whether they are distinct” (8.1). Later sections consist of opposing arguments regarding whether wisdom and excellence are teachable and whether political offices should be assigned by lot. The remaining fragments contain accounts of the value of oratorical skill and mnemonic ability, respectively.

Assuming that the form and content of these anonymous texts was not atypical, I suggest the following as a more plausible general statement regarding the sophists’ ethical compositions. These works were quite diverse, both in form and content. Some were basically exhortatory or simply contained characterizations of paradigmatic virtuous and vicious figures. But others were more theoretical and argumentative. Once again, such variety in form and content is explicable by the authors’ diverse audiences and occasions for composition, as well as their personal styles, distinct talents, and interests.

In sum, the practices or activities of the five celebrated sophists, who are central to several Platonic dialogues, can be relatively well clarified, in terms of both their various kinds and their extremely heterogeneous content. If “method” entails an explicit theory or theoretical conception informing practice, then to a large extent these sophists do not appear to have been methodical. If, instead, by “method” we merely mean “a manner of approaching a subject,” then one may, as I have, surely speak of the various manners in which they approach their diverse subjects. Finally, if we wish to speak of sophistic method and practice generally, I have cautiously suggested that sophistic activity of the late fifth and early fourth centuries may be distinguished by the prominence, not origin, of engagement in itinerant professionalism, using prose forms, tailored to the local interests of citizens, public and private, of diverse city-states throughout the Greek world, and with numerous overlapping aims: ambassadorial and diplomatic, entertaining, self-aggrandizing and self-perfecting, money making, and variously educational. The existence of this phenomenon is perhaps best explained as a function of several coincident factors: preexisting patterns and practices of itinerant professionalism; the ongoing development of Greek philosophy; the increasing sophistication of prose forms in tandem with their positive reception and growing stature; and emerging and widening markets for oratorical skills and other capabilities materially as well as symbolically efficacious in political and more broadly civic spheres.

Finally, it deserves repeating that the preceding discussion has focused on five men who were particularly successful and celebrated within the sophistic movement. One consequence of their prominence is that they play significant roles in several of Plato’s dialogues. Another is that we have a relatively substantial amount of non-Platonic fragmentary and testimonial evidence regarding their lives and works. Given the great range of these works—topically, formally, and contextually—it is fair to say that these sophists well represent the diversity of sophistic interests and activities generally. In contrast, while it is possible to mention numerous other figures of the period who arguably qualify as sophists, in the revamped sense of this term, many of these men are little more than names to us. Nonetheless, I will conclude by mentioning a few of them.



We know of some other sophists in various connections with the five celebrated sophists. For example, Antimoerus of Mende is characterized in Plato's *Protagoras* as "Protagoras' star pupil, who is studying professionally to become a sophist" (315a). Unfortunately, this is the only surviving reference to Antimoerus.

We know a little more about Polus of Acragas, who was a student of Gorgias and who also plays a prominent role in Plato's *Gorgias*. The limited information we have suggests that Polus specialized in the art of speaking, and we know of at least one text he composed. Generally, Polus' work seems to have been a mixture of rhetoric and oratory. For example, in Plato's *Phaedrus* Socrates asks Phaedrus: "What should we say of the whole gallery of terms Polus established—speaking with reduplication, speaking in maxims, speaking in images—and of the terms Licymnius gave him as a present to help him explain good diction" (267b). This passage suggests that Polus coined several rhetorical terms and, no doubt, illustrated their use with examples in some of his work.

The figure Licymnius of Chios, who is mentioned in the preceding *Phaedrus* passage, was also a teacher of Polus. Hence, it is possible he was a sophist too. We know from Aristotle's *Rhetoric* that he composed a rhetorical or oratorical text, for Aristotle criticizes some of the rhetorical terms he coined as "pointless and silly" (1414b15). We also know that Licymnius composed dithyrambic poems.

Lycophron, whose city-state of origin is unknown, was another student of Gorgias'. His contribution is somewhat better known. Aristotle refers to him as a sophist. As a student of Gorgias', it is likely that Lycophron taught at least oratory. However, Aristotle's use of "sophist" is broader than Plato's; so it is unclear whether Lycophron engaged in itinerant professionalism. Several fragments survive, all in Aristotle. The breadth of their content shows that Lycophron was alive to various intellectual currents of his day. Hence, it is possible that he was itinerant to some extent, if not in a professional capacity. One fragment mentions a composition in praise of the lyre. Such odes or parodies constitute well-established genres of Greek lyric poetry. Recall that Hippias of Elis also composed poems. Thus, Licymnius', Hippias', and Lycophron's poetic contributions illustrate another point of continuity between forms of traditional Greek *sophia* and the sophistic movement.

Other fragments indicate that Lycophron had substantive philosophical interests. In a discussion of the metaphysical relation of participation, Aristotle mentions that Lycophron characterized the relation between knowledge and the soul as one of participation. In the context of another metaphysical discussion, in this case concerning predication and the unity of being, a topic stemming from Parmenides' thought and central to fifth- and fourth-century philosophy, Aristotle notes that Lycophron avoided the use of the copula. Finally, several fragments refer to Lycophron's political views. One seems to support a democratic ideology: "The nobility of good birth is obscure, and its grandeur is a matter of words" (DK83B4). Another, cited in Aristotle's *Politics*, characterizes law as a convention that serves as a "guarantor of mutual rights" (DK83B3).

On the basis of the fragments and testimonies, it is questionable why in their seminal collection Diels and Kranz classify Lycophron among the sophists rather than philosophers. But, as we have discussed, the same question may be reasonably posed of many of the figures they so classify, including Protagoras, Hippias, Prodicus, Gorgias, and Thrasymachus.

On this note, I turn to one final problem case: Antiphon. An Antiphon of Athens is today and was in the Classical period widely treated as a sophist. It is controversial—in fact, the controversy extends back into late antiquity—whether he is identical to Antiphon of Athens of the deme Rhamnus. The basic difficulty in identifying the two is that Antiphon of Rhamnus was an anti-democratic politician who led the oligarchic regime of the Four Hundred in 411, whereas content from a fragment of Antiphon the sophist supports egalitarianism.

Antiphon of Rhamnus was a major orator, indeed, the first of the canonical ten Attic orators. He established a school in Athens, and a number of his speeches have survived. These models for instruction are assembled under the title *Tetralogies*.

Antiphon the sophist was the author of several treatises: *On Truth*, *On Concord*, *The Politician*, and *On the Interpretation of Dreams*. We have numerous fragments and testimonies of the first two, little of the last two. *On Truth*, which was composed in two books, covered numerous philosophical topics: in epistemology, metaphysics, ethics, cosmology, and biology. *On Concord* was an ethical and political treatise concerned with the topic of the title, concord (*homonoia*), both among citizens and among family members. The longest surviving fragment, for instance, discusses the difficulties and values of marriage and children.

Assume Antiphon of Rhamnus and Antiphon the sophist are one and the same person. In that case, Antiphon is another fifth-century polymath who taught oratory and perhaps a range of other subjects. But whether or not Antiphon the sophist is Antiphon the orator, neither seems to have been an itinerant figure, even though at least one was professionally engaged. Indeed, both are Athenians. Hence, the identification of at least one Antiphon as a sophist would require that we drop itinerancy as a condition of sophistry. That would leave professionalism of some degree as the differentiating condition between all of the figures discussed in this chapter and men such as Socrates, Plato, and, so far as we know, most of the so-called Presocratic philosophers. The distinction between an intellectual or philosophical life engaged in professionalism of some degree and a wholly nonprofessional one is culturally and historically significant, to be sure. Moreover, we recognize a similar distinction today between professionals and amateurs. But it at least deserves noting that if this economic criterion were applied in the terminological distinction between “sophist” and something else, say, “philosopher,” then Leibniz and Spinoza would count as philosophers and Kant, Hegel, and the rest of us would qualify as sophists.

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## CHAPTER 4

# Socrates as Educator

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*David K. O'Connor*

Socrates (469–399 BCE) was a celebrity in Athens and the wider Greek world, who was executed for “introducing new divinities and corrupting the young,” as the indictment said. The charges of “introducing” and “corrupting” are grave testimony that Socrates was an educator. If Socrates had merely held unpopular opinions, about the gods and the natural world, and even about ethics and politics, but had kept them to himself, an Athenian jury would not have condemned him. But he always refused to call himself a teacher, so there was also something elusive about how he influenced his associates. Different associates seemed to take Socrates’ ideas and suggestions in different directions, so the education he produced was more one of provocation and inspiration than of doctrine, a different influence for everyone touched by him.

By far our three most important sources for Socrates are Aristophanes’ comedy *Clouds* (produced in 423 BCE), the dialogues of Plato, and the Socratic writings of Xenophon (both written in the four decades following Socrates’ death). Socrates’ personal quirks and charisma were so well known that Aristophanes, the great comic dramatist of the day, could make effective use of them in his hilarious caricature of Socrates in the *Clouds*. Scholars hold contrary opinions about how much Aristophanes’ caricature reflects the “true” Socrates—though comic exaggeration would not be effective unless it played on features popularly perceived to be really present in the person caricatured. Aristophanes’ comedy playfully anticipated, and perhaps influenced, the deadly serious charges brought against Socrates a quarter century later. After Socrates’ execution, a literary genre of what Aristotle called “Socratic discourses” sprang up, carried forward by his admirers, among them Xenophon and Plato, whose works are all that survive intact of these Socratic discourses. It is a slippery business to get hold of the “true” Socrates from the works of these admirers, as slippery as to try to peek behind the caricature of a critic like Aristophanes. Plato and Xenophon use Socrates as a character to reflect on Socrates’ philosophical significance, but not primarily to give a historical account of him. To reconstruct what Socrates really looked like from his

image in these distorting mirrors, whether in Aristophanes' comic caricature or in the idealizations of Socrates' admirers, is inescapably speculative. But all of our sources do converge on seeing Socrates as a distinctive sort of educator.

Aristophanes portrayed Socrates as the arrogantly aloof head of a school that attracted two kinds of students: effete speculators on natural phenomena, the atheistic absent-minded professors of their day, and aggressive young men motivated by political ambition. A vulgar and overextended father, Strepsiades, comes to the school with hopes of learning argumentative skills that will help him escape his debts. Lacking the mental agility to pick up the quick wit and verbal cleverness he sought, he brings his son, Pheidippides, to the school as a substitute, only to have his son corrupted when he learns disreputable opinions and picks up a sneering contempt for his own father. So in the *Clouds*, Socrates is a babbler about nature and the gods, an usurper of the respect of sons for their fathers, and a purveyor of verbal trickery. Plato and Xenophon both make many specific allusions to Aristophanes' portrait of Socrates in the *Clouds*, though they would have been small boys when the play was produced, and so must have known the play from reading rather than viewing. Plato and Xenophon probably came to know Socrates himself when they were still teenagers and Socrates was in his fifties. In broad terms, their portraits of Socrates are consistent with Aristophanes' caricature, while contesting the comic exaggerations. Their writings concede that Socrates *was* some sort of educator, with an informal group of close associates and a wider social circle influenced by him, though he was not the head of anything as formal as a school; he *was* involved with natural science, but with a different orientation from the pretentious atheism portrayed by Aristophanes; and he *did* attract young men of political ambition, though he did not cater to their ambitions in the way Aristophanes suggested. These three themes, suggested by the responses of Plato and Xenophon to Aristophanes, will be the focus of my account of Socrates as an educator: the distinctive character of Socrates' influence on his associates, his reorientation of natural science, and his education of political ambition.

Socrates competed in an intellectual milieu obsessed with new and controversial techniques for achieving verbal facility, represented most famously by the sophist rhetoricians Gorgias and Protagoras. Socrates too was famous for his distinctive verbal facility, and all three of our primary witnesses converge on presenting Socrates as possessing a characteristic way of conducting conversations, especially by brief question-and-answer exchanges. Many scholars ancient and modern have tried to make something systematic out of this characteristic conversation style, especially as presented in Plato's dialogues, constructing elaborate theories, psychological, epistemological, metaphysical, alleged to underlie and justify Socrates' varied practices. With some other contemporary scholars, I am skeptical about such systematic reconstructions of *the* Socratic "method." Socrates was certainly a participant in a larger cultural discussion about techniques of argument and logic, and Plato especially often puts Socrates on one side of a polemical dichotomy with a competitor: dialectic versus disputation, philosophy versus rhetoric or sophistry, conversation versus speechmaking. But to identify the essence of Socrates with a particular method, let alone with the professor's game now called "the Socratic method," puts the center of gravity of his attraction to his associates in quite the wrong place. For Socrates' pull was not primarily formal, and the example of his dialectical skill is inseparable from the content of the commitments he fostered.

## 1. Imitation and Socratic Education

It can be misleading to call Socrates' distinctive influence "education" at all, because with Socrates it seems always to have been an intensely personal influence. There is an air of paradox about describing someone as an educator who was notorious for insisting he was not a teacher. The best short statement of how Socratic education worked without making Socrates a teacher comes from Xenophon (*Memorabilia* 1.2.2–3): Socrates "made his associates desire virtue and gave them hope that, if they took care for themselves, they would become noble and good. And though he never professed to be a teacher of this noble goodness, he made his associates hope by imitating him to become so, since he was himself manifestly of this sort." Socrates educated primarily by being an object of imitation and emulation, and only secondarily through precept or doctrine. Xenophon emphasizes that Socrates influenced his associates by the example of his actions even more than by what he said (*Memorabilia* 1.2.17–18, 1.3.1, and 1.5.6). This emulation could be comical and superficial, imitations by fans and acolytes who put on the superficial style without the underlying substance. Such are the pale and unmanly "students" haunting Socrates' school in the *Clouds*. Aristophanes made fun of a rather different sort of imitator a year later in the *Birds* (produced in 422 BCE), coining the comic verb "socratize" to describe odd people in Athens who "wear long hair, go hungry and wild, socratize—and carry sticks!" Socrates' charisma produces followers who "socratize" by being harsh, unkempt, and a bit of a spectacle. In the public mind, to be a Socratic meant to affect Socrates' shabby clothes and argumentative conversation, and to adopt an ascetic lifestyle.

For admirers to imitate a celebrity's style of dress and speech is nothing unusual, nor for students to start to look and sound like their favorite teachers. But such superficial imitation counts more as flattery than education, no matter how sincere. Xenophon and Plato both present the imitation Socrates provoked as going deeper. Xenophon was especially interested in how Socrates' admirers tried to imitate the great man's self-sufficiency and self-control. Indeed, Xenophon makes Socrates' preternatural self-sufficiency the central fact of his personality, subordinating even Socrates' wisdom to it. As he makes Socrates say, "To need nothing is divine; and as the divine is best, what is closest to the divine is closest to the best" (*Memorabilia* 1.6.10). For Xenophon, every imitation of this Socratic self-sufficiency was partial or imperfect, and so for him the question of how Socrates educated his admirers cannot be separated from the question of how he differed from them, as we will see in Xenophon's discussion of Socrates and natural science.

Like Xenophon, Plato draws a portrait of Socrates as personal influence and shining exemplar, not as pedagogue. But he goes much farther in the direction of theorizing and mythologizing the imitation of Socrates, and in his typical fashion, he ties Socrates' influence to his erotic charisma. The key texts on this topic are the *Meno* and the *Phaedrus*, with their accounts of what is known as the Theory of Recollection. In a famous passage of the *Meno*, Socrates demonstrates that an untaught slave boy can be brought to understand basic geometrical truths without explicitly being told those truths. The knowledge of such truths, Socrates suggests, can be elicited from the slave boy because he already had the knowledge; all he needs is to be questioned in the right way, Socrates' way, to be provoked to recollect these truths. Socrates denies that such questioning should be called "teaching," since it is really just

reminding. He then provides a myth to explain how this knowledge could already be present in us: our souls pre-existed, and must have learned before they entered our bodies, which is when they forgot the knowledge. Whatever one thinks of this myth, the dialogue does present a powerful picture of how learning can be an experience quite distinct from being taught a doctrine from the outside, as it were. Socrates seems to elicit from his interlocutors things they already know, things that are already their own rather than a teacher's. This is Plato's version of the personal dimension of Socrates as educator.

In the *Phaedrus*, Plato developed this theory and myth of recollection within a complex account of the erotic nature of philosophy too large to consider here. But the key aspect of this account presents the lover as driven by the urge to educate his beloved in a most particular way: the lover tries to make the beloved a more perfect imitation of a divine exemplar of virtue that the lover also himself imitates. Rather like the soul in the *Meno*, the lover had immediate vision of these divine exemplars in a mythical preexistence, and the beloved's beauty is what provokes the experience of recollection of these exemplars. This recollection is provoked because the beloved's beauty, imperfect as it may be, points toward an ideal beauty. Without the recollection provoked by the beloved, the lover would not have cognitive access to the original on which he models himself: recollection is the form of cognition. Further, the beloved is also formed by imitation. In an extraordinary image implicitly following the myth of Echo and Narcissus, Socrates suggests that the lover, seeing the beauty of the beloved, reflects or echoes back this beauty to the beloved, so that the beloved has access to his own beauty only through the lover. But the lover is an idealizing mirror, reflecting an image of what the beloved can be, rather than what he merely is. We might say that the lover and beloved both give each other an aspirational image of themselves, something to know themselves by and to live up to.

Plato and Xenophon filled their writings with imitators of Socrates. But what strikes the reader of these two complex authors is the multiplicity of Socrates' admiring imitators. Socrates did not found a Socratic school, but conveyed something more like a Socratic style of philosophy. This distinctive style could coexist with a wide variety of doctrinal commitments, and the later polemics among the Hellenistic schools were often debates about their competing claims to be the true heirs of Socrates. Especially the Stoics and the Sceptics saw themselves as working out commitments and lines of thought they found in the Socratic portraits of Plato and Xenophon. These schools stabilized the legacy of Socrates in a way the playful texts of Plato and Xenophon did not.

Socrates was not a "teacher," Xenophon and Plato agreed, if this means someone who transmitted a doctrine; but he was an educator, if we mean by this someone who attracts talented young people who feel the draw of his personal influence, and who find themselves in his example. Personal influence can be but poorly institutionalized, and charisma is transmitted through channels that do not fit well into a history of education narrowly conceived. As Max Weber insisted, stable institutions require the "routinization of charisma," the turning of the wild legacy of charismatic founders into orderly bureaucracies. In an important sense, Socrates is part of the prehistory of philosophical education, or even of its counter-history.



## 2. How Literate Was Socratic Education?

Socrates was famous for his conversations, and that must be the focus of an account of Socrates as educator. But to focus only on Socrates as a part of an “oral culture” would be a distortion. Though our evidence for *how* Socrates educated with written texts is meager, Xenophon’s testimony that common reading was a characteristic activity of the Socratic circle is extremely important and should not be overlooked when thinking about Socrates’ place in the history of education.

Xenophon writes that a professional sophist named Antiphon once tried to recruit Socrates’ associates to become his own fee-paying students. “At least you’re honest, Socrates,” he said, “because you charge for your company exactly what it’s worth: nothing!” Socrates responded by pointing out that teachers who take payment from students spend their time with whoever pays the fee, while he is free to converse with whomever he wants (*Memorabilia* 1.6.5; see also 1.3.5). Socrates makes this comparison more pointed by suggesting that accepting pay for wisdom, as Antiphon claims to do, is much like accepting pay for one’s youthful beauty: the latter are called “prostitutes,” and the former, the fee-taking teachers, are called “sophists” (*Memorabilia* 1.6.13). One should accept companions in wisdom in the same spirit as one accepts a lover.

This retort emphasizes the deeply personal aspect of Socrates’ influence, so deeply personal that it can be compared to intimate friendship and erotic love. Of course, the intense friendship of Socrates’ relationships is a prominent theme in Xenophon and Plato. “As one man enjoys a good horse or a dog or a fighting cock,” Socrates says, “I for my part, Antiphon, enjoy even more a good friend” (*Memorabilia* 1.6.14, echoing Plato, *Lysis* 211d–e). So it is especially striking that Xenophon illustrates this intimacy within the Socratic circle by the practice of common reading. “The treasures that the wise men of the past have left written in their books,” says Socrates, “I open and go through in common with my friends; and if we see anything good, we pick it out, and we believe it a great profit if we prove useful to one another” (*Memorabilia* 1.6.14). There is nothing else in this passage that would have prompted Xenophon to introduce the topic of common reading, and the parallel passage in Plato makes no mention of it. But Xenophon thought it important enough that he made the study of books central to his most extended account of Socrates’ personal influence with a particular “student,” in the account (in *Memorabilia* Book 4) of Socrates’ relationship with an attractive young man named Euthydemus. (Alcibiades lists this Euthydemus in Plato’s *Symposium* among the young men who, like Alcibiades himself, became infatuated with Socrates.) Euthydemus is ambitious to acquire wisdom, and he has become a great book collector (and one presumes a reader, too) with that end in view. Socrates compliments Euthydemus on his collection of books of “those who are said to be wise men”: “I admire you, since you do not choose to possess treasures of silver and gold over those of wisdom” (*Memorabilia* 4.2.8–9). Xenophon implicitly reminds us here of the Antiphon passage, where Socrates reported that his erotic intercourse with his associates involved picking out the “treasures” from the books of the wise men of the past. (These are the only two passages in the *Memorabilia* where the word occurs.) We do not here see Socrates reading these books along with his new young friend, but together the two “common reading” passages are a tantalizing glimpse inside an otherwise closed room.

The closest Plato comes to showing us a scene of common reading is in his *Phaedrus*. Socrates and the title character read and analyze at some length a text written by the most prominent speechwriter of the day, Lysias. This scene is integrated in ways too complicated to take up here with later discussions in the dialogue about the nature of writing, and about the relative virtues of conversation and reading. There is also a long scene in the *Protagoras* where Socrates and Protagoras, with some interjections by others, give competing close readings of a well-known poem by Simonides. Certainly these scenes show us Socrates working with details of a text, but they do not depict what Socrates describes in Xenophon. In both *Phaedrus* and *Protagoras*, Socrates stands in a polemical relationship to the text, not an open relationship looking for its treasures. If we had such scenes of literary treasure-seeking, we would have more clues to answer the questions at the heart of what kind of literate educator Socrates may have been: how Socrates would have led a close reading of a text by a “wise man of the past,” picking out some “treasures” himself and being delighted when his friends picked out others; what would have counted as a treasure, and whether a text would have been treated as a literary whole, or just as a mine of independent jewels; and many other such questions.

It is tempting to look at passages where Xenophon and Plato themselves are writing in intimate relationship with some other text—from Homer or Hesiod, say, or in Xenophon’s case from Plato—to infer their own practices of reading, and then to consider whether these implied practices are part of a Socratic literary heritage. But, of course, this would be to pile fantasy on speculation, and the temptation must be resisted. The literate Socratic education is reported to us, but hidden from us. But even this is enough to correct any tendency to think of the Socratic circle as simply an “oral culture.”

### 3. The Socratic Sound

Let us turn, then, from this murky Socrates the reader to the famous Socrates, Socrates the talker. Socrates was famous for requiring his conversation partners to give short answers to questions, to clarify their key terms, and to give answers that expressed their own beliefs and commitments. He also was famous for using humble, earthy examples to illustrate general principles. But Socrates would not have been a famous conversationalist merely because he did these things. He also conveyed an attitude of moral seriousness, without falling into a hectoring earnestness. There is almost always an element of playfulness and cheerfulness in Socrates’ seriousness. Socrates may be often ironic, but he is rarely sarcastic.

Whether or not Socrates’ way of conversing and questioning should receive the formal label of a “method,” he did establish a peculiar “sound” for philosophy, a sound people could imitate. The men who spent time with Socrates and who picked up this style of conversation and argument are the closest thing Socrates had to “students.” These examination techniques, amounting to a distinctive conversational style, were not something Socrates taught by precept, but they certainly were learned by imitation. Spending time with Socrates meant undergoing such examination oneself, but it seems also to have made people desire to conduct such examinations of others. Plato gives some playful examples of the students imitating the master. For example, in his *Gorgias*, Socrates’ devoted friend Chaerephon engages in some Socratic sparring with Gorgias’

pupil Polus before the main bout commences between Socrates and Gorgias (448a); and in the *Republic*, when Polemarchus, with fresh wounds from being refuted himself by Socrates, interjects himself into Socrates' long argument with Thrasymachus, who in turn is defended by his follower Clitophon (340a). Xenophon's most extended account of someone imitating Socrates' examination techniques is the disconcerting case of the young Alcibiades, confuting the famous statesman Pericles, his legal guardian, about one's duty to obey the law (*Memorabilia* 1.2.40–46). In all of these cases, it appears that the education of undergoing Socratic examination also was an education in wanting to inflict such examination. Plato lets us in on this rather ignoble motive for learning the Socratic sound in his *Lysis*, when one boy, embarrassed after Socrates has refuted him, immediately asks Socrates to refute his friend, too (*Lysis* 211a–c). Embarrassment loves company.

In Plato's *Apology*, Socrates concedes that young men are inspired by his example to examine their elders' claims to knowledge, since exposing their elders' pretensions "is not unpleasant," as he says with ironic understatement. Socrates warns the Athenians that his example will live on after he is executed, and that his imitators, when they expose the Athenians' pretension and ignorance, will be much harsher than he had been himself. Plato gives us an entertaining example at the beginning of the *Symposium* of how abrasive Socrates' imitators could become, even with their friends. The dialogue is narrated by a certain Apollodorus, a smitten devotee of Socrates. This emotionally volatile man—he cannot control his weeping and wailing at Socrates' death scene in the *Phaedo*—chides a friend who wants to hear an old story about Socrates at a drinking party: "Before I started spending all my time hanging on every word and deed of Socrates, I was an accursed wretch—just like you are now." When Apollodorus says his friend is an "accursed wretch," he uses a term of contempt, *kakodaimon*, much more at home in the comic insults of Aristophanes' lowlife characters than in the cultivated wit of Socratic conversation; it is too crude a word for Socrates ever to use it against his interlocutors in Plato. His friend has heard this tone from Apollodorus before, and playfully returns the insult, saying that for such a tender soul, who thinks everyone except Socrates is miserable, Apollodorus is a bit of a savage madman in his moral criticism. In this little scene, Plato has given us his version of the Aristophanic notion of how Socrates' devotees tried to "socratize" and sound like the master.

This contrast between the Socratic imitator's harsh sarcasm and the more urbane irony of Socrates' own conversation is evidenced again later in the *Symposium*, in a scene precisely of education. Socrates first examines the views on love of his host, the tragedian Agathon, displaying his characteristic playful irony, then tells the tale of how once upon a time he learned all he now knows about the topic from the examination he was put through by a woman named Diotima. In Socrates' telling, Diotima refuted in Socrates much the same views Socrates has just refuted in Agathon, but her tone is much closer to the harsh Apollodorus than to the urbane Socrates. Where Socrates uses irony to hide and soften his superiority over Agathon, Diotima hardly checks her frustrations with the younger Socrates, and frankly doubts his understanding.

In Xenophon, too, Socrates is usually urbane and suggestive rather than directly critical and hectoring. He brings his interlocutor to the point of seeing his own limitations, rather than casting them in his teeth. Xenophon shows the subtle indirection and care of Socrates' approach to educating a promising young man most extensively in the

fourth book of his *Memorabilia*, in an extended account of how Socrates examined Euthydemus. Curiously, the harshest language Socrates uses in Xenophon's writings is in the one refuting examination that Xenophon reports Socrates had with, of all people, Xenophon himself. Socrates warns Xenophon in no uncertain terms about the dangers of beautiful boys, and calls him a "wretch" and a "fool" (*Memorabilia* 1.3.11, 13). But Xenophon reports that Xenophon laughed off the warnings, and expressed the hope to run into as many dangers of that sort as he could. Xenophon reports his own laughter at this unusually earnest Socrates, and so preserves the playful urbanity more typical of Socratic conversation.

Such passages reveal the complexity of how Socrates educated his associates in the practices of examination. The Socratic sound of philosophy, the sound of moral examination, was susceptible of being imitated in a brassy, strident voice characterized more by harsh sarcasm than gentle irony. After all, philosophers after Socrates have found it not unpleasant to point out the flaw in their neighbor's eye. But admirers like Xenophon, and of course Plato, learned a more seductive sound, with plenty of the enchanting woodwind piping that Alcibiades (in Plato's *Symposium*) had compared to Socrates' uncanny conversation. They learned from Socrates a moral seriousness that does not flatten into the droning sounds of moral earnestness. It should be counted a signal achievement, then, of Socrates as an educator, that he taught Xenophon and Plato how to write their Socratic books, books that capture this extraordinary integration of the serious and the playful that Socrates exemplified. But it is a substantial achievement, too, that he helped so many others find a sound still morally impressive, if less tuneful, a less perfect but still recognizable riff on the Socratic sound. It is primarily through being the exemplar of this conversational style that Socrates established philosophy's tradition of moral critique.

#### 4. Socratic Natural Science

Many contemporary scholars reject as a total fabrication Aristophanes' portrait of Socrates as a natural philosopher or a teacher of natural science. It is true that Plato and Xenophon denied that Socrates pursued natural science in the manner of his philosophical predecessors. But they also portrayed him as having an expert acquaintance with the main theories of his day. Furthermore, the cosmological interests ascribed to Socrates in the *Clouds* are corroborated by Socrates' account of his intellectual autobiography in Plato's *Phaedo*. Equally striking are the interlocutors in that dialogue. Why would the foreigners from distant Thebes, Simmias, and Cebes, whose primary interests seem to be in nature rather than in ethics or politics, be among that small group of friends present at Socrates' death? Assuming that Plato did not fabricate the list of friends present at Socrates' death, they must have had a reason for being interested in Socrates, and the simplest reason is that he had interesting ideas about natural science.

Plato and especially Xenophon presented Socrates' attitude to natural science as the antithesis to the atheistic naturalism of the *Clouds*. Their Socrates criticizes materialist explanations of the cosmos, and insists that a better explanation must appeal to mind and divine purposes. The *Phaedo* is Plato's portrait of the Socratic reorientation of

natural science; the *Timaeus* is the first fruits of such a reorientation, with the crucial center being the denial of divine envy. As Plato developed the Socratic idea, the cosmos is imperfect, but it is not tragic. Xenophon focused more on the good moral effects of Socrates' emphasis on providence on his companions. One of these companions, Aristodemus, who also appears in Plato's *Symposium*, denies that the gods have any concern for human beings, and so concludes that humans need have no concern for the gods (*Memorabilia* 1.4.11). Socrates tries to wean Aristodemus from this neglect of the divine by arguing for the existence of general providence (*Memorabilia* 1.4.2–14), with a particular emphasis on the design of human bodily and psychic capacities. Socrates' commitment to a providential account of the cosmos seems to have been a primary impetus for the Stoics' development of their own providential cosmology. Indeed, through the Stoics, Socrates' emphasis on providence may have had a formative influence in natural philosophy on a par with the more celebrated and better documented Socratic turn in ethics and politics.

But from the narrower perspective of Socrates as an educator, the question is not so much about whether Socrates had distinctive views on natural science. We are more interested in evidence about how these views were conveyed to his associates. Xenophon makes clear that Socrates recommended a more limited, less technical education than the one he himself had obtained. Here the key text is *Memorabilia* 4.7.1–8, which explicitly considers what education Socrates recommended to his companions in natural science and mathematics. Xenophon focuses on how Socrates provided his associates with whatever knowledge was “appropriate for noble goodness” (*Memorabilia* 4.7.1). Socrates “taught them up to what point the properly educated man should be familiar with any particular subject” (*Memorabilia* 4.7.2), but his own knowledge often exceeded this limit. For example, Socrates recommended that his associates learn enough geometry and astronomy for practical uses like land measurement and night navigation, but discouraged them from pursuing the more abstruse and speculative parts of these sciences. Xenophon has Socrates explain this limitation twice in virtually identical words, once for geometry and once for astronomy (*Memorabilia* 4.7.3 and 5): “Such studies are capable of using up an entire human life and preventing many other useful kinds of learning.” But in both cases Xenophon also tells the reader that despite this advice, Socrates himself was familiar with the more theoretical parts of the sciences. Similarly, Socrates turned his associates away from imitating Anaxagoras and becoming concerned with heavenly phenomena (*Memorabilia* 4.7.6), yet the immediately following critique of Anaxagorean theories shows that Socrates himself was quite familiar with speculation on such subjects (*Memorabilia* 4.7.7). Socrates pursued a theoretical interest that transcended the practical interest he recommended to his associates.

There need be nothing surprising about this distinction between how much science and mathematics Socrates thought worth learning himself and how much he urged his friends to learn. With men like Simmias and Cebes, Socrates knew enough to be an interesting conversation partner, and may have educated them into a providential cosmology. But most of his “students” did not have those interests, and perhaps not those talents. The curriculum he recommended to them was part of a general education, not a graduate education.

## 5. Politics and the Education of Desire

We have seen how Socrates was an educator more by being an object of imitation than by instruction, and we have looked at how he educated others in reading, speaking, and in natural science. The final and most difficult topic is how Socrates was an educator in politics. Let us start with a passage (*Republic* 6, 494b) in which Plato helps us to see the general problem of such education. After Socrates has sung the praises of philosophers for many pages, Adeimantus raises a powerful objection. Those who take up philosophy, he says, become in politics either useless or vicious. Surprisingly, Socrates concedes the point. Why is it so difficult for (training in) philosophy to be politically useful? Because, says Socrates, “the very same features that define the philosophic nature are, when wrongly brought up, also in a way the cause of its being banished from the practice of philosophy.” The same natural endowments that are the necessary prerequisites for philosophy also incline one to tyranny. The potential tyrant is also the potential philosopher. We would expect to find Socrates associating with young men of a tyrannical temperament to exactly the extent we would expect to find him consorting with those with a talent for philosophy.

This uncomfortable fact calls for a delicate educational strategy. The educator cannot simply extirpate dangerous ambitions; that would be to pull out the philosophical wheat with the tyrannical tares. Ultimately, of course, one must redirect the energy of such ambitions. But first one must see to it that the energy is there. That is, before redirecting ambition, one must nurture it. The *Republic* as a whole is something of an example, though an ambiguous one, of this nurturing and inflation of desire. Socrates attracts Glaucon to philosophy by giving him absolute control over a city, albeit a city in speech. This way of reading Glaucon, as the potential philosopher and so as the potential tyrant, is supported by Xenophon’s account of Glaucon. He reports that from a very young age Glaucon had big political ambitions, and Socrates intervened to try to control them. But to get enough of a hearing from the headstrong young man, Socrates was not above flattering him, and suggesting that his real ambition was to rule, not just his home city, but all the Greeks and barbarians (*Memorabilia* 3.6.2–3). After Glaucon trusts Socrates’ respect for his ambition, Socrates can start the long process of redirection. So redirection happens only once the educator has endeared himself to the ambitious man by recognizing his ambition, and even by articulating it more boldly and clearly than the man had himself.

Perhaps the most transparent example Plato offers of Socrates’ inflation and redirection of political ambition comes in the *Lysis*. Socrates speaks with beautiful young Lysis to illustrate how to interest a beloved without merely flattering him (206b–c). The seduction takes place in two stages. First, Socrates must elicit and stimulate Lysis’ ambitions, and then he must present himself as the indispensable means to satisfying them. To oversimplify a very complicated dialogue, the second stage consists in making Lysis see that he requires more knowledge to pursue his ambitions successfully, with a fairly vague indication that Socrates can somehow be the source of this knowledge. Socrates opens up the boy’s imagination to unlimited power, justified by knowledge. “Your father,” says Socrates, “isn’t waiting for you to come of age to turn everything over to you; but come the day he thinks you reason better than he does, he’ll turn over to you himself and his affairs and possessions.” Lysis is interested, and Socrates expands the desire. How about your neighbor? Won’t he turn himself over to you, when he sees you have the knowledge? And why stop there? The Athenians, too,

can be yours. And even the barbarians: “By Zeus, what about the Great King of Persia? Would he turn all of his affairs over to us, rather than to himself or his son, to the extent that we seemed to him more wise?” At this point, the vision of greatness is almost too much for the boy, and he bursts out, “He’d have to!”

Socrates draws the inspiring conclusion: “Then this is the way it is, my friend Lysis: in those areas where we become good reasoners, everyone, Greeks and barbarians, men and women, will turn things over to us. There we will do whatever we wish, nobody will want to get in our way, and we will be free ourselves, and rule over others” (*Lysis* 209c–210b).

We can see in this passage how Socrates expands the horizons of Lysis’ ambition: from taking over in his own household from his father, to leading his own city, to the imperial fantasy of control over barbarians. Lysis warms to Socrates’ suggestion that power grows as knowledge does. Thus, Socrates has given a striking illustration to how he attracts students of this most dangerous but rewarding kind: exciting Lysis’ interest in power is essential to exciting his interest in further philosophizing. Finally, the end of this passage gives us a nice statement of how Lysis understands the ambition that Socrates excites: “We will be free ourselves, and rule over others.” Throughout, Socrates is actively arousing Lysis, even if we are to assume that these desires were already somehow latent in the young man.

This pattern of the education of political desire occurs regularly in Plato and Xenophon. Plato gives us Socrates’ education of the title characters of the *Alcibiades I* and the *Theages*, and Xenophon gives us Euthydemus in *Memorabilia* Book 4. It is also striking that all these cases are explicitly linked to Socrates’ erotic art (*Alcibiades* 103a; *Theages* 128b; *Memorabilia* 4.1.2). Now, if Socrates simply *inserted* such dangerous ambitions into innocent young men, he could hardly escape the charge of being reckless. To poison a man in order then to effect his purgation and chastening is clearly a morally dubious venture. Plato and Xenophon present these high ambitions as already latent in these young men, but when Socrates is so bold as to make these desires explicit and articulate, a dangerous threshold has been crossed. For once desire has been given so much voice and power, has been nurtured so lovingly, it may be a disaster if the educator cannot complete the second stage and redirect the desire to more wholesome objects.

The case of Alcibiades is especially interesting. Alcibiades at first maintains his distance from the ambitions that Socrates ascribes to him. “Whether or not I have it in mind to achieve absolute power in the city, you have, it seems, already decided, and even if I deny it I will be no closer to persuading you,” he says rather coyly. But he then concedes, at least for the sake of argument, that he does in fact harbor such extreme ambitions. “If I do have these things especially in mind,” he says, “how is it that through you they will happen but without you they will not? What do you have to say?” (*Alcibiades I* 105d–106a). He has switched the topic from whether he has tyrannical ambitions, to what Socrates might do to help him achieve these ambitions. As one can see from this response, Alcibiades is not particularly uncomfortable about accepting, indeed embracing Socrates’ description of his ambitions. He simply pleads no contest and proceeds to ask what Socrates can do for him, if he does happen to have such ambitions.

Because we know that Alcibiades came to disaster, we are likely to shiver a bit when we see Socrates give the young man’s dark desires so much light that they may start to grow. Did

Plato have concerns about the prudence of Socrates' educational strategy? In an intriguing passage (112e–113c), Socrates insists Alcibiades acknowledge as his own whatever he is forced to concede in the dialectic; he cannot evade the conclusions by simply pretending they are just things Socrates has said. Socrates clinches his point by quoting to Alcibiades a line from Euripides' *Hippolytus* (352): "These things come from yourself, not from me." This seemingly offhand tag in fact reveals a rich analogy between the play and the dialogue. In the play, Phaedra has been cursed by Aphrodite with a passionate erotic attraction for her stepson, the pure Hippolytus. She is terribly distraught, and her nurse interrogates her to find out why. After considerable resistance, she says enough that the nurse can guess her hidden desire. When the nurse blurts out the awful truth, Phaedra responds with the quoted tag, "These things come from yourself, not from me." The nurse at first reacts with horror, but then comforts Phaedra with the thought that such things happen all the time, and that after all no one does such evil willingly. Finally, in a well-intentioned but disastrous attempt to help Phaedra, the nurse reveals Phaedra's disordered eros to Hippolytus.

What parallels are thus suggested with the dialogue? Alcibiades' tyrannical ambition, coyly evaded by his "If you say so" responses, now appears as a symptom of an unacknowledged and disordered eros. Socrates appears as the well-intentioned nurse who undertakes a cure that requires exposure and public acknowledgment of a shameful desire perhaps better left hidden. Euripides' nurse then looks like a parody of Socrates, deploying his characteristic thesis that "no one does evil willingly" to apologize for and even to legitimate Phaedra's desire. One need not take any of this to imply that Plato has presented Socrates as an incompetent healer who makes his patients worse. But he has acknowledged the dangers of Socrates' education of political desire.

Socrates respects, seeks out, and to some extent even flatters and solicits very bold political ambitions, up to and including fantasies of despotic empire realized most fully in the ancient Greek political world only by the Great King of the Persian Empire. This solicitude is based on Socrates' view that philosophy and tyranny spring from the same psychic soil. Socrates seems to find these ambitious longings especially interesting; but even if he did not, the sort of men who have them are the potential philosophers, so he can attract the men he wants only by starting out from these longings. This is a quite specific and perhaps surprising place for philosophy to begin its educational project.

The movement from latency to manifestation and then to redirection is fraught with danger; but it seems to have been truly Socratic. Plato and Xenophon present Socrates himself as almost uniformly cheerful and optimistic about the impact of his conversations with ambitious men. But they make no attempt to hide, and indeed rather emphasize, how many of these conversations did not produce virtue or even reform in the interlocutor. Plato especially presents Socrates engaged in high-spirited and apparently hopeful examinations of various uplifting moral topics with a veritable rogues gallery: of courage with Nicias, whose superstition and timidity doomed the Sicilian Expedition; of piety with Euthyphro, a know-it-all prophet; of temperance with Charmides, fated to become part of a murderous political cabal; of love with Alcibiades, a shameless if charismatic profligate; and of virtue with Meno, whom Xenophon reveals to have been a duplicitous and greedy mercenary. Plato could surely have chosen other interlocutors if he wished simply to celebrate Socrates' effectiveness as a good example, or as an exhorter to virtue. Plato and Xenophon, perhaps, did not share Socrates' own optimism about moral education.



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## CHAPTER 5

# Spartan Education

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*Anton Powell*

### 1. Overview: From Classical Sparta to Roman Times. Ancient Sources—and Modern Approaches

Spartan education may be painful for us to contemplate. The hardships and beatings (not to mention the pederasty) imposed by adults on children and on adolescents are repellent to modern sensibilities. We may become more uneasy still if we realize that in several ways the Spartan approach to education was remarkably modern. Unlike other Greek city-states, Sparta insisted that the upbringing of future citizens should be centralized, kept under the close control of the state authorities. Education was judged far too important to be left, as it was elsewhere in Greece, to the decisions of individual parents, who might diverge widely from each other and produce an ill-trained, incompatible variety of sons. In other Greek cities, even those boys with the time and resources needed for an extended education, the sons of the rich, were regularly entrusted to *paidagōgoi*, slaves, who—whatever their technical knowledge—could hardly be expected to have insight into the values their young charges would need to learn, the values of leisured and powerful citizens.

Sparta, like an advanced modern state, saw education as a *political* matter, and the person in charge of it was to be a citizen, *politēs*, known for his political correctness. Also *somewhat* like modern Western policy was Sparta's practice of giving girls a limited but conspicuous share in the physical, outdoor education undergone by boys. This, like other aspects of Spartan femininity, scandalized other Greeks. More radical still, in ancient terms, was the fact that Spartan girls were encouraged to criticize, in public, the boys' performance as trainee citizens (Plutarch, *Life of Lykourgos* 14). Girls, that is, were trusted to embody the values of the community; they were assumed to have been well educated as to what those values were. And they were being taught early in life to exercise a certain authority over men, in a sphere which other Greeks saw as exclusively masculine.

Images of Spartan education have been used in recent centuries as pedagogy in their own right. Radically militaristic and patriotic regimes, as in Prussia, and then Germany, from the eighteenth century to 1945 (Roche 2013), and in the aristocratic public schools of England and Scotland, employed stories of brave little Spartans to inspire boys (Harley 1934; Powell 2015). In our own times, images of Spartan girls and women have been used even in scholarship to promote assertiveness and career-mindedness in girls and young women of the United States. Pomeroy's useful study of Spartan women (2002) is written very much in that spirit. Spartan education, in short, remains what it was in antiquity: a highly charged matter politically, and therefore susceptible to intense bias.

Reliable Spartan detail continues to be elusive. We cannot be sure, for example, that the term *agōgē* was, as scholars long thought, Sparta's standard word for the local education system of the classical period: see now Ducat 2006: 69–71. The division of Spartan boys into age classes has been much studied but remains problematic (Tazelaar 1967; Lupi 2000; Ducat 2006: 71–77). But *general* comments by Greek writers of the classical period allow us to build a useful picture of Spartan education. By comparing that picture with what is known of Sparta's politics, we can begin to understand how Sparta's unusual treatment of the young made sense as a contribution to perceived local needs. It is on that question that the present chapter will largely concentrate.

Scholarship about education in Sparta has changed greatly in recent decades. For long, the commonest approach to the subject involved putting extensive trust in the *Life of Lykourgos* ("Lycurgus," mythical reformer of Sparta), written by the moralizing Greek biographer Plutarch soon after 100 CE. It is from Plutarch, for example, that we derive the familiar images of Spartan babies dipped in wine to test their prospective health (ch. 16), and of a Spartan boy suffering in silence rather than confessing, while a stolen fox cub fatally gnawed his belly (ch. 18). This *Life* is, on the face of it, the easiest to use of all sources for Spartan education, because it contains more information in one place than any other text. Unfortunately, Plutarch was writing (in the Roman era) not only with a moralizing agenda to stress Greek virtues but also centuries after the period at which Spartan education was thought to have achieved most (the period of Sparta's hegemony, approximately speaking, between 500 and 371 BCE). Thus, for example, Plutarch argues that Lykourgos was too humane to have required young Spartans to kill unfree laborers, *helots*, simply for being powerfully built or for being out at night (ch. 28). Modern scholars, however, are increasingly reluctant to concede that a lawgiver Lykourgos ever existed. As for humanity in the Spartan system, scholars now tend to note rather the account of the generally trusted Thucydides, who recounted a systematic massacre of 2,000 of the most impressive helots by the Spartan authorities of his own time (Thuc. 4.80, describing events of the 420s BCE).

Recent scholarship understandably insists that Spartan education almost certainly changed greatly over the six centuries separating (for example) the battle of Thermopylai (480) and the era of Plutarch. Historians properly no longer assume that Spartan arrangements were "timeless," as the Spartans themselves liked to suggest. Methods of education are likely to have changed to reflect perceived needs of different periods. But Plutarch is still allowed to have value for our subject. He preserves literary evidence from earlier times: for example, he reports (ch.18) the testimony of Aristotle from the fourth century BCE, that Sparta's government formally declared war every year on the city's own helots, so that killing them would be religiously permissible. Also, Plutarch was an eyewitness of aspects of Spartan education in his own day. He reports that he had seen

“many” Spartan youths “dying” under the lash during the famous whipping contest at the shrine of Orthia (ch. 28). Some modern scholars have found it incredible that Sparta should kill its own young in this way, and have sought to “gentle” Plutarch and Sparta—by translating the key word in the Greek (*apothnēskontas*) ambiguously as “expiring.” But this word is the standard, clear, Greek term for “dying,” and by reading the passage of Plutarch we can see that the word fits best if given its normal sense. According to Plutarch, boys were indeed dying. And when we look (see the following text) at the circumstances, the particular period, in which Plutarch was writing, we may understand why this sacrifice might have a certain logic in Spartan eyes.

Our information on education at Sparta concerns two main periods. The classical period, roughly the fifth and early fourth centuries, is our main concern in this chapter. For this period, the most promising single source concerning education is the *Constitution of the Lakedaimonians* by Xenophon. He wrote as a partisan of Sparta, usually to praise or defend Spartan methods, but sometimes (ch. 14) as a disappointed enthusiast. Most of this short work was written when Sparta’s power was at its height, and as explanation of that power, Xenophon put forward the superbly efficient—in his view—nature of the city’s education system. Xenophon’s work is supplemented from scattered but precious contemporary references elsewhere, and especially from comments in Thucydides, Plato, and Aristotle. Plato was almost certainly inspired by Sparta’s rigorously planned education to conceive his own two theoretical schemes of exact and exacting training for the young. In his *Republic*, education for rulers is imagined as far more philosophical than it was at Sparta. In his *Laws*, Plato conceives a more regimented and repetitive indoctrination than even Sparta had (Powell 1994). Aristotle, on the other hand, reacts with some passion in his *Politics* against the ideas of his former teacher Plato on this subject—as we shall see. For Aristotle, Spartan education was emphatically *not* fit to be used as a model (*Politics* 1334a–b). Although even he grimly admits, honestly and against his own bias, that the Spartan system of teaching had one important merit (as will be discussed later). The intensity with which Aristotle criticizes Spartan education is itself revealing: evidently, the reputation of Sparta’s educational system remained deeply alluring when he was writing, many years after the fall of Sparta’s military and political hegemony in 371–370. We might therefore suspect that *before* Spartan supremacy collapsed, the appeal of its educational system was greater still.

The Spartans themselves have left no surviving literature from the classical period, on their education system—or on anything else. That absence, which Spartans themselves would probably have regarded as a positive achievement rather than as a failure on their part, itself reflects on the nature of their educational system. Words, as we shall see, were to be minimized. In consequence, anyone today seeking to reconstruct Spartan educational methods at that period is bound to range widely in the search for evidence, a process which requires wariness in studying the particular viewpoint, bias, of each of the ancient writers we use. In the most thorough and sophisticated study to date of Spartan education in the classical period, Ducat (2006) necessarily considers in great detail the chronologically scattered, and ideologically varied, ancient sources on which we depend. Much promising research remains to be done, particularly in exploring the various reflections of Sparta in the works of Plato and Aristotle. For that research to be done effectively, scholars would need to specialize in *both* the philosophical content of those two writers *and* in the politics and ideology of Sparta. Such a combination of specialisms has seldom been attempted.

For Spartan education after the classical period, two periods are of particular interest. A little is known of remarkable, but short-lived, attempts in the late third century BCE to restore the rigorous training of the local young. These reforms were part of revolutionary attempts by Spartan kings Agis IV (reigned ca. 244–241) and Kleomenes III (reigned ca. 235–222) to restore Spartan glory and hegemony. Kennell has helpfully studied the educational aspects of this upheaval, and especially Kleomenes' role in it. For Kennell, Kleomenes was probably aided in his educational reconstruction by a Stoic philosopher from a distant city of the Black Sea region, Sphairos of Borysthenes. However, not only were Kleomenes' reforms followed by the devastating military defeat and depopulation of Sparta by Macedon (at Sellasia in 222), but the restored education system was deliberately abolished by the Achaean League in 188 only to be reconstructed decades later (Cartledge and Spawforth 2002: 198), when living memories of the old system were largely extinct.

If we could establish how far the system of teaching used at Sparta in the Roman period, from the mid-second century BCE onward, was genuinely informed by knowledge of the city's classical past, we might have more confidence in using evidence from the Roman period, as a means of reconstructing educational practice in each of these widely separated periods. Chief among our sources for the later education system are Plutarch's *Life of Lykourgos*, and inscriptions found in Laconia from the Imperial period (in effect from 31 BCE until the fourth century CE). The predominant tendency in modern scholarship is to suspect that the peculiar educational virtues of which Spartans boasted in the Roman period seriously distort, as well as partially reflect, classical realities (Cartledge and Spawforth, ch.14).

Sparta of the Roman period, including its educational system, is now frequently compared by scholars to a modern theme park, proudly exaggerating supposed local qualities and peculiar practices of olden days, indeed claiming real continuity with them. The theme-park image is helpful. But we have already seen, from the case of the youths who died under the whip, that this was no Disneyland. Spartan education under the Roman empire will be discussed briefly later. For classical, as for Roman, Sparta, to understand what was really done in the name of schooling, we need to observe the political pressures to which *in each period* Spartan education needed to respond. And those pressures changed drastically, from one period to another.

## 2. Classical Sparta: Imposing a Character on the Young

Modern theorists of education sometimes distinguish between divergent, classic, modes of instruction by citing two related Latin terms. Latin *educere*, to “draw out,” is aligned with that approach to education which seeks to *develop* a young person's own aptitudes. Latin *educare*, on the other hand, is taken to mean “to form,” with the stress not on the individual's inherent qualities but on a given body of knowledge, or type of behavior, which is to be *imposed*. It may seem that any practicable system of education is likely to include both procedures. So if, for example, a child shows an aptitude for beating up his or her peers, teachers are likely both to repress the aptitude in some circumstances by imposing peaceful behavior (*educare*) and to channel it (*educere*) in other circumstances toward warfare or aggressive sport. But societies may differ widely in how far they incline toward one or the other approach.

In the classical period, Sparta seems to have laid an extreme emphasis on the imposition of required behavior, whereas Athens was more freewheeling. Thucydides reports (or constructs) an elaborate set of contrasts drawn, by the Athenian politician Perikles on a solemn occasion of state in 431/0, between his own city and its enemy Sparta. At Athens, Perikles claims, citizens achieve both courage and versatility from their inherent resources, whereas at Sparta soldierly competence is the result of much painful practice (Thuc. 2.39, 41). The contrast is likely to be overdrawn: Athenian youths, for example, had their own form of imposed military training, no doubt quite rigorous. Perikles here is tending to stereotype, to polarize, the two Greek cultures which had so long challenged each other for hegemony over Greece. But thinking in stereotypes, however undesirable in many modern circumstances, is not always deluded. In the Greek case, Sparta sought to stereotype itself not only in the concept but in the act. One revealing local name for its citizens was *hoi homoioi*, “the similars” (e.g., Xen. *Const. Lak.* 10.7; 13.1). In modern cultures, the concept of uniformity in a population is likely to be used pejoratively. Thus, when in 2007, as president of France, Nicolas Sarkozy described his nation’s judges as resembling each other like peas in a pod (“comme des petits pois”), the stereotype was meant to insult. (“The same color, the same shape, and the same lack of flavor,” he explained.) In Sparta, on the other hand, “similarity”—among citizens—was an ideal. Perikles’ stereotyping remark was no doubt somewhat realistic. But since Spartans referred to similarity as their ideal, by coining the stereotyping term for themselves, it is highly likely that they were admitting implicitly that similarity was—as usual where ideals are expressed—something to be striven after, perhaps even elusive, rather than something which came easily. Thus, the perceived need to achieve similarity may in itself imply a heavy hand in matters of education. The young could not be allowed to go their own way, to grow up *different*.

Today’s students of Sparta, and of Athens, may be struck by a certain official-looking arrogance in the self-presentation of each state. When claiming preeminence in the classical period, each vaunted its own past, including what we should see as its remote and legendary past. Athenians boasted of their *autochthony*, of having lived forever in the same land, from which they drew comfort and confidence as to the human qualities which had achieved such stability. Sparta had no such myth to sustain morale: quite the opposite. And this difference may lie at the root of the difference between the educational systems of the two states. Spartan official story, inculcated in the local youth and widely believed elsewhere in Greece, held that the population of Sparta was the product of invasion from the north some time after the end of the Trojan War. In the mid-fifth century, Sparta apparently claimed that its mother-city was Doris (Thuc. 1.107.1–2), in central Greece, outside the Peloponnese and north-west of the Isthmos of Corinth. Young Spartans, unlike young Athenians, could not rely on inheriting local virtues going back to the beginning of the race, and thus presumably secure for the future. Spartan qualities had to be imposed, vigorously.

The fact that Doris was by the fifth century a weak and vulnerable statelet may itself have caused Spartans to reflect on the fragility of cultures. But there were reasons far closer to home to induce fear of catastrophic change. According to our two best sources of the fifth century, Herodotos and Thucydides, Sparta had suffered extraordinarily bad internal conflict, *stasis* (Herod. 1.65.2; Thuc. 1.18.1). That idea was very likely propagated by Spartans themselves, as part of a general discourse that Sparta was exceptional—a theme

that runs explicitly and prominently through Xenophon's pro-Spartan aforementioned treatise. Sparta, it might be thought, had once been exceptionally bad in its *stasis*; now, in the classical period, Sparta was uniquely stable and obedient to its own officials, thanks to the revolutionary changes imposed by its lawgiver Lykourgos. But for how long had this divinely sanctioned Lykourgan system, including the educational system, lasted?

Plutarch, significantly, has to admit at the start of the *Life of Lykourgos* that his own sources were deeply contradictory and inconclusive as to the lawgiver's date (ch.1): on this, he writes memorably, "history is all over the place" (*peplanēmenēs tēs historias*). Xenophon, so often a virtual spokesman for Sparta, seems deliberately vague about Lykourgos' date (*Const. Lak.* 10.8). Modern scholars are themselves divided. De Ste. Croix (1972, 89–91) influentially suggested that the austere, militaristic reforms attributed to Lykourgos lay as far back as the 7th century. More recently, other specialists have found evidence that Spartans were still living a most un-Lykourgan life of luxury for some citizens, and thus of poverty and resentment for others, as late as the last third of the 6th century (van Wees forthcoming; cf. Powell 1998), that is, barely half a century before the supposed moral triumph of the Lykourgan system at the battle of Thermopylai (480). Spartans of the classical period claimed officially that their system was reassuringly ancient: Thucydides was probably drawing on Spartan sources for his statement that the system had existed for "slightly more than four hundred years, approximately" (I.18.1); Xenophon guardedly reports that Lykourgos may have lived earlier still (*Const. Lak.* 10.8). But in crucial matters of state, Spartans knew how to lie, even to themselves. The respectful Xenophon tells that two major military defeats were each reported by a Spartan commander, with deliberate mendacity and *to his own men*, as victories (*Hellenica* 1.6.36–7; 4.3.13–14). If Sparta's revolution into discipline, officially so ancient, was in reality remembered (or even suspected) at Sparta as having been all too recent, here was another reason for the Spartan community, its political and educational arrangements, to be structured by fear. The closer were the bad old days, the greater the chance that they might return. And then, as a further source of fear, there were the helots.

The fact that there could *be* a system of training for Spartan children and young people, one that allowed them the time and strength to be educated together for many years rather than being used as child labor from an early age, depended on the helots. These unfree laborers, Greek-speaking residents of Laconia (Sparta's homeland) and Messenia (to the west), far outnumbered the citizen population of Sparta. When, in 479 at the battle of Plataiai, Sparta sent out something approaching its full population of citizen soldiers, we hear that the latter were accompanied by seven times as many helots (Herod. 9.10–11; 28–29). Some eighty years later, when the citizen population of Sparta had shrunk, Xenophon—who knew Sparta from the inside—wrote (*Hellenica* 3.3.5) of the Spartan citizens being outnumbered, on a typical day in their own marketplace, approximately 100:1 by non-Spartans (many of whom would be *perioikoi*, free non-Spartans who lived in scattered communities of Laconia and Messenia). Relations between free and unfree were poisonous: Xenophon represents a dissident at this period as claiming that the unfree would happily "eat the Spartans raw" (*Hellenica* 3.3.6). Here, then, was a further source of enduring fear for the citizen population. Yet, it was the productivity, rents in the form of food, clothing, and other physical products and services supplied by local non-Spartans and above all by the helots, which made it possible for young Spartans to spend their time in the (initially) unproductive activity of

education. That is something which scholars have long understood. They have also understood that fear of helot insurrection may have imposed on Sparta the austere training of the young, the sober, and militarized lifestyle of adults, for which Sparta is still famous. The classic statement of this is by de Ste. Croix, who wrote of Sparta, like Fafner in Germanic myth, being forced to turn itself into a dragon and to live a nasty life in a cave, in order to guard the treasure which the helots represented (1972: 91). But, there was another and—to scholars—a less obvious way in which the overwhelming numbers of the helots might seem to require a system of collective education for the children of citizens.

For adults determined to preserve caste, a hereditary system of social superiority, children can be alarmingly adaptable. Left to run free, the young not only tend to socialize with almost any available child of similar age, but their speech and behavior quickly tend to assimilate to those of their neighbors. Among children, perhaps more than among adults, to be different is to invite persecution; put another way, persecution, bullying, is a mechanism whereby children impose a certain homogeneity and unity upon their own group. (The evolutionary value of this can readily be guessed: a group living near subsistence level may need to understand, predict, and like its own members rather well simply to survive. It may therefore be that the well-meant, and entirely proper, efforts of modern pedagogy to repress bullying at school are contrary to one of the deepest human survival mechanisms.) A brief historical vignette from twentieth-century Ireland may demonstrate rather well the mentality which helped to produce the Spartan education system. The children of a senior British diplomat were living during the 1940s deep in the countryside of the Irish Free State. Trained at home to speak upper-class British, they would return from their play outside speaking Gaelic-influenced English. Their mother would react with distress to such phrases as “There is a terrible hunger on me.” This assimilation to “the local children” was unbearable. Normally, an upper-class British family would react by sending its children away to a boarding school where they would meet only their peers. But in this case, the family was itself of Irish Catholic descent and wished to stay intact in its home. Interviewed 60 years later, former children of the family discussed the question whether being torn thus between two worlds was “hard on us.” And one replied simply, “*There were two us-es*”—the British self and the Irish self (Source: BBC 4 television program of December 16, 2012: “Storyville: The Other Irish Travellers”). Spartans, we may think, could tolerate no such division of identities, of loyalties. For the helots were their enemies.

The Irish case was an isolated one: there were very few children of British diplomats in Ireland at the time. But in Spartan territory, the whole citizen population of Spartiates would be faced with the fact that the default playmates for its children were—little helots. The latter, unless demography was carefully managed, would be everywhere, and their influence with them. That perhaps, is one potent reason why Sparta insisted that its children be pulled into a single, carefully policed educational group, excluding almost all noncitizens. Only in this way could young Spartans be taught to see themselves as the norm and helots as the outsiders; otherwise it might be the helots who normalized *them*, into a very different form of *homoioiōtēs*.

The similarity between Spartan education and that of the classic British boarding school has often been commented on (Harley 1934; Powell forthcoming): each system was



created to protect caste. However, caste might be short of talent. So Sparta admitted to its citizen-school—to raise standards—a minority of promising boys from an out-group, thereafter known as *mothakes*. Similarly, the British public schools systematically admitted a small minority of “scholarship boys.” Lysandros, the overthrower of the Athenian empire, was an example of the first category; George Orwell an example of the second. The results of admitting such exceptional outsiders were mixed. Lysandros came to be suspected of planning the overthrow of Sparta’s divinely sanctioned hereditary kingship. Orwell would later write, of British public school (that is, highly exclusive) education, that its most enduring lesson was—snobbery. Put less judgmentally, his point was that such schools, by inducing a permanent sense of superiority as compared with the mass of the population, also produced a sense that the group of ex-public schoolboys was something very special, something which *shared* certain desirable qualities. Similarly with the Spartan *homoioi*. They too were a group created to resist one form of assimilation (with the helots) by substituting another form of assimilation (with the children of other citizens). And such differentiation might work best if the cultural gap between the cherished group and the shunned group was made artificially wide.

The point on which Aristotle conceded that the Spartans “might be praised” for their form of education was that it was keenly controlled by the state, and provided for all young citizens together (*Politics* 1337a). Not to have gone through this state system of training excluded a boy from future citizenship—except, it seems, in the case of Sparta’s two kings (Cartledge 1987, 23–24). (As heir apparent to the hereditary diarchy, a prince did not qualify for the education system of the citizenry, a fact which may have contributed to the extraordinarily high rate of Spartan royalty killed, exiled, or direly threatened during the classical period: kings were a painful anomaly among the “similars.”) A fundamental lesson of Spartan education is likely to have been that helots were contemptible; the young should not *want* to assimilate with them. Although Plutarch (*Lykourgos* 28) is our only source for the practice, we should take seriously his report that young Spartans were shown, as a moral lesson, helots who had been deliberately made very drunk and who were then compelled, while incapacitated, to dance and sing ridiculously. Spartan citizens, young and old, were themselves accomplished, indeed competitive, dancers. Festivals such as the *gymnopaideiai* (lit. “naked play-and-dance,” or even “naked education”) involved long, elaborate, strenuous forms of dance by the very young (Ducat 2006, 265–274). Collective song and dance, for which the Greek word is *choros*, was a specialism of Sparta. Around 500 BCE, the poet Pratinas of Phleious described the typical Spartan as “like a cicada—always ready for a *choros*.” Training in *choros* was, of course, a form of imposed similarity, similarity of a technically superior kind within the elite group, aimed in part to demonstrate—to others and to itself—the elegant superiority of that group. The spectacle of drunken helots improvising clumsily their own form of dance would complement that lesson. The concept of superiority involves more than one term, and the Spartan education demonstrated both terms of a social comparison, visually. Such a lesson would be unforgettable.

Drunken dancing by helots taught a further lesson to the young, corresponding to another of the fears which structured Spartan society. The austerity on which classical Sparta prided itself was a reaction against the image of a bygone Sparta, a Sparta riven and weakened by internal dissension, disobedience to authority, and provocative aristocratic luxury. That luxury had been symbolized, in bygone Sparta as in other Greek cities, above all by the

*symposion*. Literally, the term meant simply “drinking together.” In practice, it frequently meant a premeditated, orchestrated orgy for wealthy men, with compulsory heavy drinking of wine and planned displays of wild sex. Given that cities across the Greek world were tenaciously attached to such exclusive fun, Sparta’s rejection of it was probably inspired not by moral or religious disapproval but by something even more potent: *symposia* had become for Sparta a security issue. Such orgies probably aroused a passionate sense of exclusion in the majority of citizens who could not afford them. It thus contributed to anti-aristocratic feeling, in an age (roughly, the sixth century) when aristocracies were overthrown in numerous Greek cities and replaced by a form of dictatorship, *tyrannis*. But at Sparta, revolution of this kind would be exceptionally dangerous, because it would give the massive helot population a chance to rise in revolt. Accordingly, the *symposion* was banned at Sparta, and pointedly replaced by a more sober form of gathering named *sysstition*: “eating together” thus replaced “drinking together.” And we hear from Plato that all drunkenness was outlawed in classical Sparta: even a citizen, even at a festival, was liable to be lawfully beaten up if caught drunk (*Laws* 637a–b). By displaying to the young, as part of their education, the lurching of drunken helots, Sparta imparted the message that—contrary to the general Greek view—there was nothing elegant or socially elevated about being drunk. The young were taught to see intoxication as hopelessly vulgar.

The young were included from time to time at the *sysstition*, for the sake of what Victorians called “moral education.” That chilling phrase is usually left vague, and for good reason. Like most ideals, it is—for historians—best understood by its opposite: by the immorality which authority feared. For contemporaries, on the other hand, spelling out such immorality might prove perversely attractive to the rebellious young, in short counterproductive. (We have already seen the extreme way in which drunkenness had to be caricatured.) At the *sysstition*, the young were taught, by watching and imitating the adults, not to eat to excess; the *sysstition* was famous for its austere food—though in diet Sparta was not always as austere as it liked to advertise (Hodkinson 2009 makes a thorough study of the gifts of attractive food made to *sysstia* by their wealthier members). The drinking of wine was also limited at the *sysstition*: the institution, as we have already suggested, was designed to be in vital ways the opposite of a *symposion*. The inclusion, at these intimate evening gatherings, of the young along with adults, some of whom were elderly, was meant to prevent social fracture between the generations. In other Greek cities, men tended to socialize with members of their own age group, in a way familiar in modern societies. A predictable result was that people of different ages generated—as they do today—widely different cultures. Classical Sparta, already facing the twin threats of violent division between rich and poorer citizens, and also between citizens and helots, evidently decided that generation gaps—widened, then as now, by shifting tastes in music—were too dangerous to permit. Not only were the generations to be integrated through the *sysstition* and by public participatory festivals, including dancing and singing together; at the *sysstition* the common culture—conversation, knowledge, ideas, ideals—was controlled by the oldest members, the most conservative group of all (Xen., *Const. Lak.* 5.5, cf. Plato, *Laws* 659d).

Xenophon in the early fourth century saw adult Spartans as uniquely suspicious of their own young (*Const. Lak.* 3 1–2). A century earlier, the poet Simonides (quoted at Plut., *Agessilaos* 1) described Sparta as “man-taming”; older men did the taming, and the beasts to be tamed were evidently the young. The official in overall charge of education was

known as *paidonomos*, “boy-herd” (Xen., *Const. Lak.* 2.2). Our best sources from the classical period, Thucydides, Xenophon, Plato, and Aristotle, impressively concur in that they all describe Spartan education with words from the root *pon-*, meaning toil and suffering. Perikles, as reported by Thucydides, speaks of young Spartans suffering as they were taught *andreion*: manly, military courage (2.39.1, 4; compare 1.84.3). Contemporary authors refer to the role of the whip in Spartan education (Xen., *Const. Lak.* 2; *Anabasis* 4.6.15, Plato, *Laws* 633b), and Plato complains that Sparta educated its young “not by persuasion but by violence” (*Rep.* 548b). All this testifies to the severity of what Spartan children were required to perform, in order to avoid a whipping. And that whipping could be administered to any boy by any adult citizen who happened to witness bad behavior: little Spartans were to be observed by authority at all times (Xen., *Const. Lak.* 2.10–11).

Attempts to evade the required discipline were no doubt common, and the Spartans seem to have had a technical term for such: *rhaidiourgein* (literally, “to take the work easy”) is mentioned by Xenophon four times (*Const. Lak.* 2.2; 4.4; 5.2; 14.4). At times, beating was made unavoidable. Xenophon describes a ritual contest at the shrine of the goddess Orthia: boys were required to snatch cheeses which were “defended” by other young people who met the boys’ attempts with a hail of whipping (*Const. Lak.* 2.9). Evidently success and glory went only to those boys who braved the most battering. Sparta shows an ingenious economy in its practices. This ritual of beating served to teach boys to persevere among painful distraction, as on a battlefield. But it also taught, as Xenophon saw, that the enjoyment of lasting prestige might come from short-term pain, again as in the case of war. In removing many of the physical delights, and even ordinary comforts, of life, Spartan ingenuity was bound to offer potent compensation. Moral status substituted for physical pleasures. And if that seems, by our standards, extreme and unsympathetic, we should perhaps reflect on how much physical indulgence and comfort modern athletes have willingly denied themselves, not only in today’s world, but in the early twentieth century when top sportsmen were often paid poorly, or not at all.

Other hardships imposed on Spartan children were, according to Xenophon (*Const. Lak.* 2.3–5), being obliged to walk barefoot, to wear no more than one cloak even in winter, and to be kept so hungry as to be obliged to steal. (A boy caught stealing could expect a beating, to teach him to steal more discreetly next time.) How long did these privations last? Xenophon lets his readers think that they may have been a permanent condition for the young. But we may wonder; it would certainly have suited Xenophon’s pro-Spartan leanings to make other Greeks, Sparta’s (real or potential) enemies, believe that Spartans were even harder men than they were in reality. It was not in Sparta’s interest to produce male citizens stunted by lack of food in childhood. Indeed, Xenophon himself stresses that Sparta succeeded in producing tall, strong men (*Const. Lak.* 1.10) and also fed its girls unusually well, by Greek standards (*Const. Lak.* 1.3), to prepare them for childbearing and the production of strong offspring. Making a visually impressive display on the battlefield was a Spartan specialism; and a culture which killed helots for being too big and strong is likely to have promoted, rather than hindered, its own production of well-built citizen warriors. The privations which Xenophon records seem likely to belong to short periods, with a special purpose. What might that have been?

The form of military campaign in which Sparta proudly advertised its excellence was, collective marching to battle and fighting in phalanx. Much of Spartan education was a preparation, moral or physical, for that. Did Sparta ever use guerrilla methods? If it did,

this is unlikely to have been advertised, and so may have been inaccessible to our sources—especially if the opponents in any such guerrilla warfare were helots. Spartans, like the helots, attacked their enemies on principle when the latter were weak or distracted. To admit to fighting systematically against helots would be to admit to a weakness of their own, near the heart of Sparta's home territory. Spartans seem to have convinced Thucydides that they were not used to guerrilla warfare (4.41.3; contrast 4.9.1; 53.3). But for runaway helots, who could not hope to match the training or the heavy arms of Spartans on the battlefield, guerrilla, or indeed in our terms “terrorism,” was an obvious recourse, against an enemy which practiced a state terrorism of its own. Sparta's training of children to withstand cold, hunger, and walking barefoot (that is, almost silently) may have been meant—in part—to equip them, as young men, to perform counter-insurgency as special forces while living off hostile terrain near helot villages.

Several ancient writers, Plato, Aristotle, and Plutarch among them, and many modern scholars have been interested in a Spartan practice known as *krypteia*, literally “the secret thing.” Plato (*Laws* 633b–c) writes of it involving the young (apparently), wandering the countryside, barefoot, at night. No bedding was allowed. Plato's Spartan character in the *Laws*, “Megillos,” describes it enthusiastically as “fantastically *polyponos* [stressful in many ways] for making people tough.” Plutarch (*Lykourgos* 28), writing half a millennium later but citing Aristotle, writes that the institution had involved carefully chosen young men (“those apparently most intelligent”) roaming the countryside, with daggers, short rations, and nothing else, killing any helot they caught on the roads at night, and the strongest helots in the fields. (Presumably, daylight was needed to identify the latter.) Some scholars, especially in the French anthropological tradition of Structuralism, have seen this as chiefly a *rite de passage*, that is a temporary separation of young men from their home communities and an inversion of civilized norms, designed to toughen, instruct, and test them before reintegrating them into the community. (Such practices are indeed attested from many societies: in the modern West, a few years of compulsory military service, or of education at some college far from home, might be seen as mild examples.) Jean Ducat (2006, ch. 9), with a thorough review of the ancient sources, stresses the uncivilized privations undergone by the young men during the *krypteia*, and argues that this suggests the inversion of norms characteristic of *rites de passages*. Other scholars, while not discarding the anthropological, ritual, explanation (Cartledge 1987, 30–32), have stressed the element of systematic state terror: the killing of potential leaders among the helots, and the possible enforcement of a curfew upon them. We should additionally notice a certain symmetry, between the most physically impressive of the helots, killed, and the most impressively cunning of young Spartiates, those sent to do the killing. We seem to be dealing with a low-intensity, enduring, war, and it may well have been in large measure as a preparation for this that Spartan education involved the training of boys in how to survive in miserably tough conditions.

Aristotle, attempting to deflate the potent reputation of Sparta's educational system, stated that it made the young “beast-like” (*Pol.* 1338b). He claimed that Spartan education was structured to produce one quality only, physical courage. However, on this subject the picture of Sparta transmitted by Xenophon may be more convincing. He claims that Spartan boys were successfully trained to be models of *aidōs* in public (*Const. Lak.* 2.2; 3.4): this quality, familiar and important in modern times, lacks a name in English. It means the modest willingness to defer to the moral opinions of others, to be influenced into conformism by the consideration “What would people think?!” Public facts about Spartan behavior

suggest that Xenophon was right. The death rate, in battle, of Spartan commanders is strikingly higher than that of the other Greek city we know best, Athens. And that, rather than being the product of “animal courage,” is more likely the result of sensitivity about moral reputation. Any Spartans who had shirked battle, run away, were liable to be stigmatized as “those who had trembled (*tresantes*).” Once was evidently enough: such men were treated at Sparta as a spectacle, humiliated permanently in ingenious ways, publicly—where the young would see and take to heart (Xen., *Const. Lak.* 9). Better to fight against the odds in the hope of a good reputation than to risk slow social death. In the decades of Sparta’s empire in Greece, 404–371 BCE, her commanders also won a reputation for their offensive *indiscipline* as administrators, once abroad where few or no other Spartans could see. It was evidently fear of what other Spartans thought that tended to control Spartiate behavior: we can see education playing out in the behavior of Spartan adults. So also in the way Spartan generals, when in command of non-Spartan Greeks, became notorious for their use of the stick against free men from other cities (Hornblower 2002). The opinion of non-Spartans evidently did not concern them greatly; and in seeking to discipline others by hitting, they were acting out the model they had learned in childhood.

Did young Spartans learn to read and write? The question has been asked seriously in modern times, though generally answered in the same way: with a positive (Cartledge 1978; Boring 1979). A few inscribed stones survive from classical Sparta. Written messages were sent to Sparta by commanders in the field. One of these, intercepted and triumphantly read out by the Athenians, stated, “The ships are lost. Mindaros [Spartan admiral-in-chief] is dead. The men are starving. We don’t know what to do” (Xen., *Hellenica* 1.1.23). Wartime reports may anyway tend to be very short. Written in difficult conditions, always vulnerable to enemy interception, and in Sparta’s case crudely coded on material wrapped around a stick (*skytalē*) of which only the authorities had a counterpart of matching size, reports discouraged wordiness. But Spartans was anyway known for the brevity of its speech, whence the word—ancient and modern—“laconic.” Priding themselves, as so often, on being different from other Greeks, Sparta rejected lengthy rhetoric. We hear that ambassadors from one Greek state (Samos) who made a long speech at Sparta, were proudly told, “We don’t remember what you said at the beginning, and the rest we simply don’t understand.” (Herod. 3.46.1–2) Actions were what mattered, not speech making. Books were a heap of words. Indeed, they might import subversive ideas and fashions from elsewhere, threatening the homogeneity of the *homoioi*. Worse still: books lasted. (Readable fragments of Greek books, that is text on papyrus, are still being discovered, 2000 years or more after being written). Sparta was a culture given to lying about its own past. It was easier to change the official line about the past if there were no books to preserve earlier orthodoxy. Not only has classical Sparta left us no books, but we hear of very few texts written by Spartans of the period. The disgraced former king Pausanias is said to have written a text, some time around 390, but significantly he was at the time in exile, and convicted of pro-democratic, pro-Athenian, tendencies.

Laconic sayings, on the other hand, are recorded in countless examples from antiquity, mostly of doubtful authenticity, but claiming to reflect a trenchant Spartan intelligence. Collections of these sayings survive in the Plutarchan corpus, including the “Sayings of Spartan Women” (*Moralia* 240c–242d). This was Sparta’s own form of rhetoric, to which the young were exposed in the *gymnasia* as well as, doubtless, in their childhood age groups. Indeed, laconisms were particularly well adapted to education of the Spartan style. They

were designed to be intelligent, but also unanswerable. Such is the reply, recorded by Thucydides (4.40.2), of a Spartan soldier mocked because his group had surrendered, rather than voluntarily dying, when trapped and overwhelmed by Athenian missiles on the isle of Sphacteria in 425. To the taunt that the brave Spartans on that occasion had all died, he replied, “An arrow would be very precious if it could pick out the brave.” Unanswerable rhetoric was the opposite of the formal speech for which Athenian politicians, and sophists, were known: their speeches were designed to be part of an exchange, a dialogue, suitable for a large audience which might judge between rival arguments. In short, long speeches were a device fit for democracy. Spartan aphorisms, on the other hand, were the language of control, the instrument of the master or the officer who intended not to be answered, but to be obeyed—without discussion. They were designed to lead to action, not to more words. So, for example, the Spartan rebuke to the Samian ambassadors meant, “Speak briefly.” The laconic dispatch quoted earlier concerning Mindaros and his lost ships meant, “Send help!”. And the famous words of a Spartan mother, sending her son to war: “[Come back] with this [shield], or on it,” meant “Fight bravely; die if necessary” on pain of rejection (Figueira 2010: 276 for references). Thucydides describes the Spartan army in action as consisting mainly of “officers over officers.” Spartan education and its preferred style of speech were likewise structured around command and action. For young Spartans at school, laconisms may have been the verbal counterpart of the whip.

### 3. The Education of Girls

Our information about the upbringing, the teaching, given to girls at Sparta is even more fragmentary than in the case of boys. But what our sources do tell us about girls points strongly in a single direction. Girls, it seems, received an education that was more considered, more collective (rather than familial), and more resembling the upbringing of boys than was the case in other Greek cities. The motives behind this Spartan difference were far from feminist. They seem to reflect, once more, the fears of a small community knowing itself to be under threat, but also driven by grand ambitions. With girls, as with boys, Sparta assumed that reality was plastic: Spartans of both sexes were not born, they were made.

Once more, ideological enthusiasm in our ancient source material is to be suspected, starting with the Spartans themselves whose viewpoint (if we are lucky) lies at the root of material in Xenophon and other contemporaries. Modern enthusiasms too are at work in our literature, if not in ourselves.

Sparta’s special attention to girls began early, according to Xenophon, whose valuable work, the *Constitution of the Lakedaimonians*, is structured—here as in other matters—by the theme of the uniqueness of his chosen city. Girls at Sparta, he suggests in a passage now somewhat garbled (1.3), received more food than the meager portion given them elsewhere. (Studies of girls’ levels of poor nutrition—and high mortality—in the modern Third World suggest the importance of the topic Xenophon here identifies.) The reason he implies for this Spartan practice is that well-fed girls would become strong mothers, productive of strong children (1.4). Another Athenian partisan of Sparta, Kritias (writing in the late fifth century), reports similarly (frag. 32). Spartans would be acutely aware that their citizen population, and thus the size of their vital army, declined drastically during the classical period: eugenic thinking was unavoidable. But probably also at work (more

acceptably to modern thinking) was the influence of mothers. The informal influence of women at Sparta seems to have been unusually high, as we shall see. It may well have been female solidarity as well as the needs of a precarious community which impelled mothers to place an unusual value on their daughters, and to accept (or demand?), as the girls grew up, a more prominent role for them in society than did Greek mothers elsewhere. And for empowering girls and women, by making female education to last longer as well as to embrace a wider sphere than elsewhere in Greece, there may have been something else at work. Xenophon (*Const. Lak.* 1.6) and Plutarch (*Lykourgos* 15) both hint emphatically that the age of females at marriage was higher at Sparta than elsewhere. If this was true, it might be capital: by giving young women more time in society before they turned (in most cases) to child rearing, it might mean that the gap in age and experience—and thus in moral force—between spouses was less than elsewhere.

Xenophon writes: most Greek cities want girls to sit quietly and work wool; at Sparta, on the other hand, females, like males, take part in physical training arranged by the community. The preceding context, to do with wool working and girls, suggests that his remark about physical training may apply also to girls. But he goes on: contests of running and of strength are provided for “females just as for adult men (*andrasin*),” and this rather suggests that his attention is moving to young adult women (1.3–4). Important as this physical training no doubt was for health, its political aspect may have been even more significant. For the physical contests here mentioned took place outside the home, that is, in what other Greeks saw—and enforced—as the male sphere. Elsewhere in Greece the use of the veil for women was extensive, as an influential recent study has shown (Llewellyn-Jones 2003). Women and girls, where their level of wealth allowed, were discouraged from leaving the house, and those who did go out might take—like the tortoise—a symbolic house with them, in the form of a veil and enveloping dress. Greeks elsewhere reacted, in ways still recognizable, to the female “thigh-barers” of Sparta. The Athenian comic poet Aristophanes portrayed—in fantasy—a married Spartan woman (the character “Lampito” in the *Lysistrata*, of 411 BCE) as possessing a well-exercised body of glorious beauty. Such evidence of male glee at Spartan female practice is important as evidence. It is not in itself proof of what happened at Sparta. But, given the unashamed fascination at Athens and elsewhere with female nudity, silence concerning Spartan women’s bodies would have been almost conclusive. There is no such silence: Spartan women’s “immodesty” was a favorite theme.

The collective training of girls at sport is likely to have been quite frequent, since Xenophon describes it as happening—according to the rules of Lykourgos—“not less for the female than for the male.” This participation of very young females in the public sphere most likely both reflects a greater mixing of the adult sexes than was normal elsewhere and also *prepared* the women of the future for such. Plato attributes to Socrates a comment that Spartan women, as well as men, took pride in their education (*Protagoras* 342d). He does not specify what that education consisted of, but there is little doubt that Spartan girls, by having unusual access to male spheres of competence, acquired some political and moral instruction relevant to the men’s world. This on its own would make credible, for the classical period, Plutarch’s later picture of Spartan girls formally criticizing—that is, being allowed and encouraged to do so—the performance of young men in public roles (*Lykourgos* 14). Aristotle, as part of his hostile comment on Sparta, states that in the years of Spartan empire many decisions (he means administrative, if not

political) were taken by women; such was the influence of the latter, that, in his view, Sparta amounted to a “gynecocracy” (*Politics* 1269b). Hostile exaggeration this may be, but by reflecting on women’s access to the male sphere, and on their morale, it does reflect also on how they had been educated. As girls, clearly they had not “sat quietly.”

Plato, in his *Republic*, argued that girls and boys should be educated alike and together, and later, as adults, should rule together. In this he was very likely inspired by Spartan practice. And, rather like twentieth-century Marxists complaining that their inspirational models, such as the Soviet Union or Cuba, did not “go far enough” in their revolutionary logic, so Plato in the *Laws* criticized Sparta for falling short in female education: Sparta, he lamented, had not taught its girls to fight in war (806a–b). This claim is almost certainly correct. Greek art and literature were somewhat obsessed with the idea of female warriors: the fantasy of armed Amazons is commonplace. If Sparta had ever employed armed women, Greek writers would have reacted unforgettably. Instead we hear that, when Spartan territory was invaded (in 370/69) by the Theban army which had just overthrown in battle the Spartan empire, the women of Sparta created more noise and confusion than the enemy. So Aristotle (*Politics* 1269b); and even the pro-Spartan Xenophon admits something similar (*Hellenica* 6.5.28). This reported behavior was remarkable for two reasons: first because militarism was so much in the air at Sparta, but also because women in other cities commonly did resist bravely and to good effect, with improvised weapons and suitable noise, when an enemy was at—or within—their gates (Powell 2004). Why did the Spartans provide for girls an education which involved physically confronting each other, morally confronting the boys, but not—unlike the boys—countenancing battle?

Specialization is rightly seen as a defining quality of modern industrialized civilization, and a key to its efficiency. But to understand Sparta’s unique success in classical Greece, we should perhaps accept that Spartans too had some understanding of the principle. Perikles (as reported by Thucydides: above and 2.41.1) contrasted Athenian versatility with Sparta’s narrow and intense practice of military procedures, claiming that the former quality was no less effective. Xenophon makes a similar contrast, though drawing an opposite moral: Spartans were “the only true specialists in soldiering”; others were “mere improvisers” (*Const. Lak.* 13.5; cf. 11.7–8). Aristotle, explaining Sparta’s loss of empire, writes that the Spartans ruled so long as they were the only power to train intensively for soldiering. But once others adopted similar training, Sparta lost its dominance through lacking other necessary qualities: in other words, through being overspecialized (*Politics* 1338b). The question of specialism was very much in the air, and Sparta was seen—for good or ill—as the classic case of it. And in education? We recall Xenophon’s report that Spartan girls were not trained to make clothes as in other cities. Spartans, he says, thought that female slaves were the right people for such work (*Const. Lak.* 1.4). There, already, we see a distinctive idea of specialization. In not training girls for any *direct* military role, Spartans were partly led (before 370/69, and the Theban invasion) by the thought that no enemies were likely to penetrate into the homeland of Laconia, where women could see, let alone face, them. But more importantly Sparta was applying one of the most enduring and widespread of all notions of specialism: that women should specialize in child rearing. And if—however privately—Spartans did contemplate the possibility of military catastrophe, they might reckon that women were more important than men as potential contributors to the breeding of a replacement population, more in need of keeping safe from battle. Greeks were far closer than ourselves to the brute facts of agriculture (and Spartans were far more



willing than other Greeks to sacrifice monogamy to eugenics). Every Greek knew how productively female animals could breed if exposed to a minimal number of males. In that vital respect, the human female might seem more precious than the male.

Spartan education did, however, envisage that girls and women could make an important *indirect* contribution to soldiering. By arranging for girls to understand confrontational outdoor activity, and to pass judgment on male performance in that area, Sparta was preparing women to be bearers of militaristic *morality*. Young women were formed so as not to offer men any vision of a seductive domestic alternative to battle. A crudely direct anecdote, on the familiar theme of the pitilessly militaristic Spartan mother, makes the point. An imaginary mother is confronted by her Spartan sons, who have survived battle by running away. Far from welcoming them, she lifts her dress, bares her genitals, and says in effect, “Don’t think that you can get back in here!” (Plutarch, *Moralia* 241b). The ancient literature on the Spartan female as austere cajoler of males is extensive and revealing, even though overwhelmingly post-classical in its surviving forms: it has been well explored in a recent study (Figueira 2010). As educators of Spartan boys and men, women may well have played a crucial role. Occasionally, and revealingly, that role may have gone wrong. It is conceivable that the Spartan women who “created more noise and confusion than the enemy” when the Theban army approached were enacting a version, however misplaced, of what they had been taught to do as girls: taunting males for their perceived inadequacies in the field.

#### 4. Spartan Education: A Struggle between “Male” and “Female” Influences?

The image of the unyieldingly militarist mother may well reflect what Spartans wanted to achieve, and claimed to have achieved. But Sparta, structured by fear, could not confidently take for granted that girls, women, could always be so molded. Just as men, for all their rigorous education, might “tremble” and run from battle, so recalcitrant women might also prove a problem—by being persistently tender and indulgent to boys and men. Or, since Spartan women were criticized for their indulgence in luxuries, it might be feared that by demanding expensive items they might make men in turn too interested in acquisition. Aristotle, in indignantly claiming that Spartan men were in effect “ruled by women,” explains his idea by reference to men’s sexual desires. Warrior men, he argues, tend to be highly sexed. (Similar things have been reported in recent times about international athletes, of both sexes.) Warriors may either be notably homosexual, like (Aristotle says) the Celts, or they may be strongly heterosexual, like (he implies) the Spartans. And their need for access to certain women’s bodies, Aristotle seems to mean, made Spartan men too disposed to do what those women wanted (*Politics* 1269b). From an educational, Spartan, point of view, women’s influence might be dangerous. Every known Greek society was deeply divided on gender lines. The standard Greek terms for military courage reflect this: *andreion*, *andreia*, “manliness.” But it is unusual to have clear evidence that female influence in the military sphere was actually feared. In Sparta’s case, we do have such evidence. Xenophon states that Spartan soldiers wore cloaks of red because Lykourgos thought that form of dress to be (not, “the most virile,” or some such phrase, but) “least like the dress of women” (*Const. Lak.* 11.3).

All this may help to explain why it was community policy at Sparta to encourage teenage boys to form homoerotic partnerships with older males. Xenophon, defending Sparta to other Greeks, admits that it was the opinion of “Lykourgos” that men should pair off with boys whose character they admired, and that this amounted to “an excellent form of education.” He adds that the lawgiver (i.e., Spartan practice) was strongly opposed to obvious lust for a boy’s body, and that at Sparta actual copulation within such couples was as much taboo as incest. But, he admits, “I am not surprised that some people do not believe this” (*Const. Lak.* 2.13–14). Much detail survives of such partnerships (Cartledge 1981 is the classic study). Xenophon himself, in a separate text, recorded the passionate love between the son of king Agesilaos and another Spartiate (*Hellenica* 5.4.25, 33); he also commended that king for resisting the intense passion he felt for a youth (*Agesilaos* 5.4–7). Agesilaos is recorded as having been, in his younger days, the junior partner of a loving relationship with the (no doubt already) eminent Lysandros. The quantity of such references bears out Xenophon’s general report concerning the existence of these relationships, openly recognized. Their educational value was reflected in a Spartan technical term: the elder party was known as the “inspirer” (*eisprēlas*) of the younger. Here was a way of transmitting male values, of replacing or weakening—for a time, at least—heterosexual relationships which might have brought with them the risk, in Spartan eyes, of too great a feminine influence.

## 5. Military Training for Boys?

While sources from the classical period are in clear agreement that Spartan boys were trained to endure pain and hardships, to be obedient, and to be competitive in matters of courage, all of which training would have military usefulness in their adult lives, we read no *obvious* detail from classical times of boys’ being taught military procedures. Practice for boys in mock hoplite battles, or in handling weapons: did such things actually happen? If they did, which sources would we positively expect to have mentioned them? For the classical period there is only Xenophon, especially in his *Constitution of the Lakedaimonians*, and he says nothing clear on the point. But a similar shortage of surviving detail about military training applies to Spartan adults. Hodkinson rightly emphasizes this: as part of his general argument that Sparta was more like other *poleis* than has usually been thought, he suggests that for Sparta it was training in fitness through the gymnasium and the hunt which formed the main preparation for soldiering (2006, 134–140; 2009, 448–449).

However, important if undetailed testimony about Spartan adult military training is found in classical sources. Perikles, as presented by Thucydides, speaks of the secrecy which Sparta enforced concerning its military training (2.39.1). Aristotle writes that the Spartans “used to excel [in gymnastic and military contests] not because they exercised their young men in the gymnasium, but only because they trained and their adversaries did not” (*Politics* 1338b). In the light of Perikles’ remark about enforced secrecy, one should ask whether Sparta in general regarded certain information about its own military training as an “operational matter,” that is, something to be withheld from outsiders on principle. If so, Xenophon as a partisan of Sparta might be expected to be unforthcoming, if not dishonest, on this subject. Hoplite training may have been seen as a grand version of the *krypteia*, something secret in its essence, potentially targeting this time not

the helots but every Greek state other than Sparta. Spartan propaganda may have sought to intimidate by stressing rather those off-putting aspects of education which other states would never bear to imitate. (Xenophon boasts that Spartan practices are praised by all, but no city imitates them: *Const. Lak.* 10.8.) Military maneuvers which could be imitated more easily were not to be divulged. (There is an anecdote that king Agesilaos in the 370s was criticized at Sparta for attacking Boiotia too often and thereby “teaching the Thebans how to fight.”) Xenophon states of one Spartan form of coordinated fighting (*taxis*) on a confused battlefield, that it was hard to learn, “except for those brought up (*pepaideumenois*) under the laws of Lykourgos” (*Const. Lak.* 11.7). The implicit message here, for other Greeks, may be one of mystification and deterrence: “You haven’t had, and your city will never have, that kind of childhood. So you shouldn’t try this maneuver yourselves, even if you knew what exactly it was. (And I’m not telling you.)” Xenophon may mean here the military potential, the training in general bodily and mental qualities, of a Spartan childhood, or he may be withholding details of actual rehearsal of battle by children or youths. For us to assume that Spartan boys were not taught elements of hoplite fighting would be dangerous.

The picture we have of Spartan education is very largely a picture of what made Sparta *different*, of what was done distinctively for *some of the time*. It is not a full record. A society cannot spend all its time preparing for war, or let its precious future soldiers grow up consistently hungry, or abandon conversation which was open-ended and unpolished, improvised and democratic, in favor of laconic aphorism. One leading specialist, Stephen Hodkinson, has recently argued strongly that Sparta was a far more normal Greek society than our sources readily let us see. Jean Ducat, in his invaluable account of Spartan education, has concluded that much Spartan education must have been conducted privately, at parental expense and with divergent methods—rather like other Greek cities, in fact. However, the closer we come to seeing Sparta as a normal Greek state, the further we are from being able to answer the question which Xenophon (and no doubt countless other Greeks) put: How was it that this community, with one of the smallest populations, could come to dominate Greece, militarily and morally? (*Const. Lak.* 1.1). We might equally ask, How did little Sparta attain the morale needed to undertake a formal invasion of the Persian empire, as king Agesilaos did in the mid-390s, with just thirty Spartan officers as his general staff? Spartan education must have contained some extraordinary features, to account for Sparta’s extraordinary success.

## Appendix: Spartan Education under the Roman Empire

It is ironic that education at Sparta under Roman rule should be treated as an appendix, since it is increasingly clear from new scholarly work on inscriptions, as well as literary texts, that there survives more evidence on this subject, at least by way of formal, superficial, detail, than on the Spartan upbringing of the classical period. Particularly helpful recent studies of Hellenistic and Roman Sparta are Cartledge and Spawforth (2002) and Kennell (1995). But if scholars have usually preferred to study the earlier period, it is because education then contributed to making Sparta the superpower of the Greek world, whereas in the Roman period Sparta was little more

than a cherished provincial centre of high culture and of tourism. This difference of status is itself key to understanding why Roman Sparta yields so much more information than its classical ancestor. Classical Sparta's internal political arrangements were, as Thucydides comments, *krypton*, largely kept secret—to deprive enemies of exploitable information. Sparta then was unique and notorious for having periodic *xenēlasiai*, systematic expulsions of outsiders. Roman Sparta tended to the opposite extreme, welcoming visitors who brought income for the local tourist industry but also, perhaps more importantly, contributed to local pride, to the idea that Sparta was still “special.” Picturesque aspects of the education system were proudly shown off to outsiders, as evidence of Spartan adherence to a unique tradition. The name “Lykourgos” was everywhere.

What helped to generate the almost obsessive insistence in Roman Sparta that (to simplify) nothing much had changed since earlier centuries was the uncomfortable awareness that things had changed profoundly. Spartan education of the classical period had been, in large part, a preparation for war, against other Greek states and against local helots. Under Rome, Sparta—like every other part of the empire—was forbidden to fight wars, except remote wars at Rome's bidding and as part of Rome's army. Nor was there, so far as we know, the sort of large-scale and lethal action against a local unfree population for which the young had been prepared in the classical period. On occasion, Sparta was called on to live up to its boasts and to supply troops for Rome's foreign wars. But Spartan boys could no longer expect to have to march out one day to tame Peloponnesian neighbors or to cut down Athenian crops. If they were still trained to be brave, and their womenfolk to take pride in their courage, the suffering to be faced would be of a different kind.

The contest in being whipped, in which Plutarch saw youths dying in the early second century CE, still had a religious setting, at Orthia's temple. If it was *more* lethal than any whipping of the classical period, that may be because Sparta, now in a peaceful setting sheltered by Rome, no longer felt so threatened by a crisis of citizen numbers. Boys had become expendable. Indeed, their supreme suffering might be considered an investment for the community, a spectacular source of tourist income (and of respect, including collective self-respect) in an age where lethal public shows (albeit of a very different kind) were widespread, under Roman influence.

Festivals with dancing continued (or were revived): the *Gymnopaideiai*, if only because its name suggested “naked children,” probably continued to require training in dance and song for the very young. How far the clipped and militaristic style of “laconic” speech was still taught to the young is unclear. Its rationale, we recall, had involved contempt for wordy speeches, and even wordier books, all of which were to be seen as contemptible distractions from the cult of violent action. Most violent action, in the form of war, being inaccessible, Roman Sparta was instead fully, indeed eminently, part of the word industry with which educated Greece sought to impress its Roman masters. Spartans were now (and had been since Hellenistic times) writers of books, philosophers, orators on the international market (Cartledge and Spawforth 2002, ch. 13). The decline, at Sparta, of contempt for books, and for outsiders, can be measured in a single custom. In Hellenistic times, if not later, senior Spartan officials read to the young a text on the Spartan constitution written by Dikaiarkhos of Messene. Several crucial values of education in the classical period were negated in that one

custom. That the young should be taught from a book would have been bad enough, for those brought up in the austere, classical system. But that an authority for Sparta's famous local constitutional secrets, her *krypton*, should be an outsider would have been unthinkable. Spartan education, once a local peculiarity and still a local fetish, was now under international influence.

Sparta's educational practices, formerly the gift—and the reflex—of helot labor, became quite largely the gift of Rome. Sparta's exceptional thriving as a provincial magnet arose from the happy fact that Sparta had, unlike most Greeks, taken the side of the founding emperor Octavian in his war against Mark Antony. Octavian's wife, Livia, had both ancestral and personal connections with Sparta. The new Princeps came to Sparta, was feted there, and apparently entertained in a reconstruction of a classical *sysition*. (One thinks of an American president visiting a "traditional" Irish village.) Sparta's political and financial position, now deeply privileged from Roman favor, would last for centuries. Spartan grandees adopted partly Roman names, reflecting the moment, never to be forgotten, when their city had backed the correct, Caesarian, faction of Rome. Sparta's most powerful citizen of that time, ally of Octavian, took the name "Caius Iulius Eurycles"; a century later we hear of a Spartan named Caius Iulius Agesilaus. One notices the hybrid language; while partially Spartan nomenclature survived ("Agesilaos" had been the name of one of classical Sparta's best-known kings), the Roman nomenclature, indeed the possession of Roman citizenship by a Spartan elite, was advertised. Spartan young people continued to be given some symbolic elements of a traditional education—but not *too* traditional, not too independent minded—because that was expected to meet with Roman approval. One of many reasons why Spartan *sysitia*, in traditional form, no longer existed to instruct the young was that the *sysition* had been conceived to teach restraint in the behavior of the rich, whereas the form of local polity approved by Rome for the Greek world was firmly oligarchic. Sparta's hereditary rich flaunt their wealth and status on inscriptions of the Roman era to an extent unknown in the classical period (Lafond forthcoming).

Spartan boys in the Roman period played supposedly traditional team games: the *sphaireis* ("ball-players") are mentioned on numerous inscriptions. Here was a reflection of team games of ball which existed in the Sparta of Xenophon's day (*Const. Lak.* 9.5), and which contrasted then, as later, with the individualist athletics of the great inter-Greek festivals of sport such as at Olympia (at which classical Sparta also excelled). The collectivism of the *homoioi* was still casting its shadow. Spartan youths celebrating Artemis Orthia from the time of Hadrian onward used in their inscriptions an artificial dialect, one which exaggerated traditional Spartan linguistic features, and which scholars have described as "hyper-Doricising." They might wish to reassure themselves that they still possessed a distinct local tradition. And tourists from afar might be convinced by these exaggerated eccentricities that they were getting "the real deal." Again we think of faux-antique language ("Ye Olde Tea Shoppe") of modern tourist traps, as in some English towns.

The upbringing of Spartan girls also seems in Roman times to have reflected, albeit in distorted form, that of the classical period. Romans, such as the poet Propertius (3.14), fantasized about Spartan girls training with weapons, something which, as we have seen, the education of the classical period suggested (to some) but did not

involve. A real Spartan girl seems to have been brought to Rome to enact an exaggeration of classical practice, by taking part in a wrestling match against a Roman senator. Wealthy Spartan women of the Roman period advertised their status as patrons of religion. That too may in part have been a survival from classical times. In the late third century BCE, some 150 years after the “gynecocracy” of which Aristotle complained, Spartan queens and princesses had seemingly reached an extraordinary position of influence. Social traditions are not easily extinguished, and it may be that later still, in Roman times, Spartan woman—fortified by the example of powerful Roman *matronae* of the imperial elite—retained an unusual degree of assertiveness and influence. If so, that in turn will have had an influence over the upbringing of girls in wealthy Spartan families. But, with the passing of local wars, the need for Spartan girls and women to be taught to fortify and cajole their men into warlike behavior had gone forever.

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## CHAPTER 6

# Athens

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### 1. Traditional Education

Typically, the later fifth-century comedy *Clouds* by Aristophanes is taken as evidence that the young of classical Athens had abandoned the *palaistra* (“wrestling school”) and the *gymnasion* (“athletics field”) for the “new education” of the sophists (961–1054). Certainly these intellectuals offered classes in disciplines which ranged from astronomy and cosmology to, for example, *hoplomakhia* or weapons training (e.g., Ar. *Nub.* 359–360; Pl. *Phd.* 108d–113c). The most popular of their classes were in public speaking (Joyal, McDougall, and Yardley 2009: 59–87). However, a wide range of surviving literature, including a close reading of this comedy of Aristophanes, suggests otherwise: although the later fifth century witnessed a big expansion in what young Athenians could study, physical education manifestly remained a major discipline of the education of *paides* or boys (e.g., Aeschin. 1.10; Ar. *Ran.* 727–730; Pl. *La.* 184e). This branch of what Aristophanes calls the *arkhaia paideia* or old education (*Nub.* 961) was taught by the *paidotribēs* or athletics teacher (e.g., Ar. *Nub.* 973; *Eq.* 490–492, 1238–1239; Pl. *La.* 184e). His lessons were not one on one but for groups of students (e.g., Isoc. 15.183–185; Pritchard 2013: 49–50). It is a historical irony that while the sophists argued for the superiority of what they taught over the *arkhaia paideia*, they were the first to describe this traditional education systematically (Pritchard 2013: 47, 108–109).

Athletics teachers are most frequently represented in classical texts or on red-figure pots giving lessons in the “heavy” events of Greek athletics: wrestling, boxing, and the *pankration* (e.g., Ar. *Eq.* 490–492, 1238–1239; Beck 1975). This comes as no surprise, as each of these events was technically demanding and many athletics teachers owned their own wrestling schools, while some, when they were young, had been famous Panhellenic victors in these events. But the so-called track and field events required athletes to be no less proficient in “the moves devised competition” (Isoc. 15.183). Thus, on pots and in literature, we also find athletics teachers training groups in these non-contact sports. In his *Statesmen* Plato, for



example, outlines how there are in Athens “very many” supervised “training sessions for groups” where instructions and *ponoi* (“toils”) take place not just for wrestling but also “for the sake of competition in the foot race or some other event” (294d–294e). Red-figure pots often show a *paidotribēs* supervising not only running and javelin throwing but also discus throwing and the long jump (Beck 1975; Nicholson 2005: 245 n. 25, 246 n. 38). These lessons of a *paidotribēs* were the only opportunity for Athenian boys and young men to learn and to practice the events of local and Panhellenic games (Pritchard 2013: 46–53).

*Gumnastikē* or physical education was one of the three disciplines of traditional male education in classical Athens. The other widely agreed disciplines were *mousikē* or music and *grammata* or letters (e.g., Pl. *Alc. I* 118d; *Prt.* 312b, 325e, 326c), to which were occasionally added lessons in singing and dancing dithyrambs (e.g., Aeschin. 1.9–11; Ar. *Ran.* 727–730; Pl. *Leg.* 654a–654b, 672c; Pritchard 2004). The discipline of music was the preserve of a *kitharistēs* or *kithara* teacher, who taught students how to play the *kithara*, which was a bit like a lyre, and to sing poems (e.g., Ar. *Nub.* 962–972; Pl. *Prt.* 326a–b), while that of letters was overseen by a *grammatistēs* or letter teacher. He instructed students in literacy and probably also numeracy and made them memorize and recite passages of Homer and other epic poets (e.g., Pl. *Prt.* 325e–326a).

As classes in each of these three main disciplines were taken concurrently, students travelled from one *didaskaleion* or school room to another throughout the day (e.g., Ar. *Nub.* 963–964), probably spending only a few hours at each (Beck 1964: 81–83; Golden 1990: 62–63). This schooling of boys was a predominantly private affair in classical Athens (e.g., Arist. *Pol.* 1337a22–1337a33; Xen. *Cyr.* 1.2.2). Admittedly, laws were passed to regulate school hours, class sizes, and the minimum age of pupils (Aeschin. 1.9–11). But the democracy did not license teachers, determine the curricula for their lessons, nor subsidize their wages. Thus, it was fathers who decided what disciplines their boys should study, who the good teachers were, and how long they should be at school.

For the classical Athenians, the solitary goal of education was not the teaching of practical skills but the forming of boys into *agathoi andres* or virtuous men (e.g., Eur. *Supp.* 911–917; Pl. *Prt.* 325d–325e; *Meno* 94b). Precise ways in which each of the traditional education’s disciplines contributed to this moral end are postulated by Protagoras in the Platonic dialogue bearing his name (325a–326c). The physical education of the *paidotribēs*, he suggests, guarantees that a lack of fitness will not cause a young man to be the coward on the battlefield (326b–326c). Protagoras isolates the source of moral education which is provided by the lessons in *mousikē* not in the content of lyric poetry but in the practicing of scales and rhythms on the *kithara* (326a–326b). Yet Protagoras believes that Athenian boys received the lion’s share of their instruction in morality sitting in the classes of the *grammatistēs* (325e–326a):

When the boys understand their letters and are on the point of comprehending the written word, the teachers set before them on the benches poems of good poets to read, and they are compelled to learn by rote these works, which contain many admonitions and numerous descriptions, eulogies and commendations of virtuous men of long ago, so that the boy out of a sense of jealousy imitates them and yearns to be this sort of man himself.

A wide range of authors agreed that the learning of Homer and other epic poets by heart served as instruction for boys in morality (e.g., Aeschin. 3.135; Ar. *Ran.* 1038–1039; Xen. *Sym.* 3.5–6). Aristophanes for one made the educational content of Homer’s

poetry its warrior heroes, when he had the dead Aeschylus claim in *Frogs* (1040–1042): “In imitation of him my purpose was to represent in poetry the many excellences (*pollas aretas*) of Patroclus, lion-hearted Teucers in order to induce the citizen to become a rival of these men whenever he heard the trumpet of war.” Clearly the classical Athenians believed that the learning of epic poetry by heart was the chief means of instructing boys in morality. Within traditional education, this poetry was encountered and studied only in the lessons of a *grammatistēs*.

## 2. Participation

Before considering participation in this traditional education, we must first clarify the nature of social classes in classical Athens. Sometimes the Athenians divided themselves up on the basis of military roles, income bands, occupations, or places of residence (Vartsos 1978). But the distinction which they used much more often than others and which demarcated the most important social cleavage was between *hoi plousioi* (“the wealthy”) and *hoi penētes* (“the poor”). The wealthy led lives of *skholē* or leisure and so did not have to work for a living (e.g., Ar. *Plut.* 281; *Vesp.* 552–557; Men. *Dys.* 293–295). It also enabled them to pursue pastimes which were simply too expensive and time consuming for the poor (Pritchard 2013: 3–6). Thus, groups of wealthy friends regularly came together for a *sumposion* or drinking party (e.g., Ar. *Vesp.* 1216–1217, 1219–1222, 1250; Murray 1990: 149–150). This class’s members stood out for their wearing of distinctive clothes, their undertaking of public services such as sponsorships of a chorus or warship, and their paying of the *eisphora* or emergency tax on property for war (e.g., Ar. *Eq.* 923–926; *Ran.* 1062–1065; Dem. 4.7; 10.37; 27.66; Lys. 22.13). Politicians too were drawn from their ranks (Pritchard 2013: 5–6). The wealthy numbered around 5 percent of the whole body of Athenians (Pritchard 2010: 13 n. 66). The Athenians classified the rest of the citizen body, ranging from the truly destitute to those sitting just below the elite, as the poor (Pritchard 2013: 7–9). What the members of this social class had in common was a lack of *skholē* and hence a need to work for a living (e.g., Ar. *Pax.* 632; *Vesp.* 611; *Plut.* 281; Lys. 24.16).

The classical Athenians understood that a family’s resources dictated the number of disciplines a *pais* (“boy”) could take up and the length of his schooling. This inequality of educational opportunity is again expressed clearly by the Platonic Protagoras, who explains that the three disciplines of traditional education “are done by the most able, and those who are best able are the wealthiest (*hoi plousiōtatoi*). Their sons begin regularly attending the schools of teachers at the earliest stage of their youth and stop doing so at the latest point” (Pl. *Prt.* 326c; cf. *Ap.* 23c). In the same vein, Xenophon acknowledged how education depended on money (*Cyn.* 2.1); Aristophanes made out that education beyond the three disciplines of the “old education” was the preserve of *kaloi te k’agathoi*, that is, wealthy gentlemen (*Nub.* 101, 797–798); and Pseudo-Xenophon maintained that poverty caused poor Athenians to be ignorant and uneducated (1.5; cf. Ar. *Vesp.* 1174–1175, 1183).

An obvious way in which wealth impacted on education was that a family had to have enough cash to cover the fees of three teachers, which together could be expensive (Beck 1964: 130; Golden 2008: 36). To be educated in letters, music, and athletics, a boy also needed to be free of other daytime obligations, as he would be attending classes in two

or more disciplines each day (e.g., Isae. 9.28). Critically, such *skholē* was only guaranteed for the boys of wealthy families: most poor citizens could not afford enough household slaves, as Aristotle explains (*Pol.* 1323a5–1323a), and so needed their children to help with the running of farms or businesses (Golden 1990: 34–36). The negative impact of such child labor on the education of poor boys was fully appreciated by contemporaries (e.g., Isoc. 14.48; Xen. *Cyr.* 8.3.37–39).

In his discussion of how young Athenians were kept under control in the era of Solon and Cleisthenes, for example, Isocrates assumed that some of them took up employment instead of education (7.43–45). Their forebears, he writes, “used to turn to farming and commerce those with inferior resources,” but “compelled those in possession of sufficient funds to while time away with horsemanship, athletic exercises, hunting and philosophy” (7.45). Admittedly this pamphlet is notorious for the historical fabrications which Isocrates used to try to convince the Athenians that a restriction of their democracy would be no more than a return to the beneficial regime of their ancestors. But the dichotomy which it drew between the different educational opportunities of those with and without wealth was not due to this conservative political agenda, because similar distinctions were made by authors who wrote for audiences of poor Athenians. Lysias, for example, noted how a wealthy boy went to the city to be educated, while poverty forced another to be a shepherd (20.11–12). And Demosthenes contrasted the full education which he enjoyed as wealthy boy with the impoverished childhood of Aeschines, who had to work in his father’s letter school where he performed menial tasks which were otherwise done by slaves (18.256–267).

### 3. Athletics and Music

Some ancient historians argue that poor Athenians participated in athletic *agōnes* or games. Harry Pleket for one has long argued that while the wealthy originally monopolized Greek athletics, from the early fifth century athletes of hoplite status increasingly entered athletic contests (e.g., Pleket 1992). By contrast, David Young suggests there were always good numbers of poor athletes before and after the early fifth century (1984: 107–163). Nick Fisher maintains that involvement of poor Athenians in local athletic games even reached down to Athenians of sub-hoplite status (Fisher 2011). The extent of athletic participation which these ancient historians advocate presupposes that large numbers of non-elite families sent boys to the regular lessons of the *paidotribēs*; for his lessons alone provided the training which athletic competitors required (see section 1 above).

Yet this education of poor boys in this discipline was very far from likely (Golden 2008: 23–31; Kyle 2007: 87–88, 205–216; Pritchard 2013: 34–83). The limited means of poor families and their reliance on child labor would have made it difficult to send their sons to lessons in letters *and* athletics. Nor is it likely that they would have had their boys give up the moral lessons of the *grammatistēs* in favor of athletics. The classical Athenians believed that an athlete could only win or even perform creditably at games if he had devoted a lot of his time to such training (e.g., Aeschin. 3.179–180; Ar. *Ran.* 1093–1094; Isoc. 16.32–33; Pl. *Leg.* 807c). Those of the city’s boys and young men who lacked access to the lessons of a *paidotribēs* would have performed poorly in such *agōnes*. Hence they would have been greatly disheartened about entering a race or bout in

the first place. What literary evidence we have confirms this picture: schooling in *gumnastikē* and *mousikē* and participation in athletic *agōnes* were predominant or possibly even exclusive preserves of the wealthy in classical Athens.

This limited direct experience of athletics and music among poor Athenians is reflected clearly in a scene of Aristophanes' *Wasps* where Bdelycleon struggles to teach his father, Philocleon, how to be a wealthy symposiast (1122–1264). The humor of this scene depends on the unexpected difference in the social classes of father and son: as a poor citizen Philocleon is naturally wary of the wealthy and their exclusive pursuits, such as the *sumposion* and is ill equipped to assimilate the lessons of his wealthy son. Bdelycleon initially finds it very difficult to persuade his father to exchange his *embades* (“felt slippers”) and *tribōn* (“coarse cloak”), which are the standard attire of poor citizens (Ar. *Vesp* 33, 115–117; *Plut.* 842–843; Isaeus 5.11), for imported shoes and gown and to ape “the walk of the wealthy” (1122–1173).

Next Bdelycleon asks his father whether he knows any “posh stories” suitable for relating to “well educated and clever men” (1174–1175). He quickly learns that Philocleon does not and so suggests that he speak perhaps of an embassy in which he may have participated (1183–1187). However, as only wealthy citizens with their overseas guest friends could be ambassadors (e.g., *Ach.* 607–611; *Av.* 1570–1571; *Dem.* 19.237–238), the best Philocleon can do is to bring up his service as a rower on an expedition to Paros (Ar. *Vesp* 1188–1189). Instead of this, Bdelycleon encourages him to talk about a famous sportsman (1190–1194): “You need to say, for example, that although he was grey and old, Ephoudion continued to fight well in the *pankration* with his very strong sides, hands and flank and his very fine torso (*thōrak' ariston*).” Philocleon interrupts his son here (1194–1195): “Stop! Stop! You're speaking nonsense. How could he fight in the *pankration* wearing a suit of armour (*thōrak' ekhōn*)?” Philocleon's confusing of the two established meanings of *thōrax* reveals his unfamiliarity with “jock talk” and suggests that he spent no time as a boy with a *paidotribēs* or as a competitor at games (Golden 1998: 160).

Undeterred, Bdelycleon tells his father he will have to relate “a very manly exploit of his youth” (1197–1199), and, in response to Philocleon's inability to do even this (1200–1201), suggests he talk about “how once you chased a wild boar or a hare, or you ran a torch race, after you have worked out your most dashing youthful exploit” (1202–1205). His father's experience of such things again seems unlikely. Hunting was clearly an exclusive pursuit of the wealthy (e.g., *Men. Dys.* 39–44), while joining a tribal team of torch racers—before the reform of the *ephēbeia* in 335—would have been possible for only a small minority of Athenian youths (Pritchard 2013: 76–80, 214–216). Thus, it is a surprise to find Philocleon relating what seems an anecdote about athletics before, that is, we realize that he is talking about something quite different (1205–1207): “Well I certainly know my most impetuous and youthful deed of early years: while still a boy, the runner Phayllus I overtook (*heilon*), pursuing (*diōkōn*) him for slander, by two votes.” The joke here rests on two more double entendres: *aireō* (aorist form, *heilon*) and *diōkō* are commonly used in discussions of sporting and legal contests. Therefore, while Philocleon, at first, seems to be recalling a race against a famous Olympic victor of a previous generation, Phayllus of Croton (cf. Ar. *Ach.* 214; Paus. 10.9.2), his last three words dash this impression: this addict of the jury courts has been reminiscing about a legal prosecution all along. His lack of athletic nous is revealed

again when, the demonstrations of his son notwithstanding, he botches reclining on a symposium couch *gymnastikōs* or athletically (1208–1213).

Aspects of this scene's treatment of athletics and music occur in other classical texts. In the famous *parabasis* of *Frogs*, for example, Aristophanes links athletics, music, and political leadership with the wealthy (727–730), while wrestling schools for Euripides belong to the “well born man” (*El.* 528). Alternatively, Athenian authors group athletics with other activities, such as hunting and philosophy, which were clear preserves of wealthy Athenians (e.g., Isoc. 7.45).

## 4. Letters

Poor families did not send their boys to the classes of an athletics teacher or a music teacher. But it has long been argued that they most certainly did send them to the classes of a *grammatistēs* (e.g., Beck 1964: 79–80, 83, 94, 111; Golden 1990: 63–64). This discipline—it is argued—would have been “more strictly useful” for the poor's participation in politics and business (Beck 1964: 83). However, as the role of writing in Athenian democracy has become extremely controversial, this assessment of this discipline's usefulness is no longer secure. This means that working out which Athenian boys went to the lessons in *grammata* requires us to reconsider the case for widespread literacy in classical Athens.

One argument in support of it is that this skill was a basic requirement for participation in politics. In this vein, an older handbook on Greek education suggests that the institution of ostracism “presupposes the widespread knowledge of writing among the citizen body and therefore the existence of schools for its introduction” (Beck 1964: 77). This argument has several problems. First, although the capacity to scratch out the name of another person shows some writing capacity, it does not demonstrate the highly developed ability to read and write confidently. Second, Athenians who lacked even a limited skill in writing could still take part in these institutional expulsions; for they could always ask an educated fellow to incise a potsherd for them (e.g., Plut. *Arist.* 7.5–6). David Phillips, finally, has shown how literate Athenian craftsmen produced for each ostracism batches of pottery sherds which were inscribed with the names of potential candidates for expulsion, providing another source of *ostraka* for functionally illiterate citizens (Phillips 1990: 134–37).

Others have posed the requirement of literacy for politics in more general terms. Josiah Ober suggests (1989: 158): “In order to function as a citizen, and certainly in order to carry out the responsibilities of many of the magistracies, the Athenian citizen needed a basic command of letters.” Politicians, certainly, were expected to have a confident grasp of public finances, which depended on their close scrutiny of the public accounts of financial boards (e.g., Arist. *Rhet.* 1.4.7–1.4.8; Xen. *Mem.* 3.6.5–3.6.6). As boys and young men, they would have honed their public speaking by studying with the sophists (see Section 1). Instruction in this discipline covered the commonplaces of forensic and deliberative oratory and more controversially anti-logical argumentation, which helped a speaker to argue either side of a case with equal force (e.g., Pl. *Euthd.* 275d–277c). In these lessons, students were required to copy model speeches and parts of handbooks on oratory (Ford 2001). To do so, they needed to be able to read and to write

confidently. Thus, wealthy parents, who were eager for their sons to be famous leaders one day, would have made sure that their sons were well schooled by a *grammatistēs*.

Poor Athenians would have perceived literacy as useful for taking part in politics. For example, a hoplite or naval petty officer would have found it more convenient to search himself for his name on a public list of conscripts than to rely on another's literacy. And a magistrate would have been a lot more relaxed during his public audit if he was able to consult his accounts without the help of a *hupogrammateus* or undersecretary. Yet this skill was simply not a requirement for participation in politics (Thomas 1989: 61–64; 1992: 3). Jurors, councilors, and assembly goers did not have to be literate. The *agōnes* or debates of the law courts, the council, and the assembly were conducted orally, with documents and testimonies relevant to them read out by secretaries (e.g., [Arist.] *Ath. Pol.* 54.5). In addition the decisions of the council and assembly, along with the instructions of magistrates, were made known through public announcements (e.g., 62.2). The Athenians, finally, made it possible for those who were functionally literate to be magistrates by providing every board of them with a secretary or *hupogrammateus* (e.g., Dem. 18.261; 19.200, 249; Antiph. 6.49; Lys. 30.29). Thus, the operation of the Athenian democracy did not depend in any way on widespread literacy.

Proponents of widespread literacy have also presented some ancient passages which supposedly show how most citizens could read and write (e.g., Beck 1964: 83; Golden 1990: 64; Thomas 1992: 155). The first of these two passages allowing such an interpretation comes from the *Laws* of Plato (689d). In this dialogue, the Athenian speaker argues that only those harmonizing their emotions and reasoning ability will be judged wise in his ideal city, “even if, as the saying goes, they know neither letters nor how to swim (*mēte grammata mēte nein epistōntai*).” This aphorism is usually interpreted as evidence that the Athenians thought a lack of literacy was very strange. A similar conclusion is drawn from the opening scene of *Knights* by Aristophanes where the Sausage Seller, objecting to the unlikely prediction of his political leadership of the city, explains (188–189): “My good fellow I do not even know music, except letters (*oude mousikēn epistamai plēn grammatōn*), and these I actually do very badly.” This character, of course, is not an average Athenian but a criminally inclined and underemployed individual from a deprived background (296–297, 1242, 1397–1401). Thus, it is argued that if such a marginal individual could read and write, the majority of Athenians who were certainly much better off must have been able to do so as well.

A problem with this argument is its assumption that the phrase *epistasthai grammata* (“to know one's letters”) refers to nothing less than the capacity to read and to write confidently. This assumption pays too scant regard to the fact that different levels of literacy exist, ranging from the ability to sign one's own name and the sounding out of words syllable by syllable to the highly developed skills of reading and writing without conscious effort (Thomas 1992: 8–9). In addition, two other passages by Plato and Aristophanes suggest that “to know one's letters” must be placed much lower down this scale of literary than the advocates of widespread literacy assume. We have already noted what Plato's Protagoras says about how a *grammatistēs* gets his students to read (325e–326a): “... when the pupils understand letters (*grammata mathōsi*) and are on the point of comprehending the written word (*sunēsein ta gegrammena*), just as when they are about to understand the spoken word, the teachers set before them on the benches poems of good poets to read (*anagignōskein*) ...” What is striking here is the distinction drawn between learning and understanding the alphabet (*manthanein grammata*) and

the act of reading itself (*sunienai ta gegrammena, anagignōskein*). As *manthanein* is semantically very close to *epistasthai*, the phrase *epistasthai grammata* most probably refers—as the phrase *manthanein grammata* certainly does—to a pre-reading familiarity with the alphabet.

This new interpretation of “to know one’s letters” is backed up by a fuller consideration of the educational attainment of Aristophanes’ Sausage Seller. Toward the end of *Knights*, an exchange between him and Paphlagon makes plain his complete lack of schooling (1235–1238):

- PAPHLAGON:       When you were a boy the establishment of which teacher (*eis tinos didaskalou*) did you attend?
- SAUSAGE SELLER:   I was trained with knuckles in the swine-singeing yards.
- PAPHLAGON:       At the school of the athletics teacher (*en paidotribou*) what wrestling technique did you learn?
- SAUSAGE-SELLER:   How to swear falsely and to steal while saying the opposite.

As the generic term *didaskalos* can describe a music teacher just as easily as a letter teacher (e.g., Pl. *Prt.* 325d, 326c), these witty responses of the Sausage Seller suggest that he lacked schooling not just in athletics but also in *mousikē* and *grammata* (Joyal, McDougall, and Yardley 2009: 52–53). It would have been hard for any Athenian—not to mention an impoverished seller of small goods—to have acquired any competency in reading and writing without formal schooling (Kleijwegt 1991: 78). Thus, the Sausage Seller’s earlier claim about knowing letters (188–189) denotes not an ability to read and write but a pre-reading knowledge of the alphabet. In view of what the phrase *epistasthai grammata* means, ancient historians have been mistaken in using these two passages as evidence for widespread literacy in classical Athens.

It is archaeology which provides the evidence that literacy was not confined to wealthy Athenians. Small finds from the American excavations of the Athenian *agora* or civic center as well as finely painted Attic pottery suggest that many poor residents were reasonably literate. This presupposes that the classrooms of the letter teacher also included good numbers of poor boys. The *agora* excavators have unearthed and inventoried over 3000 sherds of pottery with incised or painted texts, ranging in date from the early Archaic period to the eighth century of our era. More than 800 of these pieces whose preserved texts are long enough to determine their original functions were cataloged by Mabel Lang.

The largest group in Lang’s catalog are ownership marks for pots (1976: 23–51). Admittedly, 60 percent of these marks do not demonstrate any significant level of literacy: they are no more than an abbreviated name or a complete name in the nominative case. Nonetheless, 20 percent of them have names in the genitive or dative cases, while more than 6 percent consist of short sentences. Classical-period examples of the latter consist of the verb *eimi* (“I am/belong to”) plus the owner’s name in the genitive case, to which is often added the adverb *dikaiōs* or rightly (e.g., nos. F 131–132, 139, 154). These simple sentences and names in oblique cases demonstrate a level of writing skill that is higher than a simple knowledge of the alphabet or the ability to write one’s own name. The large number of these marks may point to a widespread capacity to write a personal name. But the archaeological context of nearly every piece is too ambiguous or insufficiently documented to determine the social backgrounds of those incising these pots.

Consequently, on the basis of ownership marks, it is not possible to say in which sections of the Attic population this skill in writing existed.

Yet, enough is known of the archaeological context of two pots with ownership marks to show that the ability to write one's own name existed among the city's craftsmen. A black-glaze base of a cup from the second quarter of the fifth century which has the name Simon in the genitive case most probably came from the workshop and home of a cobbler (no. F 86). Similarly, a black-glaze drinking cup of the fourth century, which was found in the house of a family of marble workers, was incised with the name Menon (no. F 164; Pritchard 1999: 14–21).

The functions of several other types of marks in Lang's catalog also point to the socio-economic identity of those who made them. The largest group providing this information is the records of capacity, weight, date, and contents which were originally inscribed onto ceramic containers (Lang 1976: 55–81). Of these, it is the capacity marks which exemplify most clearly the variations possible in this class of commercial notations. Among capacity indications of the Classical period, the simplest consists of tally marks alone (e.g., nos. Ha 3–4). More sophisticated texts display the first letter of the name of a standard measure followed by tally marks or numerals (e.g., nos. Ha 5–7, Ha 9–12). The most complex of capacity notations have complete words. For example, one black-glaze olphe of the fifth century has *mēetrio*, which is a misspelling of the name of a middle-sized measure, while a jug predictably bears the name *khos* (nos. Ha 1, 8). Other types of commercial notations also have full words and phrases. For example, two amphorae record dates by means of the preposition *epi* and the name of a late fourth-century eponymous archon in the genitive case (nos. Hc 1–2), while a fifth-century wine amphora bears the painted label *okhos*, meaning ordinary wine (no. Hd 1). Several other pieces classified by Lang as numerical notations are of a commercial nature as well (21–23). Most notable among the Classical-period objects is a tag recording the batch size of some ceramic product, which gives the word *keramos* and numerals (no. E5).

Other archaeological evidence confirms that a good number of Athenian craftsmen were similarly literate. In the so-called house of Mikion and Menon, a bone stylus which bears the inscription *ho Mikion epoiese* (“Mikion made [me]”) was found on a fifth-century floor (inv. no. BI 818; Pritchard 1999: 17). Whether this tool was made by a marble worker living and working in this house or a different craftsman, this inscription points to a reasonably high level of literacy. Certainly some painters of Attic pots possessed no more than a pre-reading knowledge of the alphabet, because they could only include gibberish words and phrases in their paintings. But others were literate enough to paint in the names of characters in mythological scenes or an inscription next to an image of a handsome boy describing him as beautiful (Vickers and Gill 1994: 163–164). Other pots reveal a higher level of skill in writing on the part of their painters. Around 1 percent of surviving pots have inscriptions recording that a certain craftsman painted (*egrapsen*) the scene and that another manufactured (*epoiesen*) the actual pot (100, 154–171). More impressive still are the book scrolls in paintings of the classes of a letter teacher on pots, on which sometimes appear actual lines of epic poetry (Immerwahr 1964; 1973).

As wealthy Athenians avoided any direct contact with the world of business, these inscribed or painted objects could only have been the work of poor craftsmen and retailers. Consequently, these pieces prove that literacy existed far below Athens's upper class. Indeed, the obvious utility of these skills for business would have been a powerful



motivation for poor businessmen to send their sons to the classes of a *grammatistēs* (Arist. *Pol.* 1338a15–1338a19).

Archaeology thus confirms that many poor citizens had quite high levels of literacy and so must have as boys attended the classes of a *grammatistēs*. On closer inspection, it appears that attending such classes was not prohibitively expensive nor something which stopped *paides* from helping out with the farms or the businesses of their families. The school fees which letter teachers charged were most probably very low. Third-century inscriptions from Miletus and Teos indicate that they received between 1 and 2 drachmas per day (*SEG* 43.381; *SIG* I<sup>3</sup> 577; cf. Dem. 19.249), which was no more than the wage of a skilled laborer. What figures we have for class sizes suggest that classes were normally large, consisting of several dozen or more students (e.g., Hdt. 6.27; Paus. 6.9.6). In these circumstances, school fees were far from prohibitive (cf. Theophr. *Char.* 30.14). Moreover, as classes in each discipline of traditional education lasted no more than a few hours (see Section 1), poor boys who only attended the classes of a *grammatistēs* had plenty of time out of school when they could help to secure the livelihood of their families.

It is striking that the complex poetry of Homer was introduced to Athenian boys very early in the course of their studies at the letter school. We have seen that the Platonic Protagoras describes that pupils received copies of epic poetry to read and to memorize when they had just mastered the alphabet and were about to begin reading. Nevertheless, they were initially using copies of Homer simply as a mnemonic aid and hence required only “phonetic” literacy, which is the ability to decode texts syllable by syllable and to pronounce them orally (Thomas 1992: 9, 92). Letter-school students seem not to have been made to complete the time-consuming tasks of learning to read and to write confidently before being introduced to Homeric poetry. Consequently, even a pupil whose family’s difficult economic circumstances prevented him from completing his studies with a *grammatistēs* would have been assured of encountering passages of Homer during his student days.

The fact that their sons would learn by heart stories of the heroes would have been another major motivation for Athenian fathers to send their sons to the classes of a *grammatistēs*. Indeed, for those humble Athenians who were not in the world of business, it might have been the only motivation. The solitary goal of education in the literature of classical Athens was the moral improvement of young males, while the chief means to achieve this was universally understood to be the memorization and the recall of epic poetry (see Section 1). Consequently, the fact that boys would be given an extended introduction to the poetry of Homer made the letter school appear to poor fathers the surest and the easiest of ways to guarantee the rectitude of their sons. We can say with some certainty that the classes of the letter teachers did contain good numbers of Athenian boys from poor backgrounds.

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## CHAPTER 7

# Hellenistic and Roman Philosophy

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*Gretchen Reydamns-Schils*

The manner in which Plato in his *Phaedrus* set the terms of the debate about the relation between rhetoric and philosophical truth became tremendously influential in subsequent discussions in antiquity about how to be most effective in teaching philosophy. How could one best harness persuasion for this goal? The challenge is at least twofold. First, how can one make pupils amenable to the often counterintuitive as well as counter-cultural content of philosophy (a process for which the term *psychagogy*, literally “the leading of souls,” became standard also in the secondary literature on this topic). Lucretius, for instance, in his didactic poem *De rerum natura*, uses the image of honeying the rim of a cup with bitter medicine to describe his own method of making his work more palatable (1.935–950). The second challenge pertains to having philosophical truth transform key aspects of society as a whole, so that it would also inform governance, judicial proceedings, and political debates.

In order to accomplish these goals, philosophy in antiquity had to define itself vis-à-vis other rival forms of learning, especially the study of literature and the practice of rhetoric, claim its space in the educational curriculum, and define its own educational practices. The three primary philosophical schools in the Hellenistic period, the Academics as the successors of Plato, the Stoics, and the Epicureans put great efforts into constituting their group identity (Dorandi 2008; Hadot 2005: 25–61). With Aristotle and Theophrastus, philosophical treatises *on* other forms of cultural expressions, such as poetry and rhetoric, came to occupy a more prominent role, but the Peripatetic tradition appears to have been rather dispersed in the Hellenistic period.

We know that the Epicureans aimed at condensing their views in key statements that could serve as continuous reminders and be always “at hand” for specific challenges. The *tetrapharmakos*, or “four-fold remedy,” is a perfect example of this practice, with clearly therapeutic overtones: “God presents no fear, death no worries. And while good is readily attainable, evil is readily endurable” (Philodemus, *Against the Sophists* 4.9–14, trans. Long and Sedley 1987: 25J).

The Stoics, for their part, were known for retrieving other cultural expressions for their purposes. They would, for instance, devise etymologies of names of the gods as transmitted in myths and poetry that would harmonize this material with their own philosophical views (see in the following text, under Cornutus). Chrysippus in particular would mine literature for examples that would underscore his claims, as, for instance, in his retrieval of the character Medea for his analysis of the passions (Gill 1983). Occasionally we can glimpse traces of a pedagogical rivalry between the different schools. Thus, Chrysippus cautions against using the method of arguing both sides of an issue, a practice attested in particular for the Academy under Arcesilaus and Carneades. He allows for this approach only for the sake of disproving claims that run counter to Stoic doctrine, in order to strengthen pupils' convictions so that they may "live consistently in accordance with these" (Plutarch, *Stoic. Rep.* 1035F–1036A). Or, when Chrysippus denounces any permanent attachment to a philosophical school as a life of pleasure, he is likely to be targeting the Epicureans (Plutarch, *Stoic. Rep.* 1033C). Finally, given their view that the three branches of philosophy, ethics, physics, and logic, mutually imply one another, there was a debate about the proper pedagogical sequence and the relative importance of all three subjects (Long and Sedley 1987: 26).

## 1. Cicero on the Relation between Philosophy and Rhetoric

The configuration of Plato's *Phaedrus* is clearly on Cicero's mind in his *De oratore* (55 BCE), in which he gives pride of place to Aristotle and Isocrates. The setting for the discussion explicitly refers to Plato's dialogue, while transposing it onto Roman reality (Görler 1988), and Cicero continues to use the *Phaedrus* as a foil all the way up to his *Orator* (39–42), written almost ten years later (46 BCE). The character Crassus attempts to describe an "ideal orator," someone who has sound morals (*probitas*) and will not abuse his power of speech, who combines in one person wisdom—by which he appears to mean primarily a philosophically grounded knowledge of ethics and politics—and eloquence, and who dedicates himself to public life (cf. also *De inventione* 1.1–5). In an account of the relation between philosophy and oratory (*De oratore* 3.56–73) that could well represent an original contribution by Cicero (Mankin 2011: 38), at least in some of its aspects, it is the statesman of old, exemplified by Pericles, who carries the first prize, followed by teachers who combine lessons in conduct (*vivendi*) with lessons in oratory (*dicendi*). A clear pedagogical hierarchy emerges from Cicero's account, which is also present in his overview of his own education (*Brutus* 304ff.; Corbeil 2002): after a boy has been thoroughly trained in the liberal arts, he first and foremost needs the core insights from philosophy on ethical matters. In the course of the period in which Cicero writes his three major works on oratory (*De oratore*, *Brutus*, *Orator*), he increasingly comes to embrace the value of dialectic and physics as well (as in *Brutus* 152 and especially *Orator* 113–119), but he consistently expresses reservations about an exclusive dedication to philosophy and the theoretical life (see the following text). Second are the philosophical treatises on rhetoric, of some but limited use because they can be too technical and removed from actual practice. Third are the Greek professional teachers of rhetoric, with Isocrates occupying the first rank, because they still have genuine insights to offer. Last of all rank Latin professional teachers of rhetoric, who are deemed pretty useless if not downright harmful (though Cicero himself did

study with Lucius Aelius, and for important nuances, see Bloomer 2011: 37–52). (Hence the characters Antonius and Crassus in the *De oratore* and Cicero in his own name in his *Orator* resist being seen as experts in the technical aspects of oratory.) Instead of relying primarily on such teachers, budding orators can learn much more from men of practice and should choose role models to emulate—a recommendation that is reflected in the very manner in which Cicero staged his *De oratore*, in which he has younger orators plying *éminences grises* with questions.

In his philosophical works too, Cicero admits that the Peripatetics represent the most useful strand of philosophy for training in rhetoric (*Fin.* 5.10, Griffin 1989: 9–10). He aligns Aristotle, who started out as a member of Plato’s Academy himself, with the so-called skeptical Academy and Philo for reason of their stress on the ability to argue both sides of a case (*De oratore* 3.67–68, 80, 107, *Brutus* 119–120, but as attributed to Brutus; *Orator* 46, *Tusc.* 2.9), which is an essential skill for an orator (*De oratore* 1.158; 2.215). It is worth recalling here to what extent Cicero’s preference for this later Academy, as represented by Arcesilaus and especially Carneades, might have been anchored in his aspirations as an orator. We can see other glimpses of the manner in which he establishes such connections, as when he famously compares the ideal orator to a Platonic form (*Orator* 7–10, 101) or posits the importance of the appropriate (*prepon, decorum*) for both ethics and oratory (*Orator* 70–72).

## 2. Cicero on Philosophical Education

In his *De finibus* (5.1–8), Cicero depicts an attractive scene of Romans who are attending philosophical lectures in Athens, go to the ancient site of Plato’s Academy, and try to recreate the philosophical activity of days gone by. His close friend Atticus earned his cognomen in those days because of his enthusiasm for philosophy and Epicurean doctrine in particular (*Fin.* 5.4). As we can tell from Cicero’s description of his own training (*Brutus* 304–316), by his time one could find eminent teachers of philosophy in Rome itself, ever since the Stoic Panaetius had attached himself to the household of Scipio Africanus the Younger, but for the Roman elite a finishing course in Athens was considered essential. This stance, however, did not always entail a deep commitment to such studies. As in the later Epictetus’ days, we also notice Romans trying to pick up whatever bits of intellectual refinement they can gather as they are passing through on travels that have other purposes as well (e.g., Epictetus, *Diss.* 1.11). Such appears to have been the more limited exposure Cicero’s Antonius describes in the *De oratore* (1.82).

Cicero, for his part, claims a continuous interest in philosophy all throughout his career: when he was politically active, his philosophical studies served as guidance, and when forced into leisure, he never gave up thinking in terms of responsibility to the Roman *respublica* (*De natura deorum* 1.6–7, *Brutus* 304–316). Hence, he displayed already that inextricable connection between theory and action that would become so prominent in later Stoics (see the following text), but with this essential difference that for him action entailed a very specific form of political activity and duty to Republican Rome as he saw it. His reservations about an exclusive study of philosophy in both his rhetorical and philosophical works always return to this point, all the way up to the end of his life (cf. *De oratore* 3.56, 63, 86: critique of Epicureans; *De partitione oratoria* 75–81 and *De officiis* 1.72–73).

### 3. The Roman Imperial Era

The cultural rivalry between rhetoricians and philosophers did not abate in the first two centuries CE, even though a Stoic such as Seneca clearly turned his rhetorical training to his advantage, especially in his letters and consolations, in order to convey his views more forcefully. This tension was acknowledged in Seneca's comments about his father's misgivings about philosophy (*Ep.* 108.22), the exchanges between Marcus Aurelius and his rhetoric teacher Fronto, and the concerns of Epictetus (*Diss.* 3.23.33–38), who, like Seneca (*Ep.* 40), warned that rhetorical flourishes should not cloud a philosopher's expression.

In this period, Stoicism dominates Roman philosophy (Reydamns-Schils 2010). Not all the Stoics of the Roman imperial era taught philosophy or directed a philosophical school (Gill 2003). There is evidence of teaching activity on the part of Cornutus and Musonius Rufus, but not much information about its structure. Cornutus appears to have taught topics pertaining to grammar as well as to philosophy. Epictetus directed a school in Epirus. Other Stoics were engaged in a wide range of practices. Seneca progressively devoted more time to philosophy as he grew older, addressed others who had interests and concerns similar to his, and also wrote tragedies; Marcus Aurelius's writings were addressed to himself, and it is not clear whether he intended his reflections for a wider audience; and Manilius' work belongs within the tradition of didactic poetry. Cleomedes' astronomical treatise on the heavens is a rare example of a Stoic technical treatise from this period, as is the *Elements of Ethics* by a certain Hierocles.

Although the works of Seneca, Cornutus, Musonius Rufus, Epictetus, and Marcus Aurelius engage the topic of education at the relatively advanced level of philosophy, they also provide some insights into pre-philosophical education. The writings of Seneca and especially Marcus Aurelius give us clues about how they themselves were educated. The entire first book of Marcus Aurelius' *Meditations*, for instance, consists of an overview of the people who shaped him, including his teachers. Stoic philosophy itself, in turn, as we have seen earlier, had its own curriculum, often conveniently divided into the three areas of logic, the study of nature (or physics, as the ancients called it), and ethics, though in the work of the authors examined here, ethics is the dominant strand of inquiry. Yet in the final analysis, in the view of these later Stoics, philosophy cannot be reduced to a curriculum or even a purely intellectual activity, but rather is meant to inform all human actions and to transform so-called "ordinary" life from within existing social structures and responsibilities. The following discussion will examine these thinkers' views regarding pre-philosophical education, the three branches of philosophy, and the ultimate goal of philosophical education.

### 4. Pre-philosophical Education: Cornutus and Seneca

From the writings attributed to Cornutus, it appears that he devoted himself to studies of grammar and rhetoric as well as philosophy. He taught, among others, the poets Persius and Lucan. The topic of his sole preserved text, *Introduction to Greek Theology*, sits right at the intersection of literary studies and philosophy. The work stands in a tradition of allegorical interpretations of poetry (primarily but not exclusively Homer and Hesiod's) through etymologies of divine names, which, when interpreted correctly, were believed to reveal the proper "philosophical" view of the gods.

As the opening line and final paragraphs of this work indicate, it is intended as a textbook to provide a young pupil (*paidion*) with the correct understanding of the nature of the universe, or physics, necessary to reinterpret mythological accounts. The Stoics considered theology to be the highest branch of physics, and Panaetius and Posidonius are said to have started their course of instruction with physics (Diogenes Laertius 7.41). The handbook could have been meant to ease the transition from literary studies and rhetoric to philosophy, and thus either to prepare the ground for a potential interest in “higher” philosophical studies or to prevent the worst misconceptions. The correct view of the gods would, it was assumed, yield the right attitude toward them: reverence with respect for traditional practices, yet also genuine piety without superstition (Boys-Stones 2007).

According to Cornutus, there were “philosophers” even among the men “of old,” who, moreover, had begun the tradition of clothing their insights in symbolic language. Both of these points, however, were a matter of debate within the Stoic tradition, as reflected in one of Seneca’s letters (*Ep.* 90). Though the Stoics agreed that the first generations of human beings had more direct access to the truth, they differed in their views about the extent of this knowledge and whether it was pre-philosophical. They also disagreed on when the practice of “hiding” or losing (if one viewed this as a negative outcome) true meanings in poetry, mythology, and other media, such as paintings and cult practices, had started. In this context, Cornutus seems to present a strong endorsement of the allegorical method.

Cicero in his *On the Nature of the Gods* (1.40–41) had already criticized Chrysippus’s use of etymologies. Seneca goes even further than Cicero in disapproving this mode of interpretation, thereby also asserting his independence vis-à-vis his Stoic predecessors (*Ben.* 1.3.2–4) and perhaps implicitly criticizing Cornutus, his contemporary.

Seneca’s famous *Letter 88* on “liberal studies” (*liberalia studia*), which also mentions the key Greek notion of “encyclical education” (*egkuklios paideia*, 23), builds on this criticism within a larger assessment of the curriculum that normally preceded the study of philosophy (for Zeno’s alleged rejection of this type of general education, see Diogenes Laertius 7.32). Homer can be turned into a Stoic, Epicurean, Peripatetic, or Academic, he complains, depending on who is interpreting him; if all of these doctrines can be read into Homer, none is really present. Even if Homer was a philosopher, he became so independently of his poetry.

In this letter, Seneca plays on the connection between *artes liberales* and *liberae*. Traditionally, “free studies/arts” meant those forms of knowledge that are appropriate for politically free men and do not aim at moneymaking or usefulness. (Seneca lumps painting and sculpture, which promote luxury, together with wrestling and athletics and ranks these activities lower than the “liberal arts,” 18–19). But the only study that makes human beings truly free, he claims, is that which pursues *wisdom* and *virtue*, two notions inextricably connected in Seneca’s mind.

Among the traditional liberal arts, he discusses grammar, literary studies, music, arithmetic, geometry, and astronomy. (One can see traces here of the curriculum of the so-called *trivium* and *quadrivium*, which goes back to Plato’s educational program in his *Republic*, Hadot 2005.) According to Seneca, these forms of knowledge are helpful only to the extent that they are pro-paideutic, in the sense of preparing the soul for the reception of virtue (20), and that one limits one’s efforts to the strictly essential rather than being carried away by a flood of useless tidbits of information (36–41). He denounces such excessive interests as motivated by pleasure and thus intemperate.

If the goal of philosophy is to instill virtue and to make us better human beings, as Seneca holds here, then not even all of philosophy as included in the tradition will qualify as “free.” There are plenty of thinkers, Seneca complains, who have either vied with scholars of grammar and geometry in the pursuit of useless knowledge or who have undermined the possibility of knowledge altogether (42–46). Ultimately, he holds, all forms of knowledge that do not teach us how to live well (42–43) in the context of a universe that is rationally ordered, or prepare the ground for this outcome, are superfluous.

## 5. Philosophy: Logic, Physics, Ethics

In his letter on “liberal studies,” Seneca also alludes to the division of philosophy into logic, physics, and ethics (24) central to the Stoics though not unique to them. But most writings by the later Stoics tend to focus on ethics in action—on how to lead the good life and face challenges. Yet this mode of philosophy by no means implies that knowledge of the more technical and theoretical aspects of Stoicism was no longer available in this era or that the later Stoics no longer cared about it. The technical aspects of Stoicism were still present in doxographies, compilations of the views of different schools of thought and philosophers, such as the work by Diogenes Laertius. Such compilations offer insights into the circulation of Stoic works and ideas in all three areas of physics, logic, and ethics. In addition, critics of the Stoics such as Plutarch, Galen, and Alexander of Aphrodisias reveal that the debate about core Stoic tenets, and Chrysippus’ teachings in particular, was very much alive in this period. Cleomedes’ exposition on astronomy, Manilius’ didactic poem, and Seneca’s own *Naturales quaestiones* attest to a continued interest in advanced Stoic physics. In his other writings, Seneca also likes to demonstrate occasionally that he “has the goods,” so to speak, including a decent knowledge of the Stoic tradition and key technical distinctions in it and other currents of thought (as in *Letters* 94 and 95, on the use of general doctrine and precepts, or *Letter* 58, on being, and *Letter* 65, on causality). But these expositions may have been little more than finger exercises, just as a skilled orator may occasionally reveal the tools of his trade, both to refresh his skills and establish his credibility.

The later Stoics had more than a mere awareness of doctrine, however. Apparently they also still had access to extensive writings by their predecessors, notably Chrysippus. According to the *Vita Persii* (32.35–33.40 Clausen), Cornutus inherited from Persius’ library about 700 scrolls of Chrysippus’ works. And though such sessions are not recorded in the extant evidence of Epictetus’ teachings, the expositions do mention that Epictetus’ approach partly relied on the writings of his Stoic predecessors, especially those of the prolific and systematic Chrysippus. Epictetus thus practiced “commentary” as a pedagogical method by reading philosophical works together with his pupils (*sunanagnōsis*, as this was called [Hadot 2005: 423]). Either the teacher would comment on the passages read or students would be asked to do so (as mentioned in *Diss.* 1.10.7–13; 1.26; 4.9.6; this would become the dominant mode of teaching in later Platonism).

Yet it is very striking that whenever Epictetus mentions this pedagogical method, he more often than not sounds a cautionary note, claiming that it does one no good whatsoever to be able to interpret and understand Chrysippus’ works, or those of other thinkers for that matter, unless one can also put these insights into practice and show how one has changed for the better as a result of one’s reading. According to Epictetus,



merely interpreting philosophical expositions and showing off one's erudition is no different from the immersion of a scholar of literature in trivial details that are meant to dazzle (*Diss.* 2.19.5–15; *Ench.* 49, Sellars 2007), and we already know how little Seneca also values this kind of erudition. Presumably Epictetus would measure his own success as a teacher by the actual moral progress of his pupils, not by their ability to parrot his teachings, a point to which I will return in the following.

What holds for reading philosophical treatises in these later Stoic accounts also holds for the study of logic and physics. Although logic and physics do belong within philosophy, these branches of knowledge can create similar pitfalls as the other forms of knowledge to which students would have been exposed earlier in their lives. There is a right and a wrong way of engaging in these inquiries, these authors make clear; the wrong way entails studying them for their own sake and indulging in technical details and prowess.

As the art of reasoning, and more specifically of demonstrations and syllogisms (for which both Zeno and Chrysippus were famous, or notorious, depending on one's perspective), logic is indispensable to virtue: someone who is fundamentally confused in his thinking about what the good is cannot be expected to live the virtuous life. For this reason, both Musonius Rufus and Epictetus are very severe with students who wished to bypass logic altogether, or to downplay its importance. When Epictetus once replied to his teacher Musonius Rufus that making a mistake in a logical problem was not as bad as burning the Capitol, and one of Epictetus' students in turn said that it was not like killing one's father, both received the same reply: in logic, such sloppiness would in fact be the equivalent of burning the Capitol or killing one's father (Epictetus, *Diss.* 1.7.32–33; cf. also *Ench.* 52).

Musonius Rufus provides us a glimpse of how he used theses and demonstrations in his teaching of ethics (1 Hense/Lutz), as in his example of the counterintuitive thesis that pleasure is not a good. If we start, Musonius says, with the generally accepted premise that the good is always choice worthy, and then add a second equally accepted one that pleasure is not always choice worthy, the conclusion that pleasure cannot be considered a good clearly follows. By this method, one moves from that which is more obvious to that which is harder to grasp. Yet, Musonius points out, a teacher should use only as many arguments and proofs as necessary to make the point, taking into account the pedagogical needs of his pupils: the gifted ones will need fewer arguments, while those who are dull, either because of a weaker disposition or a wrong upbringing, will need more evidence for the point to register. The most convincing example, he claims, is a teacher who *acts* consistently with his words (see also 5 Hense/Lutz, discussed later in this chapter). Here Musonius agrees with Epictetus that theorizing, or drawing the right conclusions, is easier than practice, that is, living according to these insights (*Diss.* 1.26.3–4).

Physics appears to play a minimal role in Musonius Rufus' approach. Whereas Chrysippus famously defined the goal of human life as living according to nature, which included the nature both of individual human beings and of the universe (Diogenes Laertius 7.88), Musonius Rufus does not draw much attention to the universal dimension (17 p. 89 Hense) but tends to focus on human nature as different from that of the animals and the gods. Musonius does leave room for the notion of Zeus as the "ensouled law" (*nomos empsychos* 16 p. 87 Hense) and depicts humans as citizens in Zeus' city (i.e., the universe) (9 p. 42 Hense), but does not spell out the philosophical implications of this position.

Marcus Aurelius, in contrast, states emphatically that physics, like logic, is indispensable for the pursuit of philosophy, because views that are not based on the correct science of

nature cannot hold their own. He argues that in order to make progress one needs a strong theoretical foundation and the self-confidence that results from the correct knowledge applied to each particular case (10.9). Yet a prominent, and often debated, feature of Marcus Aurelius' writings is that he appears to leave open how exactly the universe is governed, tending instead to list alternatives, most often pitting the Stoic view of Providence against the Epicurean randomness of colliding atoms with a disjunctive "either ... or" structure. His strategy appears to be twofold. First, he holds that regardless of one's view of the universe, there are certain tenets about attitude and behavior to which one should always cling. And in some cases, he uses an *a fortiori* approach: if an Epicurean can manage to be content with his lot, how much more should a Stoic be so, given his or her belief that a god has made everything good? By this approach, one could argue, Marcus Aurelius puts physics in what he sees as its proper place, as subservient to ethics.

In *On Benefits* (7.1), Seneca does not leave any doubt that it is far more preferable to have a few maxims of practical philosophy at hand that will make us better and happier than a vast storehouse of recondite knowledge about nature and its hidden causes. But it is in the preface to the third book of his *Naturales quaestiones* that he solves the riddle of this quasi-skeptical approach to the study of nature. Physics and moral self-improvement are meant to reinforce each other, and only the physics that serves this mutual relation is worth pursuing. Understanding ourselves correctly implies understanding our place and role in the universe, how we relate to the divine principle, and, in the universal community, to other human beings.

In the final analysis, according to the later Stoics, it is not just logic or physics in the philosophical curriculum that is subservient to the correct way of life. So, too, is talking about rather than practicing ethics. As Musonius Rufus (5 Hense/Lutz) and Epictetus claim, one can hold discussions and write as much as one wants about the good life, but anyone with philosophical interests is ultimately judged by the same standard as a physician, a sailor, or a musician: it is what one accomplishes that matters. Musonius Rufus and Epictetus hereby also quietly subvert certain upper-class assumptions about the value of philosophy, as exemplified in Seneca's letter on the liberal arts discussed earlier (88). (Musonius Rufus, after all, taught the slave Epictetus.) Paradoxically, Musonius Rufus and Epictetus turn Seneca's notion of freedom on its head: even though they agree with Seneca that only virtue makes one truly free, they use the parallel of the arts and vocational training to underscore that philosophy, too, has to prove itself in its results. Or, as Epictetus puts it:

The builder does not come and say: *Listen to me lecturing on building*. He gets his contract for a house, builds it, and shows that he has the craft. You should act in the same sort of way: Eat like a human being, drink like a human being, and so too, dress, and marry, and father children, and play your roles as citizen; put up with abuse, and an inconsiderate brother, father, son, neighbor, fellow-traveler. Show all this to us, so that we can see what you have really learnt from the philosophers. (*Diss.* 3.21.1–6; trans. Long)

## 6. The Role of Philosophy, the Goal of Life

When Musonius Rufus locates the ideal relationship between teacher and pupil in an agrarian setting and recommends farming or being a shepherd as the best way of life for a philosopher, who should work with his own hands just like anybody else (11 Lutz/Hense), it

becomes obvious that we are dealing with a very specific concept of philosophical education, and one that sets itself in conscious opposition to the Platonic and Peripatetic traditions. Musonius Rufus argues that if work is balanced with leisure for study and discussion, this mode of interaction is the best because the teacher simultaneously sets an example by putting his principles into action and displaying virtue in his way of life (cf. also Seneca, *Ep.* 6.6).

To understand what is behind Musonius Rufus' recommendations, we need to see how theory and practice relate to each other in Stoicism, and especially in the later accounts. "Philosophy," Musonius Rufus claims, "is nothing else than to search out by reason what is right and proper, and by deeds to put it into practice" (14 end Lutz/Hense, cf. also 4, on philosophy as the art of becoming a good human being).

What sets especially later Stoicism apart is the view that all theory, including what we would call theory or philosophizing about ethics, must serve an ethics in action. Theory and practice are inextricably intertwined, with an emphasis on practice. But the latter is no longer confined to assuming a public role in a specific sociopolitical context, as it had been for Cicero.

Small wonder, then, that the later Stoics put so much emphasis on training (*meletê-askêsis*, as in Musonius Rufus 6 Lutz/Hense) as the indispensable bridge between theoretical insights and practice. This notion, which has connections with the Socratic and Cynic traditions, encompasses much more than Aristotle's habituation, which is meant to shape the lower, irrational aspects of the soul (as in *NE* 2). The Stoics, with the potential and debated exception of Posidonius, do not accept irrational aspects of the soul as existing independently from reason. Hence, training and habituation involve a human being's entire disposition, including the process of learning to use one's reason correctly. The Stoic notion of the good has this feature in common with its Platonic and Peripatetic counterparts that it is a radical departure from ordinary conceptions of happiness, and thus it is not easy to implement against prevailing practices, weaknesses in one's own disposition, and bad habits. Therefore, according to this view, pupils need all the help they can get to make these insights sufficiently their own or to acquire the right "disposition" (*ethos*, as in Musonius Rufus 5 Lutz/Hense) for putting them into practice under all circumstances.

To this end, Musonius Rufus (6 Lutz/Hense) stipulates exercises for both body and soul (also attributed to the Cynics, Diogenes Laertius 6.70), but holds that of the two, the care of the soul is the most important. He establishes an explicit connection between the exercises of the soul and demonstrations (1 Hense/Lutz): the training of the soul, he claims, involves having ready at hand (*procheirous*) the demonstrations concerning true (as opposed to apparent) good and evil, becoming accustomed (*ethizesthai*) to making the correct distinctions, and practicing (*meletan*) the avoidance of true evil and the pursuit of true good.

Here *askêsis*, it has to be noted, has not yet acquired its later connotations of "asceticism," though frugality and the endurance of hardships are recommended for the sake of self-control and temperance, which are essential if one does not want to be swept off one's feet by the pull of the wrong values (as in Musonius Rufus 18–20 Lutz/Hense). For instance, Epictetus urges his students to "on occasion, when you are very thirsty, take cold water into your mouth, and then spit it out, without telling anybody" (*Ench.* 47). But a good Stoic, as Seneca reminds us, is also capable of putting affluence and easier conditions to good use (*De vita beata* 20.3-end).

For the later Stoics, ethics in action means showing one's mettle in ordinary, everyday life circumstances and in society among one's given sociopolitical obligations.

For this reason, students are not meant to form settled attachments to a school, as increasingly happened, for instance, with the inner circles of the schools of Platonism. The knowledge and training acquired through education has to be portable and to become fully interiorized, “digested,” as it were (Epictetus, *Diss.* 3.21.1–3; *Ench.* 46; Seneca, *Ep.* 2.2–4, 84, *De Ben.* 7.2.1). Thus, Seneca and Epictetus show their own independence toward their Stoic predecessors and do not extol a Zeno, Cleanthes, or Chrysippus above all others (Bénatoui 2009; Reydam-Schils 2011). “We Stoics,” Seneca claims, “are not subjects of a despot: each of us lays claim to his own freedom” (*Ep.* 33.4). If Chrysippus took the liberty to disagree with his teacher Cleanthes, “why, then, following the example of Chrysippus himself, should not every man claim his own freedom?” (*Ep.* 113.23).

Epictetus and Musonius Rufus also downplay their own importance as philosophers—even though they do, on occasion, mention the benefits of studying under their guidance. Students are told sternly not to show off their philosophical knowledge (e.g., Epictetus, *Diss.* 1.26.9) and that external trappings, such as a certain dress code, do not make the philosopher. Many of the accounts preserved in Epictetus’ *Discourses* explicitly address the challenge of the transition from the school to everyday life. As they point out, it is quite a bit easier to display the correct attitude and behavior among like-minded people and peers than to hold on to what one has learned outside the school environment (Epictetus, *Diss.* 2.16.20–21). And if Epictetus devotes so much attention to this topic, it is precisely because his pupils are meant to return to their regular lives.

In the long run, and over the course of an entire lifetime, according to this view, teachers are there only to point the way (as Seneca and Epictetus indicate Chrysippus had done for them). It is self-education and monitoring one’s own progress as one goes through different situations in life that are to do the bulk of the work. Modes of such ongoing training include reading and excerpting philosophical works, refreshing one’s memory of key tenets so as to have these ready at hand (as the etymology of “manual” or Epictetus’ *Encheiridion* implies), engaging in conversations with others, witnessing one’s conversations with oneself, contemplating the order of the universe, or writing.

Although Seneca is not a teacher in the same sense as Musonius Rufus and Epictetus, he increasingly focuses on philosophical writings toward the end of his life and maps out his own moral progress and challenges, along with summaries and advice for his addressees and audience. Marcus Aurelius’ reflections, many of which were jotted down during military campaigns, are the clearest example of writing as ongoing training, especially if originally intended primarily for himself and not for a broader audience. (Epictetus attributed this kind of writing even to Socrates allegedly training himself in the art of refutation, raising objections and coming up with counterarguments, *Diss.* 2.1.32–33, 2.6.26–27). In those reflections, we find the most powerful man in the then known world, as measured by conventional standards, warning himself against completely identifying himself with his public role. “Make sure,” he tells himself, “that you are not turned into a Caesar,” without leaving space for the self to continue groping for that which truly matters. In the course of interpreting Homer and Virgil, being trained in delivering speeches, and acquiring other forms of learning, all the way up to one’s philosophical training, one should, according to the later Stoics, aim toward “a holy disposition and acts that serve the common good” (6.30), as Marcus Aurelius succinctly rendered the purpose of human life.

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PART III

**The Spread and Development  
of Greek Schooling in the  
Hellenistic Era**

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## CHAPTER 8

# Learning to Read and Write

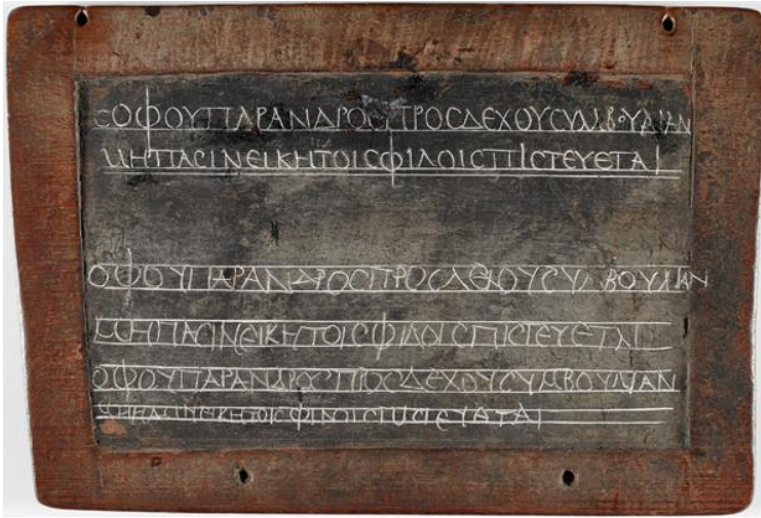
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*William A. Johnson*

Understanding how the Greeks taught their children to read and to write will require following the thread of two somewhat contrary narratives. First, there is the conceptual system of how one goes about learning the art of being literate—often labeled with the Latin term, *ordo docendi* (“the order of teaching”)—a fixed sequence by which the elements of reading and writing are introduced. But, second, it will be important to review what we can see of the actual process of instruction, which, as real-world matters tend to be, turns out to be a considerably messier affair, with an interestingly diverse range of outcomes and goals.

### 1. Ordo Docendi

The conceptual series that grounded the learning process was a progressive movement from small to larger units: letter, syllable, word, and sentence. The ancient approach to learning the ABCs at first has a comforting familiarity about it. The letters are memorized in order, at least sometimes helped by a chant or song (so in a later time: Jerome, *Ep.* 107.4). Ancient writers mention tactile drills, such as following grooves of the letter shapes in a piece of wood, or fingering letters made out of wood or ivory; using top and bottom guidelines (Figure 8.1), or tracing letters lightly sketched on waxed tablets (Plato, *Prot.* 326d, Quintilian 1.1.27, 5.14.31, 10.2.2, Seneca, *Ep.* 94.51; Muir 1984). We find scattered in the archaeological record copious evidence of written alphabetic exercises: students practicing their alphas, betas, and gammas wrote them on walls, on wax and wooden tablets, on ostraca (broken bits of pottery: a common scrap writing material in antiquity), and on papyrus (ancient paper). From the many surviving exercises on ostraca and papyri, we also, however, find alphabetic drills that strike us as a bit odd. Students were asked to practice a variety of what has been dubbed “the relentless gymnastics of the alphabet” (Cribiore 2001: 164): writing the alphabet backwards as



**Figure 8.1** Wax tablet, schoolboy's exercise. Approximately 2nd c. CE. The two lines at the top, from the comic poet Menander, are written by the teacher as a model. Below, the student has copied it letter by letter in a clumsy hand. Note that the first, somewhat faint letter of the teacher's model is omitted by the student in both copies, a sign of how little the student understood what the lines read. (British Library Add. 34186. © The British Library Board.)

well as forwards; or skipping every second or third letter; or writing first letter, last letter, second letter, second-to-last letter and so forth—analogous to asking our early learners to puzzle out how to write *azbycxdwefugthsirjqlplomn*.

From even these quick examples, three thematic points arise that will exercise us repeatedly. First, from the ancient perspective, rather monotonous exercises are simply the stuff of disciplined learning; no recourse to Sesame Street is to be envisioned here, but rather an instructor with serious purpose and, if necessary, a stick. Second, and more sympathetically, we must attune ourselves to educational goals that differ from our own. Memory was more valued for its own sake, for example; the task of reading was more challenging—as we will see later—and thus thorough practice in the basics was considered essential. Third, we must not assume facetiously that training pre-literate students to read Greek would or should match training in modern Western languages. In this case, there is a discernible method to the seeming madness of these alphabetic gymnastics. Greeks, of course, did not use Arabic numerals, and instead, quite naturally, used the alphabet (with a couple of add-ons) as their means for counting: alpha = 1, beta = 2, gamma = 3. Thus, the mental gymnastics here has to do not only with rote memorization but also with learning to use letters to *calculate*: for a student to practice skipping one or two letters in writing the alphabet is to practice counting by twos or threes—1, 3, 5, 7, 9 or 1, 4, 8—just as any modern early learner might do. (This oversimplifies somewhat—counting in Greek gets more complicated when you get past 10—but the point stands that numeracy in Greek culture required firm, exact control over the location of letters in the alphabetic sequence) (Criboire 2001: 167).

The next step in learning to read was to command the *syllabaries*—by which is meant the systematic study of the possible syllables. In English terms, the equivalent would be practicing by chant and writing *ba be bi bo bu, ca ce ci co cu, da de di do du*, etc.; followed by *bab, beb, bib, bob, bub, cac, cec, cic, coc, cuc*, etc.; and so on. This too will strike modern educators as tedious and odd, though historians of education will know that in English, too, syllabaries were a standard part of learning to read up into the nineteenth century. In Greek, use of syllabaries as an essential component in learning to read shows up as early as we can see. An incised abecedarium with syllabary survives from Etruria from the late seventh century BCE (see Johnson 2011: 452), shortly after the adaptation of the Greek script for Etruscan, and not so long after the invention of the Greek alphabet itself (of disputed date, but commonly assigned to the ninth century BCE). The fifth-century BC comedian Kallias wrote a curious play, the *Alphabet Show*, whose chorus were “women in pairs that kept rhythm together and sang in the following way: “Beta alpha ba, Beta ei [i.e. epsilon] be, Beta eta bē, beta iota bi, beta o [i.e. omicron] bo, beta u bu, beta ō [i.e. omega] bō,” and again in a strophe that matches in its song and rhythm, “gamma alpha, gamma ei, gamma eta, gamma iota, gamma o, gamma u, gamma ō,” and likewise for the rest of the syllables one by one . . .” (Athenaeus, *Deipnosoph.* 10.453.d). This alludes comically to the singsong chants employed by students in learning the syllabic combinations. Actual examples make clear that in addition to biliteral combinations (*ba, be, bē, bi, bo, bu, bō*), trilateral (such as *bra, bre*, etc., or *bar, ber*, etc.) and even quadrilateral exercises (*bras, bres*, etc.) came into play; the earliest example is a fourth-century BC ostrakon (IG II<sup>2</sup> 2784; Johnson 2011: 446). The syllabary section of a schoolteacher’s handbook on papyrus from the third century BCE (Guéraud 1938) starts with two-letter combinations, followed by selected trilateral and quadrilateral syllables, encompassing several columns and, no doubt, a great deal of time and effort on the part of the students.

Again, then, we see the characteristic movement from simple unit to the more complex, with a steady focus on the rote, the systematic drill. Extant written attempts by students transcribing syllabaries exhibit clumsy letter forms suggesting, as one would expect, that syllabaries formed an early part of reading education (Criore 1996), and emphasis in the sources on thorough memorizing of the syllables is common. Here are two illustrative remarks, the first Greek and the second Roman: (1) Dionysius of Halicarnassus (first c. BCE): “When we are taught to read, first we learn by heart the names of the letters, then their shapes and their values, then, in the same way, the syllables and their effects, and finally words and their properties . . . . And when we have acquired knowledge of these things, we begin to write and read, syllable by syllable and slowly at first.” (*de Comp. Verb.* 25 fin., trans. Usher). (2) Quintilian (first c. CE): “No short-cut is possible with regard to the syllables. They must all be memorized thoroughly and there must be no putting off the most difficult of them, as is commonly done, since that leads to an unpleasant surprise when the student needs to spell the words” (*Inst. Or.* 1.1.30). We do not know how long a student might work on the alphabet and syllabaries—our only direct evidence is Plato’s recommendation of three years for a student to “learn the letters” (*Laws* 7.809e)—but that it was a fairly long time is certain.

This enthusiasm for what seem to us mind-numbing rote exercises must be set alongside different goals and a different reading environment, as already remarked. In the case of syllabaries, there are three ways by which we can understand these drills as

foundational training, consistent with ancient perspectives and contexts (Johnson 2011: 457–460). (1) *Systematic exercise in common alphabetic combinations*. For the student still hesitant in translating the alphabetic characters to sound, practice with syllabaries allows quick repetition of the elements in an unchallenging context. Reading *ba be bi bo bu ca ce ci co cu da de di do du* allows the student to drill rather than to sound out or think through, and makes the translation of syllable to sound an automatic reflex. In many ways, this procedure is analogous to practicing scales on a musical instrument, a tedious drill that also continues to be recognized as foundational to mastery of an instrument. (2) *Phonological training and elocution*. Rhetoric was an important part of education in the ancient world—one of the twin goals (alongside philosophy) for higher elite education—and an essential part of the practice with syllables was proper articulation, the fostering of a clear, distinct manner of speaking appropriate to the educated class. This was quintessential to public speaking, of course, but in a more general way the trained ability to read aloud to one’s peers in an educated manner was important to reading in Greece, as among elites in most pre-modern societies (Johnson 2010, esp. 26–31). There is ancient evidence that teachers over a wide range of time were focused on this: Manuzius (c. 1500 AD) brings out what is already implicit in Quintilian (*Inst. Or.* 1.5.6) when he says that schoolboys need to learn well the syllables so as not to commit barbarisms in writing and speaking; specifically, he writes, the boy well trained in syllables “will neither spell nor pronounce *caelli caellorum*, or *allius allia alliud* with a double -l- as many are accustomed to do, nor will he put two consonants where there should be only one, nor one where there are two” (see Johnson 2011: 459). Jerome (*Ep.* 107.4, fourth c. CE) in advising on the early education of girls bluntly declares: “The very sound of the letters, and thus also the first lesson in them, comes out differently from the lips of an educated man, and that of a rustic.” (3) *Reading by groups of letters*. A less obvious benefit of studying syllabaries is that it accustomed pre-literate readers to seeing the shapes of the letter groups for each syllable. Greek literary texts were written without word breaks, in a continuous stream of letters (known as *scriptio continua*; also characteristic of Roman texts from the first century onward), which made learning to read more challenging. In that context, thorough training in being able to see clearly the contours of the syllables was an important first step in distinguishing the words from one another. Moreover, in ancient Greek many of the syllables are morphemically determining, that is, many of the one- or two-syllable groups are prefixes, suffixes, or word roots that deliver meaning. For example, in the Greek word *ape-grafe-to* (“he had something written out”), each element has meaning: *ape-* means “out”, with an augment that indicates past tense, *grafe-* is the word root, meaning “write”, *-to* is the ending, indicating that he had it done. The ability to pick out instantly the syllables—and often thus also the morphemes—from the undifferentiated stream of letters was an essential part of learning to read *scriptio continua* fluidly (Figure 8.2).

As one might expect, the next step in the *ordo docendi* is to study individual words. Here, too, the exercise is systematically organized so as to move from simple to more complex, beginning with monosyllabic words, then disyllabic, and working up to words of four or five syllables (as we see in two extant school handbooks: Collart 1936; Géraud-Jouguet 1938) (Figure 8.3). Multisyllabic words have the syllable divisions marked, from which we infer that these lists can be used for further syllabary practice. Almost predictably, there are aspects of these lists that strike us as odd. The one-syllable words contain

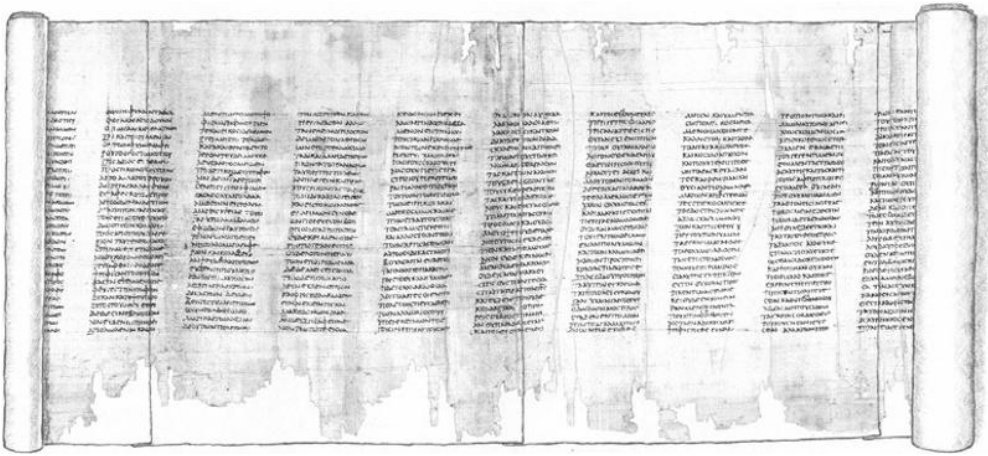


Figure 8.2 Ancient Greek book roll. Note the undifferentiated stream of letters, without word spaces. (© William A. Johnson.)



24	AP : KTOC :		35	AI : I :	108	[I : ]P :
25	RE : PEYC :		36	ME : NE] :	109	[AE : IAI : ] :
26	NEI : AEC :		37	AM : OI : MA] :	110	[NE : WN : CO : O] :
27	FO : AC :	81	AC : KA : AA : O] :	111	[THC : KA : KIC : TH] :	
28	FOY : BEYC :	82	E : AE : OI : UNP : ] :	112	DAI : MO : NUN] : E : OI : E : CAI :	
29	A : KNON] :	83	AN TI MA XOC :	113	OI : AO : TI : MI : AC PAI : MH : CY : FE] :	
30	ZH : OOC :	84	KA AI MA XOC :	114	A : AI : KOC I H OI : OC :	
31	AI : AC :	85	PO AY NEI KHC :	115	POA : AOC] : DE COI : KOYC : KAI :	
32	TEY : KFOC :	86	E : TE O : KARC :	116	PO : AEC : EY : DAI : MO : NAC :	
33	OH : PUN] :	87	IP : PO : ME : O] WN :	117	EI : CHA : OI : KAI : EIC : HA : OI] :	
		88	AN : TI : AOI : XOC] :	118	E : PO : AE : O] PAI : TAY] : XPY] : ME : N] WN] :	

Figure 8.3 A schoolmaster's model book, here showing the word lists. Note the divisions between syllables and the progression from words of two syllables to three, four, and five, followed then by a passage from Euripides. Cairo, Egyptian Museum inv. 65445. (Reprinted with permission from Gueraud-Jouguet 1936.)

not only common words like *mus* (mouse) and *nous* (mind) but *roks* (ῥώξ), a word of some obscurity that occurs once only, in the *Odyssey*, and *ksar* (ξάρ), a word otherwise unknown (examples from *P.Bour.* 1=Collart, 1936). The monosyllabic lists contain also an unusual number of words that are not entirely rare, but full of consonant clusters: *lungks* (λύγξ, lynx), *strangks* (στράγξ, drop), *klangks* (κλάγξ, howl), *klóps* (κλώψ, thief), *knaks* (κνάξ, itch). For multisyllabic words, too, there is a tendency toward words that are uncommon or hard to pronounce, and also with a strong emphasis on mythological and other proper names from literary sources. The emphasis on words difficult to pronounce matches our earlier observation that elocution was an important consideration

in learning to read. The tendency went to the extent of schoolmasters having their students memorize and practice bizarre artificial words like *knakszbich* (κναξζβίχ) and *zbuchthedon* (ζβουχθηδόν). (These are sometimes claimed as medical terms, following a remark in Clement, but they are in any case otherwise unexampled consonantal sequences for ancient Greek.) The importance of such pronunciation exercises is remarked in literary sources as well: Clement of Alexandria speaks to this (*Strom.* 5.8.48–9) as does Quintilian (1.1.37), who calls these sequences by the Greek *chalinoi*, “bridles”—exercises designed, that is, to tame and train the tongue. The emphasis on proper names from high literature is also consistent with the world view that is gradually becoming apparent to us: not only do such names familiarize the student with cultural icons of the glorious Greek past, but, importantly, they signal the goal of the system, which is designed as the first steps toward becoming truly *educated*. Under elite tutelage, the study of words could be surprisingly involved: Dionysius of Halicarnassus advises that *before* learning to read the student work with word lists to learn “the parts of speech—I mean nouns, verbs, conjunctions, and the properties of these—the shortening and lengthening of syllables, the high and low pitch of accents, the genders, cases, numbers, moods, and countless other related things” (*Dem.* 52, trans. after Ushner). This was not, that is, a system geared toward functional literacy, or indeed literacy easily or quickly gained.

Logically, one might expect the next step to be exercises with clauses or very short sentences. The latter is sometimes found: one surviving tablet preserves, for example, “The learning of letters is the beginning of wisdom”; and single line verses from Menander and brief moralistic aphorisms in prose seem to have become common, at least from the second century onward. But often, whether instead or in addition, the habit was to introduce snippets or even entire passages from authors like Homer or Euripides, which were written in verse and in an antiquated Greek that was undoubtedly very challenging for early students—much like introducing our emerging readers immediately to Chaucer and Shakespeare. Papyrus evidence shows that word divisions would be marked to help the young students, at least at first (recall that literary texts would normally have no word separation). This immediate turn to high literature remains, however, a remarkable circumstance, one that confounded earlier historians of education (e.g., Marrou 1956: 153–154). In recent years, though, scholars have come to understand that these longer maxims and short passages were more likely used for writing exercises (Criore 1996), or for reading in the sense of material for pronunciation and phrasing exercises. Christians may recall how opaque the Nicene Creed was when memorized as a young child; for Jewish children the significance of the texts read and sung at the annual Seder becomes understandable only gradually; and other religions have much the same sorts of rote training for central but difficult texts. So, too, in Greece it appears that children were practicing handwriting and elocution using verses that they could not fully understand, but that nonetheless conveyed the sense of an impressive literary culture inhabited by quintessentially Greek gods and heroes and historical figures of consequence.

This, then, was the *conceptual* system, and *qua* system it was remarkably stable over time and place. As we have seen, critical elements of the *ordo* show up in the earliest sources we can reasonably expect to have. By Hellenistic times if not before, the entirety of this conceptual system was firmly in place, and this constituted the system adopted by Roman educators as well. Indeed, we now know that the basic contour of the system—alphabet,

syllabaries, word lists by syllable count, maxims and/or poetic passages—is characteristic of Latin and Greek education through the Middle Ages, and of early modern education throughout Europe from England to Russia (Johnson 2011); and this Western notion of the *ordo* for early reading education came under the pressure of reform only in the early nineteenth century. The following chart demonstrates the striking similarity of the contents of the third-century BCE schoolmaster’s handbook we have cited before (Guéraud 1938) and Webster’s “ole blue-back,” the reading primer that sold 100 million copies and dominated instruction in the United States up until the last century (from Johnson 2011):

Webster’s Ole Blue-Back, United States (1783, rev. ed. 1831)	Schoolmaster’s Text from Egypt (third c. BCE)
1. Alphabet.	1. [Alphabet] (in lacuna: cf. P. Bour. 1=Collart 1936)
2. Syllabaries: six biliteral lessons; five trilateral lessons; one quadrilateral lesson.	2. Syllabaries: biliteral, trilateral, quadrilateral lessons.
3. Word lists: 1-syllable words, 2-syllable words, 3-syllable words, 4-syllable words; difficult or irregular monosyllables.	3. Word lists: 1-syllable words, 2-syllable words, 3-syllable words, 4-syllable words, 5-syllable words. These occur in successive columns at the left with thematic word lists interspersed at the right.
4. Moralistic reading materials.	4. Thematic word lists interspersed within the syllabic word lists: names of months, of divinities, of rivers (etc.).
5. Thematic word lists (grouped by category) interspersed with simple reading matter, usually of a moralizing nature; lists of names.	5. Poetic anthology, at first with the syllables boundaries marked.
6. Additional reading matter.	6. Mathematical exercise.

Older histories of education have left the story more or less so (Marrou 1956; Bonner 1977). But the emphasis on this skeletal sequence we call the *ordo docendi* obscures the real-world situation in important ways, and it is to the many complexities teased out by more recent scholarship that we now turn (esp. Criore 2001; Morgan 1998).

## 2. Elementary Schooling in Antiquity: Actuality versus Model

We have lots of bits of evidence that add up to a reasonably coherent view of the ways students actually learned to read and write, even if, as already remarked, these real-world situations are considerably more messy than the tidy sequence that the *ordo* implies. Chapter 9 will examine in some detail the institutional environments in which learning took place, but we need here to register immediately some crucial differences in the very notion of schooling. First is the importance of the home. Our elite literary sources tell us about private tutors for the wealthy, and elite sources are echoed by letters surviving on papyri in suggesting that students might attend a particular master, sometimes remote

from home—and study with a master might include early education (see examples collected in Joyal et al. 2009: 179–183). We also have evidence—though very scattered—of occasional institutions, always in cities, that seem to resemble our notion of a “public school” (Harris 1989: 130–133; Joyal et al. 2009: 134–140, 183–185). But it is a fair assumption that for non-elite, learning to read and write often happened under the tutelage of parents or others in the home or local community who knew something about the learning of letters, and that this might well be less focused and sustained than the literary education envisioned under the *ordo*. This observation raises the interesting question of why non-elite might be interested in basic literacy, which we will tackle in a moment; but the central point here is that much of the learning of letters was undoubtedly in-house, using a “teacher” who was a family member or friend, who simply mimicked whatever methods he or she had experienced as a child; that the procedure might be far less than formal or thorough; and that the outcome might be limited.

Even for those lucky enough to study with a someone formally designated a teacher, there is good evidence that the environment was considerably more chaotic than anything many of us are directly familiar with. Commonly cited is an interesting late source that gives us the most detailed depiction of a “classroom” that we have from antiquity (what survives is from the medieval period, but the scene seems to go back to at least the early third century CE). A schoolboy reports on his day, and part of that reads:

I go to school. I enter and I say, “Good morning, teacher.” He gives me a kiss and says hello to me. My slave gives me the tablets, the writing case; I take out the stylus and sit down at my place: I erase and copy according to the model. Afterwards I show my writing to the teacher, who makes every kind of correction. He asks me to read and then I give the text to another pupil; I learn the sayings and I recite them. “Give me dictation,” I ask. Another student dictates to me ... When the teacher bids them, the little ones engage in letters and syllables, and one of the older students pronounces these aloud for them. Others recite in order the words to the assistant teacher and write verses. Being in the first group, I take a dictation. Then, after sitting down, I study commentaries, glosses, and the handbook of grammar. *Corpus Glossiorum Latinorum* iii 639–640, 646 (trans. Cribiore 2001: 15)

There are many details of interest here: the scene is busy and noisy, with many students practicing out-loud drills at once even while others sit and study; there seem to be no writing desks (note that only after writing what is dictated does the student sit down); “primary” and “secondary” students work in the same classroom; instruction is divided among teacher, assistant teacher, older students, even peers. The scene is reminiscent of the pioneer classroom of nineteenth-century America (Cribiore 2001: 17), or of schoolhouses in rural China today, and offers a firm corrective to anachronistic mental pictures of what a “school” might mean. We have good reason to believe that this image is not so different from what we might find in earlier antiquity as well. Quintilian in the first century gives a briefer depiction of teacher–student interactions that seems of a piece with this one (1.2.11; Johnson 2010: 30). Moreover, not all “schools” were even this ordered. Schooling that took place outside under porticos was commonplace: in the second century, Martial, for instance, complains of schoolmasters who disturb his sleep by causing too much street noise before first light (*Ep.* 9.68). Cribiore (2001: 135, figures 10 and 17; cf. pp. 21–28) rightly points to “schools” in present-day Egypt and Africa that work in much the same way, where



teachers work with students at disparate educational levels under shaded outdoor spaces off noisy city streets. From Hellenistic Alexandria, we have a crudely comic literary depiction of a schoolboy who does not yet know his syllables (“he does not know enough to repeat the *alpha* part of the syllabary unless someone shouts it at him five times”), and yet in the same classroom he is also busy practicing (again with little success) recitation of speeches from tragedy (Herodas, *Mimes* 3.22–36); the parents try to be involved in helping with the schooling (24–26, 37–38) but the teacher’s solution is to beat the boy into submission—he will use a bull’s-tail whip to make the boy “better behaved than a girl” (66ff).

From such examples, we take away the vivid sense of a schooling that was not often so orderly, and considerably more dependent on an individual teacher, than our literary elite sources might have us imagine. The evidence from papyri of written school exercises becomes interesting, then, in several directions. First, and importantly, the written exercises in broad sketch match the elements described by the *ordo*: abcedaria, syllabaries, word lists, and model verses are all amply in evidence (see catalog in Cribiore 1996), and we can readily imagine these are but the few written examples to survive from what was an industry of rote drilling, often (as we have seen) oral: thus, for example, the relatively fewer syllabaries on papyrus are witness not to lack of use (*pace* Morgan 1998: 56, 70), but more probably evidence that syllabary drills were more commonly executed out-loud or on wax tablets, just as our literary sources suggest. In general, then, we find considerable substantiation for the notion that learning to read and write made use of these time-honored elements. Indeed, given the relative informality of the schooling, and the dominance of tradition within ancient society, it seems unavoidable that the “natural” way to teach someone how to read would be to use the elements by which one was taught oneself. Along these lines, it is worth a slight detour to remark that the basics of the *ordo* itself—that progression from character to syllable to word list to sayings—has intriguing parallels in the near-Eastern tradition of scribal instruction, a tradition that goes back well into the second millennium BCE (Veldhuis 1997; Johnson 2011).

Yet the papyri give counter indications as well. Cribiore’s painstaking study of the school exercises (1996) has revealed the interesting fact that students were made to copy short texts, such as aphorisms or single-line verses—texts that they may well have memorized for recitation—without being able to understand what they were writing. The great number and types of errors made in this type of copying, as well as the sometimes extreme uncertainty in forming the letters, are consistent with what Cribiore (2001: 169) calls the “passive dependence on a model,” a letter-by-letter copying exercise for students without the ability to read. This evidence is important not simply because it calls into question the fixed sequence described by ancient theorists, but also because it suggests a divergence between the goals as well as the process of learning to read and learning to write. Penmanship and the simple ability to copy had considerable value in and of themselves. The papyri also reveal one other bit of evidence that is crucial for our understanding: *advanced* written exercises—that is, advanced rhetorical and other exercises that would form the subject matter past the grammarian’s curriculum (see Chapter 10)—are, in fact, rather few, relative to the elementary ones. That is, exactly the sort of exercise one might most expect to survive on papyrus is relatively rare. As Morgan (1998: 50–52, 64–65) suggests, this seems a

fairly firm indication that most students, especially those outside major cities, did not advance past the elementary learning of letters.

All this brings us to the interesting—and rather urgent—question of the motivation to acquire elementary literacy in antiquity. Antiquity had, of course, very different ideas about literacy: no one seriously advocated universal literacy, idealistic philosophers aside; public schools seem to have been the exception rather than the rule, and were certainly not an expectation of the state; education itself, as already mentioned, was oriented towards liberal arts—knowledge of poetry, training in philosophy and rhetoric. For the elite, literacy was fundamental to belonging among “the educated” (*oi pepaideumenoi*), which in many cosmopolitan settings largely overlapped with the ruling class (broadly on this topic, Johnson 2010); and this could extend to elite women and to the elite entourage more generally, including favored servants. But for the non-elite, the situation is less clear. There seems to have been little or no shame for a non-elite not to know how to read, and use of intermediaries was widespread (Youtie 1971, 1975; Harris 1989: 33–35, 144–145)—for legal matters, the local scribe or a kinsman could help, and for public inscriptions it was necessary only that someone read aloud for those who could not. It is folly to try to attach percentages (*pace* Harris 1989), but the papyri alone suggest that a substantial number and range of people would have learned the rudiments of reading and writing, at least to the point of being able to write their own names, and would have been able to read if to a limited extent, to control basic numeracy (counting), and to know some of the aphoristic materials common to Greek culture. To what end did they do this?

The obvious answer to this question is that the goals were various, but let us flesh that out a bit. Of course, laying claim to Greek identity—bound tightly with the literary heritage—was an important goal for many, especially the large number of Greeks who lived not in Greece but around the Mediterranean (in the wake of Alexander’s conquests in the fourth century BCE and the conquest of Greece by Rome in the second). But limited literacy could also be directly useful in a variety of real-world situations. We find evidence of schools that seem to have functional literacy as their end. Horace, for example, writing in a Roman context in the first century BCE, assumes that his readers will understand the difference latent in his father’s critical choice not to send him to study alongside the “sons of great centurions” but rather to Rome, “to be taught those studies which any equestrian or senator would teach his own” (Hor., *Sat.* 1.71–78). Some teachers, that is, focused on the sort of literacy requisite for logistical operations at middle and upper levels of the military (Harris 1989: 166–167) rather than on a path oriented toward literary studies. This “centurion’s literacy” need not have been very advanced: necessary was only being able to set the password, issue formulaic orders, write brief (and, again, formulaic) letters, and that limitation is visible in the documents excavated at the Roman garrison at Vindolanda despite an impressive range of different writers (Bowman 2003). Something like the centurion’s choice—a basic schooling inadequate as training for a future poet—would have been suitable for non-elites who aimed at middle-level posts in the military or government, and this was as true of the Hellenistic as of the Roman period. Moreover, elementary schooling could be foundational for a variety of trained apprenticeships. This could include scribes, of course: we have a papyrus document from the second century that shows us how such an apprenticeship was set up

(*POxy* 724; cf. Cologne papyrus inv. 164), and there is some evidence of larger scribal training shops as well (Cribiore 2001: 182–183). But this could also include workers who made more limited use of reading, writing, and numeracy, such as bankers, merchants, traders, and certain artisans—that plurality of different, often limited “literacies” so characteristic of the ancient world (Thomas 2009). Greg Woolf (2009: 57–58) has recently pointed, for example, to the sort of highly specialized “literacy” required of those who traded in olive oil: ancient storage jars for olive oil had curiously abbreviated stamps that were unintelligible outside the industry, designating critical data like weight, origin, and the names of those doing the checking; such traders might also need to be numerate to handle accounts. One can well imagine that these merchants as a matter of course began with traditional elementary reading and writing instruction before being trained to full “literacy” in the specialty task; and yet it is also probable that most such traders were not “literate” in the sense of being competent to read a book roll containing Plato or Sophocles, and perhaps not even so much as to be able to write and read a brief letter. The demands on such a reader were tightly circumscribed. Learning to read and write was, in short, preliminary education with a wide spectrum of possible outcomes, including as an end in itself, and often, probably usually, it did not function as “primary” schooling looking toward “secondary” education in a school setting.

I end with one of the most illuminating examples of how differently literacy—both its practice and aspirations—played out in antiquity. This is the story of Petaus, son of Petaus, of the village Ptolemais Hormou in Graeco-Roman Egypt, a much-cited example first brought to notice by the distinguished Michigan papyrologist Herbert Youtie (1966). Petaus held the position of the village clerk (*kommogrammateus*), yet we have from the sands of Egypt several documents that show his subscription in surprisingly clumsy, uncertain lettering. The phenomenon of a village clerk who is not fully in command of his letters, or even described as an illiterate, is known from elsewhere (e.g., the clerk Ischyriion of Tamaus: *P. Petaus* 11), but in the case of Petaus we have a sheet on which he practices his subscription. In painfully executed letters, he copies the subscription formula, “I Petaus, village clerk, have submitted [this document],” one line after the other. On the fifth line of this worksheet he mistakenly leaves out a letter in the verb, yet continues to copy the—now garbled—subscription seven more times (*P. Petaus* 121). What is doubly interesting is that this Petaus had a brother, Theon, who could competently write out the entirety of a loan contract that he and his brother shared (*P. Petaus* 31). The example has, then, a double fascination. First, it shows how even an official with the title “clerk” could function by using his very limited competency in letters and depending on the scribal staff. Limited literacy had, ironically, a broader functionality, since, as mentioned, society had a variety of mechanisms by which those who were less literate could get along, including in rather advanced positions—Petaus, note, did not suffer financially or socially from his learning deficiency. Second, though, it shows how very different the educational outcomes could be even for two brothers from the same, moderately wealthy family (Cribiore 2001: 172). In learning to read and write, there seems to be not only a wide range in the goals and formality of instruction, but also considerably more dependence on individual persistence and motivation than on the state or societal pressures typical of our modern era.

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## CHAPTER 9

# School Structures, Apparatus, and Materials

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In trying to evaluate the evidence for ancient schooling, it is important to bear in mind that what we regard as essential elements of modern education are relatively recent acquisitions. Mass schooling started only in the nineteenth century, and education began to be sponsored by the state in the twentieth century. The stability and permanence of modern learning centers that persist independent of their initial organizers and instructors were unheard of in antiquity, where the fate of a school often depended on that of a teacher, and so it might cease to exist when the latter moved or died. In his influential book on ancient literacy, William Harris regarded a system of schools as essential to reinforce and spread literacy and pointed to the negative consequences of the apparent lack of such a network in Greek and Roman antiquity (Harris 1989). Though it is irrefutable that mass literacy did not exist in ancient societies, the nature of the evidence and the frequent silence of the sources must be taken into account if one wants to acquire some knowledge of the quality and quantity of schools in antiquity. The literary sources tend to overlook primary education that did not exclusively serve the elite and rarely mention the premises where it took place, but the argument *ex silentio* has limited value. A definite imbalance exists between the material evidence for schools and the transmission not only of basic literacy but also of higher education and culture. Teaching and learning could take place in a variety of localities and not necessarily in buildings dedicated to this purpose (I shall refer to such purpose-built or designed locations as dedicated schools), so it is necessary to be alert to a spectrum of possible accommodations. When considering the physical conditions of schools, moreover, one must draw a line between primary education, frequently characterized by lack of privacy and makeshift accommodations, and secondary education, which was more formal and better organized. In what follows, I will use a broad definition of “school,” trying to identify not only (when it is possible) specific premises where education took place but also activities and agents that point to teaching and learning. I will cover the scanty information about schools in Greece and Rome that emerges mostly from incidental references and from the literary evidence.

In the second part of this chapter, I will move to Greco-Roman Egypt, where there is more concrete evidence of schooling, including archaeological remains. I will focus especially on schools of Greek education there that have recently come to light.

## 1. Primary Education in the Archaic and Classical Periods

The literary sources mention two dedicated school buildings in the early fifth century BCE, in the Aegean islands of Chios and Astypalaea (Hdt. 6.27.2 and Paus. 6.9.6–7). In both cases, the roofs collapsed killing 120 and 60 boys, respectively. Several remarkable points emerge from these references: the location of the schools in inconspicuous localities of the Greek world; the large number of students who attended; and the fact that a great loss of human life triggered the brief allusion of these writers who, moreover, did not report that such schools were newly established or out of the ordinary. In his description of the old, conservative education, Aristophanes (*Clouds* 963–976) locates some educational activities such as marching in the snow or sitting together on the sand as taking place in the open air. But his evidence does not rule out educational activities in closed premises, because in the same passage he seems to refer only to music and athletic education, not to instruction in letters. Another exceptional report of a massacre of children in 413 reveals the existence of a school in the small city of Mycalessus in Boeotia that was destroyed by Thracian mercenaries. In reporting the annihilation of the population, Thucydides (7.29.5) mentions the slaughter of all the boys who had just entered “the largest school” of the city. That a small center like Mycalessus possessed several schools is a tantalizing piece of information. It is true that the details concerning the existence of schools in this period are few and isolated, but their significance derives from the fact that the literary sources did not report that the schools in question were something exceptional. They seem to have considered them as a normal feature of society. This may suggest that these schools were the tip of the iceberg and that a network of schools existed, especially in cities.

Athens in particular must have had schools of various sizes throughout the fifth century, and maybe even before, but Attic red-figure vases provide the only evidence for education here. Educational scenes are often portrayed on the vases either inside buildings or outside (Immerwahr 1964, 1973; Beck 1975). Most often, the iconography of a school scene consists of teachers sitting on imposing chairs (or on low chairs if they were assistants) and students standing in front of them holding book rolls and tablets. Some of these objects are hanging on the walls together with lyres, geometrical instruments, and bags for gymnastics. The most complete scene is portrayed on the Douris cup (Immerwahr 1964: 18–19) from the fifth century in which an assistant teacher holds open a diptych of tablets that looks like a modern laptop. Writing implements also appear on walls in domestic settings in scenes that include women in their quarters. This seems to indicate that there was some education for girls (cf. Cribiore 2001: 22–33). We should not overlook the possibility of primary education taking place within the family, which must have occurred frequently (especially for girls) even though it is rarely documented. In addition, some of the vases with school scenes hint at education taking place in the open air where the setting is defined by the presence of trees. It is unclear, however, how

many of these scenes relate to primary instruction; and the Douris cup, for example, where the teacher holds a roll with epic poetry, probably refers to more advanced education.

### *a. Primary Schools in the Hellenistic Period*

By this time, every city in Greece must have possessed schools, even though the testimony of Plato in the *Laws* in favor of universal education for males and females represents only an ideal that did not materialize (see also Diodorus Siculus 12.12.4 on universal education for boys). In the third and second centuries BCE, the existence of educational foundations in Teos, Miletus, Delphi, and Rhodes testify that education had become a civic concern. Wealthy citizens offered considerable sums of money to these cities to pay for teachers of boys (*SIG*<sup>3</sup> 577, 578, 672 and Polybius 31.31.1). In Teos, teachers were also supposed to teach girls (*SIG*<sup>3</sup> 578, lines 9–10). It is likely that other similar benefactions, for which there is no direct evidence, existed in this period.

The literary evidence also shows that schools were commonly part of Greek life. In the third century, Herodas, who is connected with the southeastern Aegean and Alexandria, portrays in the mime *Didaskalos* a school scene situated in some kind of building with doors featuring representations of the Muses, which a boy, who is flogged because of his indolence, invokes. It is difficult to be certain, however, whether this teacher imparted his lessons to boys in a dedicated school building or a rented space in a private house or even his own quarters.

## 2. Roman Schools

The existence of dedicated schools is rarely documented in the Roman period, either in archaeology or in the literary sources (with the exception of Egypt considered later). Of course, in both Rome and the provinces, there were schools of every size that occupied closed buildings during at least the cold months, but our ability to identify them is quite limited. The stone benches that are a feature of schools in Egypt were not an indispensable element in Rome since children could sit on the ground, and some benches and teachers' chairs might be made of perishable material. A suggestive piece of evidence for an enclosed school which was attended by students of various ages and levels comes from the *Hermeneumata* (also called *Colloquia*), educational handbooks in Greek and Latin that probably came from third-century Gaul and are preserved in medieval manuscripts in several versions. Vignettes representing the daily routines of school life in these handbooks usually portray school activities as taking place in a large room inside a building which permitted the presence of more than one teacher. Here students had their own places to sit where they wrote and studied (e.g., Goetz 1892; Dionisotti 1982; Dickey 2012). The model that emerges from the *Hermeneumata*, however, does not need to be the prevalent one. The picture offered by the sources is one of great variety.

The painting in the house of Iulia Felix in Pompeii represents a school located in a portico of the forum (Bonner 1977: 119), and the *pergula* mentioned by Suetonius (*De gramm.* 18.2) as a feature in another school must have been some kind of fragile awning that did not survive the centuries. The same must also be true of the *velaria* to

which St. Augustine (*Conf.* 1.14.23) alludes, that is, curtains that defined the learning space, which certainly had a limited lifespan. Schools could also occupy private spaces and discreet rooms in Roman villas and be open not only to the children of the owner but also to other students. A primary school (*ludus litterarius* or *ludus magistri*) did not need elaborate implements, and in most cases the use of wax tablets and a reliance on memory meant that books were not needed. No school exercises have survived the Mediterranean climate (except in Egypt), and this has rendered the identification of school spaces quite difficult. The literary graffiti found in Pompeii mostly testify to some level of literary culture, but in addition Matteo Della Corte (1959) tried to identify on their basis places where primary schools existed. Thus, apparently the primary teacher Sema plied his trade in the portico of the Forum, and another teacher taught children on the porch of the Campus, both using open-air locations and public premises. Even though these graffiti (with letters of the alphabet and a few lines invoking the gods' help in favor of those who paid the teacher) may not be secure evidence for schools, they are certainly suggestive. It is not difficult to surmise that in both places, amid the noise and various activities of the street, concentration and silence were hard to come by, which seems so impractical to the modern educator. Yet the sophist Dio Chrysostom reported in the first century CE: "Elementary teachers sit with the children in the streets and nothing keeps them from teaching and learning in the midst of the crowd" (*Or.* 20.9–10). This situation continued in the Later Roman empire where the elite made sure that their children learned the rudiments through parental instruction, private tutoring, or by attending a school (Kaster 1983). The fact that mentions of primary education for the children of the lower classes are hard to come by does not indicate that it rarely existed but points only to the lack of interest that the literary sources had for that level of instruction and social stratum. The tradition of a strong higher education by the grammarian and the rhetor continued to be vibrant in late antiquity and presupposes a strong, though now almost invisible, instruction at the primary stage.

### *a. Higher Education*

Advanced teaching could be imparted in various locations, but seems only occasionally to have occurred in the open air. In the *Protagoras*, Plato seems to allude to a formal school when he mentioned students (presumably at the second level of instruction) sitting on benches and placing their rolls of poetry next to them (*Prt.* 325d–326d). At the opening of the same dialogue, moreover, Plato discussed instruction in rhetoric and philosophy which was being imparted at the house of the wealthy Callias. Groups of students there followed Protagoras as he strolled around responding to questions. Plato also portrayed the sophist Hippias of Elis (315c) on a high chair, expounding questions concerning "nature and the heavenly bodies" to his students, most of whom he had brought from his native Elis. He was surrounded by his disciples sitting on benches, which they later rearranged to form a new educational circle around Socrates and Protagoras (317d). Another sophist, Prodicus, was at the same time lecturing from his bed. At this higher level of education, a school continued to depend on a teacher and did not have an existence separate from him. Pupils might follow a teacher who moved or



the educator might start a school in a new location. Finding a suitable place to teach (if that was really needed) was his responsibility.

The evidence provided by Hellenistic and Roman gymnasia regarding their status as venues for instruction is ambiguous. From the fourth century BCE in Athens, the institution of the gymnasium provided athletic training and a meeting place for young and older people alike. It is still debated, however, whether regular classes were held there for advanced education or if the intellectual activity mainly consisted of lectures. Inscriptions in the Hellenistic gymnasia show lists of victors not only in athletic competitions but also in poetry and other academic subjects (Legras 1999). Past scholars promoted the idea that gymnasia were the equivalent of ancient universities, but more recently it has been argued that no evidence supports such an interpretation (Harris 1989: 134–135). Hellenistic and Roman gymnasia in Egypt, in any case, were important parts of social life not only in cities but also in Hellenized villages. In large centers, they were often imposing buildings with colonnades, baths, and lecture halls, but no libraries or classrooms have so far been found in the perimeter of gymnasia (Cribiore 2001: 34–36).

Upper-education teachers were able to open a school or give lectures where and when they wished. Whereas they did not require a permanent establishment, they were at the mercy of various vicissitudes, including their own popularity. In the third century CE, for example, the philosopher Plotinus taught a group of students in the grand house of a Roman lady (Fowden 1977: 370), but other teachers preferred the privacy of their own quarters. In fourth-century CE Athens, Eunapius relates that sophists used private lecture rooms. A generation before this, the house of the sophist Julianus, for example, was adorned with statues of former students and had a small marble lecture room suitable for classes (*VS IX 1*, 4–6, 483).

The flexibility of venue for instruction allowed a teacher, as his popularity grew, to change or upgrade accommodations, as the various teaching accommodations of the sophist Libanius in Antioch allow us to see. When he taught for five years in Nicomedia, he was a private teacher, but he was allowed to hold his classes at the baths. His position became more vulnerable when he moved to Antioch, where he taught the fifteen students he had brought with him at his own home. At that time, his standing was inferior not only to that of the official sophist of the city, Zenobius, who taught in a large room at city hall, but also to the status of other private sophists who taught in temples that were formerly used for pagan cults. When his reputation increased, Libanius moved his private residence to a more conspicuous location on the fringe of the market square and met his students there; and finally, on succeeding the official sophist Zenobius, he installed himself in city hall, using “a covered lecture room with four colonnades that surrounded a courtyard” (*Or.* 22.31). And yet even at the peak of his fame Libanius’ venue of instruction was never a dedicated school (Cribiore 2007b: 30–37; *Or.* 1.101–102 and 104). The model of schooling provided by the *Hermeneumata* consisted of a large room where students of various educational levels studied together. This was to a degree the solution adopted in Antioch not only by Libanius but also by his predecessors. The school of Libanius included five classes in rhetoric, organized by the students’ ability. He taught some groups while assistant teachers read the classics with the younger students; but they were all together.

### *b. Schools in Greek and Roman Egypt*

Whereas the papyri refer quite often to teachers (mostly as members of the community), references to schools are infrequent probably because of the paucity of dedicated schools. More than 400 Greek school exercises have been found (Cribiore 1996), so that at times the cluster of finds might suggest education was imparted in the vicinity of the find place. In reality, locating a school with some certainty on the basis of the school exercises is difficult. Not only were papyri and ostraca usually discarded in common dumps, but before the late twentieth century, archaeologists rarely described the exact location in which they located school work. In what follows, I will only suggest a range of possible accommodations rather than give a complete account (Cribiore 2001: 18–27). In Egypt, demotic education revolved around the temples, though it is unclear which parts were used for instruction. Greek education might take advantage of spaces provided by abandoned pharaonic tombs, as graffiti with letters of the alphabet suggest. In late antiquity, ancient tombs in Upper Egypt became homes for anchorites, and nearby small monastic centers arose that offered instruction in Greek and Coptic. Thus, around Thebes, exercises found in specific parts of the monastery of Epiphanius and Phoebammon testify to some kind of schools there. Some primary schools called by the name *didaskaleion* and *grammatodidaskaleion* emerge from the sources. Two references regarding the city of Oxyrhynchos in the Roman and late Roman periods are interesting because in one case the teacher, who must have rented a building from the city, appears responsible for repairing it while the other school is called “the Southern School,” which indicates that there were at least two primary schools in the city.

Classes at every level of education, moreover, could be held in private houses, though the evidence is scarce. A Ptolemaic papyrus refers, for example, to a school of medicine housed in domestic quarters. The poorly lit houses of common people were not ideal for reading and writing, but the houses of the wealthy could provide adequate accommodation. The mild climate of Egypt throughout the year, moreover, rendered open-air teaching a suitable solution, and in large cities such as Alexandria or Oxyrhynchos, the arcades and vaulted colonnades surrounding some squares might have attracted teachers as they did in other parts of the Mediterranean.

### *c. The School of Amheida in Egypt*

In 2006, an archaeological mission, now based at New York University, found the site of a Greek school while excavating the city of Amheida, the ancient Trimithis, in the western part of the Dakhla Oasis in Upper Egypt. Among the various sites of inquiry, the mission concentrated on a private residence that was at the center of a densely populated area and belonged to an upper-class family, that of the landowner Serenus, who was a member of the local city council. Next to this imposing house, there was a school building consisting of at least three rooms (15, 19, and 23) that were built at the same time as Serenus' house. Both the house and the school were built on top of demolished baths. Serenus' villa underwent three stages of construction that coins and ostraka have helped date. In the first stage, the house was occupied for twenty-five years: it was built around AD 340 and abandoned around 365. During the second phase, the house was extended

to the north and incorporated the school building. The school was active for about twenty years. After that, room 15 became a deposit but in spite of numerous innovations the occupants of the villa did not destroy the red writing on the walls probably because they valued it as a sign of their cultural sophistication. The other rooms were also transformed and were used as working spaces.

The three large rooms of the school had low benches along the perimeter walls, which were made of mud brick and baked brick. In room 15, the students could sit on the benches and read or copy the epigrams of the *dipinto*, that is, the five extant columns of verses. They could also stand on the benches to write on the plastered part of the wall and could do the same in the other rooms, where the writing space was above a board painted in purple. In light of the paucity of physical remains from ancient schools, this discovery would be exciting even if no new literary texts had appeared. In this case, however, texts written on the whitewashed walls in red ink confirm that these were rooms used for education at the grammarian's and at the rhetorical level. Because of the extent of deterioration of the walls, no writing was found in the third room, which was also provided with benches, so it is unclear what level of instruction was taught there. Some school ostraka with alphabets, drawings, and a hexameter verse containing all the letters of the alphabet were found in the vicinity of the villa, but their original provenance is unclear. They testify to the close location of an elementary school.

The *dipinto* of room 15 is written on one wall in five columns, some of which are mutilated (Criore, Davoli, and Ratzan 2008). The text consists of at least eight epigrams in elegiac distichs and hexameters and is written in a good hand, presumably that of the teacher who wrote them as a model for the students. The metrics of the verses is impeccable. The author of these epigrams was a good poet, but it is difficult to know if the teacher reproduced another poet's composition or if these verses were his own. The latter may be the case, considering that he used several personal pronouns in the dedications of some of the columns: "To my students" (*scholastikoi*). The verses consist of exhortations to students to reach the summit of rhetorical knowledge in the company of the Muses, the Graces, and Hermes, the god of rhetoric, where they will receive the crown of excellence. They are supposed to drink at the Pierian waters and work hard imitating the labors of Heracles. The tone is always didactic, and the language is rich and allusive with some sophisticated choices, many epic words, and forms from Homer, Apollonius, and the later Quintus and Nonnus.

This text also has a unique characteristic: a systematic deployment of lectional signs among which are breathings, accents, stops, apostrophe, and dieresis. This feature is a departure from customary practice from papyri. Only some occasional accents are marked on the papyri with some teachers' models offering slightly more assistance to the reader. This *dipinto* shows that the teacher was attempting to demonstrate correct poetic composition. Poetry was still part of the curriculum of a school of rhetoric even though the traditional view maintained that only prose was included (Marrou 1975: 296; Criore 2007b: 155–165).

Room 19 of the school building presents two texts written on a wall side by side: a passage from the *Odyssey* and a composition that seems to be based on an anecdote found in Plutarch (Criore and Davoli 2013). Even though it is difficult to divide levels of instruction so precisely, this should have been the room where grammar and the poets

were taught. It is quite likely, in any case, that the teacher of room 15 also used room 19, but a comparison of the hands of the various texts is inconclusive. The Homeric passage is written in a tiny, proficient hand that is difficult to decipher and resembles a hand used to write documents. The teacher may have written this text too but used a different and much faster handwriting. We hear his voice through the note, “Imitate!” that follows the passage. The second text, however, is written rather unevenly with large letters and might be the work of a student.

The Homeric passage preserves lines 221–223 of *Odyssey* book 4, which recount, during Telemachus’ visit to Sparta, Helen mixing a powerful drug into the wine for her guests. This is the text on the wall: “(a drug) that takes away grief and anger, and brings forgetfulness of every ill. Whoever should drink this down when it is mixed in the bowl would not let fall a tear down his cheek, in the course of that day at least. Imitate.” It is not clear what the students were to imitate. Students may have been required to read the difficult handwriting, to learn a hand appropriate for documentary texts, to transcribe the passage in a larger, literary hand, or to recite it and paraphrase it. Numerous papyri have preserved verses from Book 4 of the *Odyssey*, which contains several references to Egypt, and a *hapax legomenon* in column 5.7 of the *dipinto* in room 15 comes from this book. Another reason the teacher may have selected these lines might be the numerous rare words (*hapax legomena*) they contained, which would be unsurprising considering the typical and punctilious insistence of a grammarian on glosses. It is also noteworthy that numerous ancient authors quoted these lines, and line 221 in particular. Scholars have highlighted the magical aspect of the passage since a story circulated about Empedocles who chanted the verses to the sound of the lyre to calm a crazy young man (Faraone 1996). Though Homeric verses were sometimes used for magical purposes, the passage in room 19 had an exclusively didactic function.

On the right of the Homeric quotation, and also written in red ink, there is a longer passage of which barely seven lines survive. The challenge in reading them is not due this time to the minuscule hand but to the deterioration of the wall where the whitewash has fallen off in several places (the central portion of the text is entirely missing). This passage appears to be a reworking of an anecdote in Ps.-Plutarch, *Regum et imperatorum apophthegmata* (174E6 1–2), told also in a longer form in Plutarch, *De Alexandri Magni fortuna aut virtute* (334B 7–14). Despite some verbal repetition, the lines do not quote Plutarch exactly, but seem to be a paraphrase of or a composition based on that anecdote. It is also possible that the story circulated independently of Plutarch, and educators appropriated it for a didactic purpose. The story in Plutarch revolves around Anteus (or Ateas), king of the Scythians, who was fighting Philip II of Macedon. He captured a famous flute player and asked him to play during a banquet. Everyone was enraptured except the king, who swore that his horse’s neighing was more pleasant to him. Plutarch commented that the king’s ears were not accustomed to the Muses, but his soul was at home in the stables, listening to horses and asses. Kings were uninterested in promoting and honoring arts. The passage on the wall at Trimithis certainly refers to this anecdote. Only single words survive, but the whole is clear enough: an expedition, a banquet with a flute player, people drinking wine, a king asked to say what he preferred and finally his own name, Ateas or Anteus. We can only wonder whether this teacher restricted his comments to the Muses and the value of education or moved to the more daring subject of the ignorance of kings.

But who was this teacher? There were frequent contacts between the Oasis and the Nile valley, and it is possible that he came from there. This rhetor (or possibly a grammarian) may have moved back to his native place after a career in the valley. Since, as usually happened, he *was* his school, when he died or moved, the school ceased to exist. Parents in the Oasis desired to give their children the best education possible. Greek education was flourishing in the nearby village of Kellis, where school exercises were found in domestic settings, including a wooden codex that contained three orations of Isocrates to be used in advanced instruction. Papyri coming from there mention several teachers. In addition, a school seems to have existed in the Temple of Tutu, a circumstance that once again testifies to fourth-century reuse of pagan spaces. Here, the archaeologists have discovered reed pens, inscribed wooden boards, several exercises, and a miniature wooden codex containing a parody of Homer that mentions a white, bold cock that ends up being cooked (Hope and Worp 2006).

#### *d. The Auditoria in Kom el-Dikka: The University of Alexandria*

In the center of the ancient city of Alexandria in the Kom el-Dikka site, twenty so-called auditoria (lecture rooms and classrooms for disciplines such as grammar, rhetoric, philosophy, and medicine) have come to light. Some were excavated in the 1980s, but the majority of the work was done in 2006, with more expected (Majcherek 2007). Alexandria was the focus of higher education in late antiquity and remained such until the Arab conquest in the seventh century. Students from throughout the Greco-Roman world went there to study in the fourth century, but it was in the fifth and sixth centuries that young men and teachers of all subjects flocked to Alexandria in unparalleled numbers. The literary sources make clear that students were attracted by the city's prestigious teachers.

The auditoria replaced the Ptolemaic and early Roman gymnasium and formed the civic center of the city together with a theater and baths. Some of the auditoria rooms are rectangular, while others have a horseshoe layout. Stone benches for the students, usually in two or three rows along three of the walls, are common to all of them together with a dais for the teacher that is most imposing in auditorium K, where six steps lead to the high seat. In the middle of most of these classrooms, there is a puzzling stone block, too small for a person to stand on. It is possible that this was the base of a lectern on which a teacher could rest his book when he lectured in the middle of the classroom (Cribiore 2007a). Because students apparently had to read aloud a text or a commentary at the start of each class, perhaps they could have used this lectern (Porphyry, *Life of Plotinus* 14.10; Snyder 2005: 25–27 and 115–117).

The sixth-century Christian rhetor Zacharias Scholasticus in his books *Ammonius* and *The Life of Severus* helps us understand how the teaching was conducted in this large complex. He says that the teaching of the various disciplines took place on the first four days of the week; but only the philosophers and Horapollon taught at the school on Fridays, while the other professors (presumably the sophists at least) instructed their students at home (Kugener 1903: 23). It is likely, therefore, that not all the eminent teachers we know from the literary sources took advantage of these classrooms that

could provide facilities for 500–600 students (Majcherek 2007). Zacharias also gives us a vivid (though biased) image of the pagan philosopher Ammonius lecturing in one of the rooms (probably similar to room K): “We were listening to a lesson on physics. It was summer when a very pleasant and sweet Zephyr blows ... Like those who interpret oracles, Ammonius, sitting on a high seat in the manner of a pompous sophist, expounded and clarified Aristotle’s doctrine on the principles of things to us” (*Ammonius* 92–99; Colonna 1973).

In conclusion, the last evidence for schools that we have examined has enabled us to view side by side archaeological remains, literary evidence, and school exercises written on a wall. More similar discoveries could happen (and would be very exciting), but we have to accept the reality of ancient schooling without making drastic and pessimistic assumptions. It is extremely difficult to find evidence of premises specifically dedicated to *paideia* because teaching did not depend on locations that could definitely be identified as “schools.” We may consider school accommodations in the Greek and Roman worlds to be somewhat quaint and unusual, and yet teachers continued to teach and students continued to learn and learn very well.

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## CHAPTER 10

# The *Progymnasmata* and Progymnasmatic Theory in Imperial Greek Education

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### 1. The Imperial Greek Literary–Rhetorical Curriculum

In the Hellenistic period, a literary–rhetorical curriculum was developed by the Greeks. It was adopted, *mutatis mutandis*, by the Latin West, remained standard in the whole Roman world to the end of late antiquity, and had a *Nachleben* beyond that time. Going through the entire course of this curriculum is what made a person fully *pepaideumenos*, a fully educated man. The literary–rhetorical curriculum varied in content, length of study, and methods of delivery, which were affected by local resources. That said, it is still valid to think of this ancient curriculum as divided into three stages, even if those three stages were not all experienced by every student and did not always align with three distinct sequential teachers. The first or elementary stage had as its goal the acquisition of basic reading and writing skills along with some arithmetic. The second or intermediate stage, typically and traditionally thought of as the province of the *grammatikos* or grammarian, focused on the close reading and explication of classical poetic texts, especially Homer, Hesiod, Euripides, and Menander. Here the literary part of the literary–rhetorical curriculum dominated. The completion of this stage made one a cultured individual, but full closure was not reached until completion of the third or advanced stage, typically and traditionally thought of as the province of the sophist, who in the Latin West was commonly called the rhetor. This third stage focused predominantly on education in rhetoric. Reading continued, here mostly in the classical orators and historians. But prose composition was the central task and, ideally, the compositions were to be orally delivered (Marrou 1982: 150–205, 265–291; Cribiore 2001: 160–244).

The most advanced compositional exercise that students engaged in at the third educational stage was declamation (Russell 1983). Declamations, called *meletai*, that is, “exercises,” in Greek, were full deliberative or forensic orations on imaginary themes, in



which the speaker impersonated a specific character. The impersonated speaker could be generic and anonymous, set in that vague but usually clearly classical place that D. A. Russell calls “Sophistopolis,” or the declamation could have a specific historical theme. In declamation, the student attempted to bring together into a symphonic whole all the skills he had acquired over the years and was still perfecting: use of correct high-register Attic Greek, a range of stylistic and rhetorical embellishments, proper organization of the oration, argumentative inventiveness, memorization, and effective oral delivery.

## 2. The *Progymnasmata* in the Imperial Greek Literary–Rhetorical Curriculum

Before students began to compose declamations, they worked on a series of less demanding compositional exercises called *progymnasmata*. *Gymnasmata*, like *meletai*, means “exercises,” although in the former term the metaphor is explicitly athletic. The prefix *pro-* in *progymnasmata* indicates that they are preliminary to declamation. There is nothing new about any of the progymnasmatic modes of discourse. The ancient rhetorical theorists cite examples of them from as far back as Homer and in the authors of the Classical period, even though they may not be elaborated in those texts precisely in the manner in which a later schoolteacher would have expected. What is new is that, in the Hellenistic period and the early Empire, these modes of discourse were singled out to become part of an educational curriculum that would have a very long duration. The *progymnasmata* were not only a central element in ancient education; their influence on the graduates of ancient schools was also felt in all modes of literary culture. Thus, if we seek to understand ancient education and its impact on ancient culture, it is crucial to grasp the nature, purpose, and role of the *progymnasmata* in the literary–rhetorical curriculum.

The great fourth-century sophist Libanius of Antioch has left us, not only model declamations, but also models of all the progymnasmatic modes of discourse. That might suggest that the teaching of the *progymnasmata* belonged exclusively to the sophist. In fact, the easier *progymnasmata* were sometimes taught by the grammarian. The more difficult ones were commonly agreed to be the exclusive province of the sophist (Marrou 1982: 172–173, 201; Webb 2001: 296–298). But Quintilian complains of Latin rhetors, the equivalent of Greek sophists, who wrongly forced the teaching of the more difficult *progymnasmata* onto the grammarians. He praises the Greeks for maintaining the proper boundaries between the grammarian’s and the rhetor’s/sophist’s curricula (*Institutio oratoria* 1.9.6; Viljamaa 1988: 183–184). The *progymnasmata*, then, were a bridge between the second and third levels of education as well as an entrée, at level three, to declamation. The rhetorical theorist Theon chastises those students who “proceed to [declamation] without having been practiced in the proper way—as the proverb says, ‘learning pottery-making by starting with a big jar’” (*Progymn.* 1: 59, Patillon 1997, trans. Kennedy 2003). The proper thing to do was to start with the small jar of the *progymnasmata*. The theorist Nicolaus of Myra remarks that young men found rhetoric to be beneficial, but difficult; “for it did not seem to be easy,” he writes, “for those taking it up to see, straight off from the beginning, all that was contained in it. As a result, the use of *progymnasmata* came about; for in them we do not practice ourselves in the whole of rhetoric, but in each part individually” (*Progymn.*, p. 2, Felten 1913, trans. Kennedy

2003). John of Sardis, in his commentary on Aphthonius's *Progymnasmata*, refers to the exercises as footprints, shadows, and images of rhetoric, and as "miniature rhetoric," *mikra rhētorikē* (pp. 2–3, Rabe 1928).

The best and easiest place to find a collection of elaborated *progymnasmata* is in Libanius. We are fortunate now to have an English translation of Libanius's *progymnasmata* by Craig A. Gibson (2008). Other examples of elaborated *progymnasmata* survive from late antiquity and Byzantium, eventually on Christian as well as traditional classical themes (Hunger 1978: 92–120). A number of theoretical discussions of the *progymnasmata* also survive from the Roman imperial and the Byzantine periods. The earliest datable comments of any length on these exercises are in Quintilian, *Institutio oratoria* 1.9, 2.4, 10.5. Quintilian's comments, though, are quite short compared to what we have in five theoretical treatises in Greek. One is by Theon—mainly in Greek, although a portion of it has survived only in Armenian. It has been common to put him in the first century, but Malcolm Heath (2002/2003: 141–158) has recently made an attractive argument that he should be put in the fifth century. A theoretical treatise ascribed either to the second-century rhetorician Hermogenes or to Libanius and referred to by modern scholars as the work of "ps.-Hermogenes" is perhaps from the third century (Patillon 2008: 165–170). Another surviving treatise is by Aphthonius, who is likely to have been a pupil of Libanius, hence flourishing in the late fourth century. Nicolaus of Myra's treatise is from the fifth century, and that of John of Sardis—actually a commentary on Aphthonius's treatise—is of a later Byzantine date, perhaps the ninth century (Rabe 1928: xvi–xvii; Hunger 1978: 77, 82). We know of other rhetoricians who published either examples of elaborated *progymnasmata* or theoretical treatises on them, but they have not survived (Heath 2002/2003: 129–141). The surviving treatises by Theon, ps.-Hermogenes, Aphthonius, Nicolaus, and (in part) John of Sardis have conveniently been translated into English by George A. Kennedy (2003).

### 3. The Libanian–Aphthonian List of *Progymnasmata*

In Libanius and in the influential treatise by his (likely) pupil Aphthonius, there are fourteen progymnasmatic exercises, presented by both in the same order. The first four are *mythos* or fable (*fabula*), *diēgēma* or narration (*narratio*), *chreia* or anecdote (*usus*), and *gnōmē* or maxim (*sententia*). In each of these four cases, the compositional exercise consists of a telling and a discussion of the item in question. A fable is a fictitious story, but with a moral truth; the examples of this exercise in Libanius are all animal fables. A narration tells of something that has happened or that could have happened. The *chreia* or anecdote is an instructive saying, a simple action that is instructive in some way, or a combination of action and saying. A popular example of a plain instructive saying is, "Plato said that the twigs of virtue grow by sweat and toil." An example of a *chreia* consisting of an instructive action is, "When Pythagoras was asked how long is the life of men, he hid himself after appearing briefly, making his appearance a measure of life" (Aphthon., *Progymn.* 3.2, Patillon 2008, trans. Kennedy 2003). The maxim is a wise saying that is normally reported abstractly, with no circumstantial details attached to it.

Next come *anaskēuē* and *kataskēuē*, refutation and confirmation (*refutatio* and *confirmatio*). Refutation is a rebuttal of something open to argument; confirmation,

a corroboration. The subjects set are commonly mythological assertions. Refutation and confirmation are followed by *koinos topos*, common topic (*locus communis*); this is an attack on an acknowledged criminal or support of an acknowledged benefactor, the former option being exclusive or at least favored in some circles (Aphthon., *Progymn.* 7; Nicolaus, *Progymn.*, pp. 36–38). The individuals attacked or supported are always anonymous and generic (for example, the murderer, or the tyrannicide). Next come *enkōmion* and *psogos*, encomium and invective (*laus* and *vituperatio*). These are praise or vilification of people, other living things, objects, places, occasions, activities, or abstract concepts. From encomium and invective, one proceeds to *synkrisis* or comparison (*comparatio*)—of anything with anything. Then comes *ēthopoiia*, the exercise in speech-in-character (*allocutio*). This is a speech put into the mouth of someone or something in a specific situation in an attempt to represent character convincingly. Some theorists differentiated speech put into the mouth of a living person (*ēthopoiia* proper), speech put into the mouth of a dead person (*eidolopoiia*), and speech put into the mouth of something personified (*prosōpopoiia*) (e.g., ps.-Hermog., *Progymn.* 9.1–2, Patillon 2008). Next we move on to *ekphrasis* or description (*descriptio*)—of anyone or anything. The modern scholarly focus on ancient description of works of art might obscure the rhetorical theorists’ insistence on the thematic catholicity of this *progymnasma*. Ps.-Hermogenes 10.1–2, for example, says that one describes “persons and things/occurrences and periods and places and times and many other things.” He mentions, specifically, descriptions of Thersites (in Homer); land and naval battles; peace and war; harbors, beaches, and cities; spring, summer and a festival; and the mixed *ekphrasis* of a night battle (i.e., night + battle).

The final two *progymnasmata* are *thesis* and what Aphthonius calls *nomou eisphora*, thesis and introduction of law (*positio* and *legis latio*). Thesis is an investigation of a general proposition, such as “should a person marry,” with no reference to the specific circumstances of an individual case. And introduction of law, according to Aphthonius, supports or attacks a proposed law (Aphthon., *Progymn.* 14.1–2). Some theorists allow also for the support of or attack on an already existing law (Theon, *Progymn.* 12, where the *progymnasma* is called simply *nomos*; cf. Nicolaus, *Progymn.*, p. 78). For all fourteen *progymnasmata*, the ancient handbooks suggest appropriate heads of discussion or argumentation.

The list of fourteen *progymnasmata* found in Libanius and Aphthonius is identical to that of ps.-Hermogenes and of Nicolaus. It is also found in the late ancient Latin grammarian, Priscian. Laurent Pernot has judiciously warned that this should not mislead us into assuming that there was absolute uniformity throughout the Roman world in the progymnasmatic scheme and in the teaching of these intermediate exercises. Indeed, Theon’s treatise and passing remarks on the other progymnasmatic theorists (see the following text) alone attest to a diversity of opinion and practice, although Theon also shares a good deal with those other theorists as well. Pernot urges, though, that we look for evidence, such as it may be, beyond the progymnasmaticists themselves, and he persuasively unveils a *progymnasma*—the *eikōn* or extended metaphor—that is uniquely attested in Fronto (Pernot 2008: 292–301). Nonetheless, it would not be rash to assume that the scheme found in ps.-Hermogenes, Libanius, Aphthonius, Nicolaus, and Priscian was widely regarded as authoritative in the middle and late Roman Empire.

#### 4. Divergences from the Libanian–Aphthonian List of Progymnasmata

Let us turn now to divergences from the “classic” Libanian-Aphthonian list. Some excluded comparison as a separate category on the ground that there was adequate exercise in it in common topic and encomium (Nicolaus, *Progymn.* p. 59). Some excluded description as a separate category because of its use in fable, narration, common topic, and encomium (ps.-Hermog., *Progymn.* 10.7). Some were hesitant to include introduction of law among the *progymnasmata* because it was so close to a full hypothesis or declamation (ps.-Hermog 12.1; Aphthon., *Progymn.* 14.1). Although Quintilian alludes to description in connection with narration (*Institutio oratoria* 2.4.3), both description as a distinct entry and speech-in-character are missing from his list of *progymnasmata*, apparently because he regarded them as too advanced to be included among the progymnasmatic exercises (Viljamaa 1988: 185–186). In Theon, where we find the most important deviation from the Libanian-Aphthonian list of progymnasmatic exercises, refutation and confirmation (*anaskeuē* and *kataskeuē*) are frequently mentioned, but they are not treated as discrete *progymnasmata*. Contradiction (*antirrhēsis*), not unrelated to refutation (*anaskeuē*) and perhaps to be understood as a response to a preexisting oration (Pernot 2008: 290–292), is discussed by Theon at the end of his treatise along with reading, listening, paraphrase, and elaboration, all five of which Michel Patillon calls “les exercices d’accompagnement,” following anecdote, fable, narration, common topic, description, speech-in-character, encomium and invective, comparison, thesis, and law (Patillon 1997: xcvi–cxiv).

Some placed common topic after description, some before refutation and confirmation, others somewhere else than in its place in the Libanian-Aphthonian list (Nicolaus, *Progymn.*, p. 35). On some lists, comparison appeared before encomium (Nicolaus, p. 59). Some put description after comparison and speech-in-character after thesis (Nicolaus, p. 63). Theon put *chreia* or anecdote first, before fable and narration; and in a move exactly the reverse of Quintilian’s (see the previous paragraph), he placed speech-in-character and description earlier than other theorists. Since the exercises are graduated, these placements represent a difference in pedagogical thinking. Malcolm Heath has recently argued that Theon’s placing of anecdote in first place may represent an Alexandrian tradition that was in competition with an Athenian one (Heath 2002/2003: 150–151).

#### 5. Advancing Through the *Progymnasmata*

The *progymnasmata* moved the student from study under the grammarian to the composition of declamations. The early *progymnasmata*, especially fable and maxim, offered a comfortable transition into the exercises, since the student had been exposed to fables and maxims in elementary school as well as under the grammarian (Cribiore 2001: 178–179, 202–203). Indeed, Libanius uses Homeric themes in many of his *progymnasmata*, which would have reminded the student of his grammatical studies. On the high end of the ladder, introduction of law offered an easy transition to the next level, for it is almost a full deliberative declamation. According to ancient theorists, only the absence of

adequately specified circumstances prevents introduction of law from being a full deliberative declamation (ps.-Hermog., *Progymn.* 12.1; Aphthon., *Progymn.* 14.1).

As the student progressed from fable to introduction of law, he learned step by step how to argue under more complex headings. If a very young student, who was still mastering Attic morphology and grammar, was assigned a fable or a *chreia*, he might do nothing more than rewrite a text that had been given to him, using different forms of the nouns and verbs (Theon, *Progymn.* 3: 101–103, 4: 74–75). That is a very elementary use of a *progymnasma*. Otherwise, according to Theon, a student might interweave fable and narrative, expand or compress the fable, or add a moral to it (Theon 4: 74–76; cf. ps.-Hermog., *Progymn.* 1.5–7). Similar kinds of manipulation were prescribed for the remaining elementary *progymnasmata*, the narration, the *chreia*, and the maxim (Theon 5: 86ff., 3: 101ff.; Aphthon., *Progymn.* 3.3, 4.3). The fifth and sixth *progymnasmata* (refutation and confirmation) took the student to a more advanced level of discourse. They were so fundamental to the contentious core of rhetoric that Aphthonius said of both of them that they contain in themselves all the power of the art of rhetoric (5.2, 6.2). In refuting and confirming, one practiced arguing under the so-called *telika kephalaia*, the “final headings” or, better, the headings that are concerned with the ends of human actions. Ps.-Hermogenes lists them as “justice, advantage, possibility, and appropriateness” and their opposites (11.8–9). Aphthonius has “legality, justice, advantage, possibility, honor, result” (7.2) or “legal, just, advantageous, possible” (13.3). Nicolaus’s list is “the advantageous, the just, the legal, the possible, the honorable, the necessary, the easy” and their opposites (*Progymn.*, p. 44). Lists of the *telika kephalaia* vary, and we should not assume that any given list is intended as exhaustive. Ps.-Hermogenes, Aphthonius, and Nicolaus mention these headings under thesis or common topic, explicitly using the term *telika kephalaia*; but the theorists introduce these headings under refutation and confirmation, and they are recommended for other *progymnasmata* as well. (Under refutation and confirmation: ps.-Hermog. 5.2–3, Aphthon. 6.2; Nicolaus, p. 32. Cf. under Theon’s contradiction (*antirrhēsis*): 17. Under speech-in-character: Theon 8: 116–117. Under introduction of law: Theon 12: 129; Aphthon. 14.2; Nicolaus, pp. 77–78. For thesis, see, in addition to ps.-Hermog. 11.8–9, Theon 11: 121–122. Such lists may occasionally include headings that are not strictly among the *telika kephalaia*.) After the student had learned refutation and confirmation, he could return to the first four *progymnasmata*, now to refute or confirm them (Theon 1: 60, 64–65, 3: 101, 104, 4: 74, 76, 5: 86; John of Sardis, *Comment. in Aphthon.*, pp. 60–62)—although some theorists were opposed to the refutation of fables, *chreiai*, and maxims (Nicolaus, pp. 21–22; John of Sardis, pp. 61–62, 69). For encomium, and its reversal, invective, the student was introduced to a distinctive set of headings; here was the distinctive preparation for panegyric, which was such a common type of discourse in the Empire. Thesis and introduction of law provided the most advanced progymnasmatic exercises in contentious discourse. According to Aphthonius 13.3 (cf. Nicolaus, pp. 74–75), thesis was the first to include antithesis and solution, two of the standard five parts of an oration (see later text).

In addition to teaching argumentation, one of the *progymnasmata*, speech-in-character, trained the student to personify a generic or specific person, something he had to do in any declamation. And besides training generally in argument and character representation, many of the *progymnasmata* could be used as parts or passages in declamations: for example, a fable, anecdote, or maxim; a narration; an encomiastic or

vituperative digression; a comparison or description. Even speech-in-character might appear as a short passage in a declamation, which as a whole was a sustained speech-in-character; thus, for example, in *Declamation 2* [XII] Choricus of Gaza is personifying Priam, but in sections 86–89 he has Priam represent Polyxena in *oratio recta*.

## 6. Theoretical Differentiation of the *Progymnasmata*

The ancient rhetorical theorists are constantly differentiating one *progymnasma* from another; this is in response to the fact that there are similarities between some *progymnasmata* and others. The theorists try to justify the autonomy of the up to fourteen distinct exercises of the classic list. For example, fable contains instructive sayings and narrative; but we are told that it differs from anecdote or *chreia* and maxim in that its themes are fictitious, and it differs from narrative because it seeks to benefit rather than to inform (John of Sardis, *Comment. in Aphthon.*, pp. 4, 31). Fable differs from common topic, although both exercises exhort against crime and evil, in that fable urges their avoidance, whereas common topic urges their punishment (John of Sardis, p. 105). Why should maxim be differentiated from *chreia*, which commonly takes the form of an instructive saying? The answer, according to the ancient theorists, is that, unlike the *chreia*, the maxim is not always attributed to a person, it always gives universal advice, it is always about something useful for life, and it can only be a saying and never the report of an instructive action (Theon, *Progymn.* 3: 96–97; cf. Aphthon., *Progymn.* 4.4; Nicolaus, *Progymn.*, pp. 19, 25). Common topic, an attack on an acknowledged criminal or support of an acknowledged benefactor, appears to have a connection with invective or encomium; therefore, the theorists must explain that common topic urges that a person be punished or rewarded, whereas invective or encomium merely attacks and incites hatred or praises and incites admiration. When no law has been broken, one uses invective, not common topic. Furthermore, common topic discusses a general type, whereas invective and encomium normally name their subjects (ps.-Hermog., *Progymn.* 7.4; Aphthon. 9.1; Nicolaus, pp. 38, 54; John of Sardis, p. 90). Encomium and thesis both praise, but the former praises a person, the latter an action (John of Sardis, p. 247). Occasionally, the ancient theorists based distinctions on argumentative grounds rather than on content or purpose. For instance, narrative is more argumentative than fable; *chreia* requires more logical divisions than fable or narrative; we may refute *chreia* and maxim, but not fable (Nicolaus, pp. 11, 17; John of Sardis, p. 4; but Nicolaus, pp. 21–22, is in disagreement with John in disallowing refutation of *chreia*).

Differentiating between the exercises can go hand in hand with conceding the porosity of the boundaries between them. I have already noted, in the words of ps.-Hermogenes, that “some of the more exact teachers do not make description a [progymnasmatic] exercise, on the ground that it has already been included in fable and narrative and common topic and encomium; for there too, they say, we describe places and rivers and actions and persons” (*Progymn.* 10.7, trans. Kennedy 2003). It was also acknowledged that narration can include encomium (John of Sardis, *Comment. in Aphthon.*, p. 118), that comparison has elements of encomium or invective (ps.-Hermog. 8.5; Aphthon., *Progymn.* 10.1), that speech-in-character and description may occur in or be similar to other *progymnasmata* (John of Sardis, pp. 194–195, 216). But the more pronounced tendency of ancient theory was to underscore the differentiated autonomy of the various exercises. Occasionally, noting the similarities and differences between the *progymnasmata* seems to have become

a game played for its own sake: consider John of Sardis's comparison of the first and the last *progymnasmata* (John of Sardis, p. 261, trans. Kennedy 2003):

You should know that fable resembles introduction of law in that in a fable too we require students not to speak ill of parents and not to dishonor gods. It differs in that in fable we offer advice solely through the subject, but in introduction of law there is enforcement by law; and in fable we impart the moral as generally agreed upon, whereas in introduction of law we debate first about the ratification of the law.

Fable and introduction of law seem to me rather far apart from one another; but John of Sardis apparently enjoys the ring-compositional link. Similarly, when John says that “fable is assigned first as being something encompassing the seeds of the whole art [of rhetoric]” (p. 11, trans. Kennedy 2003) because it has something of all three species of rhetoric in it, he may be inspired as much by the sheer elegance of this theoretical formulation as by objective assessment.

## 7. *Progymnasmata*, the Three Species of Rhetoric, and the Five Parts of the Oration

If there is a certain amount of the tail of theory wagging the dog of practice in the ancient insistence on the autonomy of each of the progymnasmatic exercises, we find an effusion of theory in Nicolaus of Myra. In what seems to be a second stage of progymnasmatic theorizing, coming after the establishment of the number of exercises and of their differentiation and autonomy, and apparently appearing for the first time in late antiquity, Nicolaus relates the *progymnasmata* both to the three species of rhetoric (judicial, deliberative, and panegyric oratory) and to the five parts of the oration (prooemium, narration, antithesis, solution, and epilogue). We find this same theoretical move in a number of Byzantine texts. (John of Sardis, *Comment. in Aphthon.*, pp. 4, 116–118, 188–189, 200, 215, 230, 256, 268, and texts VIII–XI in Rabe 1931: 74–75, 128–134, 156–157, where passages from text IX are reused, 167–169). This is taking a broader view of the role of the *progymnasmata* in rhetorical theory. As Nicolaus moves through the list of *progymnasmata*, he tells us which rhetorical species and which parts of the oration the exercise trains the student for. The *progymnasmata* train for the species and the parts either because they have a (greater or lesser) affinity to or utility for various species and parts or because an elaborated *progymnasma* may itself make use of the parts.

For example, the second *progymnasma*, narration, prepares for all three species of rhetoric because some narration is needed in all three species; as for the five parts of the oration, the *progymnasma* “narration” obviously trains the student primarily for the oratorical narration of the case, but it may also be helpful for the other parts of the oration (except the prooemium), where some narration might also be needed (Nicolaus, *Progymn.*, p. 15). The third *progymnasma*, anecdote or *chreia*, mainly prepares the student for the deliberative species, but is also of some help for the other two species; and it exercises the student in all parts of the oration, since it employs all those parts itself (Nicolaus, pp. 23–24). Refutation and confirmation, the fifth and sixth *progymnasmata*, prepare the student mainly for the judicial species and help with all parts of the oration except the epilogue (Nicolaus, pp. 33–34). The seventh *progymnasma*, common topic,

trains for the judicial species if it attacks evil; if it also praises the good, it is useful for the panegyric species. It exercises the student only for one part of the oration, the epilogue (Nicolaus, pp. 35–36, 46–47). As a final example, consider thesis, which is the thirteenth *progymnasma*. Since thesis is deliberative and uses the argumentative headings of panegyric, it prepares the student for both species. Thesis also provides exercise in all five parts of the oration (Nicolaus, pp. 72, 76).

In the schema I just reviewed, which relates the *progymnasmata* to the species and the parts, we begin and end with the *progymnasmata*: Nicolaus asks what species and what parts each of them trains the student for. But in the course of his discussion of common topic, Nicolaus interjects a different schema, one that begins and ends with the five parts of the oration and asks what *progymnasmata* train for each of the parts. Exercises three and four (*chreia* or anecdote and maxim), he says, prepare for the first part of the oration; exercise two (narration) prepares for the second part and also for narration required in the third and fourth parts; exercises five and six (refutation and confirmation) prepare for the third and fourth parts; and exercise seven (common topic) prepares for the fifth part (Nicolaus, *Progymn.* pp. 35–36). This scheme is not fully consistent with what Nicolaus says elsewhere (see earlier text); it is a distinct formulation, driven by the five parts of the oration. A variant of Nicolaus's scheme appears in John of Sardis, *Comment. in Aphthon.*, pp. 89–90: exercise one (fable), in John's view, aligns with the first part of an oration, the prooemium; exercise two (narration) with the second, narration; exercises three through six (*chreia*, maxim, refutation, and confirmation) with an oration's proofs (*agōnes*), the equivalent of the third and fourth parts of an oration, namely antithesis and solution, in the five-part scheme (see John Doxapatres in Rabe 1931: 131); and exercise seven (common topic) with epilogue, the last part of the oration. The symmetry of John's schema, moving sequentially from exercise one through seven and from part one through four in his four-part oration, must have appealed to him. Not surprisingly, theorists also devised a schema driven by the three species and asking which *progymnasmata* are correlated with each of them. This schema makes fable, *chreia*, maxim, and thesis deliberative exercises (though thesis may also be regarded as panegyric in its subject matter); refutation, confirmation, common topic, and introduction of law judicial exercises; encomium, invective, comparison, and speech-in-character panegyric exercises; and narration and description common to all three species of rhetoric (Walz 1832–1836: 1.121–122, 127–128; 2.567).

## 8. The Influence of the *Progymnasmata* on Ancient Thought and Literature

So far we have been considering the *progymnasmata* as preparatory exercises for declamation in the schools. But their influence remained alive beyond the schools and in all subsequent areas of composition. The words of Theon, *Progymn.* 2: 70, are relevant here:

Training in the [*pro*]gymnasmata is absolutely necessary not only for those who are going to practice rhetoric, but also if one wishes to undertake the function of poets or historians or any other writers. These exercises are, as it were, the foundation of every kind of discourse, and, depending on how one instills them in the minds of the young, necessarily the results make themselves felt in the same way later. (trans. Kennedy 2003)



This is why one should read all Roman imperial literature *progymnasmatically*, that is, conscious of the abiding influence of these rhetorical exercises on the ancient mind. This injunction would doubtless receive the endorsement of Graham Anderson, who makes the striking observation that “almost the whole of [Lucian’s] output can be related to the elementary exercises, the *progymnasmata*, of the rhetorical schools” (Anderson 1982: 61). Passages in the progymnasmatic modes can be found almost anywhere in imperial literature, not only in oratory. A whole ancient work could be in a single progymnasmatic mode, elaborated, of course, in a freer and more sophisticated way than a student would have done; one thinks here, for example, of Dio Chrysostom’s *Libykos mythos* (*Orat.* 5), of encomia, of *theseis* or *theseis*-like essays found among Plutarch’s *Moralia* (e.g., 439a–440c, 776b–779c, 827d–832a), of his *synkrisis* or comparison of Aristophanes and Menander (*Mor.* 853a–854d), or of how Pliny can build a letter around an *ekphrasis* (e.g., *Epp.* 8.8) or a narration (*Epp.* 9.33). Whole works could consist of a collection of pieces in a single mode. Thus, for example, Ovid’s epistolary *Heroides* is a collection of exercises in speech-in-character, a mode that Theon and Nicolaus specifically associate with letter writing (Theon 8: 115; Nicolaus, *Progymn.*, p. 67). Plutarch’s *Lives* may be thought of as a collection of *synkriseis* or comparisons, and most have explicit *synkriseis* attached to them. Lucian’s *Demonax* is largely a collection of unelaborated *chreiai*. The *Imagines* of the two Philostrati and the *Statuarum descriptiones* by Callistratus are collections of *ekphraseis* or descriptions. A history could be thought of as a collection of discrete narrations; this is not my own conception, but that of the ancient rhetorical theorists themselves (Theon 1: 60; cf. ps.-Hermog., *Progymn.* 2.2; John of Sardis, *Comment. in Aphthon.*, p. 30). In the words of Thomas D. Frazel, in a recent book that asks us to pay more attention to the influence of the *progymnasmata* on Cicero’s orations, these exercises “developed a set of skills to be internalized, utilized, and, most importantly, adapted to particular situations, and for this reason they are essential for developing more abstract ways of organizing thought and communicating it” (Frazel 2009: 33). It is essential for us to bear in mind the curriculum of the school in attempting to understand the ancient mind and its self-expression.

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## FURTHER READING

One may begin further reading with Gibson 2008, an English translation of Libanius' elaborated *progymnasmata* with Greek text, introduction, and notes, and then go on to Kennedy 2003 for English translations of ancient and Byzantine theoretical discussions of the *progymnasmata*. (I have introduced alterations in Kennedy's translations when I deemed them necessary.) Webb 2001 is

a helpful introduction with some good insights. Heath 2002/2003 includes a discussion of all known ancient writers on the *progymnasmata*. Articles by Gibson discuss the student's exposure to history (2004) and to moral pedagogy (2014) in the *progymnasmata* and ideas about education (*paideia*) in Libanius' *Progymnasmata* (2011). The culturally conservative values of late ancient *progymnasmata* are underscored in Kraus (2011). Schouler (1984: 51–138) provides an ample discussion of the progymnasmatic modes in French. Fruteau de Laclos (1999), in addition to including a French translation of Nicolaus of Myra's *Progymnasmata*, has much on the history of progymnasmatic theory and a bibliography of specialized studies of the individual progymnasmatic modes of discourses, to which may be added Amato and Schamp 2005. Kraus 2005 surveys the reception of the *progymnasmata* right into the twentieth century.

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## CHAPTER 11

# The *Ephebeia* in the Hellenistic Period

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*Nigel M. Kennell*

### 1. Introduction

The continuing debates over public education—its content, aims, and style of delivery—highlight its vital function in a modern democratic society, that of fashioning productive, well-informed citizens who can take responsibility for their own governance. While state-run universal educational systems such as those familiar today were extremely rare and very short-lived in ancient Greek city-states, there was an institution which, though sharing only a few characteristics with such modern systems, also aimed at producing citizens. This was the *ephebeia* or, in its anglicized form, ephebate, the most widespread institution for training the bodies and shaping the minds of young citizens in the Hellenistic world. This sort of citizen training system is attested in almost 200 locations, from the Greek colony of Massalia in the West (*IG XIV 2445*) to Babylon in the East, where the Greek community preserved its ephebate even under the Parthian Arsacids in the early first century BCE (*SEG VII 39*). Though aimed primarily at producing well-conditioned young citizen warriors to defend the city, ephebates in many places also provided elements of education in the liberal arts. Long dismissed as a decadent shadow of its fourth-century Athenian antecedent, the Hellenistic ephebate has undergone a radical re-evaluation in recent years, leading scholars to a better appreciation of its role in producing citizen warriors and in projecting a particularly powerful vision of Greek civic culture.

### 2. The Gymnasium and its user Groups

Ephebates centered on the gymnasium, an institution at the core of Greek civic identity. The gymnasium had developed from being simply an extensive well-watered space on the outskirts of a city devoted to athletic leisure activities of the local elite into a large,

multi-use complex, complete with facilities for practicing athletic events of all sorts as well as baths, shaded porticoes, lecture halls, and sometimes libraries. Every *polis* worthy of the name was expected to have a gymnasium, whose importance to it could be tantamount to that of a constitution. In the East, graduates of ephebeates that operated in gymnasia were counted among the educated Hellenic elite; such ephebeates therefore offered a path for ambitious young non-Hellenophones to identify themselves with the dominant international culture.

Although the youths enrolled in ephebeates were predominant in the gymnasium, they normally shared the facilities with two other organized age groups. The younger was called the “children” (*paidēs*), freeborn males under ephebic age. Their curriculum of study, such as can be reconstructed from the lists of victors in the gymnasia contests that functioned as final examinations in the ancient world, included a large proportion of instruction in the liberal arts along with the traditional athletic subjects. *Paidēs* at Hydai in the territory of Mylasa displayed their ability in quizzes, reading, calligraphy, and general knowledge (*IK* 35 909). A benefactor at Priene ensured that the *paidēs* there might compete in tests in literary subjects (*philologia*) as well as in athletics (*IPriene* 113). Teos, the headquarters of the guild of Dionysiac artistes, also held competitions in the lyre (*kitharismos*), singing to the lyre (*kitharodia*), solo singing (*psalmos*), in declaiming passages from comedy (*komodia*), poetry (*melographia*), tragedy (*ruthmographia*), and in capping verses (*hupobole antapodeseos*) (*CIG* 3088). No other city had as rich a repertoire of musical contests for their *paidēs*, but an inscription from Chios (*SIG*<sup>3</sup> 959) lists victors in epic recitation (*rhapsodia*), singing, the lyre, and reading who were probably *paidēs*, and among the athletic competitions at Cnidus boys might even have tried their hand at painting (*zographia*) (*SEG* XLIV 902). As *paidēs* customarily received their instruction in these subjects outside the gymnasium—in stoas in the agora and other available spaces—they used its facilities only when exercising. To curtail possible opportunities for inappropriate contact between underage boys and their elders, cities might impose strict age segregation in the gymnasium during these periods (*SEG* XLIII 381 B, ll. 10–16).

Older than those in the ephebate were the “youths” (*neoi*), who in the Hellenistic period formed the core of the civic defense forces. The *neoi* trained regularly in the gymnasium, received largesse from benefactors as did their younger contemporaries, and competed in the contests that punctuated the gymnasia year. *Neoi*, however, were called upon to defend their cities from external attack; they also served as a domestic security force, patrolling the countryside to suppress brigandage and other disturbances of the countryside’s peace. As full-fledged citizens, *neoi* often represented the gymnasia community as a whole in its dealings with the city at large.

Bracketed by the age groups of *paidēs* and *neoi*, ephebeates were thus concerned with those in transition from sub-adults to citizens, an age that has traditionally been of concern to society at large. The most common age of entry into the ephebate seems to have been about eighteen, as in fourth-century Athens, but the relatively high proportion of brothers in some lists of graduates from ephebeates suggests that the rule was flexible (e.g., *IG* VII 2721 [Akraiphiai]; *IG* VII 1757 [Thespiiai]; *IG* XII 6.1 169 [Samos]; *SEG* XXV 499 [Hyettos]; *SEG* XLI 107 [Athens]; *TAM* 5.2 1203 [Apollonis]; *IDélos* 1927). Nonetheless, anomalies did exist, such as in Egypt where it is thought, based on evidence from the Roman era, that boys entered the system at fourteen in the Ptolemaic period, and at Sparta, where its revived traditional ephebate lasted from age fourteen to twenty

(Kennell 1995, 37–39). The length of Sparta’s ephebate was also unusual; most of them, like Athens’ after the end of the fourth century, lasted a single year, with only a few cities having two- (e.g., *SEG* XVI 652 [Halikarnassos]; *TAM* V.2 104 [Apollonis]) or very occasionally three-year programs (*IG* V.1 1386 [Thouria]; *SIG*<sup>3</sup> 959 [Chios]).

### 3. The Spread and Nature of the Hellenistic Ephebate

The process by which the Hellenistic ephebate spread can be briefly sketched. Of all the ephebates, the Athenian is far and away the best known. Athens’ system has the most extensive epigraphical record, consisting of hundreds of inscriptions dating to each of the seven centuries of its existence, and the only surviving literary description of an ephebate, chapter 42 of the Aristotelian *Constitution of the Athenians*, which makes the loss of Teucer of Kyzikos’ mammoth three-volume work, *On the Exercise of the Ephebes at Kyzikos* (*FGrHist* 274), all the more regrettable. From this evidence, it is clear that the early Athenian *ephebeia* focused on military instruction. In the early fourth century BCE, Athenians had introduced a two-year program of athletic, military, and ethical training for young citizens destined for hoplite service apparently modeled on Spartan practice. A fundamental reform in 334 distinguished between a year of training and a second year of military service in Attica during which those enrolled, called “ephebes” (*epheboi*)—an Athenian coinage specifically designating this sort of cadet—were supported by the state. After first swearing an oath en masse in the sanctuary of Aglauros on the eastern slope of the Acropolis, young men who had just become Athenian citizens were placed under the overall direction of a high-ranking elected official known as the *kosmetes* (*kosmetes*) and grouped according to the ten Cleisthenic tribes, with ephebes of each tribe having their own “discipliner,” or *sophonistes*, elected by the Assembly from a short list of thirty men over forty years old chosen by their fathers. *Sophonistai* who kept their charges particularly well behaved could expect to receive honors from the same source at the end of their term in office (e.g., *IG* II<sup>2</sup> 1159). During their first year, which they spent garrisoning Mounichia and Akte in the Piraeus, the ephebes in each tribe were taught by public officials, elected and paid by the city. Military affairs were the province of teachers (*didaskaloi*), who taught weapons handling and tactics (*hoplomachein*), archery (*toxouein*), javelin throwing (*akontizein*), and the new military science of aiming and firing the catapult (*katapaltein*). Two *paidotribai* (“boy rubbers” or masseurs) were in charge of all instruction in athletics. No literary or philosophical training is attested apart from a tour of shrines (*hiera*) at the beginning of their ephebic service, which may have served to inculcate a certain sense of patriotism, although the existence of other aspects to the training is hinted at by the statement that the tribal *sophonistes* “took care of everything else.” To mark their transition to the second year and practical soldiering outside the urban areas, the ephebes put on displays of maneuvers in the theater before the assembled people of Athens, obtaining from the city a shield and spear as tokens of their new status. They then patrolled the Attic hinterland and spent time at the various forts guarding the borders.

With its instructors paid from the public purse, subsidies for the *sophonistai*, weapons, and other expenses, the ephebate has been calculated to have cost Athens annually well over the enormous sum of 60T. No wonder, then, that the city removed its financial support and shortened the term of service by a year when facing serious financial

difficulties at the turn of the fourth to the third centuries BCE. Despite this setback, the Athenian ephebate inspired other cities to institute their own versions, beginning with Eretria, long influenced by Athens, where an ephebate is first attested between 315 and 305 BCE (*IG XII.9* 191). In the decades following, a slight but burgeoning wave of evidence reveals the existence of ephebic systems in at least twenty-nine cities during the third century, peaking at about eighty in the second. From the first century onward into the Roman Empire, changes in the administration and funding of ephebates result in a drastic diminution of testimonia, though their existence can be assumed in most cities of the Greek East. Luckily, however, the Hellenistic evidence, almost exclusively epigraphical, is abundant and relatively eloquent.

As other cities instituted their own citizen training systems, the ephebate's military function remained prominent. In the early years of the third century, Koresia on Keos began to require its younger men to practice throwing the javelin, archery, and catapult handling three times a month (*IG XII.5* 647). Ephebes in Boiotia were trained as cadets for the League army, into which they were enrolled upon graduation (e.g., *IG VII* 2716, 3292, 3070; *SEG XXVI* 509, *XXXVII* 385). Indeed, the League authorities explicitly mandated instruction for their member cities' youth in archery, the javelin, and military formations (*SEG XXXII* 496). During his ascendancy (274–264 BCE) Aratos' father, the democrat Kleinias, built Sikyon's gymnasium, where ephebes were still being trained centuries later (Paus. 2.10.7). At Athens, even though their numbers had declined dramatically from those of the fourth century, ephebes occasionally assumed an active military role, as a decree praising them for their discipline (*eutaxia*) and civic pride (*philotimia*) at a time "when war gripped the city" and for their guarding of the Mouseion (*IG II<sup>2</sup>* 665) indicates. That Athenians still viewed ephebic service as a useful component of state security may be the reason for the variation in numbers of ephebes which has been tentatively linked to the international political climate: at times of war or crisis, more Athenians seem to have enrolled their sons than at times of peace.

Outside mainland Greece, a scattering of evidence reveals the ephebate's spread: ephebes first appear on Samos in the second half of the third century (*IG II<sup>2</sup>* XII.6 11) and by its end, the quintessential ephebic festival, the Hermaia, is attested on Lesbos at the city of Eresos, being held by a gymnasiarch, the gymnasium's chief administrator, who also led the youth under his care out to the city's borders (*IG XII.2* Supp. 122). On the north coast of the Black Sea, Sarmatian Gorgippia boasted its own Hermaia festival sometime in the same century (*IOSPE IV* 432). On Crete, the traditional "herds" (*agelai*) of boys (e.g., *IC I* xix 1) were beginning the process that would eventually transform them into Hellenistic-style ephebates (*IC I* xviii 124). In Asia Minor, ephebates are found at Teos (*SEG II* 614), at Miletos (*Milet* 1.3 169), and possibly at Ilion (*IK* 3 31). A reference in a Ptolemaic text on the demes of Alexandria reveals the existence of ephebes in Egypt between 270 and 267/6 BCE (*Pap.Oxy.* 2465).

#### 4. Ephebes and the Officials of the Gymnasium

These inscriptions and other testimonia indicate that the elements for the Hellenistic ephebate were put in place quite rapidly, making it a fully developed and important public institution by the end of the century. Generally speaking, free youths, either sons

of citizens who already numbered among a city's *paides* or, later, young foreigners with special privileges, were formally enrolled in the body of ephebes (*enkrinesthai*) at a legally established age (e.g., *IG VII 29*; *XII.6 181*). Most ephebrates, except the Athenian, were under the direction of a gymnasiarch (*gumnasiarchos*), a prominent local official, either elected or drafted, whose duty was to oversee the upkeep of the gymnasium, including the provision of costly oil for the use of ephebes and others, as well as the discipline and training of the ephebes themselves, which was often combined with supervision of the civic corps of *neoi*. The duties of a gymnasiarch were onerous and expensive, especially as he was expected at least to subsidize the daily supply of oil, if not to make it available gratis. For this reason, subsidies were often available in the form of special funds, established at public or private initiative, to alleviate this financial burden. The gymnasiarch was also expected to ensure that all who frequented the gymnasium behaved well. The link between education and orderly conduct (*kosmiotes*) is a common theme in honorific decrees for gymnasiarchs (e.g., *IG II<sup>2</sup> 1008*, line 55; Michel 1900, 544). Youthful high spirits were surely the most common cause of disorder in the gymnasium, but deeper tensions may sometimes have been at work. An inscription from Pergamum honoring the gymnasiarch Metrodorus claims that his leadership of the ephebes and *neoi* was so exemplary that "it happened that those of the lowest station were honored in this part no less than those of the upper class" (Hebding 1907, no. 10). Were some young men aggrieved at perceived unequal treatment by other gymnasiarchs because of their lower social status?

Answerable to the gymnasiarch were his assistant, the "under-gymnasiarch" (*hupogumnasiarchos*), who was sometimes a relative; the "guardian of the palaestra" (*palaistrophulax*), who though a slave had some disciplinary powers over users of the gymnasium (Hercher *Ep. Gr. Diogenes 35.3*); and the ephebic instructors. These last appear in the epigraphical evidence for the most part anonymously as "instructors" (*paidentai*). What they taught and whether or not all of them were public servants is impossible to discern.

## 5. Specialized Instruction, Intellectual and Physical

On the other hand, much instruction was provided by itinerant specialists who chanced to visit the city or were hired by the gymnasiarch himself to supplement the lessons provided by the *paidentai*. Subjects in the liberal arts were typically taught by traveling scholars who gave occasional lectures (*akroaseis*) (e.g., *SEG LVI 638*). For example, Haliartos in Boiotia praised a visiting Macedonian philosopher for lecturing to the ephebes in its gymnasium (*SEG LXIV 409b*). Menander, a grammarian from Acarnania, met with great success for the courses (*scholai*) he presented in the gymnasium at Delphi (*FdeD III.3.3.2 338*). The vigorous gymnasiarch Zosimos brought the ephebes of Priene a grammar "trainer" (*IPriene 112 xxiv*). Eretrian gymnasiarchs were particularly assiduous: Mantidoros engaged an Athenian Homeric scholar for the ephebes and anyone else favorably inclined to education (*IG XII.9 235*), while Elpinikos combined the two strands of ephebic training by providing both a rhetoric instructor and a *hoplomachos*, who taught classes in the gymnasium for the *paides*, ephebes, and anyone else interested in gaining advantage from such instruction (*IG XII.9 234*). The content of any instruction



which these traveling academics provided had to meet with the gymnasiarch's approval. Teachers whose thought was not considered conducive to the moral welfare of ephebes and *neoi* might either be flogged or ejected forcibly from the gymnasium ([Pl]. *Eryx*. 398e; DL 6.90). The gymnasiarch's word was law, as the philosopher Carneades learned when commanded to lower his voice during a particularly loud discussion (Plut. *de garrulitate* 513C).

Most of the supplementary teachers are, of course, nonentities to us, but not all. The philosopher Sphairos from Borysthenes on the north coast of the Black Sea, who was a former student of Stoicism's founder Zeno and had several influential books to his credit, lectured at Sparta in the middle of the third century concerning ephebes and *neoi*, which later led to Cleomenes III recruiting him as an advisor in his ambitious revival of traditional Spartan citizen training (Plut. *Cleom.* 2.2; Kennell 1995, 98–102). In contrast to their counterparts in other cities, even Sparta, Athenian ephebes had the luxury of regularly being able to attend lectures by renowned philosophers in permanent residence in the city (Perrin-Saminadayar 2007, 261–66). Beginning in the later second century, ephebes are praised both for assiduously exercising in gymnasia and for studying “throughout the whole year” with the philosophers who frequented the Lyceum and Academy (*IG II<sup>2</sup>* 1028, 1029). Among them was Zenodotos, probably a pupil of Diogenes of Babylon (DL 7.30) and very high in the Stoic school, who taught in the gymnasium of Ptolemy as well (*IG II<sup>2</sup>* 1028). Zenodotos seems to have taught liberal studies in general rather than philosophical theory specifically, since Dionysios, the cosmete for 123/2, is described as “making [the ephebes] attend Zenodotos because he was concerned about their interest in letters” (*IG II<sup>2</sup>* 1006, ll. 64–65). Inscriptions from the first century BCE also mention rhetoric and grammar (*IG II<sup>2</sup>* 1052b; *SEG XXII* 111).

The increasing importance of literary studies in the Athenian ephebate can be seen in the ephebes' annual donation of 100 books to the library in the Ptolemaion, required by a decree passed early in the first century BCE (e.g., *IG II<sup>2</sup>* 1029, 1030, 1043). Libraries are attested in several other cities, a few of which have some connection with citizen training. For example, inscriptions recording the foundation of libraries at Rhodes (*SEG XXXVI* 699) and Teos (*SEG II* 584) mention gymnasiarchs and *paides*, respectively, while fragments of plaster found at Tauromenion in Sicily form part of a catalog of historical works painted on the gymnasium wall (*SEG XXVI* 1123; *SEG LVI* 1106). The references to literary and philosophical education should not be taken to indicate a corresponding diminution in interest in physical education and military training. In addition to practical skills in weaponry, the martial qualities of *eutaxia* (discipline), *euexia* (good physical conditioning), and *philoponia* (diligence in training) continued to be stressed throughout the Hellenistic period, with many cities holding contests in them.

Being in the best physical condition was the criterion for victory in the *euexia* contest in Macedonian Beroia's militarily oriented gymnasium, just as it had been in the contest that King Agesilaos had held for hoplite units gathered in Ephesos two centuries earlier (X. *Hell.* 3.14.16; *SEG XLIII* 381, l. 50). Contests in *euexia* among individuals or groups in all age categories in the gymnasium were held in several cities (e.g., *IG XII.6* 181; *IOSPE IV*; *IK* 19 1; *SEG XVI* 652) throughout the Hellenistic period, attesting to its continuing viability. Not simply a matter of aesthetics

and health, *euxia* had been interpreted in military and social terms from at least the time of Xenophon, who has his Socrates describe it as enabling an individual to survive the trials and horrors of war with dignity, which leads to aiding one's friends and country, living in glory, and at the end bequeathing a good reputation to one's children (X. *Mem.* 3.12.3). A more controversial *euxia*, that of the dedicated athlete, also existed, which was criticized by Hippocrates and, later, Galen as unstable and even unhealthy (Gal. Kühn IV.751–756). Galen actually distinguished between athletic and true *euxia*, which must be the citizen *euxia* of Socrates, Xenophon, and the ephebic competitions.

Contests in *philoponia* were of a different nature, since ephebes' behavior needed to be assessed throughout their year or so in training (*IG* XII.6 183 [Samos]; *ICos* EV 5; *ID* 1958 [Delos]; *IK* 1 81 [Erythrai]). Accordingly at Beroia the gymnasiarch himself was charged with judging “whosoever of those under thirty seems to him to have trained the most diligently in the present year” since he was in the best position to do so (*SEG* XLIII 381 B, ll. 56–57). *Philoponia* was so vital to citizen training that even cities such as Athens, where no such contest is attested, showed a keen interest in its manifestation. Athenian decrees regularly refer to ephebes' application in training and performing their other duties, sometimes calling for each of them to receive an olive crown for the zeal (*spoude*) and diligence (*philoponia*) he showed throughout the entire year (e.g., *IG* II<sup>2</sup> 1042 b and c; 1043; *SEG* XXII 110). In the first century BCE, the Ephesian gymnasiarch Diodoros creditably took thought for the manliness of the youth in his care by urging them to exercise, thus showing how highly he valued both physical and mental diligence (*philoponia somatike kai psuchike*) (*IK* 11.1 6, ll. 15–18). A century later, a gymnasiarch on Cos even dedicated a building to Athena for the orderly diligence (*kosmios philoponia*) of the *neoi* and ephebes (*ICos* EV 228).

Discipline (*eutaxia*) is the most obviously martial of the three qualities, essential for warriors fighting together and much desired by cities in their potential and current citizen-soldiers, since the passage of even a friendly army was an occasion for often justifiable dread. In peace and war alike, troops and their officers were commended for orderly behavior (e.g., *IK* 3 73; *SIG*<sup>3</sup> 555). When Athens had to deploy all its manpower resources during the Chremonidean war, the ephebes of 267 BCE received praise for conducting themselves in a disciplined manner in all their guard duties and the defense of Mouseion Hill (*SEG* XXXVIII 78). *Eutaxia* was formally assessed in fourth-century Athens (*SEG* LI 80) as well as at several other cities (e.g., *IG* VII 557 [Tanagra]; XII.6 181–183 [Samos]; XIV 2445 [Massalia]; *IK* 19 1 [Sestos]) including Beroia where, as in the case of *philoponia*, the gymnasiarch was especially qualified to judge the extent of discipline in his charges over the course of the ephebic year (*SEG* XLIII 381 B, ll. 45, 54). The Beroian contest was among individuals, but in Athens civic tribes competed for the prize in *eutaxia*. The principles for recognizing the quality were probably somewhat informal. Two ephebes were awarded for their *eutaxia* in an inscription from Chalcis (*SEG* XXIX 806), and a gymnasiarch in Sicilian Centuripae crowned several boys for *eutaxia* in a weapons-handling contest (Cordiano 1997, no. 52). Finally, at Pergamum, boys entered the ephebate grouped under headings “diligent” (*philoponoioi*), “conditioned” (*euektai*), and “disciplined” (*eutaktoi*), probably indicating that they had undergone special tests in these areas (Jacobsthal 1908, 387–388).

## 6. Military Skills

Practical military training was in the skills necessary for the heavily armed hoplite and the lightly armed skirmisher. Contests in the handling of heavy weapons (*hoplomachia*) first appear in Homer's account of Patroklos' funeral games in the *Iliad* (23.798–826), and by the fifth and fourth centuries professional arms instructors (*hoplomachoi*) were a familiar, if not always welcome, sight as they traveled from city to city presenting displays to attract clients (Pl. *Laches*, 179e; X. *Mem.* 3.1). The martial art of weapons handling (*hoplomachia*) evidently entailed skill in the aesthetically pleasing wielding of the spear and large round shield that were the hoplite's characteristic weaponry, combined with an understanding of military leadership and basic tactics (X. *Mem.* 3.1; Theoc. 24.126–129). *Hoplomachia* was an essential component of the ephebic curriculum throughout the Hellenistic period starting in fourth-century Athens, where instructors were elected by the *demos* to teach young Athenians how to handle spear and shield ([Ar.] *AP* 42.3). In the company of other teachers, the *hoplomachos* was honored at the end of each ephebic class's term of service and had his name inscribed next to the annual ephebic lists (e.g., *IG* II<sup>2</sup> 1006; 1011; *SEG* XXIX 116; XXXVIII 100). He must have received some form of recompense (*misthos*) for his services, although none is recorded in the *Constitution of the Athenians*. But Athens, once again, stood alone in having elected *hoplomachoi* in office for a whole year. Elsewhere, the tradition of itinerant arms instructors prevailed. One such, Apollonios of Laodikeia, received praise from the Athenian cleruchs on Delos in 148/7 BCE for his teaching of the free *paides*, ephebes, and *neaniskoi* (*I. Delos* 1501). The people of Thespiai granted proxeny to the Athenian Sostratos, whom they had hired under the law requiring Boiotian cities to provide military instruction to all their young men (*SEG* XXXII 496). Normally, it was up to gymnasiarchs such as Elpinikos in Eretria whether to expend their own resources on such training (*IG* XII.9 234). A gymnasiarch at Pergamon was so concerned that there be training in all subjects that he introduced a distribution of weapons of every kind as well as personally funding an additional instructor (Jacobsthal 1908, no. 1). Despite not employing permanent arms teachers, cities might offer significant compensation to attract good *hoplomachoi* and retain them for set periods of time. The terms of the famous bequest by Polythrous to fund the education of free children at Teos called for a *hoplomachos* and instructor in javelin and archery to be paid 300 and 250 drachmae, respectively, for a minimum of two months' instruction. Often misunderstood as a sign of the devaluation of military training, these wages are in fact extremely generous when compared to the 500 to 700 drachmae paid to instructors in musical subjects for an entire year of employment (*SIG*<sup>3</sup> 578). After receiving the equivalent of two-and-a-half times the salary of the highest paid musical instructor, the *hoplomachos* was free to seek employment elsewhere.

Military instruction was also given in throwing a spear (*akon*) and shooting a bow (*toxon*) to provide ephebes with the complementary skills of light-armed troops. So closely associated was archery with ephebic service that the bow or quiver might by itself symbolize the ephebate (*IG* X.2.1 876; *SGO* I 05/02/02). In most instances, except at Athens and Macedonian Amphipolis, one man taught both subjects, though not all cities enjoyed an instructor's services. On Keos, the gymnasiarch of Koresia himself was to train his charges three times a month in the javelin, archery, and the catapult; at Beroia,

the gymnasiarch was probably additionally responsible for compulsory daily training in archery and javelin by the ephebes and those under the age of twenty-two (*SEG* XLIII 381 B ll. 11–13). That some cities did not feel the need for an instructor in these skills indicates that javelin and archery were not esteemed to quite the same degree as weapons handling. The Teians, for example, paid their instructors 1/6 less than *hoplomachoi*, and in many cities instructors in the bow and the spear only figured among the anonymous *paidentai* mentioned in ephebic inscriptions (e.g., *ICos* EV 372; *IPriene* 112–114; *IK* 17 2101 [Ephesos]).

The most highly specialized of ephebic instructors was the *katapaltaphetes*, who taught the aiming and firing of a new class of weapon invented in the mid-fourth century, the torsion catapult (*katapaltes*). Evidence for public instruction in the catapult is not extensive—it is attested at a maximum of five cities—but youth elsewhere were likely also required to become familiar with the technicalities of the new armament. Otherwise, cities may have relied on royal generosity to supply the expertise and equipment. Athenian ephebes received instruction in the catapult all through the Hellenistic period until the sack by Sulla in 86 BCE, after which training in heavy artillery was suppressed ([Ar.] *AP* 42.3; *IG* II<sup>2</sup> 2028-1030, 1043; *SEG* XXII 111). On Samos, ephebes (and even the elder *paides*) learned both how to fire the most common type of catapult, the individually operated *oxuboles*, which, like a crossbow, shot a bolt, and the more massive and complicated stone-throwing *lithobolos* (*IG* XII.6 183); instruction in both weapons was apparently also a desideratum in Athens, although an inscription from the later second century indicates that teachers had concentrated for some time only on the lighter weapon (Perrin-Saminadayar 2007, T26, ll. 34–37).

Athletics, strictly speaking, was the province of only a single instructor, the *paidotribes* (e.g., *IG* II<sup>2</sup> 1011 [Athens]; *ICos* ED 145 A). As his title (“boy rubber”) indicates, the *paidotribes* was originally a masseur, who by the Hellenistic period had acquired the expertise of a physical trainer. He usually taught running, jumping, boxing, and the demanding skills of wrestling.

## 7. Ephebes and Civic Events

From the early fourth century when Athenian youth competed in torch relays (*X. Vect.* 52) and, later on, with the ephebes’ visits to the city’s shrines, the Hellenistic period shows a strong tradition of ephebic participation in civic events. A wealth of local festivals existed in which ephebes competed, from the ubiquitous Hermaia marking the end of the gymnasial year, where ephebes’ progress was assessed in athletic competition, to games founded by local benefactors and even festivals honoring kings, dynasts, and eventually the goddess Roma. Ephebes also took part in official delegations to greet visiting dignitaries in a ceremony called either *apantesis* or *hupantesis*, such as when a mass of royal satraps, soldiers, priests, and young men from the gymnasium all assembled to welcome Ptolemy Euergetes on his visit to Antioch in 246 BCE (*W. Chr.* 1 col. III ll. 20–24). Upon returning from a campaign toward the middle of the second century BCE, Attalos III was greeted by the gymnasiarch of Pergamon with his ephebes and *neoi*, plus the *paidonomos* and his *paides*, along with other inhabitants of the city in their best

clothing (*I. Pergamon* I 246). Such receptions were obviously a sign of a city's esteem and zeal to ingratiate. Roman officials could expect to be welcomed to Athens by the ephebes, who are regularly noted in inscriptions from the later second and early first centuries as having greeted them as friends, benefactors, and allies of the *demos* (e.g., *IG* II<sup>2</sup> 1006, 1008, 1029). In the first century BCE, the Antiochenes, dressed in white, with their ephebes and *paides* divided into groups along the road, were even preparing to greet the freedman Demetrius, described as "the person with the greatest influence" with Pompey the Great, when Cato came upon them, much to his disgust (*Plut. Pomp.* 39.4).

A similar *polis*-centered activity concerned the posthumous honors granted to significant benefactors. Sometimes, when the city granted public burial, the bier was to be carried or accompanied by the ephebes. In the event of her death, the wealthy Archippe was to be buried with others who were also named as benefactors of Cyme, with her bier borne by the city's gymnasiarch and ephebes (*SEG* XXXIII 1039). Benefactors in Priene, including several generous gymnasiarchs, were granted similar public funerals, attended by their successors as gymnasiarchs, *neoi*, ephebes, and other officials (*IPriene* 104; 108, ll. 366–370; 113, ll. 116–114). And Cicero recounts the funeral of Castricius, who was buried within the city of Smyrna, his bier was carried by the ephebes (*Pro Flacc.* 31).

## 8. Some Conclusions

Can we trace the ephebeia's development through the Hellenistic period? The long-accepted view, as mentioned earlier, is to regard the institution as falling inexorably into decadence after its apogee at Athens in the fourth century, visible in the change of focus from physical education and active military service to the study of philosophy and literature with a gilding of military playacting—an odd conception of decline devised by library-bound academics. This notion is moreover based on a misconception, for no Greek ephebes ever consistently followed the example of their Athenian counterparts in active military service except at times of crisis. No explicit evidence exists for the military deployment of ephebes, as ephebes, other than in Attica. Recently, a perceived change in the ephebic curriculum, at least in Asia Minor, has been rephrased as a transformation of the ephebate's original function of producing good citizens to defend their city by force of arms into the training of good elite citizen diplomats to advance their city's interests by the force of their rhetoric—a change perhaps precipitated by a lessening of the importance of local military defense after the province of Asia was created in 129 BCE.

In truth, it is difficult to make sweeping statements about the Hellenistic ephebate because of the state of the evidence. Outside Athens, the epigraphical material on ephebic matters is patchy and chronologically conditioned, with the bulk of detailed information dating to the century between the mid-second and mid-first centuries BCE. Almost any statement about the content or purpose of citizen training systems in general is therefore based on a limited set of data. One thing is clear, however: despite the ubiquity of certain subjects, the Greek ephebate was far from being a monolithic institution based largely on an Athenian model. With the exception of very few ephebates—predominantly in Egypt—featuring the typically Athenian office of *kosmetes* (*IG* XII.9 Supp. 646 [Tanagra]; *IK* 29 16 [Kios]; *CPJ* 41 [Alexandria]; *IG Fayum* I 8 [Krokodilopolis]; *SEG* VIII 694

[Egyptian Thebes]), Athens had little influence on citizen training systems beyond inspiring other cities to adopt the institution and, usually, the name *ephebeia*. In addition, although the detailed late-Hellenistic ephebic inscriptions do contain extensive references to liberal studies, many cities continued to provide the elements of military training to their youth. Boiotian ephebes still entered the army ranks upon graduation in the first century BCE and were trained in the *hoplomachia* at Akraiphiai a century later (*IG VII 2712*). Ephebic training at Amphipolis in Macedonia retained a marked military character into the Augustan period. Even in the second century CE, Herakleia in Bithynia (*IK 47 60*) tested ephebes in the *hoplomachia* and the military slingshot (*sphendone*), a variation of which, the *kestrosphendone*, was also standard equipment for Athenian ephebes throughout the Roman period (e.g., *IG II<sup>2</sup> 1993, 2245*). Civic defense, in the form of domestic security, remained the duty of the corps of *neoi* (e.g., *IGBulg III.1 1461*; Robert 1937, 106), who now constituted a ready pool of manpower for the Roman army as well (*SEG XXXIX 456*; Kennell 2009). Accordingly, it can reasonably be concluded that the ephebate's original purpose of training up loyal citizen warriors, though adapted and sometimes obscured in the extant evidence, remained at the heart of Greek citizen training.

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## CHAPTER 12

# Corporal Punishment in the Ancient School

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*W. Martin Bloomer*

In a third-century BCE comic sketch, a mother comes to her son's teacher to plead with him to beat the boy. He has not been going to school. The teacher complies, but not quite with the gusto the mother desires (Herodas, *Mimiambi* 3, "The Teacher"). This scene of violence is supposed to amuse its ancient audience. How does it strike us? My reaction in this chapter on pedagogic violence is necessarily complex. We can appreciate the humor of the scene in historical context, but as contemporary parents, educators, and citizens, it raises crucial issues that beg exploration. These issues are all the more pressing because the United States, for instance, still finds partisans of corporal punishment of children, despite the fact that legislation and the educational establishment by and large disapprove and disallow a range of physical responses to "bad" behavior. Ancient corporal punishment is sometimes seen as a warrant for current practice, and their theories for and against corporal punishment remain part of the tradition of child education. Returning to the ancient evidence will therefore help clarify some of the arguments and assumptions that explicitly and implicitly underlie much of the contemporary debate.

Corporal punishment in practice, however, was not for the ancients a matter of human rights as it is for us. Rather, corporal punishment was intended to preserve a fundamental distinction regarding *citizens'* rights. Those who argue against corporal punishment may now lay claim to absolute human rights, but historical practice reflects a gradually enlarging social distinction of citizen from non-citizen. But we must not let rights language lead us astray from an even deeper issue. Submerged beneath our talk of rights is the "rights bearer," a subject with a specific set of characteristics that qualify "it" to be a possessor of rights. To elucidate the meaning and purpose of corporal punishment at any time, we must uncover the various conceptions of subjectivity at play. The varieties of subjectivity that form the basis of the rights bearer is most broadly learned, practiced, and exhibited in the school. The school offers a dynamic space where we can begin to detect the formation of the subject and its relationship to violence. That is, the use of



force against young bodies as part of the process of education brings into view the presumed meaning of the subjectivity of diverse individuals.

Historically, the elimination of corporal punishment of children is a crucial step in the recognition of subjectivity in others beyond the male elite. Yet, the growth of interest in the subjectivity of other kinds of people follows no inevitable march of progress. To examine this history, which considers the extension of the bodily rights of the citizen male to others, one must consider two phenomena: the parameters of punishment (who beat whom when, how, and why?) and reflection on those parameters. Any social order requires the limitation of violence, and yet the limits on violence establish or reinforce crucial social, political, and familial structures. The restriction of violence in turn contributes to more than a quiet society. Certain ideas of order devolve from these limitations, for example, only god or the state can kill, only the paterfamilias can strike the wife, everyone free can hit a slave (Roman law makes clear that teacher and parent may punish a child for the sake of correction, but no permanent injury may ensue [*Digest* 38.19.6.2]); it is important to remember that only in theory has the paterfamilias absolute rights over the bodies of his children, but see Shaw 2001 and Arjava 1998).

The ancient school was one place where the rules of striker and struck were learned. Since the school was also a place of social distinction (the free youth went here, the slave youth with whom the free had hitherto played at home did not; the free school-attending youth were accompanied by a slave pedagogue with the power to supervise and to punish) and since the institution of the school was influenced by literary and philosophical ideas about violence, the student also learned here a social or even intellectual rationale for punishment. School seems to have presented more systematically than the home a world of purposeful punishment. Striking was regular. The struck was understood not simply as a victim; he was struck to learn, and he had recourse (if he did not make future mistakes) or at the very least, unlike the slave, an end to his punishment would come with the end of schooling. Finally, the curriculum guided the student's understanding of what was being done to him and her. In the moral sentences and fables he and she copied out and memorized as a first student, in the readings from literature, and in the compositions he wrote at the end of schooling, the student found reflections on doing violence to others.

This sketch of corporal punishment within the ancient school describes briefly the various ways that physical pain was inflicted upon the student as a consequence of the student's alleged failure to perform and with the intention of forming the student's subjectivity (punishment aims to check the immediate behavior, to prevent its recurrence, and to have the student realize his or her status as a deficient learner and not yet adult). Clarity of definitions is needed here. In some modern normative schemes, all infliction of pain, mental as well as corporal, might be termed abuse. For the present, I shall only be descriptive and so follow the norms of Greek and Roman societies, which for the most part did not deem corporal punishment abuse (the jurist Paulus does write of the excessive severity of a teacher [*Digest* 9.2.6]). To describe the ancient practices and then attitudes, it is essential to realize that learning was measured by performance; learning constituted a series of behaviors and was not simply a cognitive proficiency or cognitive act; those behaviors were regulated by the threat and finally by the administration of violence. Violence was so common that some teachers, parents, and students deemed it necessary for learning (it may also have accomplished the immediate goals the punisher had in mind).

Nonetheless, violence represented a departure from the desired, ideal process. A student was given an assignment. If properly learned and performed, no violence would ensue. The nature of the child learner might, however, necessarily entail failure, and so violence. It is not simply that too much or something inappropriate for the child's cognitive or physical level was set (e.g., making well-formed writing with a pen on papyrus for a boy lagging behind his sister in manual dexterity or requiring the same amount of memorization for children of different ages); rather, the child was understood by some as soft in body and irrational and thus in need of hardening. The application of violence was then understood to shape body and mind away from childhood and onto virility, an idea explored in more detail later. Although a master could be remembered as too harsh—so Horace wrote of his teacher Orbilius as *plagosus* (“full of blows,” *Epistles* 2.1.70)—the fact that a teacher would strike was commonly expected and accepted. The teacher seems to have struck when his verbal instruction had not ensured the desired outcome. Thus, the student's failure with words (reading, writing, memorizing, and speaking) was imagined as caused by a failure to heed the teacher's words. When words failed, violence was allowed. Such seems to be the cultural rationale for punishment. The whole issue of why punishment should be administered with blows did receive major theoretical treatment, but it is important to distinguish the philosophical and theoretical pedagogical objections (a formal mode of written reflection on cultural and social norms) from the attitudes or ideology inherent in the practice of school punishment.

Both the child's teacher and pedagogue, a home-owned slave delegated to take the student to and from school and to supervise learning, could punish (for the latter, see Libanius *Or.* 68.9; 4,186F). For the ubiquity of punishment, Greek and Roman comedy and satire, with their interest in the humor of pain and in social inversion, are commonly cited as testimonies (Aristophanes, *Clouds* 972; Plautus, *Bacchides* 434; Herodas, *Mimes* 3; Horace, *Epistles* 2.1.70–71, and cf. the satiric Martial, *Epigrams* 10.62). The North African Augustine and his older contemporary the poet of Burgundy, Ausonius, recall being beaten at school, apparently an experience more traumatic to the theologian (*Confessions* 1.9 and Ausonius, *Ep.* 22).

Augustine, in fact, refers in this passage to “racks, claws, and various instruments of torture of this kind” (all translations except where noted are my own). Augustine may well complain too much: he writes that it is better to die than to return to school (*City of God* 21.14). In the vast memory project of the *Confessions*, one must not assume strict autobiographical accuracy. There is a theological point to his lament: his description of his school experience, including his account of weeping over Virgil, retraces the folly and ignorance of his youth, when his search for God followed blind alleys. Further, complaint about the harshness of school is something of an ancient literary topos. Nonetheless, it works as a topos because of the social reality of school punishment. Martial (10.62.2) writes of the “dire rulers, the staffs of the pedagogues” (*ferulae tristes, sceptrum paedagogorum*); Augustine again at *City of God* (22.22) of straps and switches (*lora* and *virgae*). What is consistent in these frequent laments is the kind and grade of punishments. The ruler on the hand (*ferula*) is less severe than the staffs (*sceptrum*) of the pedagogues; the whip (*lorum*) less severe than the switch (*virga*). The vocabulary for such instruments is, in fact, quite varied (see the list of Greek and Roman terms in Booth 1973: 112 note 4 with bibliography; the punitive schoolmaster of Herodas' *Mime* has knucklebones on his leather strap, which leave scars). No doubt, the tools of punishment did vary. A heavy

whip is very different from a light whip, but the basic contrast is trifold: the blow on a hand from a ruler, the whip on the back, and the rod or cane on the back. The worst punishment, depicted in a wall fresco now lost from Herculaneum, was called *katômizein* in Greek, *catomidiare* in Latin. The victim was held, sometimes apparently upside down, on the back of another student and then caned (a drawing of the fresco can be found in Bonner 1977: 118).

So far I have predominantly concentrated on the physical aspects of violence—who hit whom with what and when. But it is the *intention* behind the use of force that will give us clues to the shaping of subjectivity. The way to get at the heart of intentionality is to diagnose the immediate cause of corporal punishment and the effect upon the punished (for the effect on Roman children, see Rawson 2003: 378–381). Our understanding of the practice can then be checked against the set of ideas and attitudes communicated indirectly by school materials that sought to naturalize—to justify as beyond question—the practice of punishment. Finally, the ancient theorists Quintilian and Plutarch, who wrote against corporal punishment, can be understood as critics of their contemporary culture. Their efforts to free the child from the long-term deleterious effects of punishment is indeed a significant advance in the conception of the child as a learner and indeed in human understanding of the connection of education to the autonomy of the learner.

Given the wide testimony to the practice of corporal punishment, causes were clearly various; and given the testimony that certain teachers were more violent than others, the cause was if not arbitrary and capricious, certainly affected by the disposition of the master. No catalog of offense and punishment can be given, but we can detect the impetus to violence by considering the lowest trigger. The *Rule of St. Benedict* (45) proscribes whipping for errors in reading. The text, in fact, is quite precise:

When anyone has made a mistake while reciting a Psalm, a responsory, an antiphon, or a lesson, if he does not humble himself there before all by making a satisfaction, let him undergo a greater punishment because he would not correct by humility what he did wrong through carelessness.

But boys for such faults shall be whipped. (Leonard Doyle, trans., 1948, Collegeville, Minn.)

The word here translated “whipped” is, in fact, *vapulent*. This word means to be cudgeled or flogged. It is severe. It is also the same word used by Benedict’s chief source for writing his rule. A sixth-century anonymous monastic rule, *The Rule of the Master*, does not indicate the trigger for punishment. It simply states (XIV. 79–87) that boys below the age of fifteen are to be beaten, not excommunicated, for their faults (*pro culpis*). The reasons advanced are typical: after fifteen, the sinner understands that he ought to do penance and correct his faults. The passage concludes in a way that shows the severity and humiliation of corporal punishment: those older than fifteen who commit grave faults or crimes are to be beaten. This treatment is a return to childhood.

Over 700 years before Benedict assembled his text in the sixth century, the Roman comic playwright Plautus had written a scene in which a pedagogue remembers that in the good old days a mistake in pronouncing a single syllable would result in a severe beating (*Bacchides* 422–434). The pedagogue Lydus is reminding his master and former pupil of his educational regimen (it must be said that the details of the scene reflect

the Greek education of the Latin play's Greek original; nonetheless, the scene was supposed to raise a laugh in a Roman audience).

I tell you in your first twenty years you didn't have a chance to set foot out of the house a finger's breadth from your pedagogue. If you weren't at the wrestling school before the crack of dawn, you'd get a not mild punishment from the head of the gymnasium. And when this happened, further trouble was on the way: both student and teacher earned a bad reputation. There they exercised in running, wrestling, the spear, the discus, boxing, ball games, and the broad jump, not with a tart and kisses. They were spending their youth there, not in dives. Once you returned home from the race course and the wrestling school, you sat daintily dressed on a seat before your teacher. While you were reading, if you stumbled on a single syllable, your hide would become as spotted as a wetnurse's shirt.

The evidence from the comic stage requires careful treatment. The pedagogue here is engaging in *laudatio temporis acti*: he is playing the stern old moralist to the father who is inclined to be indulgent toward his amorous and wayward son. The educator continues to remark that nowadays if a master touches a boy, the son runs to his father who coddles the errant and visits his punishment on the teacher. The twists and turns of (threatened) punishment are one of the favorite features of a Plautine play. The man typically punished, the slave, is given immunity from punishment on the comic stage, and the typical punisher, the paterfamilias or here the teacher, is the one duped or threatened. The stage's dynamic thus plays with the alleged severity of then, the mildness of now, the beaten and subject as the chief actor, and the patriarch, master of administering violence, as the pathetic victim, all of which complicates the present task of discerning the mode, degree, impetus, and effect of punishment in the school. No simple algorithm of offense and punishment will emerge, but the comic evidence, like other evidence from literature, shows the Romans and Greeks reflecting upon the violence endemic and even inherent in schooling. Several important patterns do emerge.

Punishment is not a simple reflex of offense and response but arises in and through a set of relationships: teacher, pedagogue, father (and mother in the case of Herodas' mime), and student. Punishment can be evaded (except in that nostalgic fiction, the hard, good old days of the complainer's own education). The *Rule of Benedict*, like other prescriptive texts, does not notice the fact of evasion, but literature, school exercises themselves, and some graffiti attest to a fertile practice of resistance. Punishment is certainly imagined as a motivator (we shall consider what the theorists, ancient and modern, have to say on this subject), but possibility of reprieve or escape, at least an imagined possibility, existed in fact and in various school readings (including comedy). The latter show the human mind and, in particular, the young mind fantasizing of escape.

Both the comic account of school punishment and the monastic prescription stipulate beating for boys on the grounds of the smallest possible mistake: getting a syllable wrong while reading. The ancient student began to learn to read by reciting nonsense syllables (e.g., ba, be, bi, bo, bu—see Chapter 8), which trained the student in oral reading. For the Greek student, this meant deciding where the syllabic boundaries were, for texts were typically written without word divisions. A mistake of a syllable could mean the wrong division of a series of letters. It could also mean one of those mistakes known to us all in which we simply do not say what is printed on the page but make a mistake for a number of reasons (e.g., by anticipating what the next syllabic vowel is, by pronouncing

a similar sounding or similar looking syllable, or by substituting a semantic equivalent). The perfection of execution in delivery that the ancient intensive training realized in its best practitioners does not concern us here, and we should not be too confident about the ancient as a perfect reader (in the copying of texts, ancient scribes often made mistakes). The least possible mistake is a *puniendum* (a criterion for being punished). No greater rationale is needed. The child's attitude or good intention or prior good work or future prospects seem immaterial. At the most schematic, we might say that the faithful reproduction of the script is, at this stage, education or is the fundamental stage of education. Departure from the set script (*scribendum*) is failure and hence a *puniendum*. Punishment itself is correction—the repair of the defective script, the perfect alignment of the child's voice with the father's or teacher's script. The alignment of these two is to be effected by the bodily coercion of the child (and decidedly not by the application of reason—although Quintilian will argue for the fostering of an internal will to learn in the child). In this model, the child is a little, defective automaton (in fact, simply a body) constantly in need of a jolt to keep it on the right path. The bodily act of writing seems to require a corporal response, as if the body has no reason or will of its own, yet.

In fact, as we see from traces of resistance and from the great theorists, the child did not act as an automaton or spiritless body, perfect receptacle for direction. Can we ask about the experience of the child being punished? Certainly, we can appreciate how the child was meant to feel. The ruler gave a sharp pain, might leave bruising, and might impede the hand's ability to do schoolwork. The whip or cane was meant to be more painful and had a longer *durée*. It could then be hard to sit on a bench. The immediate physical pain is not, of course, the sole point or the whole of the experience as a victim. For the process of punishment within the school had a distinct psychological impact.

The young student performed his or her lessons with the expectation of violence. When he or she failed at this performance, the punisher took note. The call to punishment followed. Punishment seems to have been administered before the rest of the students. Indeed, other students could be involved in the act of punishing as the wall painting of Herculaneum showed students hoisting the victim onto the back of another. The subject was immobilized, by fear or physical restraint. Such notice is the reverse of the treatment for exemplary performance which rewarded the child for what seems unforced activity—the successful recitation which requires no prompt, for instance. Quintilian in his school praised those who excelled and identified the best student, who was called the leader of his class (*IO* 1.2). Prizes in school competition likewise singled out the best. The subject receiving punishment on the other hand is also isolated, on display, and thus taken out of his social group. The removal from society can be augmented by removing some or all of the victim's clothes. Indeed, for the slave-owning societies of Greece and Rome, punishment mimics a degradation of status. A free man could not be punished except by action of law. The schoolchild inhabits a world between slave and free, or perhaps this is the wrong antinomy: the schoolchild is an apprentice citizen in many ways. The social meaning of punishment, and not simply the personal experience of pain or humiliation, helped to create this liminal identity.

The assertion that being punished is unmanly and unmaning reflects the relentless ancient view of schooling as concerned primarily and essentially with boys. The ancient theorists who object to corporal punishment do so from a concern that the development

of virile qualities will be impeded. The ancient school is one of those flexible social spaces of fixed term which are understood as much by what they are not as by what they are. It is not the home or the family or future adult life. Here the child meets and competes with peers, in anticipation of later roles in the decidedly agonistic elite communities of the ancient city. He has no domestic errands or duties. He has relationships with peers and teachers not defined by kinship. School is in some sense his or her world, where achievement will determine rank. Here too it anticipates, in a controlled and slightly ideal way, the adult world. Punishment ruins all this (for a moment). The child is returned to the status of a child, whereas in his school exercises he plays at and fantasies at being a man, an orator in the courts or assembly, a counselor to a great man, a speaker of ethical advice. Sometimes, too, he is like the teacher, an erudite adult who knows grammar, rhetoric, history, and literature.

Richard Saller (1991) has emphasized that whipping was an insult to *dignitas*; that it was one of the means of public distinction between the free and the slave; and yet that this does not mean that the child was confused with the slave, for the latter could be severely beaten, sexually molested, even tortured. Punishment of children has far clearer limits even though a number of agents—parents and their surrogates, teacher and pedagogue—could punish. As we have seen in the comic passage from the *Bacchides*, the family can be presented as a sort of unruly appellate court—the child could run to father to complain of his teacher (and no doubt to mother or uncle or grandparents—Libanius' mother did not allow his pedagogues to beat him, *Autobiography* 4–5 and see Vuolanto 2014: 590). But there are other limits, by weapon and by degree of severity and by occasion. School punishment then does not make the victim a slave; rather, it reminds victim, punisher, and audience that the child is a child, not the student imitating adult forms of speaking and thinking but the pre-rational boy or girl whom words do not direct. This movement out of the speech community may be a return to the early childhood within the family, where punishment seems to have been unremarkable (on violence within the Roman family, see Laes 2005: 76–77 with bibliography). This too may have contributed to the sense of humiliation.

A passage from a schoolteacher in a text meant probably for other schoolteachers to deliver to their students reveals something of the psychology of punishment (Aphthonius 7). In describing the curriculum, Aphthonius, the fourth-century author of progymnasmata, writes of the *chreia*. He cites the aphorisms of Isocrates on the subject of education and offers a model explanation of one. This is meant as a model argument to demonstrate the validity of the sentiment of the final sentence.

The ones in love with *paideia* begin with labor, but these labors end in profit. Such was his philosophizing, and we will show our wondrous approval in what follows.

The lovers of education are conscripted with the leaders of *paideia*, to approach them is fearful, to leave them foolish ignorance. Fear ever attends children, both immediately and prospectively. Pedagogues receive the students, fearful in aspect, worse once they punish: fear precedes the task and punishment follows the fear; the children's faults are punished, right answers are treated as expected and unremarkable. Fathers are more harsh than the pedagogues: interrogating the children's routes [to and from school], ordering them to be the first to arrive, and suspecting [that they are dallying in] the agora. And if ever there is need of punishment, they forget the nature of the child. But by being a child in these circumstance and coming into manhood one is crowned with excellence (*aretê*).

If a child from fear of these things flees his teachers, runs from his father, and avoids his pedagogue, he is utterly bereft of words and in company with his fear loses eloquence. All these considerations led Isocrates to his judgment, bitter is the root of education.

Aphthonius describes the child's interiorization of a system of fear and also argues for the interiorization by the child of this system. The child does fear and should fear, and there is escape from fear, not by the child shirking his duty to other men, teacher, pedagogue, father, but by coming into manhood.

Did the child, in fact, feel as the schoolmaster would have him feel? First person notices—which are rare and part of literary works—do make clear the trauma left on the memory of the victim. As so often with history before the era of sociological surveys, one cannot generalize about a majority experience with any empirical accuracy. The evidence is piecemeal, often decidedly literary and emotional. Let us for the moment dwell on that emotion.

Augustine remembers his time at school as simply horrible: better to die than to experience a second schooling. Augustine is not alone in remembering a horrible master. Ausonius writes a poem that tries to reassure his grandson that school is not so bad: both the boy's father and mother had survived (the implication is that both had been punished, *Protrepticus ad nepotem* 14–34). This is thin consolation. Horace had made his master a catchword for the master quick to anger and quick to strike. Seneca also treats this *magister iracundus* (*Ep.* 94.9). There is also commemoration from the teacher's side. A tombstone now in Verona commemorates a female teacher: she is depicted with a whip (Inv. A. O. 9.6622, first half of the first century CE). It is important to stress that much ancient evidence reflects the ubiquity of punishment, some celebrates its utility, and some indicates a sense that punishment could turn to abuse. Ausonius, like Aphthonius, is clear that all will come out well. Horace has certainly turned out to be *litteratus*, but his adjective for his teacher, *plagosus*, expresses excess (not a good trait for the Epicurean poet), and Augustine's memories have moved many readers to doubt the goodness of the old *paideia* (it should be stressed that Augustine for all his painful memories does not share Quintilian's restraint: he advocates that the paterfamilias whip all within the family, *City of God* 19.15, but see Laes 2005: 81).

However vivid these stories are, they cannot serve as explanation for the social practice of punishing schoolchildren. Anger, the difference in age, perhaps the status of striker and struck, and the cultural commonplace that violence helped children learn could all encourage the action of an older man or woman striking his or her wards. Unlike the ancient memories of punishment, we should not personalize the issues as if the impetus or fault lay with an excessive master or one sensitive student or even more generally with the psychosexual desire to strike the young body and cause the young pain. Acts of violence were often administered to the student's body in front of an audience. These scenes temporarily removed the student from the speaking community. Indeed, for the set time they destroyed the fiction of a community of consensual learning. Physical violence, after all, is something opposed to speech—the brute exertion of force is categorically distinct from the insinuating movements of *logoi*. Force makes all mine and nothing thine. It takes away the counterclaim as it attacks the bodily integrity of the other. Persuasion may come to the same result, but it is supposed to make an interior change on thine—to change the body from within, by the action of that body's mind. The social

effect of punishment or the social meaning of punishment is symbolized by removing the child to be punished from his community. For the group, punishment puts on display the student's liminal status as a proto-citizen (but not quite a slave). Being struck on display would serve as reminder to students, teachers, and family both the ultimate goal of education (to be a freeborn, effective speaker) and what they ought not to become (a silenced individual akin to a slave but with the differences of kind of weapon and limited season, so to speak, of punishment). The intention of corporal punishment was to form the social memory of the student and shape a subjectivity as a *future* participant in a community ruled by speech.

## 1. From Coercion to Self-Punishment

We can have a glimpse into how ideas about corporal punishment were transmitted and received from another school text, the collection of maxims used as an early writing and reading exercise, the *Distichs of Cato*. These verse precepts, probably written at the same time as Plutarch's or Quintilian's works, do not represent the original composition of students. They are more like an ideal script—not the grand lecture with philosophical notes that could be heard if Quintilian or Plutarch originally delivered part of their works in oral performance—but an exercise which the students, male and female, took down, memorized, recited, and later used to embellish an argument. Here we may see, on a scale larger than the note of Aphthonius, ideas about education that the student encountered in his or her own educational career. Whether or not the student then “believed” what she had been writing is impossible for us to recover. More importantly, this material had been learnt by all the students; it was part of a common experience; and more particularly, the very precepts model the student's own experience of punishment.

Several of the couplets reflect directly on the project of education. One treats in particular the violence directed at the boy in two phases of his life or two phases of his identity: pupil and son:

Verbera cum tuleris discens aliquando magistri,      4.6  
fer patris imperium, cum verbis exit in iram.  
Since in your student days you suffered the master's blows,  
put up with a father's rule even when in his wrath he moves beyond words.

The virtue of patience here has two arenas, school and home, but more importantly the small *mise-en-scene* casts the boy not so much as victim as long-suffering learner and citizen. The boy is distinctly in the minor role, but he is not slave-like. He is a learner and one who can endure a father's rule (slaves too could be said to be subject to the *imperium* of a master, and Quintilian talks of some boys who could not put up with their teachers' *imperium* [1.3.6: *indignantur*]; the subject of a father's relation to his children is well discussed in Vuolanto 2014: 582–584). The distich presupposes that putting up with the violence is an act of choice. This is a subtle deflection of the oppressive, hierarchical relationship. The boy's penning of this line, his practice with the thought is itself a kind of distinction: he is now different from the schoolchild he was, he is different from the slave who has no choice about his punishment and cannot even imagine redress from the word of punishment (on the realities of slave punishment, see Bradley 1994).



This re-imagination or even re-inscription of the role of the punished occurs more directly in *Distichs* 4.40:

Cum quid peccaris, castiga te ipse subinde:  
vulnera dum sanas, dolor est medicina doloris.  
If ever you blunder, punish yourself immediately:  
in the course of doctoring the wound, pain will be the cure for pain.

Set as are so many of the *Distichs*' scenarios, in the future of the student's making, this distich advises self-correction. The Latin verb *castigare*, a compound of *castum* and *agere*, means to make chaste. In actual usage, it meant to emend or punish, and the word was used of the punishment of school children by blows (*verberibus*—see *Lewis and Short*; Quintilian at 1.3.14, the passage discussed earlier, uses the noun *castigatio* of the corporal punishment of children). The maxim could certainly be applied to any sort of error, but the use of *castigare* and the fact that the exercise is part of the school curriculum suggests an application to school life. The child who wrote this distich was not free of punishment from the master but was encouraged to imagine a future where he instantly punishes his slips. The stated intention of the educator may be to make his student perfectly learned or a perfect learner. In fact, successful learning may entail something both more subtle and more penetrating. The successful student is one who has taken on the ideology of the educational institution (e.g., that learning is valuable, that tuition should be paid, the education makes the man, or education makes the man free, or education creates critical thinking in the student, male and female). If the alumni who give money to their alma mater are the successful students of the American university (successful in the sense of guaranteeing the replication of the institution), the student who internalizes punishment and views it as a (painful but curative) action of self therapy may have been the successful ancient student. At the least, sharing in such attitudes, through the gradual redefinition of "correction" from actual blows to internalized chastisement, characterized the educated men and women of antiquity. If the doctrine implicit in this proposition is internalized, the student will believe that he can purify himself.

What this purity consists of and how internalizing what had been an external application of violence makes the individual chaste, like the unmolested or unbeaten body of a child, requires our reflection. But first, to return to the basic proposition of the distich: the child is being encouraged to think of himself as a man or at least a youth beyond the blows of the master and in an internal realm which he can control. This is an important state or habit of mind, since the idea of individual responsibility is a strong fiction of the free society. I mean that the child who has been sent to school, had his hand held to train him to write letters, been told to recite nonsense syllables as the necessary if meaningless way to begin to learn to read, had his hand at least struck, is now to imagine himself as a free agent of his own education, navigating his own development from constrained childhood to free adulthood. The freedom or the notion of a subjectivity of the free turns on the assumption of the self not as victim but as punisher. Such a transition depends on several semantic shifts, especially those that move from the literal to the figurative end of the meaning of punishment and pain, and on the assumption of a deferred good. Together, such subjectivity demands

a break from corporal punishment and a rationale for that break. The self now suffers freely in order to attain the future good of being a free man.

## 2. Resentment, Misbehavior, and Misuse as Agents of Internalization

Clearly, not every student has seen his or her corporal punishment as self-improvement. Significant evidence attests not simply to dread and trauma but to acts and processes of resistance. Resistance could involve truancy, as the mother in Herodas' *Mime* complained to her son's teacher; refusal or neglect of lessons (to forestall which the pedagogue was delegated in part to supervise); there was also violence from peer to peer as when a jealous boy broke the thumbs of Symphronios, a younger boy who excelled at writing (see Cribiore 1996: 149), and the misuse of school materials and methods. This last is especially interesting, both because the fertility of young minds in not doing just as they are told is a source of considerable humor and because such misuse is a kind of learning in itself. Misuse is in significant ways either a response to corporal punishment or at least a polar gesture, the act that disdains the act of correction. Writing where one should not, what one should not; breaking or stealing school materials; producing scurrilous versions of the official script can all be seen as responses to a culture of insistent direction and correction.

Inscriptions from Pompeii, quite possibly from a school, show the student copying out lines of the *Aeneid*, often the first lines of books one and two (these can be found in the *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum* and are discussed by Gigante 1979; an introductory account in English with plates is Franklin 1996–1997; see also della Corte 1956). Twice the student has only written *arma vi* (*CIL* 4. 1282 and 10059). This is perhaps the minimal sign of school literacy: the writer knows the opening of the poem. The purpose of the writing is after all not practice but display. These lines are not well ruled; they are written in the cursive script the student would have used on wax tablets. The opening c, t, and r of *Conticuere* (which again is a sort of prompt to fill in the rest of the line “All kept silent”—the first words of book two when Dido and the Carthaginians are waiting to hear from Aeneas of his travels) are more boldly written with the ascenders and descender as a long vertical sweep. These seem to be gestures of disorder against perhaps both the master's rules for orderly writing, against the property they deface, and also against the imagined silence of the audience, internal to the poem, waiting to listen. As with much graffiti, the protest is against the world of the literate but with the means of the literate, but in a form out of proportion and out of place. The writer of *CIL* 4.1481, after inscribing *Aeneid* 2.148, leaves as colophon, *scribit Narcissus*, “Narcissus writes this”—with the initial s something of a bravura stroke and his name in letters larger than those of Virgil's words. It is not only pride in Virgil and writing that are being internalized and then performed. A number of these school graffiti are warnings of school punishment: “I was beaten three times,” “Go get beaten,” and “If Cicero causes you grief, you will get beaten,” *CIL* 4. 9093; 9094; and 4208.

The cycle of punisher to punished to (self)punisher is nicely illustrated in these graffiti—which does not, of course, mean that the child writer is now well behaved. He or she is scratching on a wall with (probably) the stylus meant for his or her school

waxtablet. The fertile modes of resistance are full of threat or at least challenge to authority: CIL 4.5007 expresses a remarkable misuse of *Aeneid* 1.1, turning the line to “I sing of fullers and the owl, not arms and a man.” The ancient evidence provides other glimpses of those small acts of resistance, which would no doubt have elicited a beating and which like beating turn their back on orderly discourse. Lucian in his autobiography maintains that he was pulled between the professions of sculpture and rhetoric: he scraped the wax from his tablets and modeled little cattle, horses, and men (*The Dream* 2). Students could go farther with the master’s wax tablets. St. Basil reproves his congregation in a sermon, “Don’t be like thoughtless children who out of anger with their teacher break his tablets” (Basil, *Hom. Famis Sicc.* 67 C, PG p. 317; see Cribiore 1996: 54–55).

More sustained reaction to physical chastisement comes not in these notices of solitary misbehavior or anger but from the school curriculum itself. A poem of the fourth-century Christian poet Prudentius, which became part of the school curriculum, records a student rebellion (*Crown of the Martyrs* 9). The Roman magistrate at Imola has condemned a Christian to death. The martyr, Cassian was a shorthand teacher, apparently not popular, for the magistrate set the students on their teacher. Armed with their styli, they write on the body of the teacher, asking if he can read their letters now. The ancient school exercises often have violent content, from the perils to the lamb in fables to the dastardly scenes of betrayal, disinheritance, and maiming in the final stage of rhetorical education, the declamatory speech where the student plays the orator. Quite often in Roman declamation, the son has to deal with a harsh father. Here especially, fiction writing has the son escaping from the threat of punishment—of course, a reprieve or escape achieved by virtuosity in the school form, the speech.

### 3. Direct Theorization

Some ancient theorists argued against the corporal punishment of schoolchildren. In the late first and early second centuries CE, Quintilian and Plutarch agree that all physical punishment of the freeborn boy was abuse; that is, not only is punishment unnecessary, it is counterproductive in ways which imperil the education and the future well-being of the student. As remarkable as this history is, the child is still not seen as a rights bearer in the modern sense. Rather, students, particularly their bodies, should be treated in such a way that they retain the sense that they are freeborn and thus rightful speakers.

Reasoned objection against corporal punishment comes from the two most influential pedagogic theorists of antiquity, Quintilian and Plutarch (see Bloomer 2011: 53–110—Quintilian was influential in antiquity; the treatise ascribed to Plutarch, *On the Education of Children*, was in all probability written by one of his students or is perhaps a version of Plutarch’s lectures taken down by a student). In addition, Himerius offers an idealized account of his own fourth-century CE schoolroom in *Oration* 66, which describes a place of almost religious harmony where all violence is out of place and disobedient students are “naughty nymphs”; see Cribiore 2007. But the texts of the two theorists, who would be of great importance for Renaissance and later European thinking on education, are more relevant here. The objections of these writers are usually noted in histories of education. Their own reasons for objection, and specifically

the part played by eliminating punishment in their theories of child learning, are not so well known. In fact, both authors are strongly influenced by a tradition within philosophy counseling the philosopher to avoid anger and specifically the manifestation of anger that comes in punishing a slave (Harris 2001); both authors are concerned with the status of the freeborn schoolboy; and both authors are responding to ideas that developed in the late republic of the increased worth of a freeborn child (on this last, see especially Rawson 2003).

Quintilian's celebrated opposition to corporal punishment comprises a single paragraph of his massive work (1.3.14–17). He offers three reasons not to punish, cites the counter-opinion of a significant philosopher (Chrysippus), and then supplements his reasons by imagining the ramifications in later life for the boy. The direction of his thinking is clear from the start. His first objection is that such punishment is deforming (*deforme*) and servile and that if you were to change the age, it would constitute an injury. He is thinking of a legal, actionable injury. His second reason reflects a fear for an almost physical consequence: blows will harden the boy. Third, corporal punishment is unnecessary provided the boy has proper supervision. Quintilian continues with a typical rhetorical argument by imagining the future consequences of the present policy: what can one do to direct a youth to harder studies if one has had to rely on beating the child. The great educator again has the free man in mind (the goal of all his educational programs). To punish any more severely would be to punish a man like a slave, and that is impossible. Quintilian is characteristically concerned about the body of his student. In adding rhetorical punch to his argument, he reminds his reader of the psychological consequences of punishment. He has the reader imagine with a delicate *praeteritio*: "Consider the fact too that many things unpleasant (*deformia*) to relate and which will soon be a source of shame have followed pain and fear and this shame breaks and scatters a man's spirit and dictates an aversion and horror for light itself" (1.3.16). His reluctance to name consequences continues: "it shames me to name the criminal acts to which that right to beat twists unscrupulous men" (1.3.17: *pudet dicere, in quae probra nefandi homines isto caedendi iure abutantur*). Quintilian bristles at the sexual abuse of the child, but his earlier reference to the deformed things which often happen is more general. The Latin word *deformis* can simply mean ugly, as *formosus* is beautiful, but, as Lewis and Short's lexicon puts it, the primary meaning is "*Departing*, either physically or (more freq.) morally, *from the right shape, quality*, etc." It might be that Quintilian has in mind the embarrassing physical consequences—the tears, blood, piss, and excrement—that could follow a severe beating, but the whole process of beating is deforming in the sense that the citizen boy is held, perhaps stripped, and struck, each of which, were he a man, would be illegal.

In disapproving of corporal punishment, Plutarch like his contemporary Quintilian conceives of education as a treatment for young bodies and minds. The two seem especially connected in childhood (Plutarch has images of the child as soft wax awaiting the seal of the signet ring). The soft wax or tender plant as the metaphorical correlate to the child (and not simply his body) figure the educator as the adult property owner, the farmer tending his shoots, and the paterfamilias sealing his correspondence or more likely his contracts. This is certainly an imagination of the educational process that asserts the leading role of the male adult and specifically reassures that the end product is the legitimate heir, the proper descendant of the original semination, the authentic and not

counterfeit deed. The disapproval of corporal punishment is an essential part, but in fact only a part or consequence, of this larger pedagogic program, which is aimed, as the opening sentence of the treatise states, at the production of free children (boys). Plutarch is in this treatise much interested in safeguarding the child from mis-education—all those forces that would corrupt his body, speech, and mind or temperament. He states explicitly that blows and torture (*plēgais mēd' aikismois*) are not fitting for the child at 8F: “And I believe that children should be encouraged to noble pursuits not, by god, by blows and torture but by praise and words, for somehow it seems (right) that the former suit slaves more than the freeborn”). He continues to offer the positive correlates to blows and torture—praise and reproof—before justifying the distinction in terms of the future consequence of ill treatment: “The boys grow sluggish and bristle at the prospect of work” (*aponarkōsi gar phrittousi pros tous ponous*). Plutarch’s argument is in striking agreement with Quintilian’s desire to avoid the sense of shame (*dedignatio* or *pudor*) of the boy. Shame and guilt, the external perception of the boy as a near slave and the internal reluctance to continue on the path to manhood, stand as the polar opposite to education.

#### 4. Conclusion

The ancient school was a world of violence, potential, meditated, and actual. The staples of the curriculum, from fable to epic poems, historical prose, and school compositions, reflected on and contributed to a martial and litigious society. Himerius, Quintilian, and Plutarch call for a less severe treatment of the young student (they, of course, do not seek to lessen the violence of the reading, writing, and speaking curriculum). Quintilian’s and Plutarch’s thinking, in particular, are tied to a theory of the free male body. We find, in fact, no adequate account of what moves a teacher to strike a child. Quintilian comes closest to recognizing the sexual threat beneath an older man beating a child, but for the most part complaint about a violent teacher has no such resonance. Horace and Augustine recall a punishing time at school but without drawing any attention to the pleasure or sadism of the master (Erasmus may be the first to speak of the pleasure felt by the abusive teacher [*De pueris statim ac liberaliter instituendis*, Woodward 1904: 206]—the ancients did understand the urge to beat as a culpable manifestation of anger; see Harris 2001).

I have stressed the success of corporal punishment in the long term: the internalization of the right to strike, the connection of present pain for the deferred goal of learning and freedom or maturity, and the social distinction that is thereby practiced. The short-term advantages of beating may well include the docility and quietness of the young, so long as we understand these as immediate effects. Humiliation of the powerless is not an appealing idea especially when it is alleged that it is good for the powerless. It is certainly tied to an idea of the child as pre-rational and pathic. One of the great services of the philosophical thinking of Greece and Rome was to prepare the way for the extension of rights to the non-male citizen. Thus, we owe a debt to Quintilian and Plutarch, in particular, for their first steps in thinking of the psychology of the learner and the complexity of ideas of the development of constrained subjectivity of the young at school, which has its core the internalization of punishment.

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PART IV

# **The Roman Transformation**

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## CHAPTER 13

# Etruscan and Italic Literacy and the Case of Rome

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*Daniele F. Maras*

*“Writing probably spread quite quickly from the Greeks in Italy to some of the native peoples.  
How and exactly why this happened we do not know ...”*

(Harris 1989: 149).

In 25 years from the publication of W. V. Harris’ valuable monograph on *Ancient Literacy*, much has been added to our knowledge on the acquisition of writing in Orientalizing Italy; recent achievements allow us to sketch a clearer picture of the earliest history of literacy among the peoples of pre-Roman Italy. This chapter intends to provide an introduction to the subject of schooling and literacy in the late Roman Republic and Empire, and to show how literacy had actually in Italy a longer and more complex history than is usually admitted (Cornell 1991).

### 1. The Origins

Writing had already arrived in Italy by way of Greek commerce in the course of the eighth century BCE (Cornell 1991: 8; Bonfante and Bonfante 2002: 7–13). The earliest epigraphic document in Italy dating from this period, a graffito from Gabii in Latium, was considered by several scholars to be Greek (εὐλι(ος), an epithet: “spinning well”; or εὐοῖα, a Dionysian cheer—lastly, Guzzo 2011: 63–65, with further bibliography and a new interpretation; and Powell 2009: 235–236); but Giovanni Colonna has recently suggested that it is Latin (*ni lue*, “do not untie me”—G. Colonna, in Bartoloni and Delpino 2004: 478–483) (Figure 13.1). This piece of evidence is particularly striking, because it seems to provide credibility to the tradition, recorded by Plutarch (*Rom.* 6.2), that Romulus and Remus had studied *grammata*—that is to say Greek letters—in Gabii in their youth (Peruzzi 1969; Cornell 1991: 25). Apart from this isolated attestation, the earliest Italian writing system derived from Greek is Etruscan, as attested by inscriptions



**Figure 13.1** Drawing of the early Latin inscription from Osteria dell'Osa (ancient Gabii, Latium), tomb 482. Circa 780–770 BCE. (Drawing by Daniele F. Maras.)

Original Greek model  
(Marsiliana d'Albegna)

A B Γ Δ E I H Θ I K Λ M N Ξ O P Ϝ ϝ Ϟ ϟ Ϡ ϡ Ϣ ϣ Ϥ ϥ Ϧ ϧ Ϩ ϩ

Difference among working alphabets in the seventh and sixth centuries BCE

Greek alphabet  
(Miletus)

A B Γ Δ E I H Θ I K Λ M N Ξ O P Ϝ ϝ Ϟ ϟ Ϡ ϡ Ϣ ϣ Ϥ ϥ Ϧ ϧ Ϩ ϩ

Etruscan alphabet  
(Veii)

AA > Ϝ ϝ Ϟ ϟ Ϡ ϡ Ϣ ϣ Ϥ ϥ Ϧ ϧ Ϩ ϩ

Latin alphabet

A B C D E F I B I K L M N O P Ϝ ϝ Ϟ ϟ Ϡ ϡ Ϣ ϣ Ϥ ϥ Ϧ ϧ Ϩ ϩ

**Figure 13.2** Difference among working alphabets of the seventh and sixth centuries BCE: in the upper line is represented the original Greek model in the form showed by the writing tablet of Marsiliana d'Albegna (circa 675–650 BCE). (Drawing by Daniele F. Maras.)

from southern Etruria, dating from the end of the eighth and the beginning of the seventh century BCE (Colonna 1976a: 1606–1608). The form of the letters shows that it has an Euboean origin, either because of the presence of Euboean traders in south Etruria, or as a consequence of the presence of Etruscan travelers in the Euboean colonies at Pithekoussai and Cumae, as is documented by seventh century inscriptions. The Etruscans adopted the Euboean alphabet as it was, modifying the form of *gamma* (into a moon-shaped C, most probably because of the influence of Corinthian writing: Colonna 1976a: 1609), and omitting some of the letters, which did not correspond to Etruscan sounds (Figure 13.2).

As a matter of fact, in the Etruscan language, voiced stops (/b g d/) and the vowel /o/ were missing, while aspirated stops (/p<sup>h</sup> k<sup>h</sup> t<sup>h</sup>/) were required, as well as a wider set of fricatives than in Greek (/f s s h/) (Bonfante 2002: 63–65; Wallace 2008a: 29–32). Therefore, the earliest adaptations of the alphabet caused the abandonment of *beta*, *delta*, and *omicron*, while *gamma* was used for /k/ as an alternative to *kappa* and *qoppa* (Rix 2000: 202–203).

The resulting alphabet remained unchanged until the middle of the seventh century, except for the introduction (about 675 BCE) of the graphic group *HV* or *VH* in order to express the sound /f/, missing in the Greek model, but necessary for the Etruscan language. At that time, writing had spread across the whole of southern Etruria—in the towns of Veii, Caere, Tarquinii, Volcii—, in Latium, and in the Faliscan area (Cornell 1991: 14).

During this earliest period, it has been said that we cannot speak of a real Etruscan alphabet, but of a Greek alphabet used to write the Etruscan language; at the same time, Greek masters were at work adapting letters to the sounds of a foreign language and teaching writing to Etruscan scribes (Pandolfini and Prosdocimi 1990: 164–166). It should be noted that even the graphic group *VH* was borrowed from some Greek writing systems, where it is attested in the Archaic period (see, for instance, the Pamphilian spelling φηε, for the pronoun ξ— Lejeune 1955: 114–115; Colonna 1970: 1598–1599, spec. note 102, and Id. 1976a: 1609–1610; Pandolfini and Prosdocimi 1990: 218–221).

## 2. Writing in the Orientalizing Period

The earliest texts are in most cases either gift texts or isolated letters, some of them production marks used by craftsmen (Maras 2012a: 103). The former include some onomastic inscriptions, which simply record that the object is owned by the receiver of a gift (Benelli 2005: 206–207, with further bibliography).

These early attestations concern either high-ranking social relationships, with the ceremonial aspects of the meeting between local aristocrats and the (often aristocratic) Greek sailors and dealers who brought the new, Orientalizing cultural model; or particular fields of craftsmanship, improved and modified by technological and artistic novelties coming from the eastern Mediterranean (see, in general, Riva 2006). Aristocratic relationships and craftsmanship were therefore the channels through which writing was introduced into Italy. In this regard, it is interesting to note that writing was not reserved for high-ranking personages, but was used by craftsmen in the production of pottery, bronzes, and textiles. Clearly, literacy was a technique handed down to craftsmen and artists, whose works typically carried inscriptions (Colonna 1988a: 1703–1705; Medori and Belfiore, forthcoming).

Leaving aside for the moment production marks and isolated letters, we notice that most Etruscan inscriptions from the seventh century refer to the aristocratic gift-exchange system, and among them are some of the longest Etruscan epigraphic texts, which at times exhibit literary and even poetic features (Maras, forthcoming).

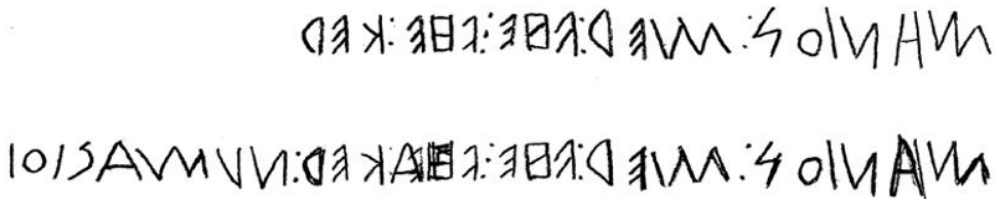
Actually, we must not be tempted to think of an illiterate culture as primitive, incapable of producing and transmitting knowledge or even literature. In antiquity as well as in our own times, a good deal of evidence demonstrates that oral literature can reach high levels and be widely diffused long before the introduction of writing (Goody and Watt 1968: 28–34). The transmission of Greek writing in central Italy at the end of the eighth century BCE met a well-defined oral culture in Etruria as well as in Latium, which received the new expressive means and naturally adapted it to its needs. It is worth noting that some of the earliest vase inscriptions, in the Greek as well as in the Etruscan



**Figure 13.3** Long inscription on the foot of a *bucchero* cup from Narce (Faliscan area: Monte in Mezzo ai Prati, tomb 5). Rome, Etruscan National Museum of Villa Giulia. End of the seventh century BCE. Drawing by Daniele F. Maras.

world, have unusually long texts, at times with literary features (Powell 1991: 158–186; spec. 182–186; and Powell 2009: 236–240). This is the case, for instance, of the famous *Cup of Nestor* from Pithekoussai, one of the earliest Greek epigraphic documents (Watkins 1995: 41–42; Ammirati, Biagetti and Radiciotti 2006: 15–16), and of a group of Etruscan inscriptions dating from the seventh century BCE (figs. 3, 10; Maras, forthcoming). The discovery sites of the latter are concentrated in the towns of Caere and Narce (the latter in the Faliscan area), which have been called the most literate towns of archaic Etruria (Colonna 1970: 1587, and Id. 1988a: 1708).

What kind of literature do these earliest documents indicate? Obviously, southern Etruria had a solid oral tradition, with literary forms dating from before the introduction of writing, and the inscriptions simply recorded what just one generation before would have been communicated by word of mouth (Maras, forthcoming). An important feature of archaic Greek texts is their metrical form (Ammirati, Biagetti and Radiciotti 2006: 15), which relates them to the diffusion of the early epic poetry, and throws light on the most common and important learning system of oral cultures: mnemonic repetition helped by formulaic modules and verse. Some of the earliest Etruscan texts also seem to have had a metrical form, but refer neither to Greek, nor to local poetry;



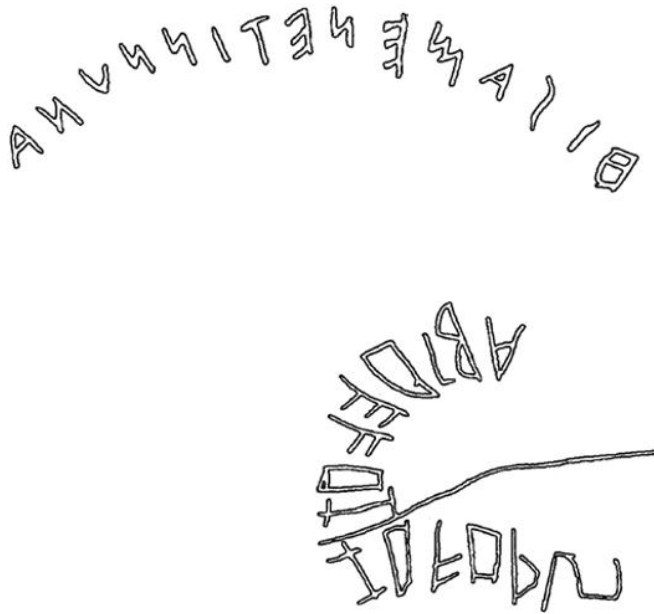
**Figure 13.4** Inscription incised on the golden “Fibula Prenestina.” Rome, National Prehistoric Ethnographic Museum “L. Pigorini.” Circa 650 BCE. Above, former version with no mention of the recipient; below, final version. (Drawings by Daniele F. Maras.)

they belong to the sphere of aristocratic gifts or to the symposium, that is, to the most significant social events of the Orientalizing aristocracies (Maras 2015: 15; regarding the connection of literacy with power, see Bowman and Woolf 1994: 1–16).

The most complete Etruscan gift texts tell the life story of the object backward, recording in order the new owner, the giver, the decorator, and the producer. This story uses the form of the so-called “speaking object” (Cornell 1991: 9), a sort of fictional stage convention, in which the object is speaking in the first person, and is introduced by the pronoun *mi*, “I”, or *mini*, “me.” Most probably, the fiction was played out by reading aloud the story of the life of the object at the moment of the gift, like the report of royal and heroic gifts in epic poetry (Maras, 2015: 52–53; see also Reece 1993: 35–36). Such a practice was surely more ancient than the introduction of writing; the custom to inscribe the object allowed the donor to preserve the memory of his gift for the future. But it resulted in “freezing” the action and fostering the creation of a standard formula. Most gift inscriptions from the second half of the seventh to the second half of the sixth century BCE assumed the standard form, *mini muluvanice X*, “X gave me,” a form obsessively repeated in profane as well as in sacred settings. Eventually, the written formula “killed” the literary, oral form of the tale of the aristocratic gift (Maras, 2015: 64).

The earliest Latin inscriptions—such as the cup of *Vetusia* and the so-called *Fibula Prenestina*, dating from almost 100 years after the isolated graffito of Gabii—also belong to this context, both from the town of Praeneste in eastern Latium (Harris 1989: 149–151). In fact, the authenticity of the *Fibula*, dating from the mid-seventh century BCE, has been definitively proved by recent archaeometric analyses (Figure 13.4; D. Ferro and E. Formigli, in Mangani 2015: 43–72; see *Etruscan News* 14, Winter 2011: 20). The inscription records a gift (*Manios med vhe:vhaked Numasioi*, literally “Manios made me for Numasios”), using the Etruscan alphabet and writing system. As a matter of fact, the verb *vhevvhaked*, “he made,” does not imply that *Manios* was a craftsman, but rather his master, who gave the jewel to *Numasios*: in central Italy, in the Archaic period, often signatures do not state the names of craftsmen responsible for the production, but the names of their masters, as testified by the use of high rank onomastic formulas (Maras, 2015: 50; and forthcoming; see also Colonna 2005a: 1819).

Together with items from the Orientalizing Barberini and Bernardini tombs of Palestrina, the *Fibula* belongs to a type of golden jewelry that can be related to Caere (Colonna 1992; see also Cornell 1991: 18–19). It is thus clear that the channel through which writing was transmitted to other peoples relates to aristocratic relationships and



**Figure 13.5** Drawing of the inscription scratched under the foot of a Proto-Corinthian lekythos from Cumae (Fondo Maiorano, tomb 17). Circa 690 BCE. (Drawing by Daniele F. Maras.)

status symbols, and it is worth pointing out that Solinus (2.7) stated that writing was introduced into Latium by Pelasgians coming from Agylla, that is to say from Caere (Colonna 1970: 1599, note 113).

Writing itself became a prized status symbol (Stoddart and Whitley 1988: 769), as testified in the Orientalizing period by some outstanding finds, such as a Proto-Corinthian lekythos from Cumae (about 690 BCE; Figure 13.5), adorned by what seems to be an Etruscan gift inscription, followed by a pair of partial Greek alphabets: Corinthian and Achaean (Colonna 1976a: 1609; Colonna 1996: 1913–1920; Powell 1991: 156. For a different, Greek reading, see Watkins 1995: 42–45, with further bibliography).

Similarly, the writing tablet of Marsiliana d’Albegna (about 675–650 BCE), enriched by a complete alphabetical sequence, was part of a scribe’s set offered in an aristocratic funerary setting; and the syllabic exercise written on a bucchero *alabastron* (the so-called “calamaio,” pen-holder), from the princely Regolini-Galassi tomb at Caere (about 630 BCE), belongs to the same context (Pandolfini and Prosdocimi 1990: 19–21 and 29–32). As a matter of fact, the symbolic value of *abecedaria* and writing exercises is far more significant than the semi-literacy of the aristocrats inferred by W.V. Harris (Harris 1989: 149–150).

### 3. Aristocratic Courts and “Secretariats”

The close link between writing and the aristocracy in Etruria also involved production marks and signatures, since both scribes and craftsmen worked within aristocratic courts, as specialized masters of their arts (Cornell 1991: 9; Medori and Belfiore, forthcoming).



**Figure 13.6** Inscribed bucchero kyathos from the Calabresi tomb of Caere (southern Etruria). Rome, Vatican Museum. Circa 660–650 BCE. (From Sciacca, F. and Di Blasi, L. [2003], *La Tomba Calabresi e la Tomba del Tripode di Cerveteri*, Rome, L’Erma di Bretschneider. Reprinted with permission of L’Erma di Bretschneider.)

The scribes and record keepers of the Etruscan *principes* thus constituted a sort of “secretariat,” within the aristocratic courts, working as writing workshops and schools, which became responsible for preserving, innovating, and handing down alphabet and writing. Their work can be distinguished by certain specific graphic features, which differ from one secretariat to the other, even within the same urban context (Maras 2012b: 333). Particularly interesting and significant in this regard is the inscription on a bucchero *kyathos*, or one-handled cup, from the tomb Calabresi in Caere, dating from the second quarter of the seventh century BCE and showing a new, modified alphabet with special features, which were to have interesting consequences in the subsequent period (Figure 13.6; Sciacca and Di Blasi 2003: 115–118).

The scribe working for the aristocratic court of the owners of the Calabresi tomb—one of the richest Orientalizing tombs of Caere, in the necropolis of Sorbo, not far from the famous Regolini-Galassi tomb—modified the usual Etruscan alphabet by substituting the Corinthian *tsade* (M) to the normal *sigma* (S), recovering the Euboean hooked *gamma* (Ϛ), and changing the common crossed *theta* (⊗) into an empty or dotted circle (○, ⊙), following the Ionian tradition (Colonna 1970: 1599–1601; Maras 2012b: 335).

This new alphabet, derived from a mixture of different Greek elements, was applied to the gift inscriptions of the Calabresi family, as testified by a small number of inscriptions coming from Caere. But what is most important is that, among other relationships, the family was connected to one of the principal aristocratic families of Vetulonia, an important town in northern Etruria, where writing had not yet arrived. Here, in the *Tomba del Duce* and in other high-ranking tombs of the hinterland, local imitations of the *kyathos* Calabresi have been found, with long gift inscriptions written in an identical

alphabet, so that in some cases it seems possible to identify the same scribe at work. The logical conclusion is that writing was transmitted from Caere to Vetulonia in the context of the relationship between two important aristocratic families of the two centers. The scribe who invented the alphabet, or perhaps his pupil, may have moved from south to north, either following one of his masters (maybe a bride), or as a special gift himself to a Vetulonian prince—considering that gifts of specialized slaves and servants were common in Homer’s epic poetry. According to this hypothesis, writing was transmitted to north Etruria again in the context of relationships between aristocratic families, as part of the gift-exchange system of the Orientalizing period (Maras 2012b: 336–338; see also with different opinions, Bagnasco Gianni 2008).

Far from being only formal choices, the modifications of the alphabet aimed to adapt it better to the Etruscan language, which required two different sibilants, respectively pronounced as in “same” and in “shame”: north Etruscan writing used *tsade* for the former and *sigma* for the latter. It also chose to use only *kappa* to express the sound /k/. Therefore, we can consider the creation of this alphabet as an intentional achievement through the agency of Etruscan masters, who now succeeded their Greek predecessors in teaching writing.

On the other hand, in Caere the new alphabet soon disappeared, and in general south Etruscan towns continued to use the old writing system until the second half of the sixth century BCE.

During the second half of the seventh century BCE, writing spread throughout northern Etruria and reached the Etruscan Po valley. Even more importantly, at the end



**Figure 13.7** Drawing of the inscriptions scratched on the opposite sides of the rim of an impasto jug from Sesto Calende (northern Italy: Via Sculati, tomb 12/1993). Sesto Calende, Archaeological Museum. Circa 600–575 BCE. (From de Marinis, R. C. and Massa, S., Pizzo, M. [eds.] [2009], *Alle origini di Varese e del suo territorio. Le collezioni del sistema archeologico provinciale*, Rome, L’Erma di Bretschneider, p. 425, Figure 12. Reprinted with permission of L’Erma di Bretschneider.)



of the century, the north Etruscan modified alphabet was handed down to a non-Etruscan people of northern Italy, the Celtic Lepontians of the Golasecca culture (Maras 2014). The transmission probably took place again in the context of aristocratic relationships, but this time in an interethnic or international scale. A recent find provides evidence for this, testifying to the presence of an Etruscan master teaching writing to Celtic scribes. This is an impasto jug from a tomb of Sesto Calende, in the heart of the Golasecca culture, with two different inscriptions on the opposite sides of the rim (Figure 13.7): the first is a local Celtic name, badly scratched and partially damaged; the second reads *ziχu*, the Etruscan word for “scribe.” This drinking jug dates from the beginning of the sixth century BCE: it belongs to the category of the tokens of hospitality, as it records a toast (Roncalli 2008). Thus, it testifies to the relationship between a local notable or aspirant scribe and an Etruscan master, whose name is omitted in favor of his profession (Maras 2014: 105–106).

Such Etruscan masters adapted the northern Etruscan alphabet to the Celtic language, creating a new writing system that was no longer compatible with the original Etruscan one (Colonna 1988b). After this earliest instance, during the first half of the sixth century BCE, several new alphabets and writing systems were created in order to transmit writing to the Italic peoples of the Tiber valley, in the Umbrian and Sabine area (Colonna 2001, and Agostiniani et al., 2011: 9–17, with further bibliography).

Most of these alphabets occur in a single inscription, which suggests how little literacy was spread among Italic peoples in this period. The notable variations among these individual scripts show the same inclination to local differentiation that characterized the secretariats of the Etruscan *principes* and hints at the symbolic rather than practical value of writing for the Italic aristocracies.

#### 4. Social, Gender, and Religious Issues

Even though writing was an aristocratic status symbol, in Etruria it started to spread beyond the gift-exchange system, doubtless because of the role of craftsmen in the new technology (for uses of writing in everyday contexts, see Cornell 1991: 21–22).

A hoard of bronze fragments in Bologna (S. Francesco) has been interpreted as a deposit of rough materials left by a smith: several pieces were marked with letters of the alphabet, showing that the craftsman knew how to use them for reckoning. One of them was incised with the name of the man, *Aie*, demonstrating that he was definitely literate (or, at least, could write his own name—Colonna 1988a: 1703–1705).

There is also evidence that in the Orientalizing period women had access to writing. Certain objects used in textile crafts were marked with letters since the late eighth century BCE, such as spools, spindle whorls, and loom weights. Since the production of fabrics was traditionally associated with women, it has been inferred that women were involved in the spread of literacy (Riva 2006: 123; Bagnasco Gianni 2000 and 2008: 48–49); but we cannot exclude that male workers marked the objects after manufacturing them (Wallace and Tuck 2011: 196–197). Furthermore, a small bucchero *aryballos*, or perfume vase, from Caere, dating from the second half of the seventh century BCE, has a very long inscription with poetic features and figures of speech, possibly referring to Aphrodite’s sphere: it could perhaps be considered a short Etruscan poem. It is extremely

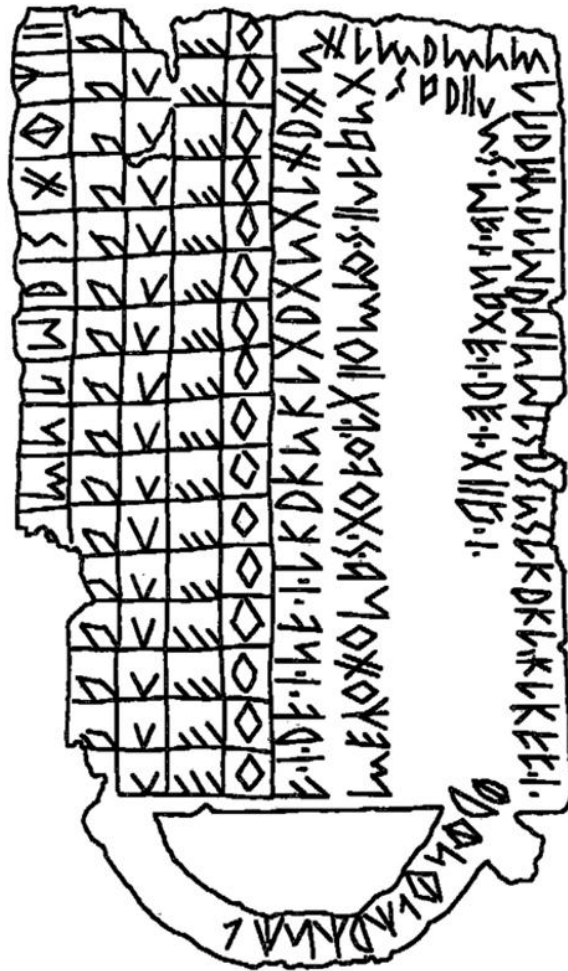
interesting, therefore, to see what looks like a woman's signature at the end of the text: *asi ikan zix akarai*, "Asi Akarai writes this" (or "Asi wrote this at Akara": a place name—but note that other scholars interpret *akarai* as a verb; see, for instance, Wylín 2000: 98–99 and 197–198; Medori and Belfiore, forthcoming). If this interpretation is correct, an aristocratic woman of Caere was the author of the poem, in an age not far from that of Sappho in Greece (Maras, forthcoming; see also Harris 1989: 48).

Without such a find, scholars have had to depend on (and have often mistrusted) much later memorialization of Etruscan women's roles. Perhaps we may now reevaluate the later ancient historians: the figure of Tanaquil, the wife of Tarquinius Priscus and queen of Rome—who is described as learned and expert in prodigies, as was common in Etruria (Livy, 1.34.9)—may then help us to understand the literate activities of Etruscan aristocratic women in the Orientalizing period.

In Etruria, there was a close relationship between writing and religion. This is evident in the legend of the *Libri Tagetici*, the esoteric writings of the Etruscan *haruspices*, which in the late Republican and Imperial age were attributed to the child prophet Tages himself, Jupiter's son, and founder of the technique of *haruspicina*, or divination by means of the entrails of sacrificed animals. According to the myth, the teachings of Tages dated from the time of Tarchon, founder of the twelve towns of Etruria, that is to say from the origin of the Etruscan people. Clearly such a date would have been too early in terms of the introduction of writing, but it is significant that the Etruscans considered their national religious science, the so-called *Etrusca disciplina*, to have been closely linked to the written word and to books (de Grummond 2006: 23–27). Rome had a legend regarding king Numa's writings, which were said to have been found in 181 BCE in his tomb on the Janiculum Hill, and dealt with religious prescriptions (*de iure pontificum*), and with Pythagorean philosophy (Livy, 40.29). The latter group was burned as being dangerous for Roman customs, while the former was preserved with care (Valerius Maximus, 1.1.12) (Harris 1989: 171; Rocca 2011). This legend allows us to understand how in the late Republican period ancient scripts were considered indispensable to invest religious doctrines with authority and credibility.

## 5. Writing Schools in Sanctuaries

The link between writing and religion does not depend only on legends (Beard 1991). Much evidence has come to light from sanctuaries and sacred places in Etruria and in the rest of Italy, where plentiful and rich corpora of inscriptions and marks have been found, relating to votive practices, as well as to other aspects of religion and to simple production activities (Cornell 1991:11–12). One of the earliest and most interesting examples comes from the sanctuary of Portonaccio in Veii, where a large number of dedicatory inscriptions on bucchero vessels relating to the cult of Minerva (the Etruscan Athena), was found in a votive deposit. The large quantity of documents, often showing common graphic features, and the type of inscribed vases, most probably produced for (and in) the sanctuary, suggest that a flourishing writing school had been working in the sacred place at least from the last quarter of the seventh to the first half of the sixth century BCE (Maras 2012b: 339–340; for a definition of "school" and "reform," see Pandolfini and Prosdocimi 1990: 236–240). The writing system and alphabet of the school differed



**Figure 13.8** Inscribed votive bronze tablet from the sanctuary of the goddess Reitia at Este (northern Italy: votive deposit of Baratella). On the surface are incised a dedicatory inscription, a grid containing consonants and vowels of the Venetic alphabet, and a series of groups of letters. Fifth or fourth century BCE. (After Pellegrini, G. and Prosdocimi, A. L. [1967], *La lingua venetica*, Padova, Università di Padova, I, pp. 109–111, Es 25. Revised drawing by Daniele F. Maras.)

from the one used in the rest of the town in aristocratic contexts. There were special graphic choices, such as some peculiar forms of letters (*zeta*, *bet*, *kappa*, *pi*, *chi*), and the lack of some others (*tsade*, multi-bar *sigma*), and the introduction of the cross-sign, used for one sibilant as an alternative to *sigma* (but with no clear differentiation in use—Maras 2009a: 309–311). Another important feature of the writing school of the Portonaccio sanctuary was the systematic use of syllabic punctuation, closely connected with the teaching methods (which is described later): it is mentioned here because it is the principal link with another important writing school of pre-Roman Italy located far in the north at Este, in the heart of the region of the Veneti, from at least the mid-sixth century BCE (Pandolfini and Prosdocimi 1990: 183–190; Wallace 2004b: 845–846). At

Este the school was also located in a sanctuary devoted to a goddess, Reitia, who received offerings of bronze styluses and writing tablets, with inscribed dedications and writing exercises (Figure 13.8; Pandolfini and Prosdocimi 1990: 259–289; Marinetti 2002). A careful study of the innovations and reforms that occurred in the Venetic writing system through the centuries fostered the hypothesis that they regularly came out from Este, which we can therefore recognize as the principal center of writing among the Veneti (Colonna 1988b: 1727–1730; see also Wallace 2004b: 846).

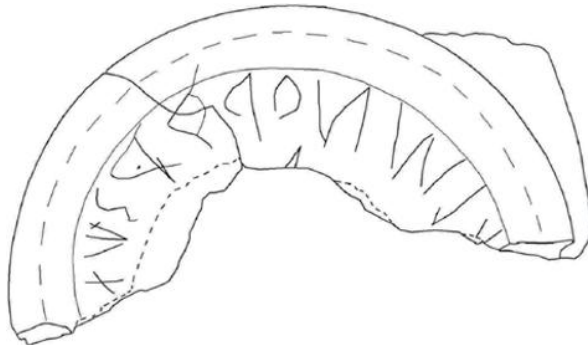
Veii and Este cannot be considered isolated cases. They responded to the social transformation at the beginning of the Archaic period that put sanctuaries, rather than aristocratic families, at the center of culture and public representation. The process is also seen in the migration of Etruscan gift formulas from the aristocratic gift-exchange system to votive offerings, and by the irreversible transfer of decorated terracottas from the roofs of aristocratic houses to temples (Colonna 2005a: 1949–1950).

Further learning centers of writing have been thought to exist at Golasecca and at Como-Prestino, in the area of the Golasecca culture, which might be the origin of some innovations of the alphabet in the archaic age, like Este in the Venetic area (Colonna

(a)



(b)



**Figure 13.9** Abecedarium scratched under the foot of a bucchero cup from the sanctuary of Juno Sospita at Lanuvium (Latium). Lanuvio, Archaeological Museum. End of the sixth century BCE. (Photo and drawing by Daniele F. Maras.)

1988b: 1727). But it is not possible at present to link the presumable writing school with a sanctuary or a cult place. Also probable is the presence of a writing school or tradition in the sanctuary of Juno Sospita at Lanuvium, where the earliest Latin *abecedarium*, dating from the end of the sixth century BCE, has been found (Figure 13.9, a–b; Attenni and Maras 2004: 68–78).

In the following centuries, it is possible to recognize the active, important role of priests in the spread and preservation of writing, though we cannot be sure that writing schools and sanctuaries continued to be closely linked (Colonna 1976b: 113). *Scriptoria* were present in the main cult places, as at Pyrgi and Gravisca from the late sixth to the fifth century BCE, and often special scribes were in charge of writing dedicatory inscriptions on vases to be offered by worshippers, who at times added their names, occasionally in a different language (Maggiani 1997: 39). Writing came to be used in divination, in the transcription of oracle responses, and in drawing inscribed lots, as in the rite of *sortilegium* (Beard 1991: 51–53; Bagnasco Gianni 2001). This function could help explain the close connection between writing and religion (see earlier text).

## 6. Punctuation and Teaching Methods

Ancient inscriptions are mostly written in *scriptio continua*, without any marks to isolate single words. Punctuation was introduced in writing only in the course of the seventh century BCE (Wallace 2008a: 25–26). The normal type of “inter-verbal” punctuation continued to be used until the Imperial period, and is basically still in use today in our system of spacing single words. But it was not the only system. An important punctuation method was the so-called syllabic punctuation (Wallace 2008a: 26), which remained in use in Etruria from the second half of the seventh to the second half of the sixth century BCE, and continued in Campania until the fifth century, and in Venetic writing even until the Romanization of the area (Pandolfini and Prosdocimi 1990: 183–190). This system is closely connected to learning and teaching methods, which were substantially based upon the open syllable as the base unit of the (written) language. According to this theory, open syllables, such as *ca-ce-ci-cu*, were considered regular; and every single letter not involved in this scheme was irregular, and thus marked with one or more dots (e.g., *-r-* and *-a-* in the name *mama.r.ce .a.puniie*). Exceptions were liquid consonants (*lambda* and *rho*) occurring between another consonant and a vowel (for example, *cra-cre*, or *cli-clu*), which were considered regular. The purpose of these marks was to make reading easier: when a dot occurred after a consonant, the reader knew that no vowel followed; when it occurred after a vowel, this was considered to be an independent syllable. It is worth noting that the learning method with open syllables is seen in other texts, such as a writing exercise from Caere (630 BCE), and the reckoning system of the roof-terraccottas of the temple of Portonaccio in Veii, which were marked on either side of the roof by series of syllables: *ci-ca-ce-cu-...* on the right side, and *cri-cra-cre-cru-...* on the left side (Maras 2010: 112–113).

Syllabic punctuation found its widest application in Veii, where it was probably invented, and spread across south Etruria, especially in Caere and Tarquinii. It was then transmitted to Campania, where Etruscan inscriptions are not earlier than the middle of the sixth century BCE. The Veneti inherited the system, presumably together with some

teaching methods, handed down by southern Etruscan masters of writing in the middle of the sixth century, in the context of long-distance relationships between sanctuaries (Wallace 2004a: 845–846). The application of syllabic punctuation to Venetic writing was even more thorough and careful than at Veii, and nasal consonants (*my* and *ny*) were added to the exceptions (see for instance *cma-cme*, or *cni-cnu*—Pandolfini and Prosdocimi 1990: 155–298).

Finally, a further type of punctuation has just recently identified, which could throw light on the tradition of scribes, already as early as the seventh century BCE (Maras, in Mangani 2015: 113–122). A small group of attestations from southern Etruria, especially Veii, testifies to the use of surrounding a wrong letter or syllable with a series of two or three dots, in order to mark it for erasure, or better, expunction (e.g. *θabna:i*: for *θabna*, and *haθi:a:snas* for *haθisnas*). The use of such punctuation has been recognized in a first draft of the verb on the famous Fibula Praenestina (see Figure 13.4), which read VHE:VHE:KED, before it was corrected to VHE:VHAKED. According to this hypothesis, the scribe originally wanted to write VHEKED, “(he) made”, but he duplicated the first syllable and then expunged it elegantly, in order not to damage the jewel’s appearance. Such a method, which has been called “expunging punctuation,” was probably spread among scribes using perishable writing surfaces, such as wax tablets (Cornell 1991: 23–24). It must have lasted until a recent period, if it determined the meaning of the Latin verb *expungere*, “to expunge,” literally “to mark out [of the row] with a dot.”

It is difficult to draw further information from the archaeological and epigraphical evidence about techniques of instruction in pre-Roman Italy. Even spelling or writing “exercises,” such as the syllables on the “calamaio” from Caere or the series of letters on the bronze votive tablets from Este (see earlier text), may have been symbolic rather than indicative of actual teaching methods.

From later Latin literary sources, we know that it was usual in schooling to learn by heart “classical” legal texts as mnemonic exercise (see Cicero about the Twelve Tables later in the chapter). And, of course, it is probable that epic poetry and other important passages of high literature were used in school contexts: it is worth noting that one of the principal purposes of metric and rhythmic prose in oral literature is making memorization of long passages and texts easier. But in actuality there is no hint of how such methods of teaching and learning were used in schooling in Italy before the late Republic and the Imperial period, when literary sources allow us to grasp at least some of the rudiments of schooling, of teaching, and of the liberal education more generally (Bloomer 2011).

## 7. Scribes, Trade, and Literature

The role of the scribes in preserving the technique of writing and spreading literacy was most important in the Orientalizing period, but continued to be relevant in the Archaic period. The case of Porsenna’s secretary, at the end of the sixth century, whom Mucius Scaevola mistook for the king due to the secretary’s elegant, regal-looking garments (Livy 2.12.7), has been compared with archaic representations of scribes and magistrates on the reliefs of some *cippi* from Clusium, and perhaps also on terracottas from Velletri (Colonna 1976b: 107–110; Harris 1989: 150). While in office, official scribes were

temporarily invested with a rank and authority equal to that of *magistrates*, or, in the age of kings, to that of the king himself. It is therefore implicit that at least some scribes enjoyed a high social position in Etruria.

We have already mentioned the role of scribe-priests in religious issues; since the Archaic period, there was also a category of public, official scribes who dealt with legal questions (Cornell 1991: 24–27). According to the sources, Rome was familiar with the *propositio*, the exhibition of laws, treaties, and public decisions, ever since the age of kings. The Capitoline temple contained a huge archive of bronze tablets, which was destroyed on several occasions by fire, and was partially restored by Vespasian (Suet. *Vesp.* 8; Williamson 1987; Cavallo 2000: 253). On one of the earliest Latin inscriptions of Rome, the stone block of the Lapis Niger, dating from the beginning of the sixth century BCE, is inscribed a (probably sacred) law; it was still exhibited at the time of Dionysius of Halicarnassus in the *Volcanal*, the sanctuary of Vulcan near the Forum (*Ant. Rom.* 2.54.2). The historian could also see with his own eyes the sacred law of Diana's sanctuary on the Aventine Hill (*Ant. Rom.* 4.26.5; Cornell 1991: 26–29).

The chronology of the earliest publications of written texts is confirmed by comparison with Etruscan and Italic evidence. An inscribed *cippus* from Tragliatella, which marked boundaries between Veii and Caere, dates from the first half of the sixth century BCE (Colonna 2005b; see also Id. 1999: 441–442); and the *cippus* of Tortora, on which was written a long inscription in the Italic language (Oenotrian) using the Aegean alphabet, dates from the end of the century (Pocchetti and Lazzarini 2001).

The private use of writing in matters of public interest is seen in Etruria in the corpus of onomastic inscriptions on the tomb doors of the necropolis of Crocifisso del Tufo at Volsinii (Orvieto) during the sixth and fifth centuries BCE. The regular affixing of proprietors' names on each tomb chamber has been interpreted as a legal prescription, required by sumptuary laws intended to prohibit the excess of funerary luxury (Colonna 1999: 442–443).

We have already observed some uses of writing in a private context by the aristocratic families of the Orientalizing period; since that time, its use as a means of recording and identifying found its way into the realm of trade. A group of ivory tokens, inscribed with Etruscan inscriptions and dating from the end of the seventh and the beginning of the sixth century BCE, have been found in Rome, Carthage, and Murlo (near Siena). They have been interpreted as *tesserae hospitales*, as they were called later in Latin literature, to be used as identification documents (Maggiani 2006, with further bibliography). A pair of identical items was split between two people who had a relationship of hospitality, but who were separated from one another by some distance; when an agent, servant, relative, or other authorized user came with the matching token, he would be recognized as a trusted partner for business, trade, or other matters. The discovery of a group of such *tesserae* in the Orientalizing palace of Murlo permits us to hypothesize that the palace contained a repository of official documents (Maggiani 2006: 336–337; Wallace 2008b: 75); but since some of the names on the tokens belong to women, it is possible that not all *tesserae* were intended for trade, but were used for social or other purposes (Wallace and Tuck 2013, and forthcoming).

At the end of the Archaic period, in the beginning of the fifth century BCE, an Etruscan trade letter written on a lead sheet, found at Pech Maho in southern France and mentioning the name of Massalia (modern Marseille), shows how writing was commonly used in trade practices (Colonna 1988c; G. Woolf, in Bowman and Woolf 1994: 87).

The reverse of the sheet was later used to write a Greek letter with a similar purpose, demonstrating that by that time dealers of different nationalities were accustomed to using writing in business relationships in different languages. Literacy was no longer the monopoly of aristocratic families, but was spreading to other social classes.

As for literature, no clear evidence indicates true Etruscan narrative or fiction: some references, such as Volnius' Etruscan tragedies mentioned by Varro (*De ling. Lat.* 5.55), are very late and relate to a Roman context (Pallottino 1984: 351). Nevertheless, as we have seen, it is very probable that some sort of oral literature already existed before the spread of writing (Maras 2015: 7–9; and forthcoming), and continued to exist, judging from funerary and votive inscriptions that occasionally exhibit metrical structures or figures of speech.

Classical sources mention the works of Etruscan historians (Varro, in Censorinus, *De die natali* 17.6) and corpora of religious and technical literature, in which some passages could have had literary or even poetic features (Pallottino 1984: 347–351). One can readily imagine that Greek works, epic poems or theatrical plays, circulated in Etruria, in the original language or in translation, which would help to explain the striking knowledge of names and tales from the Greek myths that craftsmen displayed in their work. However, we must remember that there is no evidence that such a “second hand” literature existed, let alone that it ever reached a written form.

## 8. Writing Policies and Politics

During the Archaic period, writing changed its role from the definition of identity on the level of social self-representation of the aristocracy to, as we have seen, broader civic functions. From the sixth century BCE onward, local alphabets became cultural markers of cities; often, special features and variants can be used to identify the provenance of inscriptions. Though it is unlikely that ancient people attributed much importance to specific graphic features, we should consider that writing is an expression of culture, and, being the result of personal choices, it can work as a very visible sign of distinction.

The cities of southern Etruria reacted against the north Etruscan system (see earlier text), and chose a different solution for expressing sibilants and the velar stop: *sigma* was used for /s/ (“same”) and *tsade* for /š/ (“shame”); *gamma* was used for /k/, dropping both *kappa* and *goppa* (Wallace 2008a: 21–24).

Veii seems to have accepted the south Etruscan system, but there are occasional inscriptions in the north Etruscan style. Caere at first accepted this reform, but at the end of the sixth century replaced the *tsade* with a four-bar *sigma* (Σ), thus creating its own graphic conventions (Maras 2012b: 342). Etruscan Campania adopted the south Etruscan reform, but kept alive some archaic features, such as the syllabic punctuation (see earlier text), and the crossed *theta* (⊗, elsewhere changed into a dotted circle, ⊙). Further minor features characterized local alphabets, which assumed their own identities, as had happened before on a larger scale in Greece.

Latin alphabets show a similar vitality, although the evidence is limited to a few inscriptions of the sixth and fifth century BCE: the documentation of Rome is an exception and allows us to note some peculiarities. The study of variants of the letter forms in Latin writing showed that Roman scribes rejected some of them, such as



upside-down letters or multi-bar S, which were common in the rest of Latium; this rejection is evidence for the existence of different local writing choices (Maras 2009b). A comparison of the archaic inscriptions of the *Lapis Niger* and the *Duenos* Vase shows that two different alphabetic models were used, presumably in an official and in a domestic sphere: notably, the distinctive features of these models are identical, except for the different use of certain letters, to the alphabets of the habitation site of Veii and of the sanctuary of Portonaccio (Maras 2009a). A study of the writing systems thus seems to confirm that Rome was culturally dependent on Veii at the beginning of the sixth century BCE, at the time when—according to the legend—it was ruled by the dynasty of the Tarquins, when literary sources tell us that craftsmen like Vulca of Veii were introducing innovations in art and technology (Cornell 1991: 14–15).

In the Sabellian area, where the so-called south Picene, or paleo-Sabellian inscriptions occur, we see instead cultural independence and strong homogeneity. In place of the writing systems of the Tiber valley, as seen in single inscriptions in the first half of the sixth century BCE and described earlier, a series of about twenty monumental inscribed and sculpted stones, dating from the sixth and fifth centuries BCE, were found in an extensive area of eastern central Italy (Marinetti 1999). The use of such monuments as funerary memorials as well as apparent landmarks, and the rhetoric of *Safinúm nerf*, “the leaders of Sabines” (Marinetti 1999: 136–139), which pervades the text, allow us to postulate that they were expressions of a national writing, and presumably a literary language, where we can at times recognize a metrical rhythmic pattern.

At the other end of the Sabellian expansion, a small group of archaic inscriptions preserves the remains of the pre-Samnite languages of southern Campania. The alphabet used there, called “of Nocera” or Ausonian, was derived directly from the Euboean alphabet of Cumae, but it was rendered unrecognizable by changes in the shape and disposition of letters (above all a tree-shaped *sigma*  $\text{𐌆}$ ,  $\text{𐌇}$ , and a hooked *digamma*  $\text{𐌈}$ )—Colonna 1994; Russo 2005). The creation of such a local alphabet, which soon disappeared and was of little consequence for the later writing systems of Campania, depended on the will of the Ausonian people to distinguish themselves from both the Etruscans and the Greeks, with whom they shared the region: once again, writing was a marker of (ethnic) identity.

## 9. Changes in Republican Rome

Since the forms of writing are closely linked to the identity and political choices of the cities, we can expect that radical changes in the political situation would be reflected in working alphabets, and this is corroborated by inscriptions. A splendid confirmation of this hypothesis comes during the shift from monarchy to republic in Rome at the end of the sixth century BCE, which, according to literary sources, brought with it changes in Rome’s relationships with the Etruscans and the Greeks of Cumae. The Roman version of the Latin alphabet in this period saw some important modifications, clearly deriving from a desire to imitate Greek writing, such as the definitive choice of writing from left to right, in contrast to the Etruscan custom, and the use of the modern form of *M* (up until then written in a five-bar form), which meant abandoning the Etruscan *tsade* (Colonna 1980: 1645–1646). It is clear that the writing system reflected the

political tendencies of the city, which was entering into a period of close relationships with the Greek towns of Campania.

Nevertheless, not all Etruscan influence was avoided. The earlier form of *P* (𐌒), which was identical to the working alphabet of Veii, shifted in Rome—but not in the rest of Latium—to the hooked *P* of Caere (𐌒, 𐌒). As at Caere, Rome selected the form of *A* with rising bar (𐌆, 𐌆), and used only the three-bar *S* (which in Caere was opposed to the four-bar *sigma*; see earlier text). Finally, the two-tailed *R*, introduced in this period and deriving from a Syracusan and Cuman prototype, can be compared with a type of *rho* used in some sacred texts of the sanctuary of Pyrgi, confirming the close relationship between the writing systems of Rome and Caere (Maras 2009a: 318–319). The choice of Caere instead of Veii as the new cultural referent of Rome cannot be separated from the link of friendship that united the two cities in the fifth and fourth centuries, first evidenced by the aid given by Caere to Rome when it was raided by the Gauls under Brennus, traditionally dated to 390 BCE, and later by the *civitas sine suffragio*, a special right of citizenship which Rome granted to Caere. It is no wonder, then, that high-ranking Roman families sent their children to Caere in order to learn *litterae*, that is to say, to become literate (Livy 9.36.3, Harris 1989: 157; Colonna 1999: 443).

Rome's contact with Greek Campania, even more than the relationship with the Etruscans, caused an increasing drive toward Roman literacy: an early reference to this process can be recognized in the legend of the sale of the Sibylline books to Tarquinius Superbus by the Cumaean Sibyl (Dionysius of Halicarnassus 4.62). In fact, the meaning of this legendary event was to mark the beginning of the relation between writing and religion that took place in a Greek context, in contrast to the ancient tradition of the religious books of the Etruscans. Traditionally, the arrival of the Sibylline books is referred to the period of the kings; but their common use began only in the Republican period, when a college of *duoviri*, later *decemviri*, was in charge of their care and interpretation (Harris 1989: 154; Beard 1991: 51).

Aside from religion, another college of *decemviri* was responsible for the publication and promulgation of the law of Twelve Tables in the middle of the fifth century BCE and thus had an important role in the use of writing in the early republic (Harris 1989: 151–153). The new code was inspired by legislation in Greek cities, starting with Athens. It was drawn up on twelve ivory or bronze tables which were posted in the Roman Forum so that every citizen could read and know it.

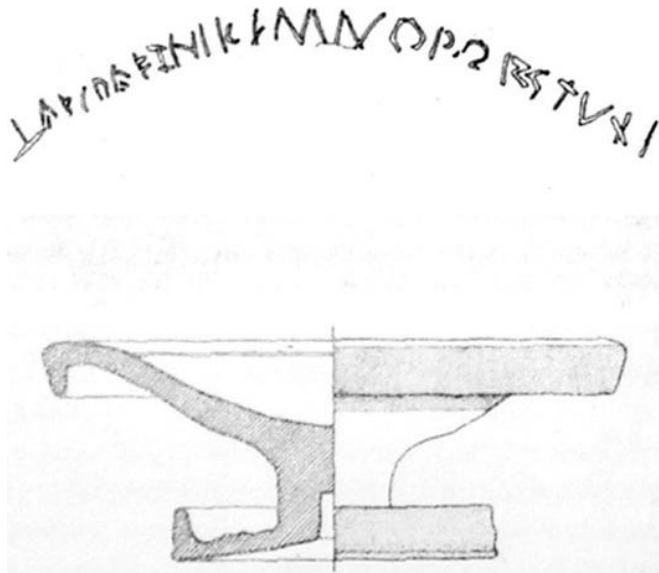
The event has been interpreted as a trick of the patricians to exclude the illiterate plebeians from knowledge of the laws after the struggles that had previously divided the two parties (Harris 1989: 153, with bibliography). But it is likely that at least some of the plebeians were interested in the laws and were able to read and understand the tables (Cornell 1991: 31–32). It cannot be by chance that the earliest reference to primary schools in Rome occurs in the context of these laws and concerns Virginia, the plebeian virgin who died as a consequence of the lust of Appius Claudius Crassus, chief of the *decemviri* (Livy 3.44–58; Dionysius of Halicarnassus 11.28–3; Cavallo 2000: 247–249). Livy tells us that Virginia was attending a public school (*litterarum ludi*) in the Forum when Appius set a trap to enslave her (Gianotti 1989: 425).

Most probably the impulse for public schooling in Rome arose from the need to understand written laws, as is confirmed by the use of the Twelve Tables as a basic school text, something that continued at least until the time of Cicero, when pupils learned passages

of the ancient code of laws by heart (Cicero, *De legibus* 2.59; Gianotti 1989: 441; Harris 1989: 152–153). A later, casual reference to public schooling in central Italy is provided by an episode of the war of Furius Camillus against Falerii at the beginning of the fourth century BCE (Livy 5.27; Plutarch, *Cam.* 10.3–5). According to the sources, the treacherous teacher who tried to hand over his Faliscan pupils to the Roman general was in charge of teaching the children of all the upper-class families of Falerii: a normal situation, according to Livy (*ut fere fit*). Finally, a further mention of schools in relationship to Camillus concerns the Latin town of Tusculum, south of Rome (Livy 6.25.9).

## 10. National Alphabets and Identity

In the course of the following centuries, from the fourth to the first centuries BCE, starting with central Italy, which was early in contact with the increasing cultural power of Rome, Italy became progressively more Romanized. The process of the adoption of the Roman language, writing, and cultural aspects had different effects and results in various parts of Italy. Already by the fourth century BCE, the Latin alphabet had assumed a standard form, modeled on the working alphabet of Rome, which soon spread over ancient Latium. This process began with the abandonment of local alphabets (Maras 2009b: 433–434). An *abecedarium* from Alsium (a center on the coast north of Rome), dating from the beginning of the third century BCE, testifies to this phase of definitive stability of Latin writing (Figure 13.10; L. Gasperini, in Cristofani 1985: 343, n. 14.4.2.3).



**Figure 13.10** Drawing of the abecedarium incised on a saucer of the “Genucilia” type from Palo Laziale (ancient Alsium: southern Etruria). Circa 300–270 BCE. (From Mannino, F., Mannino, M. and Maras, D.F. [2009], *Theodor Mommsen e il Lazio antico*, Rome, L’Erma di Bretschneider, p. 106, Figure 2. Reprinted with permission of L’Erma di Bretschneider.)

The peoples of the central Sabellian area, who had had no writing systems after the “golden age” of the south Picene monumental inscriptions, showed their cultural dependence on Rome by adopting the Latin alphabet, with only a few local adaptations. This was true for the Marsi, Aequians, Vestines, Paelignans, and so on (Wallace 2004a: 816). A phase of bilingualism and of bi-graphism is attested in Etruria, Campania, Umbria, and in most regions in contact with Roman and Latin colonies (Harris 1989: 154–155). Most probably, the presence of Roman citizens and Latin-speaking people, as well as the participation of Italic peoples in the Roman army, played an important role in the spread of Roman culture and literacy (Lomas 2004: 207–213). The prestigious role of Latin language in official matters of the Roman Republic had some interesting and unexpected consequences such as, for example, the unsolicited request of the local government of Cumae, in the second century BCE, to use Latin in public affairs (Livy 40.42.13).

But the path to the complete Latinization of Italy was not entirely straightforward or free from opposition (Lomas 1996; Lomas 2004: 204–205). Some writing systems of pre-Roman Italy were conceived from the beginning as signs of national identity. This was the case, for instance, for the Samnite national alphabet (also known as Oscan), which originated in Campania during the fifth century BCE and spread to central Italy in the following centuries; its use in opposition to Rome is clearly apparent both in the coins of the Social War and in the spread of Samnite inscriptions of that period (Dench 1997: 44–49; Cooley 2002: 77–86). Previously, the Lucanian and Bruttian writing systems, deriving from Greek Tarentum, had been created in order to reassert the cultural link with the towns of Magna Graecia, perhaps in opposition to the Samnite national alphabet, which had spread in the north.

In northern Italy, a common Celtic writing system realized by a process of simplification from the original Lepontian alphabet spread among all the Celtic peoples of Italy and became an important carrier of Celtic identity in the face of increasing Romanization (Solinas 2002; R. Häussler, in Cooley 2002: 61–76). At the same time, the Veneti, faithful allies of the Romans across the centuries, maintained their alphabet until the end of the republic. Even against the overwhelming strength of Latin, the importance of the alphabet as a marker of identity ensured its preservation. Only the concession of Roman citizenship, with its standardizing power, could at last get the better of the resistance and cultural independence of the Italic peoples (Lomas 2004: 220–223).

Roman literacy had finally come to Italy.

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## FURTHER READING

The subject of literacy in Roman Italy has been dealt with in a large part of recent—and less recent—scholarly studies (see Harris 1989, and more recently Bloomer 2011, with further bibliography); but just a few contributions have focused on pre-Roman and early Republican Italy. An important survey of the achievements on the subject has been published in reaction to the fundamental work by W.V. Harris, providing the opinions of several scholars and adding matter for further discussions and research (Humphrey 1991): specially important, from our point of view, is Cornell's contribution on literacy in Etruria and Latium in the archaic age (Cornell 1991).

A broader, anthropological point of view on the subject can be found in the works of Stoddart, Whitley 1988 (on the social context of literacy), Beard 1991 (on religious issues), Bowman and Woolf 1994 (on the relationship between literacy and power), and Maras 2015 and forthcoming (on the passage from orality to writing, about which see also Goody and Watt 1968).

Most recently, R.E. Wallace and A. Tuck devoted a series of papers to the case study of literacy at Murlo, as a consequence of the most interesting early archaic epigraphic finds in the Orientalizing site of Poggio Civitate (Wallace 2010; Wallace and Tuck 2011, 2013, and forthcoming).



Specifically on teaching and learning methods of writing in pre-Roman Italy, still fundamental are A.L. Prosdocimi's works, in most part collected in the volume Pandolfini and Prosdocimi 1990, which provide a general glance on all the available sources for determining the techniques of instruction used in antiquity. As regards Etruscan writing and its spread throughout the peoples of pre-Roman Italy, useful contributions, surveys, and updated revisions have been published in works by G. Colonna (Colonna 1970, 1976a, 1988a, 1988b) and, more recently, by the author of this note (Maras 2012a, 2012b, and 2014). Moreover, some information on the relationship between writing and language can be found in the principal reference books in English on Etruscan language (Bonfante and Bonfante 2002; Wallace 2008a).

On Latin writing and literacy in the Archaic and Republican periods, it could be worth recommending again Humphrey 1991 and Bloomer 2011, as well as Horsfall 2003, with special regard to the lower classes, and Attenni and Maras 2004, Maras 2009a and 2009b, on the evolution of alphabets before the fourth century BCE.

Finally, some important issues about writing and ethnic identity—which were specially influential in the preservation and teaching of local writing systems and traditions—have been dealt in recent contributions on the patterns of Romanization in Italy: from the Archaic period, with the controversial relationship of the writing of Rome with the southern Etruscan towns (Maras 2009a), to the mid- and late Republican and the early Imperial period, which eventually saw the triumph of Latin in writing custom as well as in language at all social levels (Lomas 1996; Cooley 2002: 61–86; Lomas 2004).

## CHAPTER 14

# Schools, Teachers, and Patrons in Mid-Republican Rome

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*Enrica Sciarrino*

Discussions of Roman education in the mid-Republican period have traditionally centered on the idea of a sudden encounter between Rome and Greece, and the presumed existence of a gap in educational and cultural advances. Exemplary in this sense is H. I. Marrou's opening paragraph to the chapter "Old Roman Education" in his *History of Education in Antiquity*:

The difference between the Romans and the Greeks arose in the first place because two different stages of development were anachronistically brought into contact with each other. What is commonly known as "Roman" virtue was simply the outlook of the old-city state. To this the Romans of Republic times—hardy, unbending types, hardly better than barbarians—remained loyal, in contrast to the Greeks of the same time—men who were highly developed intellectually, highly civilized—perhaps a little over-civilized ... (Marrou 1956: 229)

Modern accounts of this sort follow the lead of the ancient sources, which discussed, at a considerable remove of time, the inception of Roman education as a Greek cultural import based on literary texts that either replaced or improved primordial forms of learning. In the process, modern scholarship has dispensed with the focus on individuals that the ancient narratives display, and a very complex phenomenon has been reduced to a disembodied and unmediated introduction of a superior culture and technology.

In recent years, it has become increasingly clear that the notion of a sudden encounter of an inferior (Roman) culture with a superior (Greek) one is no longer tenable. Not only does this notion rest upon an essentialist understanding of culture and ethnicity, but it also denies complexity to the intercultural exchanges that had been in place in Italy well before the end of the third century BCE. The archeological record has long demonstrated that, as with the Etruscans and other Italic populations, the Romans were greatly affected by Greek culture at large since at least the late eighth century BCE. The princely

tombs of Etruria, Latium, and Campania, for example, speak of a very mobile aristocratic network which included the Greek colonies and whose hallmarks were conspicuous display and ownership of land (for a general discussion, see Cornell 1995: 81–118). In this context, the manufacture of pottery and metalwork shows that the Hellenizing style was not perceived as something foreign and superior to be caught up with; rather, it was a common language that each craftsman interpreted in his own way (Holliday 2002: 7; Cornell and Lomas 1997). In turn, Central Italy did not lie beyond the Greek horizon: from the sixth century BCE onward, the Romans and their neighbors loomed large in both Greek poetry and prose (Wiseman 2007).

Over the course of the third century BCE, however, Rome's relationship with the Greek world shifted in new directions (for general discussions, see Gruen 1990: 158–162; 1992: 227–231; Cornell 1995: 390–398; David 1997: 35–53). Centuries later, Florus claims that the victory over Pyrrhus in 278 BCE ushered in a massive movement of spoils to Rome with Manius Curius Dentatus' triumph constituting a major turning point in triumphal display with the inclusion of statues and gold from Tarentum (Florus 1.13. 26–27). Scholars have learned to be cautious about this type of retroactive periodization and the use of events as major historical turning points, especially when they tend to oppose a primitive and simple past to a sophisticated and corrupted present (for periodization, see Flower 2010: 18–34). Nevertheless, it is clear that the high prestige which the Romans traditionally gave to “things Greek” intersected with their increasing availability through plunder. By the same token, Rome's military successes during this period raised the stakes in the Italian-wide aristocratic competition, and Greek paradigms came to be used as benchmarks for downplaying the competitors (cf. Feeney 2005: 236). By the end of the third century BCE, the increasing concentration of material, human, and cultural commodities in the city of Rome and in the hands of its most powerful citizens had altered the system of migration and circulation once and for all.

The aim of this chapter is to review the ancient sources in order to identify what we know about schools, teachers, and patrons in mid-Republican Rome, and to grasp the variety of attitudes toward education sparked by the sociohistorical changes that occurred at that time. However different, these positions pivoted around questions concerning the role that Greek methods of learning and foreign professionals were supposed to play. The Roman elite—whose composition, opportunities, and responsibilities were evolving in direct proportion to the growth of the Roman territory—became particularly engrossed with how to control and capitalize on Hellenistic technologies and Greek learning in order to sustain and foster its social reproduction and political supremacy.

## 1. Reviewing the Sources

For authors writing in the late Republic and early Empire, schooling was ideally divided into three subsequent phases: first, the child was exposed to the basics of literacy and arithmetic from the *litterator* or *ludi magister*; then the child read poetry and prose in Greek and Latin with the *grammaticus* calling attention to diction, spelling, and rhetorical figures; and, finally, boys were trained in speech making and declamation by a rhetorician. These authors viewed this form of schooling as the consequence of the progressive transfer of Hellenistic education to Rome, which they dramatized through narratives involving

individual initiatives. The most influential among such accounts is Suetonius' *De Grammaticis et Rhetoribus*. Written in the second century CE, this work can be described as a sort of catalog of the men who achieved fame by teaching grammar and rhetoric. The opening section is dedicated to grammarians:

Grammar was not at all pursued at Rome in early days, still less held in any esteem; and naturally enough, since the city was then still uncouth and given to war, and had as yet little space for liberal pursuits. Its beginnings, too, were humble, for the earliest teachers, who were also both poets and half-Greeks (I refer to Livius Andronicus and Ennius, who gave instruction in both languages at home and in public, as is well known), did no more than interpret the Greeks or give readings from whatever they themselves had composed in Latin ... [2] In my opinion then, the first to introduce the study of grammar into our city was Crates of Mallos, a contemporary of Aristarchus. He was sent to the Senate by king Attalus between the second and third Punic wars at about the time when Ennius died. After falling into the opening of a sewer in the Palatine and having broken his leg, he held numerous and frequent readings during the whole time both of his embassy and of his convalescence, at which he constantly gave instruction, and thus set an example for our people to imitate. Their imitation, however, was confined to a careful scrutiny of poems which still had little circulation, either those of deceased friends or others that were approved, and to making them known to the public by reading and commenting on them. (Suet., *Rbet* 1.1–2)

From our viewpoint, Suetonius' representation of grammar's early days is more significant for what it reveals about the author's cultural horizon than for its historical accuracy. For one thing, the beginnings of grammar are made to coincide with those of poetry. In fact, the Livius Andronicus and the Ennius mentioned here as the very first to engage in some form of grammar are also traditionally recognized as among the initiators of Roman poetry. By representing the establishment of grammar and poetry as historically simultaneous and attributable to the same individuals, Suetonius suggests that they were cultural practices which were intimately related: poetry provided the material and grammar the means for using this material in order to enrich and enhance the learner's speaking skills through reading (*praelegere, legere*), commenting (*commentari*), and analyzing/translating (*interpretari*) texts.

Second, Suetonius' opening remarks—that grammar was not practiced in early days or even held in esteem—are not at all unique in their conceptualization and phrasing. This lack of uniqueness reinforces grammar's connectedness with poetry in a different way. In commenting on the early beginnings of poetic practices in Rome, Cicero had already asserted: "Therefore, poets were accepted or known by our ancestors late" (*Sero igitur a nostris poetae vel cogniti vel recepti, Tusculan Disputations* 1.3). The parallelism suggests the general understanding that Rome's expansion in the late third and early second centuries BCE triggered the arrival of individuals specialized in the production and deployment of literary texts. In turn, Suetonius' representation of Rome's pre-grammatical past as uncivilized and warlike points to a related and deeply entrenched cultural framework.

This framework finds its most famous expression in Horace's so-called *Letter to Augustus*: "Conquered Greece conquered her fierce victor in turn and introduced the arts into rustic Latium" (*Graecia capta ferum victorem cepit et artes/ intulit agresti Latio, Epist.* 2.1.156–157). In these lines, the Augustan poet sketches out the dynamic

correlation between military conquest and cultural fascination that shaped Rome's relationship with Greece from the late third century BCE onward. The Horatian passage does not do justice to the complexity of this relationship since the poet's interest and the reader's focus quickly moves to the civilizing effects attributed to the introduction of Greek *artes*. If for Horace these *artes* have to do more specifically with poetry, it is clear that they also include the kind of schooling that Suetonius has in mind. In both cases, non-Hellenized or non-textually based cultural practices are associated with rusticity and ferity. This association looms large in the sources, and from the first century BCE onward, it invariably presents itself in opposition to urban sophistication (*urbanitas*) and the institutions that placed Greek-based practices at their center.

Matters, however, are never that simple. The agricultural metaphors that flourish in many rhetorical writings of the late Republic reveal that rusticity was also—to put it in Catherine Connors' words—“a powerful icon of upright living and immunity to the corrupting influences that increase as Rome controls more land and imports more culture: being rustic means being not all Greekish” (Connors 1997: 52). Indeed, rusticity could also be used to invoke a time of hardy customs and the seat of virtue. Often, the scenario involves the Sabine countryside, the toil of agricultural work, and men who either left the plow to fight for Rome, like Cincinnatus (consul 460 BCE, cf. Livy 3.26–29; Dion. Hal. 10.23–25; Florus 1.11) or were happy to eat turnips and live uncorrupted by the gold of those whom they conquered, like M' Curius Dentatus (consul 290; 275; 274 BCE, cf. Polybius 2.19; Cicero, *De Sen.* 16; Livy, *Epit.* 11–14; Pliny 7. 16; Val. Max. 4.3, 5 and 6.3, 4; Juvenal 11.78; Plut., *Pyrrhus* 25; Florus 2.18). In these contexts, references to effeminacy and femininity connote the negativity of urban sophistication, the sensual pleasures, and the aural delights of paid performances. These elements and characteristics are generally associated with the non-Roman, the enslaved, and the poor (Connolly 2007). Accordingly, rusticity and sophistication existed as two multidimensional extremes in a much larger and complicated attempt to account, acknowledge, conceal, or justify the foreign and professional nature of both the cultural practices and the type of schooling that came to sustain the formation of Roman elite males. Their contrast expressed the worry that the grandeurs of imperial expansion and urbanization would eclipse the *mos maiorum* (“ancestral custom”) and the point of Roman/elite distinction. This sort of contrast began to emerge in the mid-Republican period. In that sociohistorical context, it served as a tool for articulating diverse but fundamentally related positions toward childrearing and household management.

Suetonius' participation in the culture of his own time finds its clearest manifestation in his narrow focus on the introduction of education as a series of individual initiatives. His emphasis on the foreign origins of Livius Andronicus and Ennius (*semi-graeci*), and his reference to Crates of Mallos' embassy do nothing more than emphasize that grammar (just like poetry) was less something unknown than a set of competences that skilled people brought into Rome (*intulit*) as an indirect consequence of being caught up in the military and political expansion of the time. Here, the perception of the body as conveyor of culture cannot be underestimated. According to Suetonius, it was through a variety of public performances that these foreigners elicited interest in the literary curriculum and in teachers operating outside the home. By building upon a network of associations among urbanization, conquest, specialized learning, and the availability of cultural and human resources, authors like Suetonius advocated the desirability of Greek learning and

naturalized its attributes by claiming it as an essential component of Rome's self-civilizing and civilizing mission. In the process, the socially secondary status of specialized practitioners is downplayed and the contribution of their teachings to the construction of authoritative speaking enhanced.

## 2. Greek Learning in the Sociocultural Context of Mid-Republican Rome

If we move closer to the time with which this chapter is concerned, the writings of Polybius provide us with a vantage point from which to better understand the sociocultural context of late third- and early second-centuries BCE Rome and the role played by education. Born around 200 BCE Polybius was the son of Lycortas, a prominent member of the Achaean League and the chief supporter of neutrality during the war of the Romans against Perseus of Macedonia. As he attracted the suspicion of the Romans, his son, Polybius, was sent to Rome as hostage among 1,000 Achaeans and was detained there for 17 years. In Rome, he was admitted to the most distinguished houses, in particular to that of Aemilius Paullus, the victor of Pydna in 168 BCE. During this time he wrote the *Histories*. In this work, he talks about himself and how he became familiar with Paullus' sons, Fabius and Scipio Aemilianus (who had been adopted by the eldest son of Scipio Africanus and who would conquer Carthage in 146 BCE). The passage is worth citing in full:

Now we have already explained that their acquaintance [i.e., of Scipio Aemilianus and Polybius] began with the loaning of some books and conversations about them. But as their closeness grew, and when the Achaeans in detention were dispatched to provincial towns, Fabius and Scipio, the sons of Lucius Aemilius, put pressure on the praetor to allow Polybius to remain in Rome. When this was accomplished, and their exchanges became much more intimate, the following event took place. One day when they all left the house of Fabius together, the latter turned toward the forum, while Polybius and Scipio went off in the opposite direction. As they were walking, Scipio, addressing Polybius in a quiet and mild voice, and blushing slightly, said: "Why, Polybius, since you dine with both of us, do you always converse with my brother and direct to him all your questions and explanations, but neglect me? Obviously you also have the same opinion of me that I hear the rest of my fellow citizens have. For, as I am told, I am believed by everybody to be someone quiet and indolent, and far away from the Roman way of thinking and acting because I do not choose to speak in the law courts. And they say that the family I spring from does not require such a *patronus* (*prostátes*), but just the opposite; and this is what pains me the most."

Polybius was surprised at the way in which the young man had begun the conversation; for he was then no more than 18 years old. "For goodness' sake, Scipio," he said, "don't say these things, or get any such ideas into your head. I don't do this because I have a low opinion of you or neglect you, rather the contrary; it is because your brother is older than you and I both begin conversation with him and finish with him; as for any explanations and advice, I turn especially to him assuming that you share his same opinions. Moreover, I admire you when you say that you are pained to think that you are of a milder character than becomes the members of this family; for that shows that you have a high spirit. I myself

would be delighted to do everything that is in my power to help you speak and act in a way worthy of your ancestors. As for those disciplines which I see you now occupied and interested, there will be no want of those ready to help both of you, so great is the throng of such men that I see flowing here from Greece at present. But as far as what now pains you, as you say, I don't think you could find any collaborator and supporter more apt than myself." While Polybius was still speaking, Scipio, grasping his right hand with both of his hands and pressing it warmly, said: "If only I could see the day on which you, regarding everything else secondary, would devote your attention to me and join your life with mine; for then I shall at once regard myself to be worthy of my house and my forefathers." Polybius was, on the one hand, very happy to see the enthusiasm and affection of the young man, on the other, perplexed when he reflected on the high position of the family and the fortunate condition of its members. After this mutual clarification, the young man never left Polybius' side, and for him all became secondary to his company. (Polybius 31.23–24; my translation)

This passage offers a compelling snapshot of the sociocultural situation of early second century BCE Rome. Polybius' self-representation calls attention to the opportunities that were available to those who, in one way or the other, had been affected by Rome's military expansion and the flow of human and material resources into the city. Polybius is offered the chance to enter the highest echelons of Rome's society thanks to the interest that Paullus and his sons had in books. Plutarch and other sources (Plut., *Aem.* 28.6; Isid., *Etym.* 6.5.1) suggest that after defeating Perseus in 168 BCE, Paullus allowed his sons to choose books from the Macedonian king's extensive library; these also became their only inheritance. Clearly, ownership of books as spoils of war expressed the prestige that derived from victory and carried a symbolic value comparable to material goods. In this respect, Polybius testifies to the eagerness of the general's sons to capitalize as much as possible on the unique achievements of their family and their exceptional possession of a library. Indeed, it is this eagerness that brings them to intercede with the praetor on behalf of the Greek hostage and to take, in turn, the opportunity to make the most of Polybius' expertise. The anecdote that Polybius recounts could not better represent the pressures, ambitions, and accommodations that facilitated the absorption of Greek learning into the Roman educational process.

The setting is the city center, and specifically the area around the forum. Polybius is with Fabius and Scipio; he seems to be the only one with them—no clients, no slaves, just the two young men and himself. When Fabius goes off, he is addressed by Scipio. The future conqueror of Carthage, at this point, expresses his concerns about his ability to meet the expectations that weigh on him as a scion of an incredibly powerful family: he is blamed for being of mild character, and he does not choose to speak in the courts, failing to fit the profile of *patronus*.

Scipio's concerns are serious. What he is talking about is one of the most crucial roles that Roman aristocrats played in the game of social distinction. As opposed to what happened in Greece, those speaking in the law courts (*patroni*) could not receive financial remuneration, according to the *lex Cincia* of 204 BCE. Speaking in court functioned instead as part of the exchange of favors and the network of political and social alliances (*amicitia*) upon which elite families based and constructed their preeminence. Viewed in this light, Polybius' reply to Scipio's concerns is striking since he offers to help the young man to speak and behave according to the standards set by the young man's

ancestors. How was he, a Greek hostage, planning to do that since he had never experienced and would have never experienced speaking in a Roman law court? Perhaps—as Habinek suggests—by providing Scipio with “an unofficial progress report or an after-the-fact evaluation” (1990: 172). Perhaps he aspired to resemble Aristotle with the young Alexander the Great. Whatever the case, this is not made explicit, whereas it is clear enough that, according to Polybius, Scipio (and his brother) had yet some basics to learn. Polybius points to the numerous Greek immigrants ready to provide the two brothers with what they needed at that stage. The reference conjures up for us an environment where Greek experts and professionals competed with one another in the hope of serving distinguished households. In later sources, we find out that Paullus gathered around his sons an entourage of Greek grammarians, philosophers, and rhetoricians, but also Greek craftsmen and painters, overseers of horses and dogs, and hunting teachers (Plutarch, *Aem.* 6.4–5). Whether Plutarch is reliable or not is less important than to acknowledge that in the second century BCE the transfer of Greek education and culture to Rome took place through extended and routine interactions between Greek experts and local youths. On this score, Scipio’s reply to Polybius offers some interesting clues.

Scipio’s emotional reaction exposes his young age, but the desire that he expresses uncovers something else. For Scipio, it would only be by having the whole of Polybius—that is, both his attention and life—that he would feel at peace with the obligations that he has toward his family and his ancestors. Blinded by the admiration of which he has become the object, Polybius then expresses the sociocultural horizon within which his interlocutor operates: to be a Roman aristocrat means to extend one’s own self through the material, human, and cultural resources of the conquered and the governed. Accordingly, Polybius’ offer is reinterpreted by the young aristocrat within a logic of ownership whose roots are to be found in the very imperialistic practices in which Polybius and the professionals who were pouring into Rome were entangled. More generally, then, the episode recounted by Polybius brings into relief the fact that the cultural transfer performed in person by the likes of Polybius and the Greek immigrants that he mentions validated elite desires of self-expansion, as well as this elite’s ascendancy in the Mediterranean. This is the context in which we need to situate the reactions sparked by the visits of philosophers and rhetoricians coming from the East and acting as diplomats.

We have already considered Crates of Mallos and his embassy to Rome in 168 BCE on behalf of King Attalus II in relation to Suetonius’ account of grammar’s early days (see also Kaster 1995: 61–63; Bloomer 1997: 38–43). The record also includes the Athenian diplomatic mission led by three prominent philosophers in 155 BCE. During their visit, the Academic Carneades lectured on both sides of moral questions (see discussion and sources in Gruen 1992: 174–175). Commenting on the event, Cicero catches something important when he asserts that Athens would have never sent men whose profession found no favor, if the leading men of Rome had no interest in their learning (Cic. *Tusc. Disp.* 4.5). Indeed, the opportunity to appreciate in person argumentative sophistry and oratorical dexterity was too enticing to forgo. This was not simply because of the novelty of these phenomena for Romans, but rather because they exemplified the kind of learning to which only eminent aristocrats like Paullus and his sons could enjoy daily access to in the form of books and training by select professionals.



Among those who followed the Athenian envoys around Rome was Cato the Censor. Most often remembered as the champion of Roman virtues and the fiercest opponent of all things Greek, Cato intervened a few times during their visit and found Carneades' performance disconcerting. For Cato Carneades' speeches in favor of and against justice displaced the truth, and raised the concern that the Roman youth would give more weight to speaking abilities than prowess in war and to seductive voices than to magistrates and laws (Plut., *Cato Mai.* 22.4–5). He expedited the conclusion of the embassy but not without first making something of a show of his reservations by criticizing C. Acilius. The senator, at his own request, had acted as an interpreter for the delegation to the Senate during their first audience (Plut., *Cato Mai.* 22.4; Pliny, *NH* 7.11, Gellius 6.14.9). In Cato's eyes, Acilius had done more than cheapen his senatorial status. For if translating was one of the ways in which many members of the Roman aristocracy would have learned Greek, translating *for* a Greek professional in a public setting like the Senate approximated the role of the slave or, at best, the professional.

The episode, in the form that we have it, calls for an enlargement of the picture. In 161 BCE—a few years earlier—the praetor Marcus Pomponius had sought the advice of the Senate on the matter of Greek philosophers and rhetoricians present in Rome. Discussion was held—unfortunately we have no details—and, at the end, Pomponius was charged with arranging and providing for their expulsion from the city (Suet., *Rhet.* 25.2). It is an expulsion that is unlikely to have been fully successful (cf. Kaster 1995: 272), otherwise the excitement and the reproach that the Athenian philosophers triggered a few years later would make little sense. Clearly, people in Rome must have had exposure to Greek rhetoric and philosophy all along; however, it is difficult to say to what degree, and it probably varied a great deal. Sarah Stroup (2007: 28–32) suggests that—as opposed to a censorial decree produced some years later, in 92 BCE, which was a rebuke to the establishment of Latin rhetorical schools—the 161 BCE initiative presupposes a model of patronage in which Greek professionals served as non-paid clients in aristocratic households. It may be so; however, Cato himself apparently had a slave, Chilon, who also ran a school of his own (Plut., *Cato Mai.* 20.3); thus, mixed situations are not to be weeded out in principle. Moreover, it is easy to imagine that not all of the Greek philosophers and rhetors present in Rome at the time would have been so lucky as to have some powerful figure looking after them. As such, it is reasonable to think that in 161 BCE the targets were already—but more generally—those who operated in the city outside the boundaries of patronage. Their employability for pay—just like the open displays offered by Carneades—would have lowered the value of the learning resources that prominent families had at their sole disposal. Exclusivity is key to social distinction, as is control over educational technologies and specialists.

### 3. Fathers and Sons

*Patria potestas* (“the power of the father”) is often invoked as the legally sanctioned right that Roman fathers had to kill their offspring; however, this is a myth since its reality included and implied much more (Shaw 2001; in relation to basic education, see Bonner 1977: 5–9): the exercise of *patria potestas* kept a family group physically together, provided boundaries for the actions of family members and, most importantly, expressed

the father's responsibility to protect and plan for the good and the future of those under his power. Viewed in this light, it becomes easier to see why household management and child rearing often crop up in the representation of family status and prestige. In the second century BCE, to advertise how and by whom one's children were taught became a strategic ploy for either enhancing or diminishing one's family's reputation or that of others. The case of Paullus and the ways in which he handled the advantages derived from his family background and his own achievements for the benefit of his sons is a case in point, and it is not unique. Cato too was concerned with the proper management of his own successes, and he was likewise a father who had a stake in the education of his children. Paullus provided for his sons the best teachers and a choice library; Cato, a new man without a history of family accomplishments to back him up, advocated self-reliance in all areas (cf. Bloomer 2011: 27–31). A most outstanding document of his position is preserved by Pliny the Elder:

Dicam de istis Graecis suo loco, Marce fili, quid Athenis exquisitum habeam, et quod bonum sit illorum litteras inspicere, non perdiscere. Vincam nequissimum et indocile esse genus illorum. Et hoc puta vatem dixisse: quandoque ista gens suas litteras dabit, omnia conrumperet, tum etiam magis, si medicos suos huc mittet. Iurarunt inter se barbaros necare omnis medicina, sed hoc ipsum mercede faciunt ut fides iis sit et facile disperdant. Nos quoque dictitant barbaros et spurcius nos quam alios Opicon appellatione foedant. Interdixi de medicis. (Pliny, *NH* 29.14)

I shall speak about those Greeks in the proper place, Marcus my son, as to what I found out in Athens and what benefit there is in looking into their writings, not in learning them thoroughly. I will demonstrate that their race is most despicable and intractable. And reckon what follows as pronounced by a *vates*: whenever this race will give its literature, it will corrupt everything; all the more so, if they will send their doctors here. They have taken an oath among themselves to kill all the barbarians by their medicine, but they do this very thing for a fee, so that they may be trusted and destroy easily. They also speak of us all the time as barbarians, and they insult us more filthily than others by calling us Opici. I have forbidden you to deal with doctors.

This fragment opens by featuring Cato's "speaking I" addressing his son and promising him to deal with the Greeks on another occasion. Through this deferral, Cato situates the Greeks in an Athens construed as a peripheral site that he has self-confidently examined, and he represents their writings as objects that are both alien and alienable. The alienable features that Cato attaches to Greek literature are here made prominent in his choice of *dare* (to give). Produced by a despicable and fickle race, these writings—he warns his son—are good to be inspected (*inspicere*) but should not be learned thoroughly (*perdiscere*). Paratactically adding to it, Cato ominously predicts that Greek literature holds the potential to undo (*conrumperere*) everything and equates his pronouncement to that of a *vates*. As a figure located in the pre-literary Roman tradition shunned by the poet Ennius in a famous fragment of the *Annales*, the *vates* becomes in this context a prop for empowering Cato's own self-positioning. In what follows, Cato abruptly shifts his focus from literature to medicine and characterizes Greek doctors as conspirators and assassins operating under the disguise of paid professionals. The language of destruction (*necare, disperdere*) that he uses at this point recalls the ruinous power (*conrumperere*) previously attributed to Greek literature. The echo ushers in the idea of reading as

affecting the body through the mind, and suggests that Cato's distinction between *inspicere* and *perdiscere* does not rest on a different degree of attention paid to texts but on the extent to which what is read comes to be incorporated. Greek learning—just like Greek medicine—is not bad in itself; what is bad is to entrust the body and the mind of those under the father's power to alien specialists and technologies. To master alien practitioners and their learning is one thing; to become dependent on them is another altogether. As opposed to Paullus, Cato took child rearing and the health of his family in his own hands.

Plutarch (*Cato Mai.* 20.3–5) reports that Cato did not let anyone teach his son, for it did not seem right to him that his son should be physically or verbally abused or owe his education to a slave. Cato himself taught him basic literacy and law; he wrote for him in large letters a book of history and looked after his physical education: he trained him on how to use the javelin, to fight with the armor, to box, to endure heat and cold, and to swim in the Tiber. Moreover, Plutarch (*Cato Mai.* 33. 4) mentions that Cato wrote rough notes (Greek *hypomnema*, Lat. *commentarius*) with dietetic treatments for the family. Scholars have long sensed that some of these materials came to be somehow incorporated into the larger piece of writing attributed to Cato and known as the *De agricultura* (“On Agriculture”). More recently, they are learning that the haphazard accumulation of directives that the *De agricultura* contains—ranging from the management and expansion of a farm, to medical and veterinary issues, dietary prescriptions, legal matters with the inclusion of contract templates, and instructions on rituals—is the most outstanding manifestation of Cato's investment in writing as a tool for creating exemplary behavioral standards out of his own conduct as a paterfamilias (Bloomer 2011: 153–156; Sciarrino 2011: 141–160). In this sense, the proliferation of sayings of anonymous authorship grouped under the heading of *Disticha Catonis* speak loudly about the success of his initiatives and strategies. These sayings drew authority from their association with Cato's name and became integral to the school curriculum at least from the third century CE onward (Bloomer 2011: 139–169).

Thematically, the roots of the *Disticha Catonis* are to be found in a few pieces of advice known as *Ad filium* (“To his son”). These include the tirade against Greek literature and medicine preserved by Pliny the Elder and cited earlier. Interestingly, of the other materials attributed to the *Ad filium*, only three include a direct address to his son; as for the remaining, their didactic tone suggests that we are dealing with cases of father-to-son instruction. In some instances, this impression is philologically confirmed by the reference “*Ad filium*” that precedes the quotation; in others, this is implied by an imperative prescribing of a type of behavior or practice pertaining to elite expectations. Sometimes the son is explicitly called upon: *orator est, Marce fili, vir bonus dicendi peritus* (“An orator, Marcus my son, is an honorable man skilled in speaking” *Ad filium* fr. 18 C&Sb); of this saying we also have an expanded version: *vir bonus est, Marce fili, colendi peritus cuius ferramenta splendent* (“an honorable man, Marcus my son, is skilled in cultivating and his instruments shine” *Ad Filium*, fr. 7 C&Sb). Other times the topic gives a clue, as in the famous case, *rem tene verba sequentur* (“Hold the subject matter, the words will follow” fr. 19 C&Sb), which is obviously focused on authoritative speaking. Taken as a whole, these samples point to the tradition of father-to-son teaching; their form suggests that this tradition was

about communicating an empowered and empowering understanding of the world. By emotionally and persuasively appealing to the son, the father induces the son to act according to his own worldview and to extend generationally his own knowledge. The remains of near contemporary comedy provide some compelling evidence in relation to both the formal features that characterized this type of communication and the educational principles that Cato espoused.

In Plautus' *Trinummus* (276–390), an exuberant exchange between father and son points not only to intergenerational instruction as a ritualized practice but also to the use of maxims as a means of father-to-son communication. Here a brief excerpt:

Philo: Qui homo cum animo inde ab ineunte aetate depugnat suo, utrum itane esse mavelit ut eum animus aequom censeat, an ita potius ut parentes eum esse et cognati velint: si animus hominem pepulit, actumst: animo servit, non sibi; si ipse animum pepulit, dum vivit victor victorum cluet. tu si animum vicisti potius quam animus te, est quod gaudeas. nimio satiust, ut opust te ita esse, quam ut animo lubet: qui animum vincunt, quam quos animus, semper probiores cluent (305–312)

Philo: The man who fights out with his inclination from his earliest age, whether he prefers to be as his inclination sanctions to be so or, rather, to be so as his parents and his kin wish him to be—if his inclination conquers that man, it is all over with him; he is the slave of his inclination and not of himself. But if he conquers his inclination, so long as he lives he will enjoy the reputation of being a conqueror of conquerors. If you have conquered your inclination rather than your inclination you, you have reason to cheer. It is better by far that you should be such as you ought to be, than such as pleases your inclination. Those who conquer the inclination will always be considered better men than those whom the inclination subdues.

Spoken by Philo, the comic father, this passage is filled with maxims structured into two parts and organized around wordplay and phonetic repetitions. Their accumulation would have triggered laughter, but it could have done so only because the practices on which the parody is constructed were well entrenched.

Plautus' *Mostellaria* presents us with allusions to the type of upbringing that underlies Cato's educational principles and the values of self-reliance that they entail. In a long soliloquy addressed to the audience, the comic young man, Philolaches, speaks of himself, of how he was properly raised and how he has now been corrupted by love (89–156). The monologue contains the typical language that we find used elsewhere for blaming and praising the paterfamilias. This includes such words as *indiligens* (idle), *pigrus* (sloth), *nequam* (useless), *instrenuus* (dilapidated), *parsimonia* (self-restraint), and *duritia* (hardness). Moreover, it incorporates an extended simile between building a house and raising children, manifesting the ideological relationship that existed between child rearing and household management. Finally, in the speech the proper father is praised for teaching his children basic literacy and law either by himself or by paying someone, and typically Greek gymnastic activities are mentioned alongside. W. Martin Bloomer has extensively discussed this passage; he correctly points out that in comedy “schooling does not convey a contrast of old Roman practice and newly introduced Greek rhetorical or gymnastic education” (Bloomer 2011: 33). If anything, the contrast emerges only in Cato's writings, and only in relation to his own self-fashioning as the self-reliant father who looks after his family and educates his own children without any

dependency on alien and subordinate practitioners—in other words, as the Roman man who is a master in the art of commanding and has an excellent command of the world.

## 4. Conclusion

Lucius Aemilius Paullus died in 160 BCE and his two sons, Scipio and Fabius, honored their father and his achievements with grand funeral games. For the occasion, the young and successful playwright Terence put on stage for the first time the *Adelphoe*, a play based on the homonymous Greek play by Menander. In the history of Roman education, this comedy is often invoked as a turning point in the integration of Greek learning into the formation of young Roman aristocrats.

In its opening, the character of the Prologue speaks as a proxy for the poet and, at one point, asserts:

As to the spiteful accusation that eminent persons assist him and often write them together, his accusers may reckon it a grave imputation; however, he takes it as an utmost compliment since he is pleasing to those who find favor with all of you and with the general public, men whose services in war, in peace, and in your affairs are given at the right moment, without arrogance, to each of you. (Terence, *Ad.* 15–21)

Noticeably, this passage incorporates a defense against allegations concerning the authorship of Terence's plays. In antiquity, the aristocrats implied here have been identified as Scipio (the son of Paullus) and his friend, Laelius (Suet., *Ter.* 4). In recent years, this identification has been variously rejected (e.g., Goldberg 1986: 8–15; Gruen 1992: 200); even so, the implied attack alerts us to the progressive domestication of poetry in the life of the Roman elite—alongside the translation and interpretation of Greek texts, practices that formed the basis of Greek schooling. David Konstan (2005: 349) has recently proposed that the insinuation mentioned by Terence has more to do with a slur against aristocrats who stooped to writing poetry than with the literary incompetence of their protégé. Konstan's interpretation makes a great deal of sense, especially when considered in the light of Cato's disagreement with professional encroachments on the care of the minds and the bodies of elite males and, consequently, with the contamination of manly development by a dependency on social subordinates. If this were not remarkable enough, the body of the play revolves around a conflict between two elderly brothers and their diverse educational approach to the two natural sons of the one brother.

Of these two sons, one, Ctesipho, has been kept in the country by Demea and is being trained for a strenuous and self-denying existence; the other, Aeschinus, has been adopted by Demea's lax and sophisticated brother, Micio, and lives on the uncle's largesse and indulgence. Micio and Demea become spokesmen for their conflicting approaches to paternity and both end up coming to terms with partial failure: Demea falls victim to Ctesipho's disobedience and longing for urban life, and Micio's trust that indulgence leads a son to sincerity is put into question by Aeschinus' failure to confess that the young Pamphila is pregnant by him and to make amends for the situation.

The two brothers' conflict has long been viewed as an allegory of the divergence between the philhellenism of Paullus (or Scipio) and the backwardness of Cato, between

the sophistication of the former and the rusticity of the other (for recent assessments, Bloomer 2011: 34–36; Leigh 2004: 158–190). More important than any particular relation of the comic action to Roman reality is to acknowledge that nowhere does this comedy represent the divergence as Greek versus Roman; its dynamics only go so far as to underscore rival understandings of how a father is to raise sons to be proper *patres familias*, able administrators, and capable commanders. Viewed in this light, rusticity and urbanity emerge as nothing more than two powerful scenarios. These helped the Romans think about how to use and invest the material and human resources that they had at their disposal (children included). In mid-Republican Rome, the integration of Greek learning and experts into the education of elite children heightened and channeled the already keen interest that the Romans traditionally had in their family's continuity and success through the proper rearing of their young. To display their education was a way to advertise the abilities of the paterfamilias, the prosperity of the household, its proper order and management; to promote one educational choice over another contributed to the culture of exemplarity and the system of praise and blame that regulated the sociopolitical life of Rome. Roman expansionism in this period increased the availability of opportunities and technologies; Greek schooling, learning, and expertise created new choices; the differing views that we find in the sources suggest that these choices were not accepted wholesale but first underwent a process of assessment, definition, and regulation.

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## FURTHER READING

Standard opinions regarding Roman education in the mid-Republican period can be found in works such as Marrou (1956) and Bonner (1977). Bloomer (2011) revisits these opinions and offers new and important insights. Readers can gain an understanding of rhetoric and oratory from the introductions gathered in collections such as Dominik and Hall (2007). For a better understanding of the sociocultural context, see Gruen (1990; 1992) and Sciarrino (2011) with a focus on Cato the Censor and the relationship of his interventions with poetry and other contemporary developments. Suetonius remains a central source; to date, Kaster (1995) provides the best edition and commentary.

## CHAPTER 15

# The Education of the Ciceros

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*Susan Treggiari*

This essay draws chiefly on Cicero himself to document his education and that of his brother, children, and nephew. He has something to say, chiefly in the treatises, about his own education and a little about that of Q. Cicero when it coincided with his own. The account may be romanticized, but the facts are accurate (Rawson 1991a, 26–27). The letters give data about the younger generation. The standard commentaries will give readers a wealth of further information. I am indebted to many scholars, only some of whom could be acknowledged here. Marcus Tullius Cicero, consul 63, will be indicated as “Cicero,” his brother Quintus as “Q. Cicero,” his son as “Marcus,” and his nephew as “Quintus” or “Young Quintus.” References to *Letters to Atticus* are to Shackleton Bailey’s numbers only; in references to *Letters to Friends*, *Quintus*, *Brutus*, his numbers are preceded by *F*, *Q*, and *B*, respectively.

Cicero studied a number of subjects and practiced his technique (an orator had to exercise pen, body, and voice regularly) throughout his life (*Brut.* 321). He declaimed in Greek (173.3; cf. Suet. *Gram.* 7.2, 25.3) and in Latin (173.3, 366.2, *F*190.7, 192.1) at least until 44. His serious reading and research are often documented in the letters (e.g., 22.2). He aimed at a well-rounded literary education, and the results can be seen in his writing and competence in many fields, though he did not attain the vast erudition of a Varro or the narrow specialist knowledge of a Sulpicius. There will not be space here to survey the many Greek and Latin authors with whom he shows familiarity. We will end our account of the brothers with Cicero’s return in 77 from “graduate study” in the East, when he was 29. The education of Quintus and Marcus will be described up to 49 and 43, respectively.

Some education was acquired informally. The home environment had a strong influence on the child. “It makes a great difference whom one hears every day at home, with whom he speaks from childhood, how fathers, pedagogues and mothers speak.” Mothers might speak a purer, more old-fashioned Latin (*Brut.* 210–211, cf. 213). It was traditional for fathers (or even grandfathers [*Brut.* 239]) to teach their sons or at least supervise and control their education closely (e.g., *de Orat.* 3.74; *Brut.* 79; *Nep. Att.* 1.2; *Plu. Cat. Ma.*



20.3–6). Cicero’s father lived until 68 and must have controlled, approved, and financed his sons’ education. Mothers might, especially if widowed, have an important influence (*Brut.* 104). The household would sometimes provide a resident tutor, usually a freedman (who might teach slaves of the household and free boys from elsewhere as well as the owner’s children) or a *grammaticus* might offer classes in private houses or in his own school (e.g., Suet. *Gram.* 7.2). In particular, the houses of cultured senators (and *equites* such as Atticus or Maecenas) had much to offer. A large and diverse staff copied manuscripts, managed libraries, took dictation, read aloud, and created luxury and leisure for the owner and his family. Friends and colleagues visited; “humbler friends” called, dined (perhaps instructively entertained by a reader [Rawson 1985: 51]), stayed and sometimes lived permanently in the house (Treggiari 1977: 25; Kaster 1995: 185). An advocate might attract young men as students, allow them to listen to the conversation of their seniors, and bring in teachers to instruct them. (Fantham 2004: 93 felicitously calls this an internship.) Cicero and his brother were trained in this way, and later Cicero, his “house stuffed with learned men” (*Orat.* 146), provided the same service, training M. Caelius Rufus (*Cael.* 9–11), allowing Apollonius to attend Diodotus who, though blind, taught geometry (*Tusc.* 5.113; *F* 316.4), and educating his own son and nephew. Probably he also trained his secretary, Tiro. The house provided some of the resources of a college. Family connections meant that some lucky men absorbed knowledge naturally (e.g., *Brut.* 98, 101, 264). The transmission of knowledge was personal: a succession of, for example, jurists could be traced, linked by marriage as well as by teaching, as were Tuberones, Sulpicii, and Cassii. The pupil imitated the master, as a son his father. Teaching was by practice as well as theory.

## 1. Cicero and Q. Cicero

Cicero (born 106) and his brother Q. Cicero (two or three years younger, praetor 62) spent much of their early lives at the ancestral country house near Arpinum (*Leg.* 2.3). But later their father took a house in Rome. They would have had the opportunity to attend the theater and religious festivals. Cicero attended schools, if we can believe Plutarch, and acquired an early reputation as a poet and orator (*Plu. Cic.* 2.2–4; this presumably refers to his schooling in *grammatica*). He had an excellent memory. Both brothers learned the Twelve Tables by heart (*Leg.* 2.59). Cicero himself talks of being educated “at home,” together with his friend and later tentmate and connection by marriage, the future jurist L. Aelius Tubero (*Lig.* 21; cf. *Q* 1.10; *Planc.* 100). Later, they began rhetorical training (*de Orat.* 1.23). Cicero was keen to attend the new school of L. Plotius Gallus, who was teaching rhetoric in Latin, but he was stopped by his learned advisers, who thought it better to be trained in Greek (Suet. *Gram.* 26; cf. *de Orat.* 3.93–95). The Greek professionals with whom he worked are unidentified. Cicero came to have reservations about their methods (e.g., *de Orat.* 2.133 [Antonius], 3.75 [Crassus]). But, like his contemporaries, he got his grounding in basic rules (*praecepta*) from the professional teachers (cf. *de Orat.* 1.137–148 [Crassus]). Both *grammatici* and *rhetores* prescribed exercises (*progymnasmata*) (Fantham 2004: 86–88, 97).

What was needed was a training in both law and oratory adapted to the realities of Roman society and the courts. It had long been customary for young Romans to train by “listening” to practicing advocates, their teachers or *magistri*. So Ti. Gracchus and

C. Carbo were *auditores* of M. Aemilius Lepidus Porcina (*Brut.* 96) and L. Crassus an *auditor* of L. Coelius Antipater, an expert lawyer (*Brut.* 102). Even inferior practitioners had their *auditores* (*Brut.* 179). The houses of eminent lawyers were packed with *discipuli*, who listened to the answers they gave to clients. The lawyers did their job and instructed pupils simultaneously. The men who specialized in speaking were busy preparing and putting together their cases, in pleading and in recovering from their exertions and besides were not equipped with enough theory to teach. But Cicero thought an orator could teach, not as in a school, but by advising, exhorting, sharing, reading in turn (*Orat.* 142–146). This reflects Cicero’s own experience as student and teacher.

When not yet in his teens, Cicero began his *tirocinium fori*, studying oratory and the law, frequenting the house of L. Licinius Crassus (consul 95, 34 years older [*Brut.* 161]), the best legal expert among the orators (*Brut.* 145, 148), until he died in September 91. His mother’s sister’s husband, C. Aculeo, a close friend of Crassus and also a legal expert (*de Orat.* 1. 191), may have introduced him. He learned from other advocates such as M. Antonius (consul 99, killed by the Marians in 87, author of a handbook [*de Orat.* 1.94, 206, 208; *Brut.* 163; *Orat.* 18]), the friend of his paternal uncle, L. Cicero. Crassus and Antonius were top orators (e.g., *de Orat.* 3.16; *Orat.* 106). His brother (although in adult life he would avoid practicing advocacy, he had to make speeches as praetor and governor [*de Orat.* 2.10]), and the two young Aculeones joined him. Cicero rebuts, from his own experience and that of his father and two uncles, the misconception that the two great Roman advocates had been uneducated. Crassus spoke Greek perfectly and had a grasp of all sorts of subjects, as did Antonius. The boys studied topics which Crassus approved and were educated by the teachers (*doctores*) who were his friends (*de Orat.* 2.1–5). Cicero claims to have been inspired by the Greek poet Archias of Antioch (*Arch.* 1), who had come to Rome in 102, frequented the house of the Luculli, and was received by Crassus (*Arch.* 5–6). Crassus’ speech backing Caepio’s jury law of 106 was his “teacher” (*Brut.* 164, cf. 161, 298), and he also read other “published” speeches (*Brut.* 162). Crassus left a lasting impression, especially as he excelled himself in the last speech he gave in the Senate, during which he was taken ill, so that he died a few days later. Cicero, though not present, knew all about the speech and used to visit the Senate to look at the spot where he had stood to give his “swan song” (*de Orat.* 3.1–8). He could quote many passages from Crassus (*de Orat.* 3.4–5; *Orat.* 219–223). He also in these years read many “published” speeches, for instance, C. Curio’s defense of Fulvius in about 113 BCE (*Inv.* 1.80, *Brut.* 122), C. Fimbria (*Brut.* 129). C. Gracchus was an ideal model for the young (*Brut.* 126). He learned by heart the peroration of a speech by C. Galba (*Brut.* 127). Cicero may have been in court in his early teens to hear Crassus and Scaevola the Pontiff argue a civil case (*Brut.* 194–198; *contra*, Fantham 2004: 27–28). He listened to speakers and mere ranters (*Brut.* 181–182): Caesulenus, Catulus, Tinca (*Brut.* 131, 134, 172), and many others, as his detailed account of the 90s and 80s in *Brutus* attests. He heard the talk of P. Sulpicius (*Brut.* 205). A respected teacher was a recommendation in a political career, since it was expected the pupil would resemble him (*Off.* 2.47). Cicero’s close association with Crassus (advertised in his *de Oratore*) was remembered: a later hostile criticism was that he failed to imitate his teacher ([Sal]. *Cic.* 4; Rawson 1991b). From the outset, Cicero acquired role models and contacts of all ages, among them C. Aurelius Cotta, portrayed as his source for the conversations in the *de Oratore*, who unfortunately went into exile (91–82).

During the Social War (91–87), Cicero worked hard (*Brut.* 304–307). He assiduously attended the only active law court to hear defendants and others. He heard the *contiones* of magistrates, including C. Carbo in 90 (*Orat.* 213–214) and P. Sulpicius in 88. He wrote (cf. *de Orat.* 1.150–154 [Crassus]), read, and prepared speeches. He practiced translating from Greek (e.g., at about 21, Xenophon’s *Oeconomicus* [*Off.* 2.87]). He claims to have seen Antonius, “the most eloquent of all those I have heard” (*Tusc.* 5.55) defend himself when accused under the Varian law, touching the ground with his knee in his emotion (*Tusc.* 2.57; disbelieved by Fantham 2004: 45).

After he took the white toga of manhood (?90 BCE), he was “escorted” by his father (the word, *deducere*, was applied to ceremonial processions and was commonly used to describe handing over a son to a *magister* [*Cael.* 9]) to Q. Mucius Q. f. Q. n. Scaevola “the Augur,” and the expectation was that he would stay by his side “always” (*Amic.* 1). He would probably go back and forth constantly from the family house, for he makes Q. Cicero say that he too “kept going” to Scaevola’s house (*Leg.* 1.13). Scaevola excelled in understanding of the civil law and in *prudentia* (*Brut.* 102). Scaevola did not teach but allowed young men to sit in on his consultations with clients (*Brut.* 306).

Cicero memorized what he said about his field of expertise and also remembered the anecdotes about earlier times, which came up when he sat on his favorite semicircular bench and talked with close friends (*Amic.* 2–3). Memorization was an important part of the orator’s training (e.g., *Brut.* 301). Scaevola was married to Laelia, daughter of Laelius, the friend of Africanus; one of his daughters was the wife of Crassus and the mother of two daughters (*Brut.* 211). Cicero’s fellow students probably included Atticus (*Leg.* 1.13; Rawson 1991a: 19), some three years older, whose good example spurred him to emulation, L. Manlius Torquatus; and the younger Gaius Marius (Nep. *Att.* 1.3–4), who married one of Crassus’ daughters.

Cicero was seriously interested in civil law (*Leg.* 1.13; Plu. *Cic.* 3.1; Fantham 2004: 102–114) and would later write a book on turning it into an art (now lost [Gel. 1.22.7; cf. *de Orat.* 2.137–142]).

We are also told that Cicero’s father “escorted” him to the house of M. Pupius Piso although he was only a little older, because of his old-fashioned morality, knowledge of literature, and standing as an orator (Asc. 15C, perhaps using Tiro’s biography, cf. *Brut.* 230, 236; *Fin.* 4.73). Staseas the Peripatetic lived with him (*de Orat.* 1.104). This would be in the late 90s, so it seems there was no reason why a boy should not have two role models. In Cicero’s youth, he says, beginning orators were taught restraint in gesture: the left arm was to be kept inside the toga. This was the *tirocinium fori* and went hand in hand with a probationary year of tunic-clad exercise and games on the Campus Martius, which inculcated a manly deportment and stamina (*Cael.* 11; *de Orat.* 3.220). These including ball games, running, swimming, riding, and throwing the javelin. Cicero is not much interested in describing his physical education, important though it was for a public career.

In 89, Cicero had a brief period of military service. He was with Pompeius Strabo in the north when the general had a colloquy with Vettius Scato, the Paelignian (*Phil.* 12.27), and with Sulla at Nola before a victory (*Div.* 1.72; Plu. *Cic.* 3.1). His military training was unusually short, which is why he took efficient generals with him when he earned his victories in 51–50.

In 88, a troubled year, he heard the speeches of the tribune P. Sulpicius and studied philosophy with Philo of Larissa, the Head of the Academy, who lectured on rhetoric

and philosophy (*Brut.* 306; *Tusc.* 2.9; *Plu. Cic.* 3.1). In 87, he worked with Apollonius Molo(n) of Rhodes, an eminent orator and teacher (*Brut.* 307; cf. *de Orat.* 1.75).

After the Augur's death in 87, he attached himself to Q. Mucius P. f. P. n. Scaevola "the Pontifex," consul 95, the greatest lawyer of his age, who wrote eighteen books on civil law, "the most eloquent of juriconsults and the most expert in law of the eloquent" (*de Orat.* 1.180 [Crassus]; cf. *Brut.* 145, 148). Scaevola also published speeches (*Brut.* 163). C. Aquilius Gallus, who became a friend and fellow praetor in 66 and a great legal expert (e.g., *Top.* 32, 51; *Off.* 3.60), was also taught by Scaevola and himself taught Ser. Sulpicius Rufus (pupil of Crassus and Antonius [*de Orat.* 1.97], consul 51), who was once reprimanded by Scaevola for advising clients without knowing the law (*dig.* 1.2.2.42–43).

In the Cinnan years (*Brut.* 308–310; cf. *Plu. Cic.* 3.2), Cicero attended the courts to hear Hortensius and others and spent days and nights in study of all kinds of subjects. He worked with Diodotus the Stoic, who lived in his house for many years until his death in 59 (40.6) and was learned in music and mathematics (*Tusc.* 5.113), especially in dialectic. Every day he prepared and declaimed speeches, often with his friend Pupius Piso and the future praetor of 63, Q. Pompeius Rufus, mostly in Greek (because the richer Greek helped his Latin style, and the Greek professors could correct him) but sometimes in Latin. (For the practice of using scenarios like real cases and the drawbacks to this method, cf. *de Orat.* 1.149–151.) Q. Pompeius A. f. (later "Bithynicus"), a couple of years older, was another friend (*F* 323–324) who practiced with Cicero and Piso (*Brut.* 240). He frequented the house of L. Aelius of Lanuvium, an *equus* learned in history and Greek and Latin literature, who composed speeches for others and listened eagerly to what he had to say (*Brut.* 205–207; cf. *Ac.* 1.8; *Suet. Gram.* 3). Some time after 91, Cicero also wrote a treatise on oratory (*Inv.*), on the basis of his notes (*de Orat.* 1.5) and using many sources (*Inv.* 2.4–9).

When civil war broke out again (82), Scaevola was among those murdered (*Brut.* 311). Cicero had another opportunity to work with Molo, who returned to Rome as an ambassador in 81 (*Brut.* 312). At this point, at the age of 25, Cicero regarded himself as sufficiently trained to speak in public and, after a minor civil case, achieved celebrity by defending Roscius on a charge of parricide (*Brut.* 311–312). But his voice and physique still needed improvement, so he resolved on a course of study abroad (*Brut.* 313–16; *Plu. Cic.* 3.4–4.5).

He spent six months in Athens with the Academic Antiochus of Ascalon (*Fin.* 5.1), but preferred the New Academy. He went, with Atticus, to the lectures of the Epicureans Phaedrus and Zeno, but was unconvinced (*F* 63; *Fin.* 1.16; *Tusc.* 3.38; Rawson 1985: 6, 9). He later boasted that he had learned his Greek at Athens (*Div. Caec.* 39). He also kept up his rhetoric with Demetrius the Syrian. His companions were Q. and L. Cicero, Atticus, and Pupius Piso (*Fin.* 5.1). He visited several famous cities. He then traveled through Asia and declaimed with the most distinguished Asian rhetors: Menippus of Stratoniceia (whom he thought the most eloquent of the Asians; cf. *Strabo* 14.2.25), Dionysius of Magnesia (who was with him a great deal), Aeschylus of Cnidos, and Xenocles of Adramyttium. He claims to have visited the exiled P. Rutilius Rufus at Smyrna and to have listened to his reminiscences (*Brut.* 85). Then he went to Rhodes to work with Molo again: the Rhodian style was preferable to the Asian (*Brut.* 51–52). Molo was not only a practicing advocate (*Strabo* 14.2.3) but a skilful teacher, who taught

Cicero to restrain his exuberant style. Ser. Sulpicius, an old fellow student who would turn the law into an art, was there too (*Brut.* 151). Cicero also studied philosophy with Posidonius. Cicero may have been a pioneer of the “Grand Tour” idea, which became more fashionable in his son’s generation (Rawson 1985: 9–11). Atticus’ residence in Athens (from autumn 86 at earliest) and the visits of Greek scholars to Rome made the idea a natural one. He returned fully prepared for his career. He was deeply read in literature, had studied philosophy, law, and Roman history, could edify the judges and sway the feelings of an audience. All these qualifications were, he later argued, vital for a man who wanted to be as good an orator as possible (*de Orat.* 1.18, 158–159 [Crassus], 167–203 [Crassus]; *Brut.* 322; *Or.* 14, 117–120). In time, he would take on the role that Crassus had had with him, helping to train young men such as Caelius and his own son and nephew. At the end of his life he expressed his gratitude to those who had taught him, face to face and by their written works (*Off.* 1.155–156).

## 2. Tullia

Because few letters survive from Tullia’s early years, information is sparse. The schooling of a girl was brief, because she could expect to marry soon after puberty, though she might receive some tuition afterward (Suet. *Gram.* 16.1). Apart from basic elementary education in spoken Greek, reading, writing, and arithmetic, Tullia was no doubt taught weaving, spinning, probably music and embroidery, and attention was paid to social graces and deportment. She may, like Attica (269.2) have had a *paedagogus* from an early age, as well as nurses and women servants from babyhood. It is unlikely that she was sent to a *grammaticus*’ school, since there was plenty of opportunity in Cicero’s household to read Greek and Latin literature with her father, members of staff, and learned visitors; to converse; and to attend the theater. She grew up to be able to talk intelligently and to be praised by her father as learned (*Q* 3.3; *F* 249.2; Lactant. *Inst.* 1.15.20).

## 3. Young Quintus and Young Marcus

For the boys, information comes almost entirely from Cicero’s correspondence. Q. Cicero’s son by Atticus’s sister, Pomponia, was probably born at the end of 67 (6.5) and Cicero’s son by Terentia in July 65 (11.1). Their education was of great concern to their fathers. Cicero was concerned with the formation of a good character as well as equipping them for senatorial careers. He held that both nature and training contributed (e.g., *Brut.* 112; *de Orat.* 1.113–115, 3.35–36 [Crassus]), that methods had to vary according to a boy’s natural tendency, and that education could weed out faults. He came to the opinion that Marcus was cooperative and that Quintus was naturally untruthful, greedy, and unaffectionate, with further faults added because his father had spoiled him (202.3, May 49). Cicero taught by example and precept: Quintilian tells us that he insisted that Marcus speak grammatically (1.7.34; for the importance of correct Latin and the accent of the City cf., e.g., *de Orat.* 3.37–51; *Brut.* 258–261). These were skills learned in the family and by reading orators and poets. Among a handful of fragments of Cicero’s letters to his son, one urges him to excel and beat his father and

another warns him not to write “*litterae duae*” (“two letters”) but “*epistulae duae*” or “*litterae binae*” for two items of correspondence (Shackleton Bailey 1988: VIII.1, 5, 8, 9). In 54, when Marcus was about eleven, Cicero wrote a dialogue between himself and his son, who asks him to let him ask questions in Latin on the theory of rhetoric, just as Cicero had cross-examined him in Greek (*Part.* 1–2). The treatise *On Duty* was addressed to Marcus while he was studying philosophy at Athens (417.2, 420.4). It is in the form of a letter, and the content and examples cited are tailored to appeal to his son as he chose his role in life (*Off.* 1.117–121).

We hear sporadically about who taught the boys. Nothing indicates that they went to any school, such as that of Orbilius (open from 63 [Suet. *Gram.* 9]). We hear nothing of their infancy and early childhood, learning to speak Latin and to read. Q. Cicero was away for three years (61–58) governing Asia. Marcus, not yet six, was showing off his Greek in April 59 by sending messages to Atticus (29.4, 30.4, 35.4), and the boys were studying Greek literature together. They were apparently being tutored by a *rhetor*, the younger Aristodemus of Nysa (27.5), possibly together with Pompey’s younger son and in Pompey’s house (Strabo 14.1.48. Sex. Pompeius was born c. 67, cf. Rawson 1985: 68). By March 56, when his father was again away, Quintus was taking lessons, no doubt in Greek, from the great polymath Licinius Tyrannio in Cicero’s house, presumably with Marcus, and making good progress (*Q* 8.2). He was living with his mother (*Q* 10.2), but both uncles were keeping an eye on him in 56–55, and he sometimes stayed with them (77.1, 3; 85.2).

By the end of 56, Cicero was getting help in his own studies (82.1, 86.2) from a freedman of Atticus in whom he had been interested before his manumission, for he was called M. (after Cicero) Pomponius (after Atticus) Dionysius (90.1). He stayed in Cicero’s houses (87.1), and by July 54 and probably earlier was helping Marcus as well as Cicero (90.10). When he traveled with his patron that autumn, they both wanted him back (92.5) and looked forward to welcoming him to a new guest-room (93.2). He was a part-time resident tutor.

When Q. Cicero set off to Gaul in May 54, when Quintus was 12, he commissioned his brother to look after his son; and Cicero promised to see him every day, check often on how well he was learning, and even to be his teacher as he was to young Marcus during spring holidays in the south (*Q* 17.2). Rhetoric was now part of the curriculum, and the boys were not always together. In September, Cicero wanted to take Quintus to the farmhouse near Arpinum and asked his brother to write to Pomponia to ask her to accompany him with the boy when he was going to a villa, assuring him that he would produce splendid results when he had leisure away from Rome. Q. Cicero’s letters always demanded news, and he told his son to stick to Cicero as his teacher. On returning to Rome, Cicero found young Quintus had been studying keenly with his tutor in rhetoric (*Q* 21.7, 14, 19). Marcus too was studying hard and getting on well with his cousin (*Q* 23.1). This tutor, a certain Paconius, could be trusted to educate Quintus in declamation as his father and uncle had been educated, but Cicero also planned to teach him in his own way, which was more scholarly and abstract, when he could take him off to a villa (*Q* 23.4). He took him away to Tusculum during the games commemorating Sulla’s victory (*Q* 24.6). In December, we find that Quintus and his mother had been living in Cicero’s house, but that Cicero was letting him go so as not to take him away from his teachers (and because he was afraid of his teenage appetite—this is a joke). But they would still be together a great deal (*Q* 27.9). The surviving letters to Q. Cicero stop here.

Evidence on arrangements for the boys' education gives an impression of patchiness, which may mislead. Aristodemus was a scholar and probably taught several boys intensively: Quintus and Marcus may have gone to him for a couple of years. A similar arrangement may have operated with Tyrannio. Lesser teachers may also have taught them at the same time. In late 54, Quintus had several tutors, perhaps living with him. Marcus and he did not always share lessons: perhaps Marcus went to Paonius, but Quintus did not go to Dionysius. Cicero is part of the team, supervising, sometimes teaching, and always providing an educational ambience in his household, with its cultured visitors and resident scholars.

As the boys matured, they might have expected to be attached to some senator with a reputation as a speaker and role model. But Cicero was the best available, and as far as we know, this never happened. Instead, Cicero's enforced provincial governorship meant that foreign travel and observation of government would occur earlier than usual. In early May 51, the four Cicero males were traveling south, first past the familiar sights of Latium and Campania, then across the Apennines to Venusia, Tarentum, and Brundisium, where they hired ships and crossed the Adriatic to be entertained by Atticus' staff in Epirus and then on to Athens by early July (94–104). They were accompanied by Dionysius, whom Cicero liked and commended (96.3, 102.3): he was expected to be their main teacher for over a year. In ten days at Athens (104.4, *F* 80.3; cf. *Brut.* 332), the Marci stayed with Aristus the Academic and the Quinti with Atticus's friend Xeno, toured the sights, and got a flavor of the philosophical schools (103.5; cf. *Tusc.* 5.22). With the staff and a small fleet (104.4), they crossed the Aegean, meeting difficult weather and spending some time at Delos (105.1, 106.1) and arriving at Ephesus on July 22. They reached Laodicea in Cicero's province on July 31 and proceeded eastward, Cicero holding assizes and hearing petitions in all the towns. No doubt the boys observed his conduct of the work.

Because their fathers were bound for a military campaign, the boys went off to Galatia, escorted by the king's son (110.3). If war came too close, there was the possibility of moving to Rhodes, a good place to study oratory (111.4). A visit to the Hellenized court of a loyal allied king would present interesting educational possibilities (Deiotarus himself was absent for part of the time with the forces he sent to Cicero [111.2, 113.9; *F* 105.2, 110.5]). Dionysius went too. A freedman of Cicero's called Chrysippus, a man of some learning, probably the one who had helped with improvements to Q. Cicero's library in late 54 (*Q* 24.5, 25.6), and an ordinary journeyman were in attendance on Marcus, and absconded, to Cicero's indignation (125.8). Chrysippus may have been chosen to help with Marcus' literary studies, probably in Greek. P. Crassus' learned freedman Apollonius may also have made himself useful to the boys (*F* 316).

The campaign over, King Deiotarus brought the boys to Cicero at Laodicea, where Quintus would be given the adult toga (113.9, 115.12). Cicero promised to keep him under careful control, which may suggest he had behaved badly. Quintus was not only on the threshold of manhood, but worried about friction between his parents (e.g., 116.2, 117.8). The boys would be able to observe the civilian work of the model governor. They also had formal lessons:

The young Cicerones are fond of each other, are doing their lessons, and taking exercise, but one of them ... needs the rein, the other the spur. I like Dionysius very much. The boys say he has a hot temper, but there couldn't be a more learned or moral man nor fonder of you and me. (115.12)

Cicero's horsey metaphor echoes an earlier orator and teacher, the great Isocrates (*Brut.* 32, 48) on how to encourage the pupil to follow his own individual nature in developing his speaking style (*de Orat.* 3.35–36; *Brut.* 204). But it may refer to their behavior in general. The metaphor may be prompted by Cicero's solitary reference to the boys' physical training, which included riding, a skill which must have been tested in their marches through Italy and eastern lands and of which they needed to be masters when they joined the army. Galatia was strong in cavalry (e.g., 115.14). Deiotarus himself had trained hard as warrior and horseman since his youth and still looked good on a horse; his son was a dashing cavalry commander (*Deiot.* 28). Cicero could not have found a better school of the martial arts. Elsewhere he mentions hunting and ball games as a routine part of youth (*Amic.* 74) and the pursuits of riding, hunting, and the use of arms as training for *virtus* and healthy amusement (*Part.* 80; cf. *Off.* 1.104, 122). Galatia and the province must have offered exciting hunting, on foot and mounted, then as later a good training for war. Similarly, swordplay must have been part of their exercises (cf. *de Orat.* 3.86).

When the time came to leave, Cicero thought Quintus was overconfident and might (as some young Romans did [e.g., 117.9]) throw his weight around if left in the province with his father in charge (121.4, 123.3). The better plan was to take both boys to visit Rhodes (120.2), to introduce them to its residents and works of art (cf. *Orat.* 5), and perhaps sample a lecture or two. In the event, all four Cicerones spent longer than they intended at Rhodes because of the winds (122.4, *F* 119.1). They had another brief stay at Athens. Quintus insisted on a sightseeing trip in Epirus (125.3, *F* 126), but the party was reunited outside Rome by January 12, 49 (*F* 143 heading). Civil war broke out. It was suggested that perhaps the boys should be sent to Greece out of the way (136.3, 141.1). But by February 13, Cicero wanted Dionysius (who had gone to Atticus in mid-December carrying a complimentary letter about his learning and morals [127.1]) to join them at his villa at Formiae, where they were likely to spend the winter (150.3). Cicero had begun to suspect Dionysius' loyalty and willingness to oblige him (128.3, 131.1, 142.3); and when the Greek kept putting him off, he was deeply offended, revoking his high opinion (with which Q. Cicero and others had not agreed):

I had acted as assistant teacher for our Cicerones rather than look for another tutor; I had sent him such letters, ye gods, showing such respect and love! You would have said it was a Dicaearchus or Aristoxenus who was being asked to come, not a chatterbox with no talent for teaching .... (156.1)

Dionysius turned up the evening after this letter was sent, to tell Cicero about his own financial problems. They agreed that he should not stay. Cicero was sorry to lose a tutor (157.1, 159), but continued to be indignant about his ingratitude, since Cicero had treated him with more honor than Scipio had treated the Stoic Panaetius (179.2). "I always thought him not quite sane, but now I think him a filthy villain" (183.5). Atticus tried to patch things up, and Dionysius came to see Cicero in May. Cicero was ready to forgive him, but Dionysius refused to accompany his pupils abroad (192.2, 208.1).

Perhaps there was a hiatus in the boys' formal education, apart from any guidance Cicero and Tiro (cf. *F* 337.8) might have had time to give. In the meantime, Marcus had received the white toga at Arpinum in March (172.1, 186.1, 189.1). Quintus,



though mostly living with his uncle, took a trip to Rome (195.5–6) but was apparently at Cumae by May 3 (200.2, 202.3). On June 7, the Marci and probably the Quinti embarked at Caieta in a ship which would take them to join Pompey (*F* 155). Academic education was for the moment at an end. Marcus commanded a troop of allied cavalry and was praised for his horsemanship and skill with the javelin (*Off.* 2.45; he may have been with Deiotarus' 600 Celtic cavalrymen led by the king's son [*Caes. Civ.* 3.4.3; *Deiot.* 9, 13, 28]). Quintus was surely equally trained and ready for a commission.

After the Pompeian *débâcle*, the Quinti lingered in the East to make their peace with Caesar. Young Quintus went ahead to make a speech before Caesar in which he would throw the blame on his uncle (219.2, 221.1), an early test of his rhetorical skill. The mission was successful (235.1). Cicero, who withdrew to Brundisium, also thought, in the summer of 47, of sending his son to plead with Caesar, with his faithful friend Cn. Sallustius in support (229.1, 230.1; *F* 166, 167), but this did not happen. This marks the point at which both young men were thought ready for an independent public career in civilian life. For the moment, further military activity was likely. Young Quintus joined Caesar's staff and was in Spain at the end of the campaigning season of 46 (244.1). His relations with his family and his political loyalties continued to be checkered, but at the end of 44 he was expecting to hold a quaestorship (425.4).

Marcus wanted to go to Spain too, but Cicero persuaded him that he would be outshone by his cousin, who had already established himself. Instead, about the end of March 45, he went to Athens for higher education (244.1). He was to work on philosophy, taking advantage of the city, his father's philosophical writings and philosophy lectures to form his own ideas, and also on oratory, again reading his father's speeches, and to become bilingual (*Off.* 1.1–3). He was supplied with a liberal allowance (245, 257.4, 263.1, 266.2, 267.1, 271.2, 339, 365.2, 371.5, 374.3, 394.2, 397.4, 409.5, 413.2), to maintain his and his father's status (271.2, 361.2, 370.4, 393.4) and two companions, L. Tullius Montanus and Tullius Marcianus (245, 294.1, 295). His contemporaries there would include the nobles M. Valerius Messalla Corvinus and L. Calpurnius Bibulus (271.2, 394.2), and the freedman's son Q. Horatius Flaccus. His teachers included the distinguished Peripatetic M. Tullius Cratippus for philosophy (*Off.* 1.1, 2.8, 3.5–6, 121), Bruttius for Latin rhetoric, 'Cassius' (mis-transcribed) for Greek (both otherwise unknown). Marcus, at his father's request, dismissed the rhetorician Gorgias, with whom he had declaimed daily: he was thought to be encouraging him to drink too much (*F* 337.5–6; *Plu. Cic.* 24.6–7). Marcus advertised his dedication in his letter to Tiro of summer 44: he spent all day with the fatherly Cratippus and often invited him to dine, he hired a lodging for Bruttius and was always with him, and he frequented the society of the learned men whom Cratippus had brought from Mitylene and of leading Athenians such as Epicrates and Leonides. He asked Tiro to send a copyist to write up his notes (*F* 337.3–5, 8). Cicero kept watch from a distance: it may have been this that led Quintus to allege Marcus was bullied (346.2). The improvement in his literary style pleased his father in April 44 (361.2). Leonides reported well, but to Cicero's mind noncommittally, and Herodes had not written as asked. By early May, Cicero thought it would help if he visited Athens and helped in Marcus' studies (370.3, 373.4). There seem to have been some grounds for thinking Marcus was going wrong, as he admits later to Tiro (*F* 337.2). But the proconsul Trebonius, visiting Athens in May, attested that Marcus was dedicated to his studies in the excellent arts his father

loved, had a good reputation for discreet behavior, and was beloved by those who were in Athens: he invited him to tour Asia with Cratippus (*F* 328.1–2). Another well-written letter (suggesting “some progress”) and a laudatory one from Herodes helped allay Cicero’s doubts in June, despite another cautious “up to now” from Leonides (391). A few days later, Cicero was more enthusiastic: he would venture to give the letter a public recital. Messalla, who had paid him a visit, had given Marcus a “marvelous” report (394.2) after which Cicero wrote a kind letter to his son (*F* 337.1). Cicero still hoped to be useful (413.4, July 17) and set out for Athens on August 6, but turned back because of political developments (415). Instead, he sent his son the three books *On Duty*, recommending a career of selfless public service (e.g., *Off.* 1.70–73, 3.5–6). They are full of practical advice on dealing with friends and clients (e.g., *Off.* 2.65–71), morals, deportment, and manners (e.g., *Off.* 1.134–137), and urge Marcus to emulate his father (e.g., *Off.* 3.6).

When civil war again broke out, Brutus, who had been attending lectures in Athens, commissioned Marcus with other students into his army. Marcus won approval from Brutus, Cassius, and Lentulus (*B* 2.6, 4.6, 5.2, 11.4; *F* 405.8, 419.2). He led Brutus’ cavalry through Thessaly (*B* 12.1). He had fully embarked on the career for which he had been trained.

## 4. Conclusion

M. Cicero had access to a wide variety of teachers and to a literary education in Greek and Latin, to the sciences, rhetoric, law and philosophy, some appreciation of art, skills in riding and the use of arms, enough physical training to enable him to march in armor. Q. Cicero and Marcus were equally privileged. Quintus missed philosophy. M. Cicero went on studying all his life. Q. Cicero had some cultural pursuits, and we know he wrote Greek plays. Cicero, by talent and training, was qualified to be a top advocate and statesman; Q. Cicero and young Marcus and Quintus had the necessary education for military and civil office and Tullia for marriage.

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## CHAPTER 16

# Late Antiquity and the Transmission of Educational Ideals and Methods

## *The Greek World*

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*Elżbieta Szabat*

A: Τίμειώ τερον γέγονεν, ὠφίλει ἐταῖρε, ὅτι σί, τὰς ἐν Αἰγύπτῳ καταλιπὼν διατριβάς καὶ τὸν Νεῖλον τό τε μέγα τοῦ Μακεδόνοιο ἄστου, ἐνθάδε νῦν διατρίβεις;

B: Νόμου με, ὦ φίλος, ἔρωσ ἄγει παρὰ τὴν μητέρα τῶν νόμων.

(Zacharias Scholasticus, *Ammonius sive de mundi opificio* 6–9)

The value of education and its social role was persistent and well recognized in late antiquity. For those intending to pursue public, legal, or ecclesiastical careers, at the very least the rudiments of rhetorical abilities were indispensable. Obtaining an education was also essential for every member of the empire's higher echelons, as this acted as a gauge of social belonging and functioned as a marker of identity among members of the elite. The core methods and content of teaching remained unchanged since the Hellenistic age. Education was still based on schools of grammar and rhetoric—the two levels that contained essentially everything that comprised the *paideia*, or ancient literary education.

A central element in a grammarian's school was poetry, which was accompanied by lexical and grammatical analysis (Kaster 1988). Studies in the *rhetor's* or *sophist's* school included prose reading and a range of practical exercises in declamation and composition (Heath 2004). Details of these methods are known primarily from school exercises preserved on tablets or papyri (Criboire 2001), as well as from grammatical and rhetorical treatises and commentaries. In grammar, these include works by Theodosios of Alexandria, Timotheos of Gaza, Ioannes Charax, and Hesychios of Alexandria from the fifth and sixth centuries. In rhetoric, the most important are the treatises of Menander Rhetor (third or fourth century) on the art of *epideixis* and commentaries on Hermogenes by Sopatros and Syrianos (fourth and fifth centuries). Late antiquity is also the first epoch from which preparatory rhetorical exercises have been preserved: the extant *progymnasmata* of Aelius Theon (currently dated to the fifth century, Heath 2004: 295–296), Aphthonios of

Antioch, and Nicholaos of Myra enjoyed most popularity. The practices of rhetoric can also be gleaned from the remaining rhetorical works of the renowned sophists (including Libanios, Himerios, Themistios, Prokopios of Gaza, and Chorikios). Scholars have long held the opinion that rhetoric never recovered after the third-century crisis, thus remaining an indolent and uncreative shadow of what it was at its peak during the Second Sophistic. Recent studies, however, have rehabilitated late rhetoric to a large extent, and many scholars have come to identify it as the “Third Sophistic” (Pernot 2000: 271–272; Amato 2006), emphasizing not only late ancient rhetoric’s continuity, but also its vitality and technical innovations (Heath 2004; Webb 2009).

Ancient education is widely recognized for its exceptional tenacity and resistance to change (Cameron 1998; Browning 2000). This does not mean, however, that it remained unaffected by the grand-scale transformations of the late Roman Empire. Traditional scholarship has dismissed this period—and its literary culture and education—as decadent and in decline. Only in the last few decades have scholars challenged this approach. Instead of rupture, the current focus is on continuity. Terms like “crisis” and “decline” are discarded in favor of expressions like “transformation” or “transition.” Nevertheless, the debate on the purported decline is still relevant and certainly necessary (Cameron 2002; van Hoof 2010), since many serious studies point to evidence that intellectual life in late antiquity did indeed show retrograde tendencies (cf. Liebeschuetz 2001). This article, however, in lieu of exploring the paradigm of decline or closure in late ancient education, attempts to emphasize the aspects of educational life of the epoch that indicate the ongoing vitality of educational ideals and intellectual development. The lively school life, educational mobility of teachers and students, and particularly the popularity of rhetorical and legal studies, as well as philosophy and medicine, all reflect this vigor, especially in flourishing centers at that time in Athens and Alexandria.

## 1. Christianity and Classical Education

A late Hellenistic inscription contains beautiful poetic praise of literary education as a path by which souls “progress toward excellence and the condition proper to humanity” (*IPriene* 112.73). This reflects the emblematic belief that education plays an exceptional role not only in the production of cultural ideals but also moral ones. This conviction would persist in late antiquity (Kaster 1988: 15–16; Watts 2006: 6–20), and the motif recurs in the works of numerous Christian writers. For example, the fifth-century sophist Kytherios is depicted by Firmos, the bishop of Caesarea (*Ep.* 2), as both a teacher of *logoi* (oratory) and of *pragmatoi* (comportment). Athanasius is praised by Theodoret, bishop of Cyrus, as an excellent and pious *rhetor* whose “language is graced by oratory, and his oratory by his conduct, which is fully illuminated by his great faith” (*Ep.* 19). Moreover, according to Theodoret (*Ep.* 44), even the pagan sophist Isokasios not only inculcated his students with knowledge of Greek and the beauty of Attic speech but also strove to ennoble their characters and to nurture their virtue and wisdom.

The Greek ideal of *paideia* was the foundation of Christian culture (Cameron 1991; Brown 1992). The process of Christianization did not affect the model or content of education. The early, ambivalent attitude toward its “pagan” heritage gradually diminished. The only real weight of the edict issued by Julian the Apostate (363) banning Christians

from teaching classics was symbolic. The church did not attempt to create its own schools; there were no alternative models of culture or education. Pagan literature was, of course, treated cautiously, and various techniques, often allegorical, facilitated the assimilation process. Basil of Caesarea's recommendations in *To the Youths* regarding the benefits of reading pagan writings illustrate most conspicuously the integration of pagan traditions. References to pagan mythology and worship were stripped of their religious implications, acknowledged instead as stylistic and rhetorical tools. Therefore, in school texts, pagan themes are only sporadically replaced by Christian examples.

The Cappadocian Fathers (Basil of Caesarea, Gregory of Nazianzus, and Gregory of Nyssa) and John Chrysostom became symbols of the reconciliation between Greek *paideia* and Christianity. Their intellects had been shaped by the best pagan oratorical schools, and they themselves became some of the foremost *rhetors* of antiquity, combining rhetorical and philosophical expertise with theological activities. Another later example of this symbiosis is the late fifth- and sixth-century school in Gaza. Since all its members were probably Christians, it has been called a "Christian school" (cf. Downey 1958), though the term is misleading. The rhetoric taught and practiced by the Gaza teachers was basically that of Polemon, Aristides, and Libanios. For the most part, their connection to Christianity is almost indiscernible. Chorikios himself, in his funeral oration for Prokopios (*Or.* 21.117), recalls a pious listener who lamented that the speech did not even once state outright that Prokopios had been a Christian. Photios' review is symptomatic. The patriarch valued Chorikios' perfect style but criticized him for introducing "Greek myths and loathsome stories even when describing sacred matters" (*Bibliotheca*, cod. 160). Christian themes were absorbed and casually intermingled with pagan motives. Prokopios even composed Biblical commentaries and engaged in philosophical polemics with Proklos' thesis, which contradicted Christian doctrine. Chorikios wrote a panegyric for the bishop Markianos and an *ekphrasis* of the church of Sts. Sergios and Stephanos. Interestingly, Ioannes of Gaza's description of the paintings in the winter baths had two prologues, one pagan, one Christian, in which the Christian and pagan deities are respectively evoked. Similarly, Ioannes' *epithalamia* are modified only very slightly to meet the expectations of his Christian audience (Ciccolella 2006: 90).

The widespread absorption of classical education among Christians makes it evident that any preference for traditional genres and pagan themes in rhetorical or poetical compositions cannot be taken to reflect the author's religious convictions (Cameron 2006). Modern readers, however, are often fooled. Some scholars (cf. Kennedy 1983: 171), perplexed by the gulf between his theological works and his speeches, have proposed that Prokopios was a pagan who converted, or that there were two completely different authors by that name. Most remarkable is the example of Nonnos of Panopolis, Christian author of poetical paraphrase of the Gospel of John and of the *Dionysiaca*, the longest Greek epic of late antiquity. The latter poem's spirit is so strongly "pagan" in nature that many historians have denied the author's Christianity.

Other groups of the eastern empire (Coptic, Syrian, Georgian, and Armenian) accepted the traditional Greek model of education, but Christianity deeply marked its nature and content. Of special importance are the Syrian communities. Beginning with the fifth century, a movement of translation from Greek into Syriac took place, and the famous theological school (in Nisibis and Edessa) attests to a truly flourishing intellectual life in Syrian circles.

## 2. Educational Geography

Adopting a metaphor proposed by Kaster (1988: 21–22), Brown (1992: 37) writes of an “archipelago of cities” on which the culture of late antiquity was based. In every city, grammarians and sophists, either “private” or appointed as public teachers, communicated, interchanged, and competed with each other.

Sons of well-to-do families acquired an education by moving between teachers from one city to another, frequently armed with letters of recommendation from previous masters (among these are the important extant letters of Libanios and Prokopios of Gaza). Such educational travels depended on students’ own ambitions and wealth, but also on schools’ reputations and teachers’ prestige, as well as the level and quality of the available instruction.

The dominant centers considered the best sources of education and which attracted the largest number of students, even from distant areas of the empire, were few and far between. In the fourth century, primacy undoubtedly belonged to Athens, crowded with sophists and philosophers and their devoted pupils. Among the famous Athenian teachers of rhetoric were Julian of Cappadocia, Diophantos, Epiphanius, Prohaeresios, and Himerios, all portrayed in the *Vita Sophistarum* by Eunapius of Sardis (Penella 1990). The most legendary among fourth-century intelligentsia was, however, Libanios, whose Antiochene school has been explored extensively in recent studies (Petit 1956; Cribiore 2007).

On the educational “archipelago” of schools, some changes clearly occurred in the fifth century. Many cities that had been important in preceding centuries appear less and less frequently in sources. The scarcity of information alone, however, is an insufficient reason to assume a decline or crisis in these cities’ scholarly institutions. At the same time, the law school in Beirut was enjoying its heyday, and Gaza gained a significant position as a new center for literary studies. Athens’ supremacy remained unchanged, especially with the burgeoning of neoplatonic philosophy there in the fifth century. Beginning in the mid-fifth century, however, it was Alexandria that became the main center of learning, utterly dominating the educational scene until the very end of the Roman Empire. This was a new phenomenon. In fourth-century data on educational travel, Alexandria occupies a marginal position. Yet in the fifth and sixth centuries, all of the foremost sophists, scholars, and philosophers received their intellectual formation there or were somehow associated with Alexandrian circles.

It had become customary for students to receive an initial instruction in their hometowns and only afterward travel to the main centers to deepen their knowledge. Most of the famous late antique philosophers, including Damaskios and Proklos, learned grammar and rhetoric in their native cities before they traveled to the philosophical schools in Alexandria or Athens. In his youth, Libanios was fascinated with Athens (*Or.* 1.11), but he arrived there only after completing rhetorical training in the Antiochene schools. Julian the Apostate, John Chrysostom, Gregory of Nazianzus, and Basil of Caesarea all reached Athens after a long period of wandering among various teachers. For example, Gregory had studied in his hometown, then alongside Basil in the “metropolis of *logoi*” (*Or.* 43.13), that is, Caesarea. For most members of the elite, embarking on an educational journey to a great center was an essential stage in refining their upbringing, a blissful period evoked long afterward, frequently in circles of former fellow students. Aineias of Gaza, in a letter to his old friend, by then a priest, longingly recalled their old days spent

on the Nile (i.e., in Alexandria), filled with rhetorical exercises and “play with the Muses” (*Ep.* 15). Similarly, in a letter to an old classmate, Prokopios included a beautiful eulogy of their “common mother of *logoi*” (*Ep.* 119), Alexandria.

Educational geography, reflected in the students’ mobility, depended primarily on the disciplines and instruction levels available in a given city. There were many possibilities for grammar and rhetoric. However, if someone wanted to study beyond the literary *paideia* (in philosophy, medicine, or law), the options were much more limited. Libanios would send his pupils who wished to engage in philosophy to Constantinople (*Ep.* 1296) or Egypt (*Ep.* 720), and Antiochos, one of Prokopios’ former students and addressees (*Ep.* 104) who wanted to study medicine, had to go to Alexandria. Not surprisingly, despite his promises to return to Gaza, Antiochos was greatly impressed by the “city of Alexander” and stayed on permanently. If Alexandria was the best place to study medicine, then law was best at Beirut.

### 3. A New Field Emerges: Legal Studies

The growth in popularity of legal studies was one of the most significant new educational trends of late antiquity. Libanios often complained about the popularity of law and Latin among students, who, in their pursuit of new fashions, neglected rhetorical training or abandoned it too early (*Or.* 31.27–29, 43.3–5; 62.21). Beirut (Collinet 1925; Jones Hall 2004: 192–217), often called “the mother of *nomoi* (laws),” continued to be the best place to study law until the mid-sixth century. It was already in existence in the early third century (Gregory Thaumaturgus, *Or.* 5.66–67), but the school’s heyday began in the fifth century, with the activity of the so-called *oikoumenes*, or “universal” teachers. The school ceased to exist in 551, when an earthquake and tsunami destroyed Beirut. One could study law in Constantinople as well, but little is known about the availability and quality of legal studies in other cities. In accordance with Justinian’s constitution *Omnem* of 533, which opens the *Digesta*, the law schools of Constantinople and Beirut were granted a monopoly, and the teaching of law in other cities (Alexandria and Caesarea in Palestine are mentioned) was banned.

In many ways, the organization of legal studies resembled that of later medieval universities: a regular program of studies, textbooks, and even special names given to students of each year. In the fourth and fifth centuries, legal studies lasted four years, and the curriculum was based on the works of the jurists Gaius, Ulpianus, Papinianus, and Paulus. After Justinian’s reform, the program was founded on the new *Corpus Iuris*, and the duration of studies was extended to five years. In the fifth century, teaching methods underwent important modifications. Greek gradually replaced Latin, which until then had been the language of legal writings and administration. Soon Greek translations and adaptations of Latin texts began to appear, and the legal commentaries of the fifth and sixth centuries were being written in Greek as well (Scheltema 1970).

According to some scholars, in late antiquity, law and Latin became alternatives that rivaled the schools of the sophists; some have even noted that the study of law displaced rhetoric (Liebeschuetz 1972: 242–254; Malosse-Schouler 2009: 169). Such hypotheses are based mainly on complaints from Libanios, who, however, was certainly not free from rhetorical exaggeration (van Hoof 2010: 221–222). Libanios himself wanted to



bring a Latin teacher to Antioch (*Ep.* 534, 539), and he made some teachings in law available there (*Ep.* 209, 433). The study of Latin could not compete with rhetoric because the former was complementary to legal studies (Criboire 2009: 237–238). Likewise, rhetoric was an obvious prerequisite for the legal profession; hence, it could never be replaced by law (Heath 2004: 321–331; Humfress 2009: 382–383). A variety of examples clearly attest to the fact that students began law training only after learning grammar and rhetoric. For example, Gregory Thaumaturgos (*Or.* 5.58–67), who planned to study in Beirut, had learned rhetoric with the basics of Latin and law in Caesarea. Libanios sent many letters of recommendation for his former students who undertook study in Beirut (cf. *Ep.* 117, 175, 318, 912, 533, 653, 1171). Proklos, destined in his youth for a legal career, had learned rhetoric and Latin in Alexandria (Marinos, *Vita Procli* 8). Severos, future bishop of Antioch, and Zacharias Scholasticus, his biographer, had both come to Alexandria for literary studies, wishing eventually to study law (*Vita Severi* 11, 46). Among their fellow students in Beirut was Petros of Palestine, who had attended schools of grammar and rhetoric beforehand (*Vita Severi* 98), as well as Evagrius, who acquired his *propaideia* in Antioch; and although he wished for a monastic life, was forced by his father to study in Beirut (*Vita Severi* 54–55).

The term *propaideia* encompasses the study of grammar and rhetoric, which was considered core education. For Damaskios, *propaideia* served as an introduction to philosophical studies (Dam. *Epit. Phot.* 168, Dam. fr. 284, 289). Preparatory instruction for legal training assumed perhaps a more formal character. In the mid-sixth century, Agathias (*Hist.* II 15.7) attempted to go from Alexandria to Beirut as was customary, admitting that he had stayed in Alexandria because of the *paideia pros ton nomon*, “the preparatory education for law” (McCail 1977). The same expression, in a similar context, also appears in writings of the late-sixth-century historian Menander Protektor in descriptions of his brother, who likewise undertook such preparatory schooling (*Suda*, s.v. Μένανδρος). The close *propaideia*-based link between Alexandria and Beirut is reflected in a short scene that opens the dialogue *Ammonius* by Zacharias. Here, the protagonist, upon arriving at “the mother of laws,” runs into an old classmate from Alexandria (which he had just left) by the harbor.

It seems that the Phoenician “mother of laws” was viewed as a much better option than law schools in Constantinople. Perhaps it is not incidental that the historian Agathias traveled from Constantinople to Alexandrian schools, intending to study in Beirut afterward. However, because the city was destroyed, he was forced to return and study law in the capital (II 16.4). Constantinople, however, attracted many Beirut graduates, including Zacharias Scholastikos and his friend Zenodoros, both of whom settled in Constantinople, embracing the legal profession as offered by the *stoa basilike* (*Vita Severi* 8, 56). Although it was the best place for a public career, Constantinople appears to have been left out of the vivid scholarly exchange that was so typical among southern provinces. No intellectual circles like those in Athens or Alexandria ever developed there. The famous legislation of Theodosius II of 425 (*CTh* XIV.9.3) has sometimes exaggeratedly been called the “foundation of the university” (Lemerle 1971: 63–64). In fact, this was apparently merely an attempt to regulate teachers’ activities by reorganizing the school that was already there, which had imperial patronage and was geared toward educating the future bureaucratic elite (Speck 1974).

Legal studies were not an intellectual fashion but rather a path toward prestige, power, and individual advancement. In the early empire, practically anyone who had studied rhetoric could be an advocate. In late antiquity, the situation changed fundamentally. By the late fourth century, the study of rhetoric had gradually ceased to suffice for someone who was in pursuit of a career at court. A most conspicuous example is that of Apringios, Libanios' former pupil, who after a decade of practicing law in Antioch, and already a mature man, felt inclined to embark upon legal studies in Beirut, wishing to become a better advocate (*Ep.* 1107). In Libanios' time, legal studies became desirable, but they were still not a *sine qua non* for court. However, by the mid-fifth century, access to the legal profession had already become controlled. There were now "catalogs of *rhetors*" who were ascribed to a specific court, and we see the emergence of a robust class of bureaucrats, legal experts, and advocates who had earned professions in both rhetoric and law schools.

#### 4. Philosophical Studies in Late Antiquity

The popularity of neoplatonic studies in Athens and Alexandria during the fifth century is well documented (Blumenthal 1993; Sheppard 2000; Watts 2006). In this period, there was a "renewal" of the Platonic Academy after a long hiatus of almost five centuries (Lynch 1972). The succession of the school's *diadochoi* (heads) can only be traced from Plutarchos (died ca. 432) until the school ceased to exist in the first half of the sixth century. His successors were Syrianos, Proklos, Marinos, Isidoros, and then probably Zenodotos and Damaskios. Athenian philosophers saw the school as the continuation of Plato's Academy, and the metaphor of the "golden chain" was frequently used to express the idea of uninterrupted succession of the *diadochoi* from Plato to their own time. Athenian neoplatonism had strong religious and mystical elements, and the Academy is often compared to the "priestly caste" of pagan theurgists. Under Syrianos and Proklos, the school blossomed, as described by Marinos in the *Vita Procli*. A phase of stagnancy in Athens seems to have begun with the death of Proklos in 485, perhaps with a brief exception represented by the activities of Damaskios, the author of the *Vita Isidori*, which was the main source for philosophical circles of the period. Although evidence for Justinian's legendary "closure" of the neoplatonic school in 529 is extremely vague and elusive, there are almost no data regarding philosophy in Athens after that date (Cameron 1969; Hadot 1987; Watts 2006: 111–142).

Philosophy remained on the margins of the top disciplines in Alexandria until the results of the achievements of the renewed Athenian Academy reached the city in the mid-fifth century. Philosophical development proceeded simultaneously in both cities; they maintained close contact, and there was continuous mutual exchange of students and teachers throughout the period. It must be noted that scholars long hypothesized that there were major doctrinal differences in neoplatonism in Alexandria and Athens. It was believed that the Alexandrian school concentrated on Aristotle, downplaying theurgic elements and complex metaphysics; consequently, it became more rational and much more easily reconcilable with Christian doctrine. Recent studies, however, have abandoned this notion by demonstrating that the philosophical doctrine and methods of exegesis between the schools was characterized by a deep symbiosis (Hadot 1978; Blumenthal 1993).

With the second half of the fifth century, aided by the activities of Ammonios, Alexandria began to thrive as it gained an astonishing dominance as the center of neoplatonic philosophy. Ammonios (died between 517 and 526) lectured for almost forty years, and he trained two generations of famous scholars (Damaskios, Olympiodoros, Simplikios, Asklepios of Tralles, Eutokios, the iatrosophist Gessios, probably Zacharias Scholastikos and Ioannes Philoponos, and perhaps Anthemios of Tralles). Teachers of philosophy and successors of Ammonios who were active in Alexandria between the fifth and the seventh centuries are usually considered to be of the “Alexandrian Philosophical School.” However, although they shared the same interests and methods of exegesis, the term “school” is used here in the broadest sense, since the institutional character of the teachers’ activity, any succession comparable to that of Athenian philosophers, or a self-awareness as a community of scholars is not evident.

Many subscribe to the conviction that over the course of the fifth century, Alexandrian schools and teaching were gradually Christianized. This notion usually appears in connection with the vague, scattered evidence of Damaskios’ references to the persecutions of pagan intelligentsia in Alexandria under Zenon (484–488) and of the mysterious agreement between Ammonios and the patriarch of Alexandria (Athanasiasiadi 1993; Watts 2010). However, although the events Damaskios alludes to undoubtedly hampered open pagan worship, they did not affect educational methods or content. In fact, it seems that philosophy in Alexandria was never really Christianized (Verrycken 1990). Commentaries on Aristotle and Plato were offered according to clearly defined rules and remained almost unchanged. Even elements of the neoplatonic exegesis, which clearly contradicted Christian doctrine (as in the thesis regarding the eternity of the world), are repeated without reservation in the commentaries of sixth-century teachers (Olympiodoros, Elias, David, and Stephanos).

The neoplatonic curriculum acquired its definitive shape during the fifth century. The writings of Aristotle, beginning with the *Categories* and followed by the other treatises of the *Organon*, constituted the first stage of education to prepare students for higher levels; the writings of Plato were read similarly, also in a clearly defined sequence. Before the lectures on Aristotle, however, students became acquainted with the Porphyry’s *Isagoge*, which introduced them to the terminology of logic. Even before the prefatory *Isagoge*, however, it was necessary to introduce the most basic philosophical issues (the aims, definitions, and divisions of philosophy), which were gathered in the so-called *prolegomena*. Lectures on the *Categories* were preceded by similar customary *prolegomena* to introduce Aristotle’s philosophy. These focused, for example, on the aims, authenticity, utility, and structure of his works (Mansfeld 1994). The exegesis of Plato’s dialogues also required special *prolegomena* to his philosophy (Westerink 1962). All of the surviving texts of the Alexandrian commentaries to *Isagoge*, as well as those to the *Categories*, are preceded in the manuscripts by such *prolegomena*. The system of technical introductions became a characteristic feature of philosophical instruction in late antiquity.

All of Ammonios’ extant commentaries originated in lecture notes written down by his students; these were subsequently published in so-called *apo phones* “from the voice of” commentaries (Richard 1950). Such commentaries became general practice among Alexandrian philosophy teachers: all preserved commentaries from the sixth century are of this type. Their content and structure are marked by their original format as oral

class lecture; they include teachers' references to previous classes, repetitions, insertions of direct speech, and questions posed by the teachers or pupils. Beginning with Olympiodoros (ca. 550), the *apo phones* commentaries are divided into *praxeis*, which then have subdivisions that correspond to specific parts of the actual lecture. One *praxis* probably includes one lecture, which would last about an hour. Each *praxis* is divided into *theoria* (general exegesis) and *lexis* (more detailed explanations of each term and phrase). Both the structure and the philosophical value of the *apo phones* commentaries emerged from the process of teaching: the more advanced the audience, the more specialized the discourse and exegesis. Therefore, any evaluation of a given author's exegetical skills and proficiency should be done with this in mind, especially when a commentary exhibits discourse at an elementary level and is rife with repetition and simplifications, as demonstrated by the fifth chapter of Proklos' commentary to Plato's *Republic* (Sheppard 1980).

The titles of the commentaries refer to two equally important figures: the master-lecturer and the pupil-editor, for example: "Scholia on the first book of Aristotle's *Metaphysics* [published] by Asklepios *apo phones* Ammonios, son of Hermeias." Noteworthy is the case of the Ammonios' lectures on the arithmetic treatise of Nikomachos of Gerasa, as it was published twice: once by Asklepios and once by Philoponos. Both editors worked on the same cycle of Ammonios' lectures, but Asklepios' version is more faithful, containing typical mistakes, repetitions, and occasional distortions in the argument. Philoponos' version is more elaborate, with the editor's own comments and critical remarks. Interestingly, there is an assumption that Philoponos might have based his version on Asklepios' or some other notes, without even having attended Ammonios' classes (Westerink 1964b). Thus, lecture notes, once prepared, took on a life of their own and could then be used by anyone, even those outside strict philosophical circles. Perhaps this was the case with Philoponos, who is always portrayed as a *grammatikos*. Although he was occasionally depicted as a head of the philosophical school or as a close associate of Ammonios (Saffrey 1954), nothing supports such statements and most commentaries on Aristotle preserved under his name are based on notes from somebody else's lectures.

Commentaries on the *Isagoge* and the *Categories*, that is, the texts that covered the lectures to introduce the discipline, constitute the majority of the surviving production of the Alexandrian school. This certainly illustrates which classes were most popular and well attended. Such introductory philosophical lectures did not necessarily lead to deeper studies or force one to follow the entire path of what was a long and complex curriculum. It seems that the philosophy studied in Alexandria was most often simply some training in logic based on the philosophical prolegomena and some parts of the *Organon*. This is understandable. We envision young people coming here for just a year or two for a finishing touch—a taste of rhetoric or philosophy with famous teachers. This is clearly the case with Zacharias Scholastikos, who extended his studies in Alexandria before going to law school because he wished to listen to "rhetors and philosophers" for one year (*Vita Severi* 46); during that time, he could have attended some lectures on *Isagoge* or *Categories*, but not much more. Such basic philosophical studies, along with a literary education, constituted an essential cultural core for those who wanted to pride themselves on their good education. Often this core was enriched with a sprinkling of medical studies as well.

## 5. Medical Studies in Alexandria and the Ideal of Polymathy

Since the Hellenistic era, the medical sciences were always associated with Alexandria. However, the fifth century CE saw the birth of an epoch of great medical exegesis, with the activities of commentators such as Gessios, Asklepios, Agapios, Palladios, Ioannes, and Stephanos of Alexandria. All extant medical commentaries on Galen and Hippokrates are dated between 550 and 650, and these are deeply influenced by teaching practices: all of them are in the *apo phones* format. The medical curriculum encompassed selected works of Galen and Hippokrates read in a clearly defined sequence, and this can be also reconstructed from evidence from Arab authors, who adapted the Alexandrian medical “canon” (Iskandar 1976). Just as the *Isagogē* introduced philosophical curriculum, Galen’s *De Sectis* inaugurated students’ medical studies, though it was preceded by a general introduction to medicine that was in many respects analogous to the philosophical prolegomena. Medical commentaries are also similar to the philosophical ones in terms of the methods of exegesis, the argument stages, divisions into *praxeis*, and the terminology employed (Westernik 1964a; Duffy 1984). These similarities between philosophical and medical studies illustrate the distinctive features of the Alexandrian center of learning in late antiquity. The exegetical apparatus elaborated here was to become common among various disciplines.

Students attending medical lectures must have had some philosophical background, since teachers of medicine made frequent use of dialectical techniques and often referred directly to philosophical texts (Roueché 1999). These lecturers themselves obviously had a thorough education in philosophy. Interestingly, teachers of philosophy also exhibited knowledge of medicine and made use of medical examples in their teaching. This intellectual trend was characteristic of the vibrant Alexandrian intellectual community and led naturally to the appearance of teachers who had all the necessary tools and skills to teach the rudiments of both philosophy and medicine. Thus, unsurprisingly, we find in Alexandria lecturers engaged in both disciplines, such as Agapios (fifth/sixth century), or the famous Stephanos of Alexandria (sixth/seventh century), who is none other than Stephanos of Athens (Wolska-Conus 1989).

Alexandrian teachers of medicine were never called *iatroi* (physicians), but *iatrosophistai*, or simply *sophistai*. Thus, the term *sophistes* could simply denote a skillful teacher, which is clearly discernible in Sophronios’ description of Gessios: “an extremely wise sophist, not in the teaching of rhetoric ... but as a foremost expert in medical art and a well-known teacher of its precise methods” (*Miracula* 30). This phenomenon had its roots in the second century, but the first “sophists of medicine” appeared in the fourth century. Their rhetorical proficiency, which often combined well with their expertise in medical theory but contrasted with their deficiency in medical practice, is often emphasized in late antique sources. Paradoxically, these “sophists in medicine” were renowned for their medical knowledge but were unable (with a few exceptions) to heal the sick. It should be noted, however, that their role as exegetes and commentators was particularly significant, especially toward the end of antiquity: it is through their very commentaries that Greek medical knowledge survived and was transmitted to the Arab world, and then to the Latin West.

The Alexandrian commentaries show that medicine became fashionable in the educational system of late antiquity. One should not, however, imagine that students were engaged in serious training for medical practice. Just as in philosophy, the vast majority of extant medical commentaries are on Galen's *De Sectis*, documenting the lectures of the first stage of the medical curriculum. In most cases, medical studies were reduced to a cursory introduction to theoretical medicine, that is, Galen's "medical philosophy" (Temkin 1972). A short course in basic medicine often complemented studies in rhetoric and philosophy, but it did not generally lead to high-level training or to a subsequent profession as a physician. Apparently, a cursory knowledge of medicine alongside knowledge of philosophy was highly regarded among the elite as a mark of erudition, reflecting the ancient ideal of a broad education.

Scholarship has, of course, long recognized the exceptionally strong link between medicine and philosophy in antiquity, and medicine was always a part of the ancient ideal of *polymatheia*. However, these links became particularly prominent in the Roman Empire with the development of Galenism, and more so in late antiquity, when philosophical and medical studies flourished in Alexandria. The ideal of wisdom, of knowledge of many arts and sciences (encompassing the fields of rhetoric, philosophy, and medicine, but also astronomy, astrology, and alchemy), is illustrated in the writings of many famous late antique scholars (including Ammonios, Agapios, Asklepiodotos of Alexandria, and Agapios or Stephanos of Alexandria). This ideal is also exemplified in less well-known figures, such as the prematurely deceased Kollega Makedon, who was honored in the fourth-century Pisidian Antioch as "rhetor, philosopher, and *archiatros*" (Puech 2002: 178–180).

## 6. Conclusions

Libanios boasts of the prominence of his family, which "was one of the greatest in a great city—in education, wealth, the provision of shows and games, and in the oratory which opposes itself to the ill-temper of governors" (*Or.* 1. 2). Education was regarded as a virtue that distinguished members of the elite, and it constituted a path toward intellectual and moral excellence. The cultural value placed on education can easily be detected in honorific or funeral inscriptions, where it was conventional to praise cultural attainment and eloquence.

Rhetorical skills were always indispensable for power and position, but this was perhaps even more so in late antiquity. Not only did educational ideals persist, but they also continued to develop over these centuries. In the late fifth century, Prokopios of Gaza, in a letter to his brother, who held an important administrative position in Constantinople, recommended a certain Aineias (presumably not the sophist): "He is of excellent birth, has acquired a proper education, and has a qualified knowledge of the law" (*Ep.* 43). The development of the imperial administrative structures demanded a considerably more specialized background than had the traditional literary formation. Rhetorical training was increasingly supplemented with legal instruction. Classical *paideia* in late antiquity, through new educational trends, recognized innovations, and the vitality of the rhetorical *technē* of the Third Sophistic, proved to be not only resistant, but also flexible, and surely far from ossified.

Furthermore, the impressive intellectual revival of philosophy and medicine in Athens and Alexandria renders insufficient any unequivocal assertion of a crisis in the intellectual life of that period. Alexandria's dominance in the educational map is exceptional. In the fifth century, in contrast to "exclusivist" Athens, Alexandria became an enormous "cosmopolitan" center that offered possibilities not available anywhere else in the Roman Empire: a wide range of schooling, from grammar to medicine, an incomparable number of famous teachers, and crowds of students from all corners of the eastern Empire. Moreover, though religious clashes did occur (Watts 2010), Christians and pagans still mingled freely in the lecture halls in the fifth and sixth centuries, as the works of Zacharias Scholasticus and Aineias of Gaza show. Frequently, it was erudition and eloquence—not religion—that united or divided those in the Alexandrian schools.

The picture of educational geography in late antiquity has been supplemented by archeology. Excavations carried out in recent years at Kom el-Dikka in central Alexandria have revealed approximately twenty-five rectangular auditoria with rows of seats and a separate raised seat in the center (Majcherek 2007). The entire impressive complex dates from the late fifth through the seventh centuries. It is difficult not to see its function as linked to the blossoming of scholarship in Alexandria, which is well documented through *apo phones* commentaries which were transcribed "live" in the lecture halls.

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## FURTHER READING

For education in late antiquity in general, Averil Cameron (1988) and Robert Browning (2000) are good introductions. Any study of the grammarian's profession in late antiquity must now begin with the masterly synthesis (with a prosopography) of Robert Kaster (1988). Malcolm Heath (2004) is a brilliant survey on rhetorical instruction and technography in the Roman Empire.

Norman, A. F. (ed. and tr.) (1992), *Libanius, Autobiography and Selected Letters*, Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press. Provides English translation of Libanios autobiography and selected letters.

To learn more about school of Gaza, one can turn to the collection of papers Saliou, Catherine (ed.) (2005), *Gaza dans l'antiquité tardive: Actes du colloque international de Poitiers* (mai 2004), Salerno, Helios.

Penella, Robert (ed.) (2009), *Rhetorical Exercises from Late Antiquity: A Translation of Choricus of Gaza's Preliminary Talks and Declamations*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press. Provides the first English translation of the corpus of rhetorical exercises composed by Chorikios of Gaza.

For the most recent edition (with Italian translation) of the works and letters of Prokopios of Gaza: Amato, Eugenio (ed.) (2010), *Rose di Gaza: Gli scritti retorico-sofistici e le Epistole di Procopio di Gaza*, Alessandria, Edizioni dell'Orso.

Goulet Richard (ed.) (1989–2012), *Dictionnaire des Philosophes Antiques*, I–V, Paris, CNRS Editions. Has entries (with further bibliography) under all of the late antique philosophers mentioned in this chapter.

Athanassiadi, Polymnia (ed. and tr.) (1999), *Damascius: The Philosophical History*, Athens, Apamea Cultural Association. Provides the first English translation of Damaskios' *Vita Isidori*.

Edwards, Mark (tr.) (2000), *Neoplatonic Saints: The Lives of Plotinus and Proclus*, Liverpool, Liverpool University Press. Provides the English translation of the *Vita Procli* of Marinos.

Ambjörn L. (ed.) (2008), *The Life of Severus by Zachariah of Mytilene*, Piscataway NJ, Gorgias Press. Provides the English translation of the *Vita Severi* of Zacharias.

On the auditoria excavated at Alexandria see *Alexandria: Auditoria of Kom el-Dikka and Late Antique Education*, Tomasz Derda, Tomasz Markiewicz, and Ewa Wipszycka (eds.), Warsaw, Taubenschlag Foundation.

Becker, Adam H. (2006), *Fear of God and the Beginning of Wisdom: The School of Nisibis and the Development of Scholastic Culture in Late Antique Mesopotamia*, Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press. Is the most recent study on the theological school of Nisibis.

Other sources cited in the chapter:

Minniti Colonna, M. (tr.) (1973), *Zacaria Scolastico, Ammonio*, Napoli.

Gascou, Jean (tr.) (2006), *Sophrone de Jérusalem, Miracles des saints Cyr et Jean*, Paris, De Boccard.

## CHAPTER 17

# Late Antiquity and the Transmission of Educational Ideals and Methods

## *The Western Empire*

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*Ilaria L. E. Ramelli*

Late antiquity was an exceptionally rich period for the transmission of educational ideals and methods to the Middle Ages and, in some respects, even to later epochs (see Cameron 1998; for the periodization question, see at least Cameron 2002; Marcone 2008; Shanzer 2009; Formisano 2011). During the late Roman Empire, which from the fourth century onward became progressively Christian, formal schools continued to function, at least for those students who could afford them. Provisions and subventions are also attested for less wealthy students. Both boys and girls usually received an education; especially in the upper classes there are many examples of very learned and intellectually active women (see Chapter 19). The poet Proba, for instance, will be discussed later. Emphasis was placed on a student's innate gift for learning, but only those of the upper class normally received a complete formal education. Indeed, late antique grammatical education helped maintain the hierarchy of the literate in Roman administration (Chin 2008: Ch. 1). Roman education in late antiquity continued to be arranged in hierarchical levels, from the equivalent of our elementary school to middle school, then to high school, and finally to college and various university levels of graduation. Thus, in the Roman world the first educator was the *magister ludi* or *harenarius*, who taught children to write and read; then came the *grammaticus* or teacher of grammar, who taught language and the bases of literature, as well as (often) elements of general culture. Yet later came the *rhetor* or teacher of rhetoric, who taught advanced literature, style, and rhetoric for about four to six years, and had students exercise in declamations (*declamationes* divided into *controversiae* and *suasoriae*, controversial points and exercises in persuasion). Last came various higher instructors such as the philosopher. However, it must be observed that philosophy and science remained essentially

Greek (Marrou 1948). In the western empire, Greek, philosophy, and science seem to have been progressively abandoned in scholastic teaching, apart from rare exceptions, as will be shown later.

Learning became increasingly codified in the so-called “liberal arts,” which were so named (*liberales*) because they provided the education proper to a free person. Their origin goes back to Classical and Hellenistic times, but it was the late Latin Neoplatonist Martianus Capella who grouped them into seven in the early fifth century CE. Varro’s *Disciplinarum libri* or *Books of Disciplines* had earlier collected nine arts. Martianus omitted medicine and architecture; the latter was codified in Vitruvius’ *De Architectura* (*On Architecture*), which highlighted the reciprocal influence of all arts (1.1.12). Martianus imitated Varro not only in content, but also in his choice of a prosimetric form—with mixed prose and verse—typical of the Menippean satire, for his *De nuptiis Philologiae et Mercurii* (*On the Marriage of Philology and Mercury*, ed. J. Willis, Leipzig: Teubner, 1983; new editions of each book are appearing in the Budé series and elsewhere: see Ramelli 2008; 2013b; forthcoming). Capella’s work is profoundly imbued with Middle Platonism, Neoplatonism, Pythagoreanism, and the doctrine of the *Chaldaean Oracles*. He seems either to have been a contemporary of Augustine or, more probably, to have lived slightly later, in the second half of the fifth century and, like Augustine, in Africa. He wrote his masterpiece in the early fifth century CE, likely before 439, although the dating of Martianus is quite a difficult issue. One passage of his work may indicate that he was a rhetorician. He seems to have been a “pagan,” as is also maintained, for instance, by Préaux, Turcan, and Shanzer, against Cappuyns’ or Böttger’s doubts. There is probably some anti-Christian polemic behind his *De nuptiis*. He was nostalgic for the time in which Rome “flourished in its military enterprises, its heroes, and its religion” (*viguit armis, viris sacrisque*: 6.637), and certainly “religion” (*sacra*) refers to “paganism.” The fall of Rome was a catastrophe (Perkins 2005) also from the religious viewpoint. Martianus never mentions Christianity in his work, which bristles with “pagan” deities.

His *De nuptiis* is in nine books. The first two provide an allegorical-narrative framework for his encyclopedic project (Shanzer 1986), and the remaining seven books (3–9) supply a veritable encyclopedia of education in which each art is expounded by its own personification or prosopopoeia. First come the disciplines that would be canonized as the *trivium* or three ways (grammar, dialectic, and rhetoric), then those of the *quadrivium* or four ways: geometry, arithmetic, astronomy, and music (see Grebe 1999; Ramelli 2001; 2006; on music only, Teeuwen 2002). The longest speech is by Lady Rhetoric, either because Martianus knew this art best, or because the allegorical meaning of the co-protagonist, the god Mercury, is precisely rhetoric. Indeed, according to the plot, Mercury seeks a bride, and after a search, with the help of Apollo, he finds Philology. Even though she is a mortal girl, she is approved by the assembly of the gods thanks to her immense learning and her desire for an intellectual elevation beyond the human condition. The personifications of the liberal arts are maids who serve as nuptial gifts. Each speaks before the assembly of the gods, explaining the contents of the discipline she represents. Philology (*Philologia*, literally “love of the Logos”) symbolizes the sum of all this learning; Mercury is the allegory of the Logos itself, that is, both reason and speech.

Hadot 2005 and 2009 argues that Martianus' understanding of the liberal arts is more Neoplatonic than Hellenistic. An important consequence of this thesis is that the educational system of the Middle Ages, which came to be based on Martianus' work and model, was not really a continuation of the Hellenistic and Roman educational ideals, but it was rather Platonic in its origin. Martianus' philosophical orientation is indeed mainly Neoplatonic, as is evident especially in the narrative frame, in some poetic passages, and in some points pertaining to the exposition of the arts. Allegories of the Neoplatonic hypostases have been found in Martianus' work. His discourse in his masterpiece revolves around the elevation of the wise soul, represented by Philology, who loves the Logos, to heaven where she marries Mercury—that is, Hermes the Logos, according to an ancient allegorical tradition. The Logos is not only the word, but also, and above all, reason; the soul who loves it is the philosophical soul, which must get rid of all mundane learning in order to access true wisdom. For Philology is not only love for words and thus our discipline of philology, but the love of the soul for wisdom, rationality, thought, and knowledge. This is why Martianus emphasizes Philology's vast knowledge, which embraces all human knowledge. She symbolizes the human soul that is divinized through learning and philosophy. According to Remigius of Auxerre, one of the most prolific medieval commentators on Martianus, Mercury represents *sermo* or rhetorically crafted speech, and Philology symbolizes human reason and the knowledge that it acquires. Martianus himself identifies Mercury with the Neoplatonic Intellect (*De nupt.* 1.92), the hypostasis derived from the One and prior to the third hypostasis, the Soul. Philosophy, broadly conceived, including all human knowledge and behavior, leads to the deification of the human soul. The gods' decree, of which Martianus speaks in the narrative frame, concedes immortality to those human beings who have earned it by merit of their conduct and study. Philology herself, as Martianus says, "had her birth on earth, but the intention to tend to the stars" (*sed cui terreus/ortus, propositum in sidera tendere: De nupt.* 1.93). She ascends to heaven thanks to her efforts in study and the exercise of reason. Philosophical culture, including the liberal arts, is conceived by Martianus as an instrument of elevation and a means to attain immortality. Allegory itself, which abounds in the *De nuptiis*, was a remarkable philosophical tool in Neoplatonism, after being so in Stoicism: in both it was not a rhetorical ornament, but part and parcel of philosophy (Ramelli 2004b; 2011a). Traces of other philosophical trends, however, are present as well in Martianus's *De nuptiis*, such as Hermeticism, and even Etruscan religion. Late religious syncretism is reflected especially in the narrative frame. Martianus's style is complex, refined, full of artifices, and difficult. Influence from Apuleius, one of the few Latin Middle- and Neoplatonists, is sometimes patent (Ramelli 2002a). Only relatively recently has Martianus's *De nuptiis* been reevaluated in scholarship, which is felicitous, both in its own right and in light of its impressive *Wirkungsgeschichte* (reception history). The enormous number of medieval manuscripts containing this prosimetric encyclopedia, often equipped with glosses and comments from the Carolingian age (O'Sullivan 2010) onwards, testifies to the popularity of this work in the Middle Ages. They all seem to trace back to a common archetype in the Carolingian age, which in turn derived from the emended late antique *recensio* of Securus Melior Felix.

Both for its literary frame and for its didactic contents, Martianus's work was considered exceptionally momentous throughout the Middle Ages, the Renaissance, and beyond. The most important medieval commentaries on his *De nuptiis* are the anonymous "old glosses," earlier ascribed to Dunchad and Martinus of Laon, the commentary and glosses of John Scottus Eriugena, the Carolingian Latin Christian Neoplatonist, the commentary of Remigius of Auxerre, that of Bernardus Silvestris, and the anonymous Berlin-Zwettl commentary (all of which are edited, studied, and translated in Ramelli 2006). These commentaries often display a superabundance of erudition and of allegorical exegesis; sometimes they superimpose Christian interpretations onto Martianus's text for the religious education of their own medieval readers. Indeed, they were in turn used as educational tools in the Middle Ages.

Martianus Capella was very probably a "pagan." It is interesting to compare his work with that of a later Christian, Magnus Felix Ennodius's *Paraenesis didascalica* or *Didactic Exhortation*, which is likewise an educative prosimetrum that makes use of prosopopoeia. Ennodius (†521) significantly adds *Verecundia* (modesty), *Castitas* (Chastity), and *Fides* (Faith) to *Grammatica* (Grammar) and *Rhetorica* (Rhetoric), thus joining Christian virtues to liberal arts (see Schröder 2007, esp. 52–53; 86–88). Indeed, education in the late antique West was also carried on by Christian poets who used the classical heritage to transmit new educational content. For instance, Proba's cento in the fourth century used Virgil's verses, combined in a new fashion, to teach the stories of the Old and the New Testament. Prudentius in the late fourth and early fifth century used epic hexameters to teach theological doctrines (in his *Apotheosis* and *Hamartigenia*, *Deification* and *The Rise of Sin*) and ethical doctrines (*Psychomachia*: the conflict of virtues and vices in human souls), and imitated Horace's verses to teach Christian prayers (*Cathemerinon*, with prayers for every day, all the day round) and stories of Christian martyrs (*Peristephanon* or *The Crown of Martyrdom*). The latter was also the point of Pope Damasus (366–384), who composed epitaphs, strongly influenced by Virgil, to be engraved on the tombs of the martyrs who were especially venerated in Rome, that people might learn their stories. They were transcribed by the renowned calligrapher Furius Dionysius Philocalus on the martyrs' monuments (ed. A. Ferrua, Vatican 1942). The exaltation of Peter and Paul, their translation, and the epigram for them (Brändle 1992) were aimed at supporting and promoting Roman primacy. Rome's glory was presented as lying in Christianity; Damasus used pagan literary culture to reinforce Christian identity (Gemeinhardt 2007). His literary oeuvre attempted to solve the problem of being both Roman and Christian in fourth-century Rome (Trout 2005: 300), with a strong educational aim that joined together both poetry and visual impact.

This shows that education did not avail itself only of encyclopedias and handbooks, but also of other literary—and even iconographical—forms related to the transmission of knowledge. In this respect, one would hardly overestimate the importance of exegesis in late antiquity, with commentaries on philosophers (especially Plato and Aristotle, but in the West also Cicero), poets (Homer, but in the West especially Virgil), and among Christians, of course, the Bible. Commentaries on Virgil were produced most famously by Donatus and Servius. Donatus, a fourth-century grammarian, was also the teacher of the Christian polymath and exegete Jerome; for in both the West and the East, "pagan" and Christian pupils frequented the same schools, and in the Christian empire they

could have both “pagan” and Christian teachers alike (this is what disquieted the emperor Julian, who tried to exclude Christian professors from teaching the traditional cultural heritage, which he felt to be “pagan”—the reasons for the failure of such an attempt are easy to understand). Besides two grammar handbooks (*Ars minor* and *Ars maior* [*Smaller Grammar* and *Larger Grammar*], which were used throughout the Middle Ages and beyond), Donatus composed a commentary on Virgil (most of which has been lost) and one on Terence. Until the nineteenth century, he was confused with Tiberius Claudius Donatus, a fourth- to fifth-century grammarian who also composed a commentary on Virgil, which has been preserved (Irvine 1994, ch. 4). Servius was probably a disciple of the former Donatus. His fame as a commentator on Virgil was so great that Macrobius chose him as the most authoritative representative of Virgilian exegesis in his *Saturnalia* (see later text). His commentary survives in a shorter form and in a longer one (called *Servius Danielinus*, from the name of its discoverer, or *Servius auctus*, “augmented”), which was probably compiled by a later seventh- to eighth-century commentator on the basis of Servius’ and other ancient commentaries, perhaps Donatus’ own. Servius in his commentary often discusses and judges alternative interpretations of a single point, as well as alternative variant readings (*variae lectiones*), and incorporates diverse erudite materials on religion, linguistics, allegoresis, etc. The study of his commentary therefore provided a kind of encyclopedic education for its readers. Moreover, grammar handbooks, in their composition and educational use, played a core role in the representation of “pagan” classical culture, of Christianity as a “book religion,” and of the passage from the former to the latter (Chin 2008, with my review in *JR* 90 [2010] 564–566).

Of course, not only grammars such as those produced by some commentators on Virgil and other authors, but also handbooks of rhetoric multiplied in late antiquity. Besides the treatment provided by Martianus in his own encyclopedia, independent handbooks of rhetoric were produced. For instance, toward the end of the fourth century, Messius wrote his *Exempla elocutionis* (*Examples of Style*) drawn from the four Latin authors who were destined to form the *quadriga*, the group of the four standard authors that every person of culture was supposed to know and take as paradigms: Virgil, Sallust, Terence, and Cicero (listed in this order in the subtitle of Messius’s work). To the fourth century also belongs Fortunatianus’ *Ars rhetorica* (*The Art of Rhetoric*), which subsequently was widely used in schools for its clear organization of the material into *inventio* (discovery), *dispositio* (arrangement), and *elocutio* (expression), the three main parts of rhetoric itself, and for the form of its exposition in questions and answers (a popular format in late antiquity, which is found in disparate didactic works, including, for instance, Basil the Great’s instructions to his monks). Iulius Victor’s *Ars rhetorica* interestingly reports examples from a certain rhetor called Marcomannus. His name discloses a Germanic origin and indicates that the integration of some “barbarians” into the Greco-Roman *paideia* was by then advanced.

Among late antique Latin commentators on philosophers, and especially on Cicero (a Neo-Academic, one of the few popular Latin Platonists together with the Middle Platonist Apuleius), Marius Victorinus and Macrobius deserve at least some mention. Victorinus, a Neoplatonist very well steeped in Greek, after a period of interest in Christian scriptures and works, became a Christian in 355. He was directly acquainted with the work of Plotinus (at least parts of the *Enneads*) and Porphyry (at least his

exegesis of the *Chaldean Oracles*), as well as with the anonymous Platonic *Commentary on the Parmenides*. Before composing his Christian writings, including hymns and a work against the Arians, Victorinus also wrote both an *Ars grammatica*, a grammar handbook, and a commentary on Cicero's *De inventione* (*On the Discovery of Arguments*). This shows how his interests in grammar, rhetoric, and philosophy blended; soon theology, too, would be added. He also seems to have translated Platonic works into Latin, an operation that was becoming more and more useful, as the case of Augustine would soon prove (see later text).

The other late antique commentator on Cicero, Macrobius, a Latin Neoplatonist and a member of the senatorial order and *vir illustris* active at the beginning of the fifth century or at the earliest at the end of the fourth, was and remained, in all probability, a “pagan” intellectual, unlike Victorinus. Macrobius probably also harbored some anti-Christian sentiments. In his *Saturnalia*, the name Evangelus, designating a very unpleasant character, ignorant and arrogant, who offends people and sows hatred, may be significant. This is a person with whom a serene conversation is impossible. His identification with the historical person mentioned by Symmachus in *Ep.* 6.7 is uncertain. Evangelus's name, together with his designation of Virgil as *vester* rather than *noster*, may suggest an allusion to Christianity as well—in that case, an obviously negative allusion. Moreover, the three major characters who make their houses available for conversation in the *Saturnalia* are among the most illustrious pagan figures of that time. Alan Cameron (2011) argued that “paganism” was “mortally dead” already before Theodosius, and that the “circle of Symmachus” never existed. In fact, in his view this is only a literary fiction elaborated many years later by Macrobius himself in his *Saturnalia*. The speeches ascribed to the characters of the dialogue, whose conversations are set in 382 CE, are entirely fictitious and rather reflect Macrobius's own interests in “paganism” and classical culture. The interlocutors of the *Saturnalia*, who were all dead when Macrobius published his work, were in fact the “pagan” ancestors of influential Christian families contemporary to Macrobius. Therefore the latter, a “pagan,” in Cameron's view produced a literary, rather than a historical, depiction of “paganism.” His *Saturnalia* is presented as an educative handbook, and more precisely as a work aimed at the education of the author's son, like Martianus' encyclopedia.

Macrobius' learned commentary on Cicero comments on the famous fragment, the *Somnium Scipionis* or *The Dream of Scipio*, from the last book of Cicero's *Republic*, inspired by Plato's homonymous work. The *Somnium* corresponded, in position and content, to the myth of Er in Plato's *Republic*, as Macrobius himself remarks in *Comm.* 1.1, and as was observed by other ancient authors as well, such as Favonius Eulogius (*Disp.* 1.1) and Augustine (*City of God* 22.28). To the Pythagorean-Platonic myth of Er, in which Er is shown the otherworldly destiny of souls, Cicero added some Stoic elements. The *Somnium Scipionis* itself already fused Stoic, Platonic, and Pythagorean ideas; Macrobius read it mainly in the light of Neoplatonism and viewed Cicero as Plato's spokesman. Macrobius' commentary is an education for the soul. Scipio the Elder, in Macrobius, directly asserts that the soul is immortal and will never perish (according to the Platonic tenet), as it never had a beginning (according to an interpretation of Plato which posited the creation of the soul, described in the *Timaeus*, outside time). This is an application of the so-called perishability axiom. Souls must therefore be educated to immortality, and not be immersed in sense perception. The soul must



be trained in what is best; it must become detached from the body and must be continually bent on the contemplation of eternal realities. In Cicero, there was no precise universalistic assertion about the beatitude of souls. It is Macrobius who stresses this, and I have hypothesized (Ramelli 2008–2009) that this may be due to the influence of the Christian doctrine of apokatastasis that had developed meanwhile. Of course, Macrobius would never have admitted that Christian doctrines had an impact on his own thought; he rather ascribed his theory of the restoration of all souls to Plato himself, in order to legitimate and ennoble it. However, Plato did not support the doctrine of a universal restoration and salvation of all souls, since he repeatedly asserted that souls who have committed too serious injustices are “incurable” and destined to suffer in Tartarus forever; their suffering will not be purifying, but punitive. Origen explicitly “corrected” Plato on this score, by stating that no soul is incurable for its creator (see Ramelli 2013a, chapter on Origen).

The third kind of exegesis I have mentioned in the foregoing classification of late antique Latin commentaries is that of commentaries on scripture from Christian authors. There are several examples, but the most important are the running commentaries on almost all of scripture composed in Latin by the monks Jerome and Rufinus between the end of the fourth and the beginning of the fifth century. However, these commentaries are so impressive, learned, and rich because they all rely on the Greek commentaries of the greatest and most learned Christian exegete ever: Origen of Alexandria. Jerome’s commentaries on many Biblical books were published under his own name, but in fact they were mostly a paraphrase and simplification of Origen’s commentaries. Jerome also translated homilies on Biblical books by Origen, in this case indicating the original author. This operation goes together with his translation of all of scripture into Latin, which resulted in the so-called Vulgate, where the Old Testament was translated not from the Greek of the Septuagint, as in the case of the Latin versions current in Jerome’s day (the so-called *Vetus Latina* or Old Latin Versions), but from the Hebrew. Jerome’s translation was destined to become the official version of the Western church, although manuscripts of the *Vetus Latina* continued to be copied and spread for many centuries afterward. Jerome also translated Origen’s philosophical masterpiece (not without a great deal of exegesis), *De principiis* (*On First Principles*), but he did so for a polemical purpose: after his sudden about-face from Origen’s admirer to his enemy, and essentially fearing the renewed outburst of the infelicitous Origenist controversy, he wanted to produce a Latin version of *De principiis* that could compete with that of Rufinus of Aquileia, who on the contrary remained an admirer of Origen all his life long (under the motto, *Magistros meos nec accuso nec muto*, “I neither accuse nor change my teachers,” the first of whom was, of course, Origen himself). This is also why, after Jerome’s U-turn, Rufinus and Jerome, who had been good friends, became hostile to one another. Rufinus’ version was intended to show to all Latin readers that Origen was not a heretic in the least, as he was (falsely) accused to be; Jerome’s version aimed at demonstrating the opposite. Rufinus’ translations of Origen’s exegesis, a monumental summa of commentaries on the whole of scripture, acknowledged the true author, Origen, and provided a kind of exegetical encyclopedia, to which Rufinus wanted to add his Latin translation of Origen’s *De principiis*, all in the service of theodicy and against fatalism and Manichaeism. This huge corpus, along with Rufinus’ Latin version and continuation of Eusebius’ *Historia Ecclesiastica* (*Church*

*History*), his translation of the *Historia monachorum*, and the so-called Pseudo-Clementines, an apostolic novel, was transmitted to the West as a compact patrimony for the education of Latin Christians.

In the same spirit, Rufinus produced his Latin translation of the *Dialogue of Adamantius*, in which the character of Adamantius, the supporter of the orthodox faith against Marcionite, Valentinian, and Bardaisanite interlocutors, was identified by Rufinus with Origen, whose Christian byname was precisely Adamantius. I hope to have demonstrated the anteriority and priority of Rufinus's version vis-à-vis the extant Greek, which even includes Byzantinisms, historical incongruences, and above all strategic doctrinal alterations, especially when it comes to the doctrine of apokatastasis (Ramelli 2012/2013; cf. 2009: 168–172). This suggests that the Greek was tampered with, at least after the official rejection of the doctrine of apokatastasis under Justinian in the sixth century. Rufinus' Latin, on the contrary, is a faithful version of the original Greek *Vorlage*. A new critical edition and a full commentary are urgently needed and are in preparation.

Some of the liberal arts were included in encyclopedic projects envisaged (and not always actually accomplished) in late antiquity by Augustine, Boethius, and Cassiodorus. Augustine had a Neoplatonic philosophical formation, but unfortunately, unlike the senator Ambrose and unlike Rufinus and Jerome, he could only read Latin and had little or no direct access to Greek philosophy, “pagan” or Christian, or to Greek. Besides homilies and theological works including *De civitate Dei* (*The City of God*), Augustine composed educative dialogues such as *De magistro* (*The Teacher*, identified with Christ-Logos as already in Clement of Alexandria's *Pedagogue*) or *De musica* (*Music*). His all-important *De doctrina christiana* (*Christian Teaching*) revisits ancient educational ideals in the light of the formation of the good Christian pupil (on Augustine's educational theory and practice, see Chapter 24). Augustine's attitude to Greek culture and philosophy is ambivalent, and became more and more negative over time. For the same reason, Jerome famously felt—or represented himself as feeling—guilty of being more “Ciceronian” than “Christian,” a sentiment which an Arnobius and a Lactantius too, for instance, could well have shared. And Augustine gave, for example, a negative moral judgment of Seneca (Ramelli 2002b), while the possible contemporary *Epistola Annae Senecae de superbia et idolis* (*Letter of Annaeus Seneca on Pride and Idolatry*, or *Epistola Anne [sic] ad Senecam de superbia et idolis*, *Letter of Anna to Seneca on Pride and Idolatry*) celebrated the philosopher, as well as the pseudo-epigraphical correspondence between Seneca and St. Paul did (Fürst, Fuhrer et al. 2006; Ramelli 2004a and 1997, 2011b; 2013c; 2014; a book on the new findings concerning this correspondence and their implications is needed and is in preparation).

As for Boethius, this sixth-century Roman senator who was thoroughly adept in Greek and Greek philosophy, he planned an encyclopedic corpus of which only the works on arithmetic and music actually saw the light of day. He was also active as a translator and commentator on Aristotle, Porphyry, and Cicero. His masterpiece, the prosimetric dialogue *De consolazione philosophiae* (*The Consolation of Philosophy*), written during the imprisonment that ended with his execution, is an education of the soul toward the Good, through the discussion of the philosophical themes of free will, good and evil, happiness, and the like. The use of prosopopoeia (in the figure of Lady Philosophy) makes it even closer to Martianus' prosimetrum. Like *De nuptiis*, Boethius' work, too, would be very popular as an educative tool in the Middle Ages. Cassiodorus, another

sixth-century senator who lived for a while in Constantinople and finally founded the monastery of Vivarium in Calabria, wrote *Institutiones* and a *De orthographia* (a handbook of orthography) for the education of his monks. The former likewise exerted a strong influence upon the educational systems of the Middle Ages. Moreover, it was in his monastery's library that the work of collection, comparison, emendations, and editions of manuscripts began, as did the transcription, summarization, and vulgarization which served as the prelude to the projects of the great monastic libraries of medieval Europe. Similarly, in the sixth century, Benedict of Nursia founded the world-famous abbey (and the relevant library) of Monte Cassino. At the end of late antiquity and in the early Middle Ages, cathedral schools and monasteries became the centers of education for both men and women. This would change later, after the eleventh century, with the opening of universities, which would be the exclusive domain of men. This, along with the pernicious influence of Aristotelian anthropology, would bring about a misogynist turn that also contributed to the exclusion of women from ecclesiastical offices, whereas in imperial and late antiquity, in both the eastern and the western empire, women deacons, presbyters, and even bishops are attested, not to mention the episcopal powers of abbesses (Madigan and Osiek 2005; Macy 2008; Schaefer 2013).

At the end of late antiquity, Isidore of Seville in his *Etymologiae* treated grammar, rhetoric, dialectic, and the four mathematical arts, but added medicine, theology, and other disciplines. The extremely rich textual transmission of this encyclopedic work testifies to the extent of its diffusion in the Middle Ages. The seven liberal arts would be studied and promoted, on the basis of Martianus' treatment, by medieval commentators on Martianus, such as Eriugena, Remigius, and Bernardus Silvestris (Ramelli 2006). Among these commentators, the most philosophically minded and closest to Martianus' own philosophical formation was John Scottus Eriugena, who was imbued with Neoplatonism and a master of the liberal arts at Charles the Bald's *schola palatina* or court school. He used Martianus as a handbook of liberal arts in his classes, from which his commentary on Martianus originated. Indeed, the liberal arts played a pivotal role in medieval education; educational practice was deeply informed by the division, codification, and content of these disciplines. In his commentary on Martianus, Eriugena states that *Nemo intrat in caelum nisi per philosophiam*, that is, "nobody enters heaven except through philosophy," which in turn includes the liberal arts celebrated by Martianus. Indeed, philosophy in Eriugena's view coincides with theology and represents the perfection of the liberal arts, to the point that Eriugena declares theological errors to be the fruit of ignorance of these arts (see Ramelli 2012). Eriugena's interpretation of Martianus is neoplatonic. This is not a superimposition upon a text that has a different philosophical orientation or is not philosophical, since Martianus was a Neoplatonist, as John remarks in his commentary: *omnino Platonicus*. Of course, Martianus was a "pagan" Platonist, Eriugena a *Christian* Platonist. Eriugena's expertise in the liberal arts also played a role in his participation in the controversy over predestination. Eriugena's commentary on Martianus valorizes the liberal arts, which would achieve a full gnoseological and metaphysical status in *Periphyseon*. Several of Eriugena's major philosophical concepts already emerge in his commentary; a direct line extends from it to his later masterpiece. Thus, his reflection on the metaphysical value of the liberal arts is prominent in his philosophical masterpiece, the *Periphyseon* (*On Natures*: note the Greek title), which was closely inspired by Origen's *Peri Arkhôn* or *On First Principles*

(see Ramelli 2009; 2013a, chapter on Eriugena). Eriugena turned to a Greek model—indeed the only possible model—to offer a synthesis of philosophy and Christian theology that had no equal in Christianity thus far, except in Origen’s masterpiece. Eriugena’s ambitious project, like Origen’s, was at the very top of Christian education, which culminated with philosophy and theology. It is no surprise that he had to refer to a Greek model for this. It is still the case in late antiquity that “the Romans were thereby historical, real heirs, and practitioners of the great *paideia* of the Hellenistic and classical Greek past” (Bloomer 2011: 25). However, in the early Middle Ages, John Scottus’ Greek culture, which allowed him to study and translate the best of Greek Patristics, was more exceptional than usual.

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PART V

# **Theories and Themes of Education**

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## CHAPTER 18

# The Persistence of Ancient Education

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*Robin Barrow*

### 1. Introduction

From a contemporary standpoint, raising questions about cause and effect in education seems natural. The Industrial Revolution, for example, brought with it certain specific new demands in education; the move toward mass literacy had profound consequences for society; the success of the Sputnik launch led directly to a great deal of talk about the need to teach “creativity”; and advances in Internet technology offer new possibilities for transcending geographical limitations.

But raising the question of change in education in the context of the ancient world is a different matter. First, there are the historiographical problems. Determining cause and effect in human affairs is a difficult business at the best of times. Trying to find and interpret limited data from the past adds further difficulty. Second, there are some important differences between society then and now, one of which is that the Greeks and the Romans never had a state system of education. Education was considered the responsibility of the family, even when there were schools present in the vicinity. Though there were various laws governing schools in Athens (e.g., limiting the number of students), and though emperors such as Vespasian funded certain professorships, there was never a systematic attempt by the state to provide a common education for all. Third, ancient and modern economic systems differ considerably. The Greeks and Romans at various times acquired great wealth through war (with its attendant booty, including land and slaves), through the discovery of mining deposits of one kind or another, or through cornering a line in trade. The lack of anything resembling our money market and stocks and shares in itself leads to a quite different view of educational provision, and indeed educational success. Rightly or wrongly, today many people judge educational success at least partly in economic terms, in a way that would never have occurred to Greeks or Romans. Insufficient historical data and a disparity between the ancient and modern

political and economic systems make it difficult to measure cause and effect changes in social phenomena from the distant past.

Thus, the question of whether or to what extent education developed in response to sociopolitical or cultural change is not susceptible to a clear, let alone a definitive answer. And when we bear in mind the remarkable continuity, stability, and longevity of educational provision in a world that in many other respects witnessed dramatic changes, and recognize that without the unifying power of state, church, or any other concentrated central administration, it retained a homogeneity from Homeric to imperial Roman times, there is a case for arguing that education was very little affected by cultural or political change. The focus in this chapter is therefore on the question: to what extent did formal education (“formal education” being understood to refer to the systematic study of specific subject matter) change in reaction to political and cultural changes? In “elementary education” (ages seven to eighteen), we find no significant development in response to political and cultural change other than the introduction of reading and writing in classical Athens. As for what can be termed “higher education,” a core of Greek content and learning in rhetoric, along with small bands of philosophic communities, persists from Athenian democracy until Christianity rose to dominance in the Roman world.

## 2. Elementary Education

Our knowledge of Homeric education is essentially based on inferences drawn from the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, supplemented by some pictorial evidence from vases and comments from later writers. Because literacy lies at the root of our idea of education, we should note the existence of Linear B in Mycenaean times. But Linear B is a limited form of writing, the use of which was confined to certain specialist officials. For the Homeric Greeks, literacy was not a defining characteristic of education and, notwithstanding the obvious advantages of being able to keep records and accounts, the adoption of Linear B did not lead to any changes in education. Nor in heroic times was there concern for subtle distinctions between training, socialization, and education that are commonplace today. While *paideia* (enculturation and upbringing) mattered greatly to Homeric Greeks, it was not regarded as particularly mysterious or difficult. (See, for instance, Phoenix’s remarks, full of pathos and concern, suggesting the importance of his role as teacher to the young Achilles, but without any hint of the role having been burdensome or onerous [*Iliad* IX: 434 ff.]) In practice, of course, it did not always work out right: the sons, even of admirable fathers, sometimes turned out badly (as Plato was later to note [e.g., *Protagoras*: 319e ff.]), and it was difficult to see why that should be so. Nonetheless, in principle it was straightforward: the idea was to develop a certain “heroic” character and certain specific skills, generally of a warlike or athletic nature but with a modicum of culture represented by the skills of lyre playing and singing or reciting epic poetry; and the way to achieve this was to entrust the growing lad to a suitable tutor whose function was to act as mentor, example, and guide. The notion of specialist expertise as a teacher was not even on the horizon. When such a notion did emerge during the fifth century, the expertise in question was seen more as a matter of specialist knowledge, such as basic mathematical or grammatical knowledge, than a matter of pedagogical

knowledge. Beyond the association with such a mentor, it was a matter of practice—learning to run fast, to throw the javelin well, to behave appropriately, and so forth by doing so, just as Aristotle was later to advocate in relation to developing virtuous habits (*Nicomachean Ethics*: 1103a 14ff). Changes in education in this period would come about only insofar as, say, sporting or military norms or practices changed, which would be a matter of detail and, in any case, did not happen much until the Homeric age had passed away.

That Homeric education reflects Homeric society is a truism: education, on any view, involves passing on what a society thinks of as important. Since our view of the Homeric world is limited in such a way that we cannot discern significant change or development, we do not see any educational development either. We should remember, however, that, because of the nature of our evidence, in talking about Homeric education, we are talking about the education of aristocrats.

The view that educational and sociopolitical or cultural change were very little connected in the ancient world gains support from the observation that, following the Dark Ages and the age of tyrants, when we encounter a radically different society such as fifth-century Athens, we see that educational theory and practice had not changed with the times. Although fifth-century Athens had a democratic form of government involving wide (male) citizen participation; a hoplite form of warfare; the emergence of books (i.e., papyri); an advanced culture of prose, poetry, art, and architecture; and a defense policy predicated on a navy manned by the poorest members of society, the nature of education really had not changed very much since Homeric times. Homeric warriors did not go to school, but nor probably did the majority of Athenians. (Schools are not heard of till the end of the sixth century and never seem to have been very large or numerous.) Most individuals, whether rich or poor, were still educated through precept and example set by parents or sometimes a slave deputed to that purpose. Only the relatively well-to-do would hire somebody actually professing to be a teacher (still as likely as not a slave). Education continues to focus on good habits and manners (modified as suits the transition from an aristocratic to a democratic society, but not substantially different values), skills relating to a trade (more varied than the skills of the warriors of the past), and the Homeric poems that enshrine the *paideia* of the past. The emphasis is still on memorizing Homer, on emulating Homeric values, on physical fitness and prowess, and on the accomplishments of a musical education, notably singing and playing the lyre.

But one factor that was new and important was the introduction of an alphabet to write down the poetry that had previously been the preserve of an oral tradition. The extent of literacy in fifth-century Athens is disputed, but it is probably reasonable to assume that the majority of male citizens was literate, though in some cases perhaps only barely. (Evidence to the effect that *ostraka* were produced in bulk inscribed with a given name does not necessarily imply the opposite. The very idea of ostracism surely implies a functionally literate citizen body.) So, of course, some fifth-century Athenians differed from Homeric warriors in that they learned to read and write and, just as that provides a clear example of an educational change brought about by a sociopolitical change, so also the educational innovation had repercussions on how politics and business were conducted, as we can see most easily from the ubiquity of inscriptions.

But we should be cautious about concluding that there was a dramatic change. Even if we suppose that many more citizens were more literate at the end of the fifth century

than at the beginning, that does not lead to any particular conclusion, such as that the early plays of Aeschylus were less appreciated or less understood than the later plays of Euripides. Plato's concern about the danger of the poets, whatever its merits or demerits, suggests that the young are still routinely being brought up as their Mycenaean forebears had been (*Republic* Bk X: 595a ff).

One change that should be noted is the gradual decline in emphasis on the acquisition of musical abilities. Themistocles was sneered at for his lack of cultivation as indicated by his poor musical ability ("He had never learned how to tune a lyre or play a harp" [Plutarch, *Themistocles*: 2]). Such a criticism would not appear to have had so much force by the end of the century, notwithstanding Plato's old-fashioned view that the uneducated man is one who has no choric training (*Laws*: 654b).

But if we are focused on elementary education, there is no real reason to suppose, for example, that the arrival of hoplite warfare led specifically to any educational developments, or that the emergence of democracy was responsible for a greater or lesser interest in music education, or even that generally accepted moral and social values changed very much. It is as if both thirteenth-century Mycenae (as perceived through Homer) and fifth-century Athens took it for granted that education was a private responsibility and a matter of character development, and that, apart from the skills of reading and writing, this required little in the way of change even in changing political and social times.

The obvious exception to this (leaving aside what is said about Crete in Plato's *Laws*) is Sparta. Sparta did institute a very specific and distinctive mode of upbringing (*agôge*), the outlines of which are well known: first, this was truly a state system, incumbent on all and overseen by state officials. Second, it involved taking children away to board in a communal setting where they underwent stringent physical and military training, and indoctrination into an ideology focused on the ideals of courage, loyalty, and simplicity—an induction into a brotherhood of warriors. Although it is sometimes said that girls partook of education alongside boys in Sparta, that should be qualified: young girls do seem to have exercised alongside young boys, but to what age this continued is unclear, and it is certain that girls did not enter barracks or undergo true military and survival training. What was behind this slightly different attitude to girls, as contrasted with Athenian practice, is difficult to say. Spartan women were generally deemed to have more freedom than other Greek women, and were hence the butt of various jokes about their sexuality and mannishness. And during the fourth century, as the population of true Spartans (*homoioi*, "equals") diminished, some women appear to have amassed considerable property and wealth. But whether educational practice in regard to girls derived from assumptions about the social and political role of females or vice versa, or whether they both came about for some other reason is unknown.

Whatever the explanation in the case of women, it is widely held that the imposition of the Spartan *agôge* and other features of Spartan culture such as its lack of coinage and distinctive marriage rituals were a direct response to its distinctive political situation. Having enslaved a huge population of *helots* and subordinated a large number of *perioeci* ("those who dwell round about"), a small number of Spartans needed to keep constant watch over their security. The political reality for Spartans was that their way of life demanded military prowess, constant vigilance, brotherhood, and asceticism, so they created a system to ensure the stability and security they needed. (Some might invert the argument, suggesting that their upbringing bred the kind of people who were driven to enslave their various

neighbors, or that their innate character led to their style of education and way of life; but this does not seem very plausible.) It is difficult to say whether their relative lack of artistic or cultural interest and achievement (sometimes disputed) is a consequence of their education or a contributory factor to its relative lack of emphasis on literature.

Difficult though it is to sort out precise cause and effect in regard to details, there can be little doubt that Sparta is an example of a state that developed a certain form of education because of its political situation and ideology. But she is surely the exception that proves the rule. Athens and Sparta exemplify not so much rival theories of education, as different responses to different circumstances.

Elementary education in Hellenistic times continued in recognizably the same form as in the classical period, the main point of interest being that, following Alexander's conquests and the settlement of his veterans and followers of various description across his vast empire, we now see Greek education infiltrating hitherto alien and unknown cultures.

In Republican Rome, education had originally been very much a family affair, with the father taking direct responsibility for the moral welfare of his sons, and subsequently either inducting them into a trade or, in the case of the more powerful families, into politics. Like the Greeks, Romans were concerned about character building, public service or work of some kind, and a degree of cultural refinement (defined or assessed very much according to class). Basic literacy was expected, at least of the wealthier classes, but lacking any body of literature comparable to the Homeric poems and generally exhibiting less artistic awareness and interest than the Greeks, Romans in the early Republic did not place a similar emphasis on music and literature in education. The main concern was cultivating respect for *mos maiorum* ("ancestral custom").

As Rome continued her conquests and enlarged her empire, new perspectives and ideas challenged the old ways, leading figures such as Cato in the second century BC to react in defense of the old and simple virtues of early Rome. But once Rome had finally subdued Greece, as Horace put it, "Greece ... took hold of her crude conqueror and brought sophistication to uneducated Latium" (*Ep* II. 1: 56). But while Greek literature, and indeed many things Greek, became widely fashionable, and Roman schools and teachers began to use Greek texts and *topoi* ("topics") only gradually to be replaced by Roman examples, the Greek enthusiasm for music and athletics were not similarly taken up (despite Juvenal's later reference to *mens sana in corpore sano*, "a healthy mind in a healthy body" [*Sat.* X: 356]). The explanation for the embracing of Greek material surely lies not only in the fact that the Roman corpus of literature was only beginning to emerge with poets such as Virgil and Horace, but also in terms of a cultural snobbery akin to the assumption at other times and places that French was the language of fashion and the repository of the greatest art and truest wisdom.

But while the upper classes may have been preoccupied with matters Greek (and many serious-minded people such as Cicero traveled to Athens to pursue a genuine education in philosophy), the basic elementary schooling to be found in Rome still took place at the feet of the *litterator* (teacher of reading and writing) and the *grammaticus* (teacher of literature), and still involved journeying to and from school in the company of a *paedagogus* (one, usually a slave, who accompanies or leads the child). And just as that word is Greek in origin, so Roman elementary education for the most part still closely resembled that of the Greeks.

Thus, over the course of seven centuries we do not find significant developments in ancient elementary education, despite large-scale political and cultural changes. Although skills in reading and writing progressed, a “core” persisted in both content and pedagogy. By and large, an elementary-aged male was educated in private and learned material based on various forms of Greek literature.

### 3. Higher Education

By contrast, the very origin of higher education in a formal sense owes something to political change, particularly to the rise of Athenian democracy. Three dominant views of higher education arose among the Greeks, all of them initially located in Athens: the Sophistic, the Platonic, and the Isocratic, and each of these deserves consideration.

There is debate over the extent to which the sophists who came to Athens in large numbers during the second half of the fifth century represent either a school or, less concretely, a school of thought (see Chapter 3). Some see their arrival as the direct result of a policy on the part of leaders such as Pericles to turn the city-state into a center of “intellectual excellence” (as modern jargon would have it), very much in the manner that ruling Italian families at one time consciously encouraged artists and thinkers to Urbino or Florence. (e.g., Kerferd 1981). This seems to me untenable (Barrow 2007: Appendix 1). Although Pericles had a real interest in intellectual and artistic matters as well as friendships with various individual sophists, and certainly played an active part (*the* active part, if you like) in the artistic embellishment of the city, it seems altogether more reasonable to say that Athens saw an influx of many diverse thinkers and artists primarily because she provided the requisite freedom, security, and potential wealth for these characters. The blossoming of so much new thinking itself owed a great deal to the recent expansion of horizons brought about primarily by trade and warfare with far-flung foreigners such as the Persians. It is obviously no accident but a direct result of this political opening up of horizons that we see the beginning of history in Herodotus, development in philosophy and change in art and, by extension, thought generally. This new type of thinking came to Athens because of the democratic and prosperous nature of the place. However, the fact that so many came and offered their services in the same place at the same time, even if some of them were actively encouraged by Pericles, does not imply that we have a movement or a school of thought. From the evidence we have, these individuals can in no way be considered a homogeneous group. They varied in their subject matter, their competence, their mode of teaching, and, above all, in their overall view of the world.

Ultimately, we must attribute the birth of higher education to democracy and not to any one individual. Athens at this period cared for and was excited by intellectual inquiry; it also offered its citizens opportunities to talk and act in ways previously unimagined by the mass of people. For better or worse, it invited careerism, one might say. It openly advocated freedom of expression as a political value, and it had the wealth to allow for both the reward and the implementation of at least some new ideas and plans. And all those factors were brought about by democracy. In short, democracy provided freedom and money, freedom and money brought the teachers, and they in turn generated education and thought. This was certainly something new in education, as were various

incidentals such as the status individual sophists acquired and the high fees some of them received, neither of which came the way of lowly *didaskaloi* (“school teachers”). It also involved a view of education rather more akin to our contemporary views and, paradoxically given his fear and distrust of the sophists generally, more in line with Plato’s theoretical view of education as being primarily a matter of the development of mind.

Aristophanes’ *Clouds* presumably reflects a genuine debate or conflict under way in Athens at the time. The conflict in question is between those who thought that new ideas about education were being imported which, besides being foreign, were dangerous and affected, and those who found them invigorating and important. The play seems at times to refer to elementary education, but reference is made explicitly to *meirakia* (“striplings” aged about twenty [*Clouds*, 1.917]), and it is surely aimed at the debate surrounding the teaching of the sophists. It also very likely reflected and intensified a class antagonism between the sons of the well-to-do, who attended on such sophists, and the ordinary citizen, who saw them as poseurs preaching an unsustainable relativism and skepticism. Whatever the actual credibility of individual sophists, there is not much doubt that collectively they led or contributed to an era of debate, questioning, and in some cases rejection of various traditional assumptions and values. Whether Alcibiades was or was not guilty of parodying the Mysteries and damaging the *herms*, it is entirely plausible to suggest that he might have been. Whether or not he had attended lectures with this or that sophist, he was representative of a new kind of thinking and feeling—the new way that was sweeping upper-class Athenians off their feet.

And in this case, not only do we have a cause, we also have an effect. While historians will continue to sift through the evidence concerning the conduct and rhetoric surrounding the Peloponnesian War, including such ventures as the Syracusan expedition, the treatment of the Mytilenians, and the enslavement and slaughter of the Melians, we may still conclude, without relying on the cynical debate recorded by Thucydides (Bk. V: 84ff.) and with due acknowledgment that some of these events might have occurred anyway, that a major factor was the leadership of men such as Alcibiades educated in the manner that they were. And while individual demagogues such as Hyperbolus, Cleon, and Cleophon may or may not have danced close attendance on individual sophists, it is clear that they too exhibited and reflected the intellectual and moral tenor of the age. Clearly, that tenor was partly the product of sophistic teachings. (Unless one takes the view that sophistry was not a contributory cause but a consequence of the cynicism of the age brought about by war, which is possible, but unconvincing.) Similarly, the suspension of democracy in 411 and the rule of the 30 tyrants in 404 were supported by some who must have subscribed to the sort of thinking that had been systematically encouraged by their higher education. Argument may persist over precisely what effect Socrates’ teaching, Plato’s thinking, and Euripides’ and Aristophanes’ plays had politically or culturally, but there is not much doubt that they contributed to the higher education of many Athenians.

The sophists, then, certainly contributed to the growth of relativism and cynicism on the one hand, and the expansion of free and innovative thinking on the other. Plato had his own agenda in painting them in dark and mocking colors: he was at pains to distinguish both the motives and manner of philosophy from that of sophistry and to stress that thinking should not be commercialized, trivialized, or reduced to technique, and that it must have a moral dimension. Who knows what motivated Plato (other than

Socrates), but we can see that in his legacy we have the beginnings of the idea of study for its own sake and the institutionalization of education in the Academy, perhaps involving study particularly geared to the art of governing, but certainly at odds with “making the worse cause appear the better,” as Aristophanes had depicted the new education.

There was also a third view of higher education, to be found in the approach of Isocrates. Though sometimes dismissed as tedious and pedantic, Isocrates is important as he is in many ways the precursor of subsequent Roman rhetoric. Some critics feel that he offered a training in technique that ignored content, but that seems an unfair judgment considering the evident interest in substantive issues to be found in his writing. But it is true that he placed emphasis on procedure, principles, and rules for successful argument, whereas Plato emphasized truth and understanding. And it is also true that the teaching of Roman rhetoric during the principate had more in common with Isocrates than Plato.

The Hellenistic age brought with it some significant educational developments, but not any particularly noteworthy changes in its nature. Thus, the typical content and methodology remained much the same as in the classical period, but the pattern of Greek education now spread through the known world in the thousands of Greek settlements that arose. The *ephebeia*, the period of military training that began at the age of 18, had become important by the end of the fourth century and became more organized and significant in Hellenistic times (see Chapter 11). In general terms, higher education, whether consciously following Isocrates or not, became more formalized and mechanical, no doubt partly because Alexander’s successors were all effectively autocratic rulers, and there was little encouragement or scope for the free-thinking of a Socratic type in politics or culture.

Antiquarian scholarship or exegesis, however, thrived in the hands of clerical figures such as Callimachus who were employed in the newly founded museums and libraries. These foundations at places such as Alexandria and Pergamum represent one educational development that arose directly out of the political situation. The museum at Alexandria, of which the library was a part, was dedicated to the Muses as a place to preserve and study accumulated wisdom. The idea of a locus for the preservation of wisdom is something significantly new (Plato’s and other academies or schools being primarily places of teaching and communal learning) and comes about for three main reasons: first, rulers such as the Ptolemies in Egypt had enormous wealth, which allowed for growth and specifically for the building, purchasing of manuscripts, hiring of staff, and so forth. Second, literacy was becoming increasingly more widespread, and writing materials more diversified. (And one might add that successors of Alexander such as Ptolemy were well-educated individuals.) But third, and perhaps most important, the Greeks were now exiles abroad: as at the height of the Roman Empire, initially at least, the Greeks in Egypt, Pergamum, Ephesus, and thousands of other lesser settlements lived parallel rather than integrated lives with local populations, bringing their culture with them (as the archeological evidence of countless gymnasia throughout the Hellenistic world alone makes clear). Greeks still needed to distinguish themselves from the “*barbaroi*” (originally, all those who do not speak Greek) whom they had conquered, to solace themselves with memories of home, and to flaunt their cultural superiority. Hence, there was a premium on Greek literature and art, and hence the museums to house the collections.



We have seen that, at the elementary level, the Romans first took on Greek literature in the schools in the absence of any adequate Roman material and then continued to embrace it as a model of excellence, even after the emergence of poets such as Virgil and Horace and prose writers such as Cicero. The main preoccupation for Rome was, of course, running an enormous empire. With a largely agrarian economy, supplemented by taxes and tribute of various kinds, and an enormous number of slaves, upper-class Romans really had very little to do other than engage in government in one capacity or another. Thus, higher education was seen very much in terms of the *cursus honorum* (career path): a succession of administrative, military, and political positions. Some individuals (one suspects few) had the genuine love of culture and learning to be found in, say, Cicero. But most were probably not particularly interested in reading Virgil and were happy to leave such “intellectual” tasks as accounting, cataloging, drafting regulations, and other tasks requiring serious prior schooling, to an array of foreign slaves and freedmen. Nero’s obsession with music, dance, and theater is almost certainly both much exaggerated and, more importantly, atypical (which would explain why contemporary or near contemporary sources tend to ridicule his passions).

The consequence of this state of affairs was that the study of rhetoric became effectively the only form of higher education that had much appeal or use for an upper-class individual. Following in the tradition of Isocrates rather than Plato (despite the hold the latter continued to have over a small band of professional scholars culminating in the neoplatonism of later Christian thinkers), the Roman upper class could see the value of being able to speak in an accomplished and persuasive manner in order to participate effectively in the spheres of politics, law, and diplomacy. This produced some admirable thinkers and speakers such as Cicero—men who had great technical skill and formal understanding of the rules of sound reasoning and the pattern of effective presentation, but who also developed that ability within the context of substantive thought and moral awareness and concern. That was still the ostensible aim of an education in rhetoric for Quintilian, but over time there seems little doubt that the study and practice of rhetoric became something of a fossilized skill, a consequence mainly of its growing lack of relevance in a society increasingly dominated by the power and force of individual emperors. It is true that Vespasian endowed chairs in rhetoric, but on the whole, higher education gradually became a formal rather than a meaningful experience.

## 4. Conclusion

The argument presented here is that so far as elementary education goes, there was not a great deal of development throughout the history of the ancient world, and such as there was had little to do with cultural, social, or political change, but rather with technological advances (e.g., the emergence of writing, slate, book, etc.). Furthermore, thinking about education, though important to certain individuals, never generated much public or official interest. There is no evidence of widespread enthusiasm for the topic, and the state at no time seems to have thought it desirable or necessary to institutionalize the process. At the practical level, in elementary education there was a slow and fairly minor shift in emphasis from character training and cultural attainment to intellectual development, which both reflects increased knowledge of the world and,

more specifically, response to wider cultural surroundings. The only noteworthy change in organization is an increase in the number of schools, which does not mean very much more than that more people were taught in groups rather than individually.

Why is this, especially given that there were some momentous political and social changes during this lengthy time period? It is partly because, despite the political changes, the way of life for the majority of people—living off the land or engaged in a trade—did not change very much. Technological, economic, and social change were all very slow in comparison to today's world. The majority of people in the sixth century BC and the second century AD alike would have spent their lives focused on making a living and raising a family.

In the case of higher education, however, there was that important flourishing of genuine intellectual inquiry brought about by the emergence of democracy. Athenian democracy created an environment for free speech that was directly responsible for the Platonic view of education as the cultivation of the mind and Isocrates' development of the art of rhetoric. Both attitudes toward education persisted in the ancient world in the face of various political and cultural changes. It was not until Christianity became dominant throughout the Roman world and took on the task of education that a dramatic change occurred in terms of content. Although this change took centuries to make itself felt, Christianity ultimately supplanted the pagan material that formed the basis of ancient education. Furthermore, industrialization and the rise of the modern economy opened up opportunities for public education on a mass scale. Despite the significant changes in education brought about by Christianity and the modern political project, the legacy of ancient education is nonetheless an inspiration to this day.

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## CHAPTER 19

# The Education of Women in Ancient Rome

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*Emily A. Hemelrijk*

The young woman had many charms apart from her youthful beauty. She was well versed in literature, in playing the lyre, and in geometry, and had been accustomed to listen to philosophical discourses with profit. In addition to this, she had a nature which was free from that unpleasant meddlesomeness which such accomplishments are apt to impart to young women.

(Plut., *Pomp.* 55 about Pompey's fifth wife, Cornelia; transl. Loeb series, slightly adapted)

### 1. Introduction

Roman women lived in a male-dominated world. Men had the exclusive right of public office—political, military, and legal—and determined the standards of public morality, both for themselves and for women. Roman education also centered on men; it prepared boys of upper-class families for a public career. The notion of a uniform Greco-Roman education, divided into three clearly defined stages—elementary education by the *magister ludi*, literary tuition by a *grammaticus*, culminating in the study of rhetoric (Marrou 1965; Clarke 1971; Bonner 1977)—is now mostly rejected. Recent studies draw attention to the great diversity within Greek and Roman education, speaking of “educations” rather than “education” (Too 2001: 16). This broader perspective provides room for the inclusion of new groups, not only men of the non-elite classes, but also women. It is in this vein that we may approach the highly varied educational opportunities for Roman girls and women.

In this chapter, I shall discuss the education of Roman women in the best-documented period: the late republic and the first three centuries of the empire. I shall look at women's opportunities to receive education, the kinds of education they received, the levels they could reach, and the judgments that were passed on them. My focus will be on Rome and Italy, with occasional forays into the western, Latin-speaking provinces (see Criore 2001: 74–101 for women's education in Hellenistic and Roman Egypt).

Though concentrating on women of the elite, for whose education most evidence is available, I shall try also to throw some light on the educational opportunities for women of the professional classes. Here, our sources are scarce, and much must be inferred from circumstantial evidence. Poor women, especially those living in the countryside, fall outside the scope of this chapter for lack of evidence; unlike most wealthy and upper-class women in urban environments, they are usually assumed to have been illiterate.

## 2. Educational Opportunities and Levels of Education

In the Roman world, the common goal of male education—to prepare boys for a public career or profession—was lacking for girls, who according to tradition were brought up solely for marriage and motherhood. Seen in this light, the literary education of upper-class men was superfluous for women; according to some sources, it even harmed their morals. In practice, however, the boundaries between male and female education were more flexible: some schools were coeducational, and many wealthy families had teachers at home to instruct their children, both boys and girls. We may assume that these boys and girls were taught from the same books and followed the same curriculum (Morgan 1998: 48). Nevertheless, the absence of a well-defined aim for female education, and the early age of marriage of most Roman girls—in their mid or late teens—caused their education to be less extensive and more haphazard than that of their male relatives. Not only were far fewer girls educated, but their education did not last as long. Moreover, their opportunities to receive an education depended greatly on individual circumstances, such as their domicile, the wealth and standing of their families, their access to books and private libraries, and the inclination of the family to spend money on the education of daughters (Hemelrijk 1999: 18–30). In short, the education of Roman women was deeply inconsistent: taken as a whole, it lagged behind that of men, but because of women’s dependency on individual circumstances, some could be highly educated, rivaling men in their literary skills and the style of their letters.

Women’s opportunities to learn the three Rs (reading, writing, and reckoning) were mainly determined by their domicile in a city where schools were available and by the wealth and class of their families. According to a cautious estimate by William Harris, fewer—perhaps far fewer—than ten percent of Roman women of the late republic and high empire were literate. This includes all women of the elite classes in our period, and at least some women of well-to-do, urban families outside the decurial elite and of the professional classes (Harris 1989: 252–253, 259, 263, 266, 270–271). Harris’s “minimalist view” of ancient literacy has been criticized in recent studies (Humphrey 1991; Johnson and Parker 2009), which posit a wider dispersal and more varied uses and levels of literacy in the Roman world. Though none of the articles in these volumes focus on women, the studies imply that, in Italy and the urbanized Mediterranean regions of the Latin West, a limited, functional literacy may well have extended beyond women of upper-class families to women working in manufacturing and crafts and that some degree of literacy—if only the ability to read one’s name in an inscription—may be supposed for a greater number of women of the “inscribing classes.”

Studies of women’s occupations in retail and craft (Kampen 1981, 1982; Holleran 2013; Groen-Vallinga 2013) show that some women worked in professions that require

various levels of literacy, ranging from the full competence in reading and writing expected of female physicians (*medicae*) and perhaps midwives (*obstetrices*) (see Flemming 2007, 2013; Parker 2012; Laes 2010), to elementary literacy and numeracy for female retailers (Holleran 2013). Most of these women may have been trained as slaves or have learned their trade within their families. The well-known Roman relief showing a butcher and a woman who is usually taken to be his wife (Figure 19.1) may be taken as representative of an accepted division of labor within the professional classes. While he is busy carving the meat, she sits in a high-backed chair, fashionably coiffed and wearing the full dress of the upper-class *matrona*. The stylus and writing tablets in her hands, however, show that she is not the leisured *matrona* we might take her for, but a working woman, probably a co-working wife managing the accounts of the butcher's shop (cf. Haines-Eitzen 1998 on female scribes and record keepers). Of course, the actual competence in reading and writing of such professional women must have varied greatly. Yet it is likely that women working in skilled occupations acquired at least a limited degree of literacy and numeracy, since they needed it for their trade.

The ability to read the large letters of formulaic inscriptions (cf. Petron., *Sat.* 58.7: *lapidarias litteras scio*) may have extended somewhat below the social level of skilled craftsmen. Women of the “inscribing classes”—a suitably vague term for members of those classes who had the literate mentality and means to set up inscriptions—set up funerary inscriptions for their relatives as well as votive inscriptions to the gods (Spickermann 1994). Though such inscriptions do not actually *prove* the women's literacy, they do show their high regard for the written word and their wish to immortalize their loved ones, themselves, or their offerings to the gods in writing. Public graffiti and short messages scratched into the plaster of the interior walls of houses in Pompeii presuppose male *and* female readers, and even imply that some women were involved in



**Figure 19.1** Marble funerary relief of a butcher and his wife (?) from Rome, second century AD. © Skulpturensammlung, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden (Inv. No. ZV 44). (Photo: Elke Estel, Dresden.)

producing the graffiti (Bernstein 1988; Benefiel 2011; Levin-Richardson 2013), though women's names remain a minority in graffiti, as in public inscriptions (Hemelrijk 2013). At the higher end of the social scale, the Vindolanda Tablets show that Sulpicia Lepidina and Claudia Severa, women of the officers' class who lived in the Roman camps along Hadrian's Wall in northern Britain, exchanged letters dictated to a scribe, to which Claudia Severa added the closing words in her own hand (Bowman and Thomas 1994: 256–265, nos. 291–293; Hemelrijk 1999: 191–192, 200–202).

Taken together, the evidence suggests a variegated pattern, showing different levels of literacy among women of the sub-elite urban classes. The scale ranged from full competence or a more limited functional literacy and numeracy among skilled workers, to the ability to read the names of the dedicator and deceased, or deity, in simple funerary and votive inscriptions, which no doubt was characteristic of a wider group of women of the inscribing classes. It is impossible to estimate how many women had at least a rudimentary knowledge of letters and numbers. Obviously, in Roman society, literate women were far outnumbered by literate men, as well as outdone by them in terms of the level of their proficiency. In view of women's limited opportunities to receive formal schooling, Harris's "less than ten percent" may be a fair guess, but we should bear in mind that literate communities such as Roman cities offered ample opportunities to learn some letters, even for those who lacked formal training. There is no reason to suppose that women were excluded from such opportunities to learn letters from the inscriptions, public and domestic graffiti, announcements of public events, and other written notices that abounded in Roman cities (Franklin 1991).

In considering women's competence in reading and writing literary texts, especially poetry, which was the province of the *grammaticus*, we are confined—with the exception of professional entertainers such as actresses—to the wealthy and elite classes. There is considerable evidence for the Greco-Roman literary education of girls of upper-class families, but most is anecdotal. For example, we find Pompey's daughter Pompeia reading an unfortunate passage from Homer's *Iliad* to her father when he returned from his campaigns ("You came back from the war; I wish you had died there," a quote from Helen to Paris, *Iliad* 3.428; the story told by Plut. *Quaest. Conv.* 9.1.3; see Hemelrijk 1999: 22); and poor Minicia Marcella in Ticinum, who died just before her wedding day at the tender age of thirteen, had received a full education in literature and the liberal arts. Pliny (*Ep.* 5.16) praises her kindness to her teachers and her industry and intelligence in her studies (see Hemelrijk 1999: 60–61). Referring to the level of education of such girls in a matter-of-fact way, the sources suggest that a good literary education was common for girls of the highest classes in Rome and also for some girls of local elite families in the urban centers of Italy and the provinces (Hemelrijk 1999: 21–58). The brief characterization of the young Christian martyr Perpetua in Carthage in northern Africa in 203 as "well-born, well educated, and respectably married" (*Passio* 2.1: *honeste nata, liberaliter instituta, matronaliter nupta*) shows the extent to which a Greco-Roman literary education had come to be an identifying mark of the urban elites also for women in the provinces (on Perpetua's education: Shaw 1993; McKechnie 1994: a full course with a *grammaticus*; Ameling 2012 is skeptical about the level of her education).

What is apparent from the evidence is the great variety in the level and content of girls' education. This is connected with the haphazard nature and variable duration of their study, which, in the absence of a fixed aim, was highly dependent on individual

circumstances such as their age at marriage, the presence of private tutors, the availability of books, and an appreciation of learning, also for girls, in the family. Since most upper-class girls seem to have been taught at home during the advanced stages of their education, their educational level and curriculum depended on their individual capacities and the wishes of their parents and tutors. Literary education, especially Greek and Roman poetry, seems to have been the core, but philosophy, geometry, and sometimes even prose composition—which was strictly speaking the province of the rhetorician—could also be part of their training (cf. McKechnie 1994 on Perpetua's education). Music lessons might also be on the curriculum (see the passage from Plutarch at the head of this chapter). But even in the most favorable circumstances, early marriage must have left upper-class girls only half-educated in comparison with their male relatives, who at that age progressed to the final stage of their education: training in public speaking with a rhetorician.

### 3. Praise and Blame: The Controversial Education of Roman Women

For Roman women, marriage formed the major turning point in their lives, transforming them from girls into adult *matronae*. In terms of education, however, the transition was less abrupt. Anecdotes relate that some upper-class girls took the tutors of their childhood with them to their new homes; others hired or bought learned men, often Greeks, to serve as their tutors in literature, philosophy, or even rhetoric (Suet., *Gramm.* 16 and 19). Apart from this, women of upper-class urban families had other opportunities to improve their education: they could attend public recitations or performances in the theater or participate in cultured dinner parties during which a book was read or a play performed (Plin., *Ep.* 9.36.4; Parker 2009: 203–206, 208–209, 213). Though such events added to their cultural literacy, we should not exaggerate the effect on their education. At best, it heightened the literary awareness of those who were already well educated.

A more important way for women to improve their education must have been reading books from the family library or from their own collections of books. However, women's reading habits are hard to determine. Our sources differentiate what women would—or should—read according to age. The writers of love poetry and epigrams saw young women as appreciative readers of their poems; more mature women, on the other hand, were expected to turn to moral philosophy as a dignified refuge against the blows of fortune. Women's alleged interest in poetry or moral philosophy at different stages in their lives is in line with their training in grammar and the liberal arts, but in practice women's reading must have varied greatly depending on the presence and content of a family library, the learning and literary preferences of their relatives, and, of course, their own interests and capacities. Two philosophical works dedicated to women whose names are unknown (Nicomachus, *Enchiridion* 1 and 12; Diogenes Laertius 3.47) testify to the sincerity of their interests and the level of their education, which seems to be that of a well-informed reader, who apart from her grammatical curriculum had at least a basic knowledge of philosophy and mathematics. The deferential



language of both philosophers toward their female addressees suggests an asymmetrical relationship; possibly they had been engaged as private teachers of these women (Hemelrijk 1999: 38–57; Levick 2002).

Obviously, this is all about the upper echelons of Roman society, in which women like Cornelia, mother of the Gracchi, were praised for their excellent style of speaking and writing (Hemelrijk 1999: 24–25, 64–67, 193–196; Dixon 2007). Yet, with the growing wealth and the spread of education from the late republic onward, we encounter an increasing number of educated women in our sources. The more complicated social roles of women of the prosperous classes, in entertaining guests and visiting relatives and friends, for instance, required an ability to keep up a cultivated conversation, for which some literary education was required. Moreover, these propertied women needed some education to run their large households, administer their estates, and support the (political and financial) interests of their husbands and other relatives (Treggiari 2007; Gardner 1990, 1993: 85–109, and 1995; Hemelrijk 1999: 71–75). Consequently, in the upper classes, a good education was an asset for women, too, and, given the time and expense it involved, it was a mark of their high social status. During the imperial period, we find well-educated women not only in the highest circles in Rome, but increasingly also among the local elites of Italy and the provinces. In addition to her mastery of Latin, Aemilia Pudentilla, the wealthy wife of Apuleius in North African Oea, was able to write excellent letters in Greek (Apul., *Apol.* 30.11; 82–84; 87.5–6), and Oscia Modesta, a city patroness of senatorial rank from northern Africa known to us only through inscriptions, composed her own funerary elegy in archaizing, pseudo-Homeric Greek (Hemelrijk 2004). As a mark of high status, a good education was also coveted by social climbers outside the elite. On her tomb, Ninnia Primilla, priestess of Ceres (*sacerdos Cereriae!*) in the small Italian town of Pinna Vestina, addresses the passer-by in elegiac verse: “I was born of freed parents, who were poor in property, but noble in mind. However, brought up in every respect with the care befitting a *matrona*, I am adorned with all good arts” (*CLE 1125: Sum libertinis ego nata parentibus ambis / pauperibus censu, moribus ingenuis. / Sed m[at]r[on]ali nutrita [pe]r omnia cura / [artibus et cun]ctis sum decora[ta b]on[is]*).

The increasing number of educated women in the upper classes and their widening curriculum—including not only Greek and Latin poetry, but also some philosophy, geometry, prose composition (letters and memoirs), and in some cases music and dance—gave rise to sharp criticism. Women engaging Greek scholars to improve their education met with ridicule (Lucian, *Merc. Cond.* 36), and educated women were accused of all sorts of vices, especially sexual licentiousness, pretension, and meddlesomeness. The common denominator of these—at first sight unrelated—defects is the idea that a liberal education distracted women from the traditional ideals of the Roman *matrona* (modesty, chastity, and domesticity), turning them into unfaithful or unbearable wives. The Stoic philosopher Musonius Rufus summarizes some of the charges (which he subsequently refutes) as follows:

Women who associate with philosophers are bound to be arrogant for the most part and presumptuous, in that abandoning their own households and turning to the company of men they practice speeches, talk like sophists, and analyze syllogisms, when they ought to be sitting at home spinning. (Mus. Ruf., *fragm.* III, 54–58; transl. Lutz 1947: 43)

Roman criticism of educated women usually does not question their learning as such, but in depicting them as sexually dissolute (Sall., *Cat.* 25 on Sempronia) or insufferable wives, it questions their morals or even their femininity. In line with the traditional opinion that during dinner women were to be seen and not heard, Juvenal's caricature of an educated woman domineering dinner-table conversation presents her as adopting the wrong (i.e., male) gender role:

But most intolerable of all is the woman who as soon as she has reclined for dinner recommends Virgil, pardons the dying Dido, and pits the poets against each other, putting Virgil in the one scale and Homer in the other. The grammarians give way to her; the rhetoricians give in, all fall silent .... If she is so determined to prove herself excessively learned and eloquent, she ought to tuck up her tunic knee-high, sacrifice a pig to Silvanus, and take a penny-bath. (Juv. 6.434–439 and 445–447; Loeb transl., slightly adapted)

As seems clear from these examples, female education was regarded as a mixed blessing. Though education could be a mark of wealth and high status, educated women ran the risk of being associated with actresses and professional entertainers, some of whose accomplishments they shared, or of being accused of trespassing into the male domain of learning and erudition. Some traditionally minded husbands, therefore, resisted the education of their wives (Sen., *Cons. Helv.* 17, 3–4; Hemelrijk 1999: 40–41, 77). More appreciative husbands addressed themselves to the education of their young wives, claiming that it was by and for them that their wives learned to understand literature or write cultivated letters. Pliny's description of his young wife, Calpurnia, is a good example:

Her affection for me has given her an interest in literature. My writings are continually in her hands; she reads them again and again and even learns them by heart. How full of solicitude she is when I am entering upon a cause! How happy she is when it is over! She stations messengers to be kept informed of the reception and applause I receive, and what verdict I win in the case. When I recite my works, she sits nearby, concealed behind a curtain, and greedily drinks in my praises. She sings my verses and sets them to her lyre, with no other teacher but love, who is the best instructor. (Plin., *Ep.* 4.19; Hemelrijk 1999: 32–33)

Though he praises his wife for her zeal, Pliny ignores her formal education, attributing her achievements solely to marital love. Yet her ability to appreciate her husband's writings, and to put his verses to music, presupposes a full curriculum by a grammarian and music lessons during her childhood. By presenting her literary interests and abilities as prompted solely by her love for him, Pliny stresses her traditional female virtues and, at the same time, justifies her education. In a similar vein, educated women could be praised for their ability to supervise the education of their sons, starting with the excellent education that Cornelia, mother of the Gracchi, gave to hers. Quintilian's remark that both parents should be as highly educated as possible (Quint. 1.1.6) shows that women's education was appreciated in this respect. However, the "ideal of educated motherhood" (Hemelrijk 1999: 64–71) should not be regarded as the initial reason for girls' education, but rather as its subsequent justification in the face of criticism. Likewise, some philosophers, such as Musonius Rufus (*fragm.* 3 and 4) and Plutarch, defended women's education, especially the study of moral philosophy, in traditional terms. The study of philosophy was intended

to strengthen women's self-restraint and protect them against immodest behavior and superstition, thus teaching them to be good wives and mothers:

Studies of this sort, in the first place, divert women from all untoward conduct; for a woman studying geometry will be ashamed to be a dancer, and she will not swallow any beliefs in magic charms while she is under the charm of Plato's or Xenophon's words. And if anybody professes power to pull down the moon from the sky, she will laugh at the ignorance and stupidity of women who believe these things, in as much as she herself is not unschooled in astronomy. (Plut., *Praec. Coni.* 48 (*Mor.* 145C); Loeb transl.; Hemelrijk 1999: 60–64)

In sum, critics and defenders of women's education were united in their appeal to the traditional female virtues. As is also apparent in Plutarch's brief description of Cornelia, Pompey's young wife, quoted at the head of this chapter, women's education was an ambivalent quality, bringing them both praise and blame. Though valued as a mark of wealth and high status—and therefore increasingly found in elite families and among those who aspired to elite status—female education was considered to be acceptable only in so far as it could be presented as contributing to their conventional role as wives and mothers.

#### 4. Patronage of Literature and Learning: The Example of Argentaria Polla

Women's learning in adult life was largely shaped by their training as girls, which in the most favorable circumstances consisted of a full course with a grammarian, sometimes including the liberal arts and philosophy. As a rule, oratory formed no part of their education. The rare examples of a woman studying rhetoric (Julia Domna: Philostratus *VA* 1.3; Hemelrijk 1999: 122–126; Levick 2007: 107–123) or being praised for her oratorical proficiency (Hortensia: App. *BC* 32–33; Quint. 1.1.6; Val. Max. 8.3.3) may be explained as the result of an exceptional position as an empress, of inherited talent or, possibly, of home tuition. Poetry, however, figured prominently in women's literary pursuits: not only were there a few female poets and a wider group of women writing amateur poetry (Hemelrijk 1999: 146–184), but well-educated women read poetry and some women commissioned poems for special occasions or even patronized poets on a regular basis. By looking at the way women were represented in the poems written for them, we may gain some insight into the level and appreciation of their education.

As an example, I take Argentaria Polla, the widow of the poet Lucan (who was forced to commit suicide in 65 CE because of his participation in Piso's conspiracy against the emperor Nero). Five poems, one by Statius and four by Martial, bear witness to Argentaria Polla's patronage of these poets (Hemelrijk 1999: 129–138, 141–145; Nauta 2002: 70, 87, 89, 223–225, 241–242). Four of the poems, the long "Birthday Poem of Lucan" by Statius (*Silvae* 2.7: *Genethliacon Lucani*) and a cycle of three short epigrams by Martial (*Ep.* 7.21–23), were written for the same occasion: the posthumous celebration of what would probably have been Lucan's fiftieth birthday, almost twenty-five years after his death. Though focusing on their praise of Lucan, both poets make it clear that it was his widow Argentaria Polla who commissioned, and paid for, the poems. Statius mentions

her wealth (*census*) and learning (*docta*) and alludes to her patronage in the preface to his second book of *Silvae* (2 *Ep.* 22–24), and Martial strategically addresses her in the first and last poems of his cycle. Despite these references to her education and her appreciation of poetry, her traditional qualities take center stage: Argentaria Polla is presented first and foremost as Lucan's devoted wife and widow. Statius takes care to insert his allusions to her wealth and learning in a list of her more conventional female virtues: her chastity, beauty, simplicity, kindness, charm, and grace (*Silvae* 2.7. 62, 83, 85–86). Thus, her education and literary patronage are presented as embedded in her conventional role as Lucan's loving wife and widow.

The resemblance among the four poems for Lucan's posthumous anniversary has been attributed to the influence of the patroness, who—as is apparent from Statius' preface—organized the celebration and commissioned the poems (Hardie 1983: 70–71 on “patron-guidance”). This makes it likely that she also wanted to be depicted in such traditional terms. Yet, we should not take her portrait at face value, nor should we assume that the ancient readers did so. The hints at her literary education and the fact that poetry was addressed to her clearly distinguish her from the traditional Roman wife and widow. This is the more striking if she can be identified with another lady who patronized poets: Polla, the wife of Statius' patron Pollius Felix (Statius, *Silv.* 2.2; Nisbet 1978; Nauta 2002: 223–225). Though hard to prove, this identification is not impossible. Remarriage was common for young widows—and encouraged by the Augustan marital laws—and devotion to a deceased first husband was considered laudable and not incompatible with love and fidelity to a second (Treggiari 1991; Statius, *Silv.* 3.5.50–54). In sum, though Argentaria Polla's mourning for Lucan may well be sincere, her portrait as the devoted widow should not close our eyes to the fact that she also had a more rounded existence as a well-educated literary patroness, possibly happily remarried, and a mother and grandmother.

Some years later, Martial sent Argentaria Polla a poem as a present, together with some books of his poetry, as he often did with his male patrons. In the poem, Martial again extols Lucan (who had now been dead for over thirty years) as well as alluding to Polla's education and literary patronage. Deferentially addressing Polla as his *regina* (queen; read: patroness), he asks for a sympathetic reading of his playful poems, quoting in his defense an obscene verse from a now lost work by her late husband.

If you, Polla, my queen, will handle my little volumes, accept my poetic jests with no frowning look. He, your own bard, the glory of our Helicon, although on his Pierian trumpet he resoundingly sang of wild wars, yet he did not blush to write in playful verse: “If I am not being buggered, Cotta, what am I doing here?”

(Mart., *Ep.* 10.64; Loeb transl., slightly adapted and Sullivan 1991: 70–71)

Though somewhat crude, the scurrilous quotation at the end of the poem may be regarded as a compliment since it demonstrated her knowledge of the poetic genre; at the same time, the poem reminded the reader of her marriage to Lucan. Both aspects must have been to her liking. The emphasis on her marriage to Lucan not only presented her in the conventional role of the devoted widow, but it also enhanced her social status because of his senatorial rank and his fame as a poet. In patronizing poets in this way, Argentaria Polla honored her deceased husband and at the same time reminded the

reader of her elevated position as the widow of a senator and a wealthy, well-educated woman herself. Patronage of poets allowed her the best of both worlds: it enabled her to display her wealth, high standing, and elite education in an unobtrusive way, while being publicly praised for her adherence to the pristine Roman virtues.

In view of the controversial nature of women's liberal education, patronage of literature and learning was one of few the ways in which women could display their education without incurring censure. Of course, it was limited to the happy few: those women who were both sufficiently wealthy and well educated. We find patronesses of literature and learning mainly among the highest echelons of Roman society, among empresses and other women of the imperial family (e.g., Octavia, Plotina, and Julia Domna) and senatorial women such as Cornelia, mother of the Gracchi, but also among some women of less elevated or provincial background, such as Argentaria Polla and Martial's Spanish patroness Marcella (Hemelrijk 1999: 97–45). These patronesses were part of a social milieu in which appreciation of poetry and philosophy was fashionable, among women as well as men. Martial and Statius praise several women—not necessarily patronesses—for their appreciation of poetry (e.g., the wealthy widow Violentilla, remarried to the literary patron Arruntius Stella: *Silvae* 1.2; Martial, *Ep.* 6.21, 7.15, and 50). Possibly in imitation of the empresses and other high-ranking women, these well-educated female patrons used their wealth and education to favor poets and men of learning, earning renown and immortality as the dedicatees of their poetry and philosophical works.

## 5. Conclusion

When we survey the evidence for the education of Roman women, no definite conclusions can be drawn as regards the numbers of literate women or the level of their education. Since far fewer girls than boys attended school, we may assume that fewer girls were literate and that, as a rule, their level of competence lagged behind that of boys. This does not always hold true in individual cases: the absence of a fixed aim of female education and women's dependency on their personal circumstances and the wealth and inclination of their families meant that the level of their education was highly varied. Though only a minority of women were fully literate, the evidence suggests that in the late republic and the imperial period, a basic or limited level of literacy and numeracy extended beyond the upper classes to women engaged in craft or trade and, in a more general sense, to women of well-to-do urban families who set up votive or funerary inscriptions. Setting up an inscription does not actually prove the literacy of the dedicator, but it does suggest that he or she valued writing and may have been able to read the large letters of simple inscriptions. We may assume that not all of these women received formal schooling; some must have learned letters when practicing their trade or from the numerous written notices in Roman cities.

Though the evidence for female literacy is scant, the literary education of women of the propertied classes received a great deal of attention from ancient authors. As we have seen, women's education in poetry and the liberal arts, sometimes including philosophy and musical training, was controversial. On the one hand, it was a sign of wealth and high social status and, for that reason, imitated by women aspiring to elite status; but it was mistrusted by the traditionally minded as diverting women from the conventional

standards of female behavior, thus threatening a woman's moral reputation. The ferocity with which some authors attacked, or defended, women's education shows that educated women were a highly visible group, perhaps growing in numbers and visibility over the first centuries of the empire (Huskinson 1999). Despite the traditional terms in which women's education was defended (to make them better wives and mothers) or criticized (it turned them into unbearable or unfaithful wives), it was taken seriously enough to elicit public debate. The evidence for literary patronesses shows that at least some women were aware of the controversy surrounding their studies and took care to have their activities presented as part of their traditional female role as devoted wives, widows, or mothers. Their example shows that the traditional terms of praise should not always be taken at face value; they may hide the much more complex social life of the wealthy, well-educated Roman woman.

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## CHAPTER 20

# The Education of Women in Ancient Greece<sup>1</sup>

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*Aleksander Wolicki*

### 1. Household and Professional Work

A free woman in Greece, especially from a citizen family, was brought up to be a housewife. Her duties included caring for children, cleaning, and cooking (Plato “generously” admitted that women even surpassed men in cooking, *Rep.* 455c). Education in this area took place in a “natural” way, through observation and imitation. The mother–daughter relationship was very significant, since the girl was expected to duplicate her mother’s social role. A unique terracotta from Tanagra, dated to the first quarter of the fifth century BCE, provides us with a scene of tuition: the mother cooks something in a big pot, while her daughter observes and tries to emulate her mother’s actions (Neils and Oakley 2003: 257, fig. 61). A scene from Erinna’s poem *Distaff* offers a rare insight into this intimate and at the same time everyday relationship, in which a mother summons her daughter to set about salting meat or, it is difficult to resolve because of the bad condition of the text, for spinning wool (fr. 1, 12–15 Plant).

Girls’ education probably began at around seven years of age, because at this age there was differentiation between the sexes: boys started to leave the house, whereas girls remained at home with their mothers until marriage (Hes., *Op.* 520; *agoge* in Sparta began at this age, Cartledge 2001: 113). In addition to learning specific tasks, girls also received a moral education. Through the story of Ischomachos’ wife, as related in Xenophon’s *Oeconomicus*, we learn that her mother taught her “sense,” *sophrosyne* (7.6, cf. 14). This is widely understood as moderation (*enkrateia*) in various aspects: restraint

in eating and drinking, marital fidelity, and obedience. Indeed, *sophrosyne* encompassed the social expectations of a girl on the threshold of adulthood (semantics of *sophrosyne*, North 1966, cf. Bourland Huizenga 2010; the distinction between male and female *sophrosyne*, Arist., *Pol.* 1260a, 20–24 and 1277b, 20–21).

Once she was married, the skills which a girl had acquired in the home were put to the test. The hero of *Lysias' Speech I* presents a newly wedded wife in this way: “[she] was a clever, frugal housekeeper and kept everything in the nicest order” (*Lys.* 1.7, tr. W. R. M. Lamb, cf. tombstone inscription *IG II<sup>2</sup> 12254*: “Here lies Nikarete. She was a hard-working and frugal wife”). The test did not always go so favorably. Ischomachos says about his new wife: “[s]he was not yet 15 years old when she came to me, and up to that time she had lived in leading-strings, seeing, hearing, and saying as little as possible” (*Oec.* 7.5, tr. E. C. Marchant). The description smacks of rhetorical exaggeration, but in a world where girls were given for marriage at the age of 15, rarely was a new young wife prepared to undertake all the duties expected of the mistress of the house. Hesiod explicitly recommended taking a young wife, precisely because she would be more amenable to education (*Op.* 699). After marriage, therefore, the husband, who as a rule was clearly older than his wife, became her teacher. An important educational role was also played by the mother-in-law. Her regular appearance in Athenian vase paintings depicting the wedding procession, where the bride is welcomed at the groom’s doorstep, reminds us that the Greek family was two-generational only in Aristotelian theory (Walcot 1994: 29–34).

## 2. Weaving

In the Greek house, the only area of activity which required a more “specific” skill set that fell exclusively within the female realm was the production of fabrics. In Homer, this skill is both a virtue and a duty of all women, from goddesses to slaves (*Il.* 6.289–290, 9.128–129, 388–390, *Od.* 1.356–358 etc.). Spinning and weaving by a man symbolized effeminacy (Heracles at the court of Omphale, cf. Aristoph., *Birds* 831). The different phases of the textile process account for the majority of representations of everyday life in the woman’s part of the house shown on vase paintings (e.g., rich in details *ABV* 154.57). When asked what brought her fame, Pythagorean Theano apparently answered by quoting Homer: “Plying the loom and sharing my bed” (*Stob.* 74.32, cf. *Il.* 1.31). While it is doubtful that this anecdote gives us access to the authentic “female voice,” it conveys awareness that weaving was the subject of women’s self-identification and was encouraged to be the source of their pride.

Weaving resided therefore within a woman’s sphere of knowledge, as Plato admitted (Plato, *Rep.* 455c). The comical value of Aristophanes’ *Lysistrata* is based not only on women using weaving as a metaphor for the world of politics, but also on proposed solutions to political problems which are drawn from the practice of weaving (Aristoph., *Lys.* 574–586).

Instruction in weaving took place in the same way as the teaching of other household duties. Moreover, girls became familiar with this activity early in their lives. References to

weaving even appeared in children's games (Foley in Neils and Oakley 2003: 119). Girls watched women at work, as demonstrated by the votive plaque in honor of Athena Ergane, which depicts a woman working at the loom, with a girl, probably her daughter, sitting next to her on the ground (Foley in Neils and Oakley 2003: 119, fig. 7; cf. *IG II<sup>2</sup>* 4334). At least in Athens, when teaching began in earnest, girls were soon able to test their skills: a verse inscribed on an Attic vase mentions competitions for girls in wool carding (Dillon and Garland 2000: no. 13.46[m]). Weaving competitions also probably took place during the festival of Brauronia (Golden 1990: 78 and n. 126). This was the appropriate *agon* for women.

### 3. Professional Training

According to contemporary social ideals, running a household and weaving were to be a free woman's sole occupation. Paid work has been commonly considered to be an inconvenience in life. However, poorer women were forced to work "in the marketplace," as well as in elementary vocational occupations. In addition to selling the services they performed in the home anyway, such as weaving or cooking, even the wives of citizens appear to have engaged in outside work—for example, in midwifery. We can even find single cases of a free woman working as a cobbler or goldsmith (Herfst 1922: 32–34, 52–56; Brock 1994: 342). The inscription on a vessel shows that a (most likely) free woman could be employed in vase painting (*ARV<sup>2</sup>* 571.73, cf. Pomeroy 1977: 63, n. 3). Unfortunately we are unable to determine which roads women took to end up in a certain profession, but a single piece of evidence suggests that in Athens they could belong together with men to a guild or corporation (*IG II<sup>2</sup>* 2934). Due to the nature of the sources, we are seldom sure of their legal and social status. We suspect that some of these women who worked were former slaves. After their manumission, these women probably performed the same trades that they had been forced to learn and practice in slavery.

### 4. Religious Education

As traditional religion lacked sacred texts and tenets, a woman only needed to know how to behave during the different ceremonies, and what the rules of ritual purity were. The latter a girl learned from older women in her family, because the most important taboos for women were associated with their sexuality and reproduction: the menstrual cycle, sexual intercourse, and childbirth (*LSCG Suppl.* no 115, *LSCG* no 97; Parker 1983: 74–103). The rules and procedures of repetitive rituals were generally easy to learn, especially since in most cases participation consisted of passive observation of actions performed by priests and/or officials. Women's participation—and thus, their prior education in sacred procedures—was essential in two cases. The first was for women carrying out priestly functions, and the second for women's rituals in which men participated to a limited extent or not at all, such as Thesmophoria, Haloa, or Adonia. Regarding the former, note that even in democratic Athens the priesthood of the major traditional cults was hereditary (Eleusinian deities, Athena Polias, cf. Garland 1984: 83–86). Girls chosen

to be priestesses were therefore educated *individually*. When it came to women's rituals, we can assume that a young girl (or woman, in rituals restricted to wives) was introduced to the ceremonies by accompanying older women in the family.

## 5. Physical Education

If one can treat the myth of Atalanta as a realistic reflection of women's sports, or even as a "normative description" thereof, it appears that marriage meant the end of a woman's sporting activities. This seems to be confirmed by the most important testimony concerning women's sports: when at a certain date (difficult to discern) female races were introduced into the Heraea festival at Olympia, they were exclusively for girls, divided into three age categories (Paus. 5.16.2–7; cf. Scanlon 2002: 98–120).

Three observations arise concerning the Heraea races. First, the absence of any list of winners suggests a later provenance of the competition or their local nature. Second, the Olympic track was shortened by 1/6, which, although of no practical significance, devalued the women's race in comparison to the "real" men's competition at the same stadium. Finally, running was the only competition open to women. The latter is not a coincidence: if one disregards the isolated (and suspicious) mention in Athenaeus of women practicing wrestling naked on Chios (*Deipn.* 13.566e), and likewise rejects the claim in an inscription from the third century *palaistra* in Brauron that it was a place for girls' exercises (Parker 2005: 230), races constitute the single instance of a female sport confirmed as having been practiced outside Sparta prior to Roman times (*contra* Miller 2004a: 150–159, but cf. Miller 2004b: 105–110). In the context of initiation, we find them in Brauron (Attica; Scanlon 2002: 139–174) and perhaps in northern Greece, in Thessaly and Macedonia (Parker 2005: 243, but cf. SEG 59.631). Races are also relatively well documented archaeologically through figurines of running women from the Archaic era (Ducat 2006: 236).

It does not seem that the absolute dominance of running in the (albeit meager) *dossier* of women's sports was accidental. Running was a sport with a special status: it is an advanced development of the natural motor skills of children of both sexes (Ducat 2006: 233). That girls ran, therefore, is not proof that they engaged in other, more sophisticated disciplines of sport. Moreover, running generally had an initiatory character that we do not see in other sports (though see Parker 2005: 243–244). So the fact that races were occasionally organized for girls does not amount to proof that there was a *female sporting life*.

This does not mean that aside from ritual running girls did not participate in any physical exercise. The domain of girls was *games*. Early childhood play, such as *tortoise*, contained an element of movement (Golden 1990: 74; Foley in Neils and Oakley 2003: 119). Another game for girls was the swing, which can be seen in the Athenian ritual of "swinging" during the festival of Aiora (Parker 2005: 183–184, 301–302). Entertainment was commonly found in ball games. In *The Odyssey* they are shown to be a typical of activity of girls, and this was not restricted only to early childhood: Nausikaa played ball games despite already being of a suitable age for marriage (*Od.* 6.99–100). An epigram from the *Palatine*

*Anthology* (6.280) mentions the ball among the votive offerings to Artemis made by a girl at the time of marriage (Calame 1997: 145). “Mature” girls playing with a ball are also depicted on vases (*ARV*<sup>2</sup> 1147.61; cf. Golden 1990: 76–77, fig. 13).

## 6. Musical Education

Singing and dancing to the accompaniment of musical instruments was an integral part of Greek life. Monody was fundamentally designed to be performed by men, but the choral lyrics were often performed by women. In the scene of a wedding feast depicted on Achilles’ shield, there are girls dancing to the sound of music (*Il.* 18.593–596). The dancing (and probably also singing) women constituted archaic and classical iconographic motifs (Neils in Neils and Oakley 2003: 156–157, figs. 17–19). Female choruses appeared on the occasion of various religious festivals (Stehle 1997: 111–113) and public and private feast events: parallel to the men’s symposium meetings women held musical-dance *pannychides* (Bravo 1997). The performances of female choruses are attested almost everywhere: in the Peloponnese; Athens; Boeotia; important religious centers such as Delphi and Delos; Sicily (Rhegium); the Aegean islands (Lesbos); and the coast of Asia Minor (Stehle 1997: 72). If we take into account the myths and iconography, female choruses may have been an even more widespread phenomenon than male choruses (Calame 1997: 25). Women’s involvement in choruses, unlike in races, was not limited to unmarried women. Although, with a few exceptions, only the choral lyrics performed by “girls who are ready to be married” (*parthenoi*, *korai*) have survived, we also hear of choruses of very young girls as well as of adult women (Ingalls 1999: 373–374; fr. 871 *PMG* is a hymn performed by adult women).

One must distinguish between two types of women’s involvement in choruses. Performances associated with recurrent events of private life (wedding songs, funeral laments) can probably be reduced to common and consequently amateur practices for which we find analogues in almost all cultures. However, in the context of public worship, at least until the end of the Archaic era, participation in the chorus seems to have been a privilege of women who belonged to the aristocratic elite (Stehle 1997: 22–25). Aristocratic women represented the *polis* in the same way as their husbands and fathers and because of this learned to sing and dance. Consequently, the fact that they sang and danced better than other women sanctioned their unique position in public ceremonies. In the case of these elite performances, the question of institutionalized teaching of dancing and singing arises. The famous circle of Sappho and (the supposed) circles of her competitors from Lesbos seemed to constitute an exception rather than a rule, but Claude Calame collected testimonies testifying that above all in Sparta but also in other Greek *poleis* groups of women were prepared in an institutionalized manner for performances in the chorus under the direction of a poet-*choregos* (Calame 1997; cf. Attic *astragalos* from about 450 BCE reproduced in Beck 1964: 345, no. 224 and pl. 16–17, which may depict a female chorus taught under direction of a *choregos*). Less convincing is his claim that learning dancing and singing was not the *aim* of education but its *vehicle*: female choruses were to constitute an institution of initiation in which, through the performance of pieces of poetry, participants absorbed patriotic (and wider ethical) values and thus were prepared for participation in the community of “citizen wives”

(Calame 1997: 221–244; cf. Ingalls 1999). However, participation in the choruses, whereby a limited number of chosen girls performed songs on public occasions, can hardly be called a true “citizenship initiation.” The fact that adult women’s choruses existed means that female choruses cannot be reduced to a purely educational function.

## 7. Literacy

Determining the level of literacy of Greek women is especially important for assessing the level of their education. Knowledge of letters could be a tool which enabled self-education independent of educational and cultural institutions. This is especially important in the case of Greek women from families of the upper and middle classes, because they had more free time than their husbands, and because they were isolated from contact with the culture of the spoken word (the symposium, theater, courts, assemblies).

Unfortunately, assessing the absolute number or even percentage of literate women in ancient Greece is impossible. We lack sources which could be used in capturing *statistics*. The inscriptions, which are the most abundant available texts, are not reliable because, although some are written from a woman’s perspective, a woman’s actual authorship is not clear. There is also a lack of general or normative statements (for a few exceptions, see later text). A single mention of literate or illiterate women does not enable generalizations, and the literary sources are often contradictory. Consider two examples: Euripides’ Phaedra can write (*Hipp.* 856–881) while Iphigenia cannot (*IT.* 582–587), but both “facts” are given without *commentary*. The already mentioned protagonist of Xenophon’s *Oeconomicus*, Ischomachos, assumes that his newly married wife knew how to write, but when he married her she apparently did not know anything.

In this situation, only the most general conclusions can be drawn, based on sources concerning female literacy (or indeed illiteracy) combined with a commonsense look at Greek civilization. The most important are as follows:

1. Among people who read and (eventually) wrote, there were significantly fewer women than men. The greater proportion of proof of male literacy cannot be reduced to bias in the sources. The *expectations* for different *social groups* have to be taken into account. Inscriptions on symposium vessels suggest that, in the Archaic era, literacy was expected of all men belonging to the aristocratic elite (and probably only of them). In democratic Athens, basic literacy was part of the *emploi* of citizens, perhaps as a legacy of the aristocratic ethos, which in democracy became property of all *politai*. There are no similar contexts that required women’s literacy. The arguments *ex silentio* are (a) the lack of authentic letters written by women or addressed to women (for scanty literary tradition, see Ceccarelli 2013: index *sv.* women); (b) the fact that as authors of literary works they form only a minimal percentage; and (c) the lack of women’s literature, which shows that they were not regarded as collective recipients of the written word.
2. Female literacy correlated to social status: since Greek writing in all likelihood originated as one of the symbols of belonging to the *aristoi*, in the Archaic era a knowledge of writing had to be limited to a few women from the elite, such as Sappho and her companions. “Feminine” inscriptions tend to appear on spectacular examples of archaic votive offerings.

3. As among men, certainly more women were able to read than write. Perhaps some confirmation of this commonsense intuition is evidenced by vase paintings, where we find a number of images of women reading (e.g., Louvre CA 2220), but none of them writing. The fact that vase paintings depict women reading inside nearly as often as men (if you take into account the presentation of the Muses, even more frequently, Cole 1981: 133–134), means, however, that this argument must be treated with caution.

Limited in comparison with male literacy, female literacy fits well with what (we suspect) we know about the teaching of reading and writing. At least since the beginning of the Classical period, boys attended schools, but girls did not. Children were separated from the opposite sex at seven years of age (see earlier text), and boys started to study writing probably at nine years old, which was after the moment of separation. Thus, school attendance might not be so much a *consequence* of the division of the sexes, but rather its *determinant*. This, at any rate, seems to arise in a rhetorical question posed by Socrates to Xenophon: “Or if at the end of our life we should wish to appoint a guardian to *educate* our boys or *protect* our girls ..., should we think a loose liver a trustworthy man to choose?” (Xen., *Mem.*1.5.2, tr. E. C. Marchant). Hence, when Lysistrata wants to show off her knowledge, she refers not to what she learned at school, but rather what she heard from her father and older people (Aristoph., *Lys.* 1124–1127; cf. Garland 1990: 135–136). Girls in the context of the school do not appear in written sources, and the only visual depiction of girls walking somewhere with writing instruments was probably intended as a joke (*ARV*<sup>2</sup> 1023.146 = Golden 1990: 73–74, fig. 11 = Neils and Oakley 2003: 247, fig. 46; Neils 2012: 163–165 interprets the painting as Spartan girls going to school). It is also significant that there is a lack of representations of girls and boys reading papyrus scrolls together.

So how were some women able to read? If we assume that the teachers came to the houses of the elite, and boys from poorer families went to (shared) teachers, only a girl from the higher classes could take advantage of professional education. Literacy for the remainder depended on the willingness and capabilities of the family. An important role also could be played by male siblings: today it is quite common to observe the phenomenon of children with older siblings learning letters through observation before beginning school. The same applies to the teaching of mathematics.

## 8. Women Intellectuals: Poetry and Philosophy

In the shadow of the great Sappho, there have been a few other female poets. Maximus of Tyre considered Gorgo and Andromeda, both mentioned in her work, to be Sappho’s competitors (18.9; cf. Calame 1997: 212 and n. 20). Also preserved were the names and smaller or larger fragments and/or testimonies of Telesilla of Argos, who, according to tradition, saved her native polis from the Spartans after the defeat of Sepeia (494?); Myrtis of Anthedon; Praxilla of Sicyon; the pornographic author Philaenis of Samos; and Erinna. At the beginning of the Hellenistic period, the number of women poets seemed to grow rapidly: the end of the fourth century saw Hedyle of Athens, whose mother

Moschine also reportedly dabbled in poetry; Anyte; Moero; Nossis; and, of course, Corinna of Tanagra, if we date her to the post-Classical period (Plant 2004, *sup.*). Antipater of Thessalonica compiled the canon of nine eminent poets of old, which suggests that he knew more of them (*Anth. Pal.* 9.26).

Taking into consideration the weak tradition and lack of preserved longer fragments, there is doubt as to the historicity of the character of Myrtis, and the obscene nature of the work of Philaenis aroused suspicion that the author was a man writing under a pseudonym (Plant 2004: 45–46). However, regardless of the validity of the attribution of individual fragments, the remaining poets were most likely historical figures.

How did these women become poets? The practice of poetry did not require a formal education; however, it did require an elementary knowledge of poetic traditions. Men who were members of the elite had access to the poetic tradition, especially within the symposium; the rest of the citizen community relied on public performances, poetic *agon*, and from some point also school. Respectable women were not permitted to attend the symposium, while the school and (probably) the theater were closed to women in general. Poetry performances could therefore only be listened to on the occasion of certain categories of poetic performances (especially those involving a female chorus). There does not appear to have been a special female school of poetry: it is debatable whether Sappho was an instructor to a group of girls who used *her own poetry* as a medium of education (see Calame 1997: 210–214 and 249–252), but there is no indication that *the art of poetry* itself was taught. Although preserved fragments of a later commentary suggest something like this, the suggestion is, however, probably due to a misreading of metaphorical references to Sappho as *the Poet* by her much later successors (see Sappho fr. 213 Voigt; cf. Plant 2004: 11). Moreover, the content, the context in which it was executed, and the transmission of the works of Sappho cannot prove the existence of a distinct, closed world of “female literature.”

The dating of all the other female poets apart from Sappho to the fifth century or later suggests that, for women, the poetic tradition was primarily assimilated through *reading*. The number of known female poets increases with the expansion of book culture at the expense of the wider culture of the spectacle, the majority of forms of which were not available to women. It is no accident that Sappho is one of the first figures in the history of Greek art depicted with a papyrus scroll in hand (*ARV*<sup>2</sup> 1060.145). If, therefore, the emergence of female poets in Greece signifies something, it is that some women entered into the circle of high literature readers and that there was a development in book circulation.

Women are mentioned as disciples of almost all the major philosophical schools. Tradition states that the mother or life companion of Tales, one Cleobuline, was the author of philosophical riddles (Plant 2004: 29–32). Pythagoras is said to have married the philosopher Theano, and three of his daughters engaged with philosophy (Myia, Damo, and Arignote). Sometime between the close of the sixth and third centuries, Perictione, Melissa, Aesara, and Phintys were active (Wider 1986: 22; Plant 2004, *sup.*). The lectures of Plato and later of his nephew and successor in leading the Academy Speusippus were attended by Axiothea of Phlius and Lathenea of Mantinea (Diog. Laert. 3.46, 4.2; on another possible female student of Plato, Speusippus, and Menedemus of Eretria, see *P.Oxy.* LII 3656). The three daughters of Eudoxus of Cnidus (Diog. Laert. 8.89) and Arete, daughter of Aristippus of Cyrene (Diog. Laert. 2.72) were also



supposed to have learned philosophy. For the Hellenistic era, the analogous list of female philosophers would be even longer, containing both traditional schools and new ones, led by the Epicureans and Stoics.

Putting aside Plato's jokes (sometimes taken too seriously) which attribute philosophical interests to Aspasia and which create the fictional character of Diotima, all other traditions of women philosophers come from later periods and, because of that, are questionable (Clement of Alexandria, Stobaeus, Diogenes Laertius, and Iamblichus). Even then, when we are dealing with historical figures, there are reasons not to overestimate women's participation in the creation and persistence of philosophical schools. Apart from the mainstream Pythagorean treatises, we do not hear about ones attributed to women, and it seems therefore, that even if a single woman was involved in the life of a philosophical school, she did not play any role in the development of doctrine. What is more, almost all the aforementioned disciples of philosophy were in relationships of kinship or affinity with male philosophers, and education in the family of a philosopher is a poor testament to education policies in the community as a whole. The access of individual women to philosophy was probably mediated by the tastes of their fathers, brothers, and husbands (examples for Athens in Pomeroy 1994: 267).

It is necessary to mention Pythagoreanism separately, because it was the current of philosophy in which women appeared most often. In his *Life of Pythagoras*, Iamblichus listed seventeen distinguished women Pythagorean philosophers (*Vita Pyth.* 36). What is more, certain works attributed to them have survived, as have the titles of other works which have been lost. Theano was supposed to have written a number of pieces on ceremonies in honor of Demeter and Dionysus, and a treatise *On Piety*. To Phintys was attributed a moral treatise entitled *The Moderation Which Becomes a Woman* and to Perictione *On Wisdom* and *On the Harmony of Women*. All of them were also meant to have conducted correspondence which was later published (Wider 1986: 26–40; Waithe 1987: ch. 1–4; Plant 2004, *supra*). In this alleged “feminization” of Pythagoreanism, we can discern its attractiveness to women. It is undeniable that Pythagoreanism could to a great extent allow women to participate in intellectual life, but a healthy criticism toward our primary sources should be maintained. The impressive number of women supposedly involved in (especially early) Pythagoreanism is probably a reflex of its legendary status (see the inconsistency in the tradition of Theano, who is sometimes the wife of Pythagoras, sometimes the wife of his student; Wider 1986: 28 and n. 2). As for the treatises attributed to those supposed early women philosophers, they are probably without exception apocrypha from the Hellenistic and Roman eras (Thesleff 1965). It is characteristic that the absolute majority of them deal with the duties of women. The attribution of the authorship to women seems to be a literary device to “authenticate” the ideology of obedience which they preach (Deslauriers 2012: 343–344).

## 9. Hetaerae: An Intellectual Elite?

Arguing before the Athenian court that a certain Neaera engaged in prostitution from an early age, the prosecutor Apollodorus described her childhood as follows: “There were seven little girls, bought at a very young age by Nikarete, a freedwoman of Charisius of Elis, and wife of his cook, Hippias. She was able to see the potential for beauty in very

young children and knew how to bring them up and train them skilfully [*threpsai kai paideusai empeirōs*], having practised this trade and made a living out of it" ([Dem.] 59.18, trans. K. Kapparis).

How was this *paideia* meant to function? A once popular view maintained that a clear distinction existed in archaic and classical Greece between ordinary whores (*pornai*) and high-class courtesans (*hetairai*) and that the latter were perceived to have a very good education which enabled them to participate on an equal footing in the intellectual pursuits of their clients. Paradoxically, therefore, the same *paideia*, which in the case of men comprised their social prestige, in the case of women would have meant belonging to the demimonde.

It is true that in *Lives of Famous Philosophers* by Diogenes Laertius, we find probably more hetaerae than decent women, and the literary tradition preserved in the thirteenth book of *Deipnosophistae* by Athenaeus contains dozens of poignant *bons mots* of famous courtesans. However, the philosophical context amounts to schematic anecdotes aimed at showing us the attitude of a philosopher: the courtesan represents carnality and lust, and through his attitude toward her the philosopher pays homage to his philosophical principles (the alternative: he betrays them while finding for himself a brilliant excuse). Similarly schematic are stories gathered by Athenaeus—taken exclusively from works written by men (for a possible exception, see Athen., *Deipn.* 13.585b = Callim. fr. 433 Pfeiffer). Almost all these *bons mots* are concerned with *being a hetaera* and therefore require a hetaera as a *dramatis persona*.

Judging from vase paintings, the participation of hetaerae in the symposium entertainments was usually limited, outside of sex, to games of skill: we see hetaerae playing *kottabos* but not reciting poetry. It cannot be ruled out that the more intellectually gifted would, through participation in the symposium, learn the elementary art of improvisation or at least recitation. However, behind Apollodorus' euphemistic mention of *paideia* most probably lay the *ars amandi* and related artistic elements: in contrast to decent women, hetaerae were able to play musical instruments (judging from the comedies of Aristophanes, the boundary between the flute player or dancer and hetaera was rather conventional) and the dances which were performed had little in common with the dances of the chorus. A certain vase painting shows us a dance class of young hetaerae: the girls are naked, the dance is much more lively (licentious) than in the case of the dance of a chorus, and it has an obvious erotic subtext (Neils and Oakley 2003: 255–256, figs. 58–59). Sometimes the dancers are shown performing with accessories not found in the “dignified” dances of the female chorus: castanets or explicitly erotic leather phalluses (Keuls 1993: 82–86, figs. 72–79).

## 10. Sparta: An Alternative Education?

Girls' education in ancient Sparta (see Plato, *Protag.* 342d for links with education in Crete) appears extraordinary in contrast to other parts of Greece. Plato suggests that Spartan girls were not taught weaving (*Leg.* 806a; on weaving by slaves in Sparta, cf. Xen., *Lac. Pol.* 1.4). Instead, the ancient sources agree that Spartan women dedicated themselves to intensive physical exercise. If we sum up what individual authors say about the character of these exercises, we get a picture of extraordinarily multifaceted activities.

Spartan girls were to practice running, wrestling, *pankration*, discus and javelin throwing, horse riding, sword fighting, and the Spartan specialty—*bibasis*—a type of dance or gymnastics, the most spectacular element of which was simultaneously hitting both heels against the buttocks (Scanlon 1988: 205 and Ducat 2006: 228–229; on possible swimming education, Pomeroy 2002: 13 n. 38). Girls participated in sports in the same places as boys, and a certain passage in Euripides' *Andromache* may suggest an element of coeducation (vv. 595–600). Running, at least, was placed within a framework of competition: we hear of races on the occasion of religious holidays in honor of Hera, Dionysus, Helen, and other deities (Pomeroy 2002: 24).

Plato (*Leg.* 806a) in one breath ascribed to Spartan girls both physical and musical education. When it comes to this second aspect, ancient authors are rather reticent. The practice of music was probably seen as specifically Spartan to a lesser degree than is suggested by the philosopher, for whom physical exercise and music were complementary and necessary for a complete program of education (*Leg.* 796d). In any case, it is only with Plutarch that singing in the chorus becomes explicitly one of the pillars of Spartan girls' *paideia*: during religious holidays, they sang songs composed by themselves (perhaps improvised?) ridiculing or praising their male peers: with the former they would shame them and with the latter awaken the spirit of competition (*Lyc.* 14.4–6). However, collating the preserved fragments of Alcman's *Parthenia* with information of individual Laconian cults, Claude Calame attempted to show that in archaic Sparta girls' choruses were an important social institution. Led by a male poet and a chorus leader—a girl who was older than the rest—girls participated in numerous rituals in honor of Artemis, Apollo, Helena, Dionysus, and Dioscuri. The cult of Artemis, patron goddess of female *rites de passage*, was the focus of their activity. By performing at subsequent festivals in the Spartan sacred calendar, girls went through a type of initiation cycle. It was in Sparta that the pedagogical function was most clearly imposed on the initiation function of girls' choruses, turning them into a school of “civic” values (Calame 1997: 141–206; cf. above).

The uniqueness of Spartan girls' education, we are told, was not only based on its content but also on its institutional framework. It is above all the *public* aspect of this education that is underlined among ancient authors. Behind the education of Spartan girls stood not custom but the law-maker Lycurgus: girls were organized in groups in which one could discern symmetry with boys' *agelai*, “flocks” (Scanlon 1988: 187); the results of education underwent public evaluation during the holidays and sports competitions (Ducat 2006: 225–227). This public exposition was brought to the final boundaries of transparency in the motif of girls' nudity, which is recurring in the discourse of Spartan education. While with earlier authors partial nudity of Spartan girls was motivated by links with sports education (Ibycus fr. 58 Page: *phainomeridai*, “exposing thighs,” compare Soph. fr. 872 Radt, Eur., *And.* 597–598, *Dissoi Logoi* 2.9; cf. Anacr. fr. 399 Page with Dillon and Garland 2000: 438), with Plutarch nudity in itself was an element of the educational system. Girls appeared fully naked in non-sports contexts, in chorus dances, or religious processions. Nudity was, on the one hand, to encourage young men to marry, on the other to awaken in girls an aspiration to virtue and fame (*Lyc.* 14.2–4; cf. Pomeroy 2002: 25–27 and Ducat 2006: 235–237).

To what degree is this a realistic picture? Even leaving aside doubts as to the antiquity of boys' *agoge* in the shape known to us from Roman sources (Kennell 1995; Ducat 1999), on which girls' education was to be modeled, at least some elements of the latter

seem to be fictional. It is unlikely there would be a complete lack of weaving in girls' education. It was with weaving and embroidery that Helen, the mythical queen of Sparta, was said to occupy herself (*Od.* 4.131–135). Likewise, Theocritus seems to assume that in certain contexts weaving was the occupation of women from civic families (18.32–35), and Pausanias mentions that chosen Spartan females wove every year a *chiton* for the cult statue of Apollo in Amyclae (3.16.2; cf. Calame 1997: 235 and n. 102). Are we to believe that only a few women chosen in advance would learn to weave, and then only in order to prepare one piece of material once a year (so Pomeroy 2002: 30–32)?

On the other hand, the number of physical exercises for Spartan girls seems to be inflated beyond any probability. Early testimony speaks only about gymnastics, running, *bibasis*, and wrestling (Eur., *And.* 595–601, Arph., *Lys.* 77–83, Critias 81 F 32 DK, Xen., *Lac. Pol.* 1.4). The evidence for the practice of girls' wrestling is equivocal because the only written source is an anti-Spartan tirade declaimed by King Peleus in a tragedy of Euripides *cum ira et studio*, and the Spartan provenances of the mirror and vase handles representing women wearing loincloths (Ducat 2006: 229–230) are far from indisputable (notwithstanding the fact that they may represent a mythical character, most probably Atalanta). Without doubt Spartan women did not practice disciplines which had warfare associations such as discus or spear throwing and even more so fencing, which is attributed to them by Propertius (3.14). Plato postulates introducing exercises for women that would be useful for the defense of the country, but he seems to treat it as a novel project which has not yet materialized anywhere (*Leg.* 806ab; cf. Ducat 2006: 228–229). Xenophon and Aristotle agree that once the Thebans and their allies led by Epaminondas forced their way into Laconia, Spartan women behaved in a “feminine” way, only increasing the overall panic (Xen., *Hell.* 6.5.28, Arist., *Pol.* 1269b: 34–39). Critias and Xenophon write about women's exercise not as symmetrical to men's physical exercise but rather as a type of “preparation” to giving birth to healthy (male) offspring.

When it comes to the organizational framework of female education, it seems to be an exaggeration to treat Pindar's reference (fr. 112 Snell) to “flocks (*agelai*) of Laconian girls” as proof of the existence of organized educational groups (Stehle 1997: 88 n. 56; Ducat 1999: 64, n. 31; Ducat 2006: 242). Failure of this interpretation lies in the lack of testimony concerning the division of girls into age groups (Ducat 1999: 57). It is difficult to believe that all girls participated in the choruses. The image of coeducational physical exercise comes from a mistaken interpretation of an unreliable tirade of Peleus directed against Sparta in a Euripidean tragedy (see earlier text). The fact that Spartan women exercised in skimpy clothing finds confirmation in archaeological material (Ducat 2006: 236), but this ritual, almost nudist, nakedness, of which Plutarch speaks is probably a later invention: if Spartan girls really appeared publicly *fully* naked, it is difficult to understand why their only *partial* nudity during sports competitions awoke such a sensation in the ancients.

Critical analysis of the tradition leads one to the conclusion that Spartan women's education was not radically different from that of other Greek women. What distinguished it were elementary physical exercises in skimpy clothing; possibly a greater opportunity than elsewhere for performance in the chorus; strong links between education and the public space in which physical and musical exercise took place; and finally, if we are to consider in all seriousness the character of sporty Lampito from Aristophanes'

*Lysistrata*, possible prolonging of the age of practicing physical exercises beyond the point of matrimony (but cf. Poll., *Onom.* 4.102).

Behind the vision of the radical distinctness of Spartan education lies an Atheno-centric focus of the earliest sources (Millender 1999), later harnessed by the Spartan legend, which then, in the Sparta of the Hellenic age, became the basis for archaic-like reforms of the educational system. How little the upbringing of girls in Sparta differed from girls' upbringing in the other parts of Greece in the Classical period is demonstrated in the Platonic project of (almost) symmetrical education of girls and boys shown in *The Republic*. Through a few literary devices (such as the solemn introduction of Socrates' lecture), the philosopher suggests that he is not going to improve the existing educational system, but that he rather has something new and unprecedented to offer (*Rep.* 449a ff.).

The uniqueness of Spartan women, to the degree that is not the extension of the fantasy of outside observers, can be explained without crediting a specific educational system. The most famous, wise Spartan women, beginning with the illustrious Gorgo, were members of royal families, and they should be treated separately. Meanwhile, even regular Spartan women who married a few years later than their Athenian peers spent a long time alone at home in the absence of their husbands and, in disposing of their own wealth, naturally showed more independence in life than women in other parts of Greece. Moreover, Aristotle does not link women's freedom in Sparta with female *agoge*; on the contrary, he states that Lycurgus only subjected men to the laws and abstained from this action when it came to women (*Pol.* 2.1270a 6–8).

## 11. Conclusion

In the archaic and classical Greek world, women were excluded from politics and participated only to a very limited degree in other areas of community life. Traditional culture imagined her duty and privilege as primarily reproduction. Simultaneously, marriage constituted one of the male strategies of keeping and creating social bonds, and a girl, usually around fifteen years old, was a passive subject of transaction. "The worth" of a future wife was marginal in comparison with the connections strengthened or created during her transfer and the value of her dowry. The marriage candidate's level of education (by definition low, given that those being given away in marriage were teenage girls) did not influence men's decision of marriage, and as a result potential spending on education was socially unprofitable. Managing a household, whether it was the home of an ordinary farmer or an aristocrat, required a rather uncomplicated set of skills. As a result, the discourse about women rarely takes up the issue of education (Semonides); and when it does, women's education constitutes a subject of ridicule or criticism: in comedy, women's education is treated as a weapon aimed against men (Aristophanes' *Lysistrata*, Menander fr. 702 Kock), which was affirmed also by Democritus who warned against the risk of educating women in the field of rhetoric (fr. 110 DK). Aristotle, on the other hand, exhibited more contempt than fear. He claimed that educating women was pointless due to their innate limitations (Arist., *Pol.* 1260a 12–14; cf. Pomeroy 1994: 34).

Paradoxically, this lack of contemporary interest in women's education can also be seen in "pedagogical textbooks." The educational goals of Xenophon's *Ischomachos* are

limited to the absolutely trivial: he teaches his wife things which every good housekeeper knew. The only novelty in Xenophon's work is the ideological inculcation which intends to make domestic duties more attractive to the woman and in consequence gave her greater motivation to fulfill them. In one way or another, a wife had to find pleasure in the duties which she had to fulfill anyway. On the other hand, the utopian projects of Plato disregard the private meaning of education and focus on public education. The *polis*, unlike the *oikos*, did not need women *as women*, or rather: political values were by definition male values. As a consequence, the philosopher attempted through a specific system of education to turn women into men. For Xenophon and Plato, there was no place for a developed system of specifically female education which would operate in parallel to male education and yet take into consideration the needs of each sex. Nor indeed was there a need for a coeducational system which would educate a *human being* and not a man and man-like-woman.

## NOTE

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**FURTHER READING**

For a general introduction to women's position in Greek society, see the papers collected in James and Dillon 2012. On women's sports, see Scanlon 2002 and (though a little too optimistic) Miller 2004a. Miller 2004b gives a good collection of literary sources. On the role played by music in girls' education see the fundamental, even if controversial, Calame 1997 (slightly revised edition was published in 2001), to be read with an important review of André Lardinois in *BMCR* 97.9.27. On literacy, an exhaustive treatment of primary sources, though with no univocal conclusion, is Cole 1981. Plant 2004 gives the best annotated anthology of women's authors, both poets and philosophers. On the primary sources for women's participation in philosophical schools, contrast the sober skepticism in Deslauriers 2012 with the confidence of Wider 1986. Surprisingly, there is no good comprehensive treatment of girls' education in Athens. For education of Spartan girls, Ducat 2006 is fundamental.



## CHAPTER 21

# Isocrates

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*James R. Muir*

“Ἴσοκράτης τῆς παιδείας τὴν ρίζαν πικρὰν ἔφη, γλυκεῖς δὲ τοὺς καρπούς.

Progymnasmata of Aphthonios

### 1. Biography and Historical Context

Isocrates (436–338 BCE) was born in Athens, the son of a wealthy man named Theodorus. His father’s wealth allowed Isocrates to receive an excellent education. He was a follower of both Socrates and Gorgias, and in the *Phaedrus* Socrates predicts that he will one day achieve greatness as either a philosopher or a sophistic orator. Recall, however, that the *Phaedrus* was composed when Isocrates was 70 years old, and well established in his career as a political writer and teacher of rhetoric and political discourse. So the “prediction” may actually be an ironic and rather unkind judgment that Isocrates did not become (or *failed* to become) a philosopher in the Platonic sense. What he did become was an eminent ancient Greek philosopher, political theorist, rhetorician and educator, one of the Ten Attic Orators, and a friend and rival of Plato. His political writings, while perhaps sometimes florid in style, reveal a lifelong concern for the unity and independence of Greece, and for the education of rulers and citizens able to discern reasonably and then pursue moderately their common interests. He is reported to have starved himself to death in 338 BCE in despair over the loss of Athenian liberty after the battle of Chaeronea.

### 2. Historical Influence of Isocrates: The “Father of Liberal Education”

Isocrates holds a unique and unequalled place in the history of educational philosophy and ideas: the historical evidence demonstrates that he is the most influential educational

philosopher and theorist in the history of education (Muir 2005). He opened his own school several years before Plato opened his Academy, and wrote extensively about the nature of education, the best curriculum, the best teacher, the best teaching methods, and the proper goals of education. After a long rivalry between the school of Isocrates and the Academy of Plato, it was Isocrates' educational ideas and practices that prevailed in Athens and eventually the whole of the ancient Greco-Roman world. It was Isocrates, not Plato, who became the educator of Athens and Rome, and the father of the liberal arts and liberal education. Educational thought and practice followed Isocrates throughout the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, and then well into our own times. Indeed, the great historian of education, H. Marrou, argued that "Isocrates' ideas and the system of education which put them into practice reigned virtually unchallenged in Western Europe almost to our own generation" (Marrou 1948: 200). This conclusion is shared by Moses Hadas, who argued that

it was the program of Isocrates which has shaped European education to this day, which has kept humanism alive, and which has given Western civilization such unity as it possesses. (Hadas 1969: 129)

Yet in spite of his well-established prominence in the history of education and in Western intellectual history generally, and despite a rich tradition of Isocrates scholarship in French and German, there has been almost no academic study of his educational thought for more than a century in English-language universities. Indeed, what is worse is that most standard English-language histories of education—Ulich's *Three Thousand Years of Educational Wisdom* (1954), Curtis and Boulwood's *A Short History of Educational Ideas* (1965), Nakosteen's *The History and Philosophy of Education* (1965), Baskin's *Classics in Education* (1966), Boyd's *The History of Western Education* (1966) and Noddings' *Philosophy of Education* (1995)—are written by educationists who were not specialists in the history of education, and all of them fail even to mention the educational thought of Isocrates. A recovery of Isocrates scholarship has begun in the last few years, but is still much needed in educational studies.

### 3. Works

Of the sixty orations in his name available in Roman times, only twenty-one were transmitted to us by the ancient and medieval scribes. There are also nine letters in his name, although the authenticity of four has been questioned. The earliest medieval manuscripts of his works were copied six centuries after his death.

Although education is mentioned or briefly discussed in many of Isocrates' works, two of his orations are directly concerned with education, *Against the Sophists* and *Antidosis*. The (possibly incomplete) *Against the Sophists* was written at the beginning of his career, and seems to have been a sort of advertisement for himself and his school. The essay articulates his educational practices and goals, though it does so indirectly through criticisms of the educational practices and goals of sophistic educators. He distinguishes himself from sophistic teachers of eristic and rhetoric, and from those

who claim that education can be reduced to a technical art, a mere matter of the right mechanical methods of instruction. He is especially concerned to argue that educators in general have a poor reputation among the general public because of the exaggerated claims that are made for what education alone can accomplish, an observation that is as salutatory then as it is now. His second educational essay is the *Antidosis*, written some thirty-five years after *Against the Sophists*, near the end of his career. It is a much longer work which defends his conception of education and his entire life's work, and so it is not surprising that his fidelity to the principles first articulated in *Against the Sophists* is evident throughout.

#### 4. Classifying Isocrates

While there is no question about the unequaled magnitude of Isocrates' influence in the history of educational thought and practice, there is much debate concerning the nature and value of his educational ideas. There are, however, two related obstacles to ascertaining just what the nature and value of those educational ideas are: translation and classification. There is presently no adequate translation of the works of Isocrates in English. The standard translation by George Norlin has the advantage of including the Greek texts, but the disadvantage of translating very different Greek words into a single English word, for example, the four Greek words for speech, reason, rhetoric, and discourse are all translated into the single English word *rhetoric*. This is important because Isocrates is most commonly classified and evaluated as a rhetorician, though there are reasons to doubt the veracity of that classification. Although the word rhetoric was a familiar one in his day, Isocrates does not use it to describe himself or his activity. On the contrary, in his *To Philip*, his *Busiris*, and some of his *Epistles*, for example, Isocrates explicitly insists that he is not a rhetor and does not practice rhetoric, and he carefully explains what distinguishes him from those concerned with rhetoric. He describes himself as a philosopher concerned with the art of discourse or reasoned debate, and his longest educational work is an imitation of a defense of philosophy, the *Apology of Socrates*. What Isocrates means by the word philosopher, however, requires some explanation.

#### 5. Philosophy and the Philosopher

Perhaps one of the most difficult obstacles to understanding Isocrates is his use of the word *philosophy*. His usage does not correspond to a contemporary academic definition of philosophy, but it is quite consistent with the meaning of the word in his own time. If we try anachronistically to use a contemporary definition of philosophy to interpret Isocrates, we are most likely to fabricate a superficial and pretentious political pundit who pretends to be a philosopher in the Platonic sense. This is both unfair to him, and mistaken.

Plato and Isocrates were almost exact contemporaries, and both of them used the words *philosophers* and *philosophy* to describe themselves and their activities. During their careers, the terms *sophist* and *philosophy* were in general use, and both terms referred to a person engaged in intellectual, though especially literary activities. Over the next century, the meanings of these two terms gradually diverged, the term philosopher retaining the

original sense of praiseworthy intellectual life, while the term sophist took on the increasingly disreputable sense of a man using intellectual tricks for personal, material gain. At the same time, the meaning of the term philosopher also began to diverge, though more subtly and in a much less extreme fashion. On the one hand, it retained its original sense of a man engaged in literary activities, while on the other it took on the Platonic meaning of a man seeking demonstrable truth about all being in all time (*Republic* 484a–486a). Writing in the second century, Aristides argued that the then newly emerging Socratic definition of philosopher as a man seeking demonstrated truth and wisdom was excessively narrow (Thompson 2013). He argued instead that philosophy ought to retain its original, broader definition of literary cultivation—the ideal of the cultured person able to reason and to speak well about matters of common interest in the regime and in the wider Greek civilization. It is in this sense that Isocrates claims to be a philosopher.

## 6. Politics: Justice and Virtue in the Best Regime

Isocrates is concerned with the question of the best *politieia*, a word which can be translated as political doctrine, constitution, or regime. To translate the word as political doctrine or constitution certainly captures some of the meaning, but is nevertheless misleading. To translate *politieia* as political doctrine captures the sense that the word refers to a conception of justice and the acceptable means to attain it, while translating the word as constitution captures the sense that the word refers to a foundational code of laws from which all other laws are derived. What both of these translations fail to capture, however, is that Isocrates defines the best *politieia* not only in terms of the characteristics of political institutions and law, but most fundamentally in terms of the characteristics of the soul, that is, in terms of the role that the virtue of citizen and politician alike must play in good governance.

Isocrates argues that the virtuousness of its citizenry and especially its political leadership will determine whether a regime will be good or bad, much more than the nature and quality of its *politieia*. In the *Panathenaicus* (132), Isocrates explains that

there are three modes of *politieiai*, oligarchy, democracy, and monarchy. Those who live in any one of these *politieiai* can put the best citizens into positions of political leadership; such regimes most justly conduct their own affairs, and live well themselves and live well with others. At the other extreme are regimes which put the most daring and un-virtuous citizens in positions of political responsibility; such regimes are as villainous as their leaders. In between these extremes is a continuum of regimes which are ruled by men who listen to wise advice only when they are frightened, but who otherwise rule daringly and villainously and listen only to those who flatter. Such regimes alternate between living well and living badly.

Isocrates argues, then, that there are three *politieiai*, but that each one has two forms. The first form is immoderate and self-interested because its rulers and leaders are immoderate and self-interested. The second form of each *politieiai* is aristocratic because its rulers and leaders are the best men, moderate and just in their own affairs and in the

affairs of the regime. In other words, political justice depends less on the prevailing political doctrine (or “ideology,” as we might now say) than it does on the moral character of the political leaders and governors. If this is true, then political justice depends on how the citizens and political leaders are educated, and on how that education produces a virtuous soul.

## 7. Education in the Political Philosophy of Isocrates

Isocrates argues that education is a subordinate activity that has no goal and no value of its own. Education is of value only if, and only to the extent that, it serves to attain the goals of other, more important activities. In his view, the most important of all human activities is politics. Isocrates argues that every political community is defined by a *politeia* or political doctrine. A *politeia* or political doctrine is a definition of political justice and the acceptable means to attain justice so defined. The goal of politics is to attain justice, which is to say a distribution of material goods and powers which satisfies the material interests of all citizens sufficiently to sustain a stable political order. While Isocrates argues that there are virtues which are valued in every human community—virtues such as honesty or moderation—he also argues that there cannot be any universal *politeia* or political doctrine. Each community will discover and sustain the *politeia* that meets the requirements of its citizens.

All educational practice, and the goal of all educational practice, is wholly determined by the *politeia* of each particular community. Specifically, Isocrates argues that all normative judgments in education must be made using the logical method of conditional deduction: the educational theorist begins with a commitment to the *politeia* of his community, and deduces from it what the practices and goals of education ought to be. If we are committed to a democratic *politeia*, then we will deduce the practices and goals of democratic education from it, and use education to produce students with the knowledge and moral dispositions required by a democratic regime. If we are committed to a monarchical *politeia*, then we will deduce the practices and goals of monarchical education from it in the same way. Isocrates argues that education ought to be valued as a means to attain political justice in the community, and to develop political virtue in citizens and political leaders. His argument begins with a conception of human nature.

## 8. Isocrates' View of Human Nature

The idea of nature (*physis*) is fundamental to Greek political and educational thought. Nature was understood by the Greeks in two interrelated senses. On the one hand, nature was understood to refer to the essential property of a thing or person, the characteristics which are the sources of its behavior. Implied by this first sense is a second sense of nature as the end or perfection of a thing or person. Isocrates defines human nature in terms of what he takes to be the two essential properties of human beings, speech and a political faculty, and I will discuss each in turn.

Isocrates argued that rational speech is the trait which distinguishes human beings from animals and, as such, is the source of man's perfection (*Antidosis* 254–246;

*Panegyricus* 16–17). For Isocrates, speech (*logos*) is understood as the whole of the art of discourse, and as such includes not only verbal expression but practical reason, imagination, and disciplined sentiment (*To Alexander* 4). The second characteristic which is distinctively human is a faculty for political thought and action. Such thought and action is political rather than merely social in the sense that it is concerned with, and guided by, a particular conception of the common good.

Having defined human nature in terms of speech and the political faculty, Isocrates turns to a more comprehensive view of human nature and its perfection, in which speech and the political faculty are unified in pursuit of the same ends. Isocrates begins by arguing that we ought to

think of the art of discourse just as we think of the other arts, and not to form opposite judgements about similar things, nor show ourselves intolerant toward that power which, of all the faculties which belong to the nature of man, is the source of most of our blessings. For in the other powers which we possess, as I have already said on a former occasion, we are in no respect superior to other living creatures; indeed, we are inferior to many in swiftness and strength and in other resources; but, because there has been implanted in us the power to persuade each other and to make clear to each other whatever we desire, not only have we escaped the life of wild beasts, but we have come together and founded cities and made laws and invented arts; and, generally speaking, there is no institution devised by man which the power of speech has not helped us to establish. (*Antidosis* 253–255)

Isocrates argues here that natural human perfection is achieved by developing the natural human faculty of speech in the service of the natural human political faculty, the faculty that elevates human beings above the level of mere animals and provides for the conditions of civilized life.

To understand this argument more clearly, we turn to the “former occasion” mentioned by Isocrates, the *Panegyricus*. Here he claims that it is through the political community that we are able to provide

the fruits of the earth, which have enabled us to rise above the level of the beasts, and the holy rite [i.e., the Eleusinian Mysteries] which inspires in those who partake of it sweeter hopes regarding both the end of life and all eternity. (*Panegyricus* 28)

Isocrates argues that the ancestors who first founded the political regime provided for the most essential physical and spiritual needs of human beings, and thereby established the conditions which would allow for the development of man’s political faculty.

Primary among these necessities are the formulation of law, and the establishment of *politeia*, or authoritative political doctrine, from which law is derived. In Isocrates’ view, Athens civilized the Greeks because “she was the first to lay down laws and establish a *politeia*” (*Panegyricus* 38–40).

The question arises as to what allowed the Athenians in particular to have made these decisive contributions to the processes by which human beings are civilized in the political community. Isocrates offers an unequivocal answer: philosophy, defined as “eloquence” or the art of discourse, and “the one endowment of our nature which singles us out from all living creatures” (*Panegyricus* 48).

Philosophy, which has helped to discover and establish all these institutions, which has educated us for public affairs and made us gentle towards each other, which has distinguished between the misfortunes that are due to ignorance and those which spring from necessity, and taught us to guard against the former and bear the latter nobly—philosophy, I say, was given to the world by our city. (*Panegyricus* 47)

Philosophy, the art of discourse, exhibits itself above all in eloquent speech in the service of the regime. Philosophy is valued as the means by which political institutions are constructed and maintained, and as the means by which men are educated for participation in these institutions.

Isocrates argues that those who pursue philosophy will possess eloquence, the “beautiful and artistic speech” which allows them to influence or direct the political judgements and aspirations of the citizenry. This eloquence is the product of a prudent and learned mind (*Panegyricus* 48). Practical judgment and learning, and the eloquence that expresses them in a politically effective manner, are in turn the product of “liberal education” as Isocrates defines it. Isocrates insists

that whether men have been liberally educated from their earliest years is not to be determined by their courage or their wealth or such advantages, but is made manifest most of all by their speech, and that this has proved itself to be the surest sign of education [*paideuseos*] in every one of us, and that those who are skilled in speech are not only men of power in their own cities but are also held in honor in other regimes. (*Panegyricus* 49; *Antidosis* 255–257)

Isocrates argues that liberal education contributes decisively to the development of prudence or practical judgment, and eloquence. Practical judgment and eloquence are understood to be the natural perfection of the two most distinctively human traits, the faculties of politics and speech. These outcomes of liberal education are valued for their contributions to political life, and, above all, to the maintenance of *politeia* and the systems of law and government derived from them. In this way, education unites the two definitively human traits, the faculty of speech and the political faculty, for the collective good of each political community and the whole of mankind.

Isocrates argues that this collective good is always articulated by the *politeia*, the foundation of political life in the regime. As we read in the *Areopagiticus*:

The soul of the regime is nothing other than its *politeia*, having as much power over it as does the mind over the body; for it is this which deliberates upon all questions, seeking to preserve what is good and to ward off what is disastrous; and it is this which of necessity assimilates to its own nature the laws, the public orators, and the private citizens; and all the members of the state must fare well or ill according to the kind of *politeia* under which they live. (*Areopagiticus* 14)

Isocrates goes on to argue that, given that the *politeia* determines political life, Athens’ present difficulties stem from the fact that their present *politeia* is corrupt and that no consideration is given to the question of how to redeem it.

Isocrates does not provide a sustained examination of the question of the nature and justification of the good *politeia*. He only asserts that the good *politeia* is that of the older Athenian democracy of Solon and Cleisthenes (*Areopagiticus* 16–17). In his

view, evidence of the goodness of the old democratic *politeia* is historical, and so to be found in the noble deeds of its citizens, the admiration it won, and the hegemony it allowed Athens to establish over the Hellenic world. The ancient *politeia* also served what Isocrates believed to be its natural educative function to foster the development of the political virtues of moderation and prudence. It also distinguished between two kinds of equality, that of distributing goods equally to all and that of distributing goods according to merit, and instituted the latter (*Areopagiticus* 20–22). Whether we agree with Isocrates' judgment as to the goodness of such a *politeia* is not important from the perspective of our present concerns. What is important is the connection which Isocrates makes between both *politeia* and education generally, and between the *politeia* of the older Athenian democracy and Isocrates' educational program specifically.

His comments on the ancient regime of Solon and Cleisthenes illustrate this belief, as well as anticipating the more formal arguments for the derivation of the normative standards of education from political doctrine. Isocrates' historical account of the ancient regime of Athens argues that Solon and Cleisthenes were natural statesmen who possessed rhetorical and oratorical abilities of the highest order. They were good men, good orators, and good statesmen by nature. Through the *politeia* which they instituted, and through the education which they were able to provide to the young on the basis of it, statesmen and orators of the older regime were able to educate the citizenry in the virtue of moderation, which Isocrates repeatedly presents as the indispensable political virtue. The citizens and statesmen of the regime of Isocrates' day were guided by the opposite *politeia*, and the education which was derived from it produced correspondingly regrettable effects on the citizenry. As Isocrates puts it, education derived from the new *politeia*

trained the citizens in such a fashion that they looked upon insolence as democracy, lawlessness as liberty, impudence of speech as equality, and license to do whatever they pleased as happiness. (*Areopagiticus* 20)

After describing and praising the ancient regime of Solon and Cleisthenes in these terms, Isocrates observes:

Such was the constitution of their *politeias*, and from this it was easy to see that also in their conduct day by day they never failed to act with propriety and lawfulness (*orthós kai nominós*); for when people have laid sound foundations for the conduct of the whole regime it follows that in the details of their lives they must reflect the character of their government. (*Areopagiticus* 28)

Isocrates goes on to describe some of the specific details in which the lives of the people reflect the character of their government, and therefore the nature of the *politeia*. Significantly, education is not merely one such important detail in its own right, but also pervades all the others. The men of the old Athenian regime were pious and regular in their observance of the religious rites devoted to the praise of the gods of the regime. Young people were educated so as to ensure the perpetuation of such observance, and the retention of the religious customs regarded as important for the health of the regime.



Similarly, education in the old regime ensured that the young developed the virtues of prudence and justice, particularly in economic affairs, which are so crucial for political stability in democratic regimes (*Areopagiticus* 29–35).

## 9. The Goals of Isocratic Education

Isocrates described his program of education and its goals as “philosophy” (*Antidosis* 266). Isocrates claims that “the study of philosophy” ensures that men’s political speech will be eloquent, and guided by the “standard of what is best” (*Antidosis* 29). As Isocrates emphasizes, Athens was not made great by military power or institutions of government or law, but by

those qualities by which the nature of man rises above the other animals, and the race of the Hellenes above the barbarians, namely, in the fact that you have been educated as have been no other people in practical judgement [*phronesin*] and discourse [*logous*]. (*Antidosis* 293. Cf. *To Nicocles* 6)

Isocrates argues that political success is in large part a consequence of the coordinated development of eloquent speech and practical judgment, in the service of a political doctrine which defined “what is best.” Such speech and judgment, united in philosophy or the art of discourse, constitute one of the primary aims of Isocratic education.

Isocrates defines the formal aims of his educational program not in terms of knowledge, but in terms of “wisdom and philosophy” (*Antidosis* 270). Wisdom and philosophy, in turn, are defined in terms of practical judgment, especially in political affairs. Isocrates offers to “define and explain to you what philosophy, properly conceived, really is” (*Antidosis* 270):

For since it is not in the nature of man to attain a science by the possession of which we can know positively what we should do or what we should say, in the next resort I hold that man to be wise who is able by his powers of conjecture (*doxais*) to arrive generally at the best course, and I hold the man to be a philosopher who occupies himself with studies from which he will most quickly gain that kind of insight (*phronesin*). (*Antidosis* 271. Cf. *To Nicocles* 51, *Ag. Soph.* 2–8)

This conception of philosophy is described in greater detail, particularly with a greater focus on the specific character of practical judgment, in the *Panathenaicus*:

Whom, then, do I call educated, since I exclude the arts and sciences and specialities? First, those who manage well the circumstances which they encounter day by day, and who possess practical judgment (*doxan*) which is accurate in meeting occasions as they arise and rarely misses the expedient course of action; next; those who are decent and honourable in their intercourse with all with whom they associate, tolerating easily and good-naturedly what is unpleasant or offensive in others and being themselves as agreeable and reasonable to their associates as it is possible to be; furthermore, those who hold their pleasures always under control and are not unduly overcome by their misfortunes, bearing up under them bravely and in a manner worthy of our common nature; finally, and most important of all, those

who are not spoiled by successes and do not desert their true selves and become arrogant, but hold their ground steadfastly as intelligent men, not rejoicing in the good things which have come to them through chance rather than in those which through their own nature and intelligence are theirs from birth. Those who have a character which is in accord, not with one of these things but with all of them—these are prudent and complete men, possessed of all the virtues. (*Panathenaicus* 30–32)

For Isocrates, elementary education in the traditional arts prepares the student for philosophy, a higher level of education which develops in the student a particular kind of practical judgement. Isocrates proceeds to outline the sort of studies with which a philosopher will occupy himself, and thereby attain such practical judgement.

Isocrates also argues that his program of “liberal education” makes young men virtuous, particularly in the sense that they will be moderate, honest, and just in their private affairs and political activities. Nevertheless, just as Isocrates claims that there is no science of practical judgement, he claims that there is no science of virtue.

I claim that the kind of art which can implant honesty and justice in depraved natures has never existed, and does not exist now. (*Antidosis* 275)

Although no science of virtue exists, particularly in the sense that no educational art is guaranteed to produce virtuous men, Isocrates claims that study of the art of discourse can improve virtue:

I do hold that people can become better and worthier if they conceive an ambition to speak well, and if they become possessed by a desire to be able to persuade those that hear them. (*Antidosis* 275)

Isocrates does not contradict himself here: he does not claim that no educative science of virtue exists, only to go on to claim that education in the art of discourse is conducive to virtue. Isocrates is careful to claim that education in the art of discourse can improve virtue as a consequence of the combination of such study with what he regards as the proper motives. Isocrates claims that those who have an “ambition” and “desire” to speak eloquently and persuasively are likely to become more virtuous through the study of the art of discourse motivated by such desire and ambition.

In Isocrates’ view, the motives of education are related to the pursuit of honorable political success, and not the pursuit of knowledge or truth as in the alternative Socratic tradition. The first motive in education is the ambition to speak well in a manner worthy of honor. The man who desires to speak well in these terms will avoid petty or unjust quarrels, while concentrating on great political causes which concern the welfare of mankind and the common good of the regime. As a consequence of concentrating on such causes, the aspiring philosopher will select only the most edifying and illustrious statesmen as exemplars, since only such men may suitably illustrate the proper ways of successfully engaging in the greatest political causes. Furthermore, the need to speak persuasively through the use of such exemplars habituates the student to the contemplation of them, and to experiencing their example in his own thoughts and actions. In this way, political virtue and the powers of practical thinking and good speaking will be improved in those whose education is motivated by the desire to speak eloquently.

Isocrates educates with the intention of producing a class of virtuous men able to discourse wisely and persuasively on the broadest political questions [*Antidosis* 68]. Such men will be able to use their discursive skills in this way only if their souls have been imbued, through education, with such virtues as moderation and justice (*sophrosunen kai ten dikaiosunen*), and with practical judgement (*areten kai ten phronesisin*) (*Antidosis* 84–85). Isocrates argues that study of the art of political discourse is conducive to the development of such virtues as practical sobriety and justice. Men who have been educated in this way, and therefore the education itself, are valued as means through which the wider body of citizens may be persuaded to adopt the best political policies for both Athens and all of Hellas.

Isocrates observes that laws arise within, and in their application are relative to, particular regimes. At the same time, however, each regime also exists within both a wider context political power and international relations, and a wider context of political ideas. Laws are therefore particular and local for most practical purposes, although they arise within, and are conditioned by, a broader context than the particular regime itself. In Isocrates' view, men of wisdom ought therefore to concern themselves with both their own regime, and the whole of Hellas. There are many men able to discourse upon and implement the particular laws of their own particular regime. There are very few men, however, able to discourse upon the broader political questions of the original formulation of the law, or its application within the broader context of the regime's place within the Hellenic political community as a whole.

Isocrates intends his educational program to produce a politically effective class which may or may not be the formal ruling class. He observes that domestic and international political success does not depend on the city's having strong or beautiful walls nor a large population, but on having a stable political class "who nobly and moderately [*arista kai sophronestata*] govern their city" (*Areopagiticus* 13–14). Isocrates intended to educate just such a political class. As he argues in the earlier sections of *To Nicocles*, although it is desirable for a monarch to be well educated, it is better if the monarch is able to rely on the educated political judgement and virtue of a wider political class. Similarly, in democratic regimes, a class of men whose education has developed their political judgement and moderation will balance the political power of the citizens as a whole, just as that same class balances and moderates the political power of the monarch. Isocrates believes that

those who give most study to the art of words are the best of statesmen who come before you on the rostrum, and, furthermore, that among the ancients it was the greatest and most illustrious orators who brought to the city most of her blessings. (*Antidosis* 232)

Isocrates intended that the liberal education which he offered would produced a class of statesmen who, while not members of the monarchy or the constitutional ruling class, were nevertheless politically powerful representatives ensuring the stability and continuity of the best *politeia* (*Antidosis* 231–236, 306–309). When Isocrates wishes to establish that his educational program has been successful, he points to the fact that his students have either been members of such a class, or constitute one in themselves.

## 10. The Educational Program of Isocrates

The formal educational program offered by Isocrates builds upon traditional Athenian elementary education. Traditional Athenian education was

addressed to the complete man, body and soul—physical training and mental culture proceeding together, as two interlocking and balanced forms of discipline. (*Antidosis* 180–185)

Isocrates affirms the desirability of physical training but gives no details of it on the grounds that it is the proper concern of others, such as the teachers of gymnastic. Isocrates argued that advocates of liberal education, such as himself, must “examine into the nature of each kind of knowledge” (*Ag. Soph.* 10). Isocrates lists seven forms of knowledge: politics, involving such human sciences as political science, psychology, sociology, and economics; mathematics; physical sciences; literature; religion; and philosophy. An important Isocratic addition to the curriculum is the study of history. Isocrates divides knowledge further into the “theoretical” and “practical,” and adds to these a notion of moral knowledge (*Antidosis* 261–267, *To Demonicus* 3–5, *Busiris* 21, *To Nicocles* 35). Taken together, these literary and scientific disciplines constitute the antecedents of the (seven) liberal arts of the late Roman and medieval periods (Muir 2005).

Isocrates values such education relative to two criteria. First, such education is regarded as mental exercise, analogous to physical exercise, which trains and strengthens the mind. As Isocrates said,

Give careful attention to all that concerns your life, but above all train your own intellect; for the greatest thing in the smallest compass is a sound mind in a human body. (*To Demonicus* 40)

Second, such elementary education is valued as “the gymnastics of the mind in preparation for philosophy” (*Antidosis* 26). Elementary education is valued as training for the mind, and as preparation for what Isocrates calls “philosophy,” namely, the art of discourse.

Isocrates next turns to the relation of education and philosophy to the other arts. He begins his discussion by commending the education handed down by Athens’ ancestors and recommends in particular study of the set of arts first assembled by Hippias of Elis. Isocrates recommends study of eristic dialogue, astronomy, geometry, grammar, and music, though his recommendation is subject to a number of qualifications. These arts are to be learned by the young. Adults should neither continue learning such subjects nor spend time reviewing them, unless they intend to make their living teaching them. These arts

are different in their nature from the other studies which make up our education; for the other branches avail us only after we have gained a knowledge of them, whereas these studies can be of no benefit to us after we have mastered them. (*Antidosis* 263–267)

The other studies referred to are philosophy or the art of discourse. The preliminary, lesser arts themselves are not beneficial in private or in public affairs, and need not be

mastered because they do not themselves lead to practical judgement or oratorical skill. The *process* or experience of learning these arts is beneficial, however, because this involves hard work, practice, exact thought, and clear speech (*Antidosis* 262–266). In Isocrates' view:

While we are occupied with the subtlety and exactness of astronomy and geometry and are forced to apply our minds to difficult problems, and are, in addition, being habituated to speak and apply ourselves to what is said and shown to us, and not to let our intelligence be dissipated, we gain the power, after being exercised and sharpened on these disciplines, of grasping and learning more easily and more quickly those subjects which are of more importance and of greater value. (*Antidosis* 264–265)

In other words, the nature of the traditional education in the arts is different from the nature of the education Isocrates offers in that the arts do not in themselves foster the development of practical judgement but serve only to train the mind in preparation for such development. Traditional education is not a part of philosophy but preparation for it. In Isocrates' words,

I do not, however, think it proper to apply the term “philosophy” to a training which is no help to us either in our speech or in our actions, but rather I would call it a gymnastic of the mind and a preparation for philosophy. (*Antidosis* 266)

In Isocrates' view, even those who have mastered the arts cannot be called educated because they have not advanced to philosophy, the arts of good judgment and persuasive speech which are the ultimate goal of education (*Panathenaicus* 30).

## 11. Moral *mimesis*

Isocrates used a variety of three teaching methods, appropriate to the subject being taught. The most important teaching method was a mode of moral *mimesis*, in which the teacher presents himself as *mimesasthai*: the teacher is a model of virtue which presents himself for imitation. He argues that the teacher must not merely know the subjects and skills he claims to teach but, much more importantly, the teacher must in a sense *be* an embodiment of the educational goals he asks his students to attain. The teacher must have attained, must live, and must be a constant example of moderation, civic virtue, prudent judgment in private and public matters, and reasoned discourse about the fundamental political questions facing the regime which his students can imitate and seek to emulate.

## 12. The Limits of Education

Isocrates did not believe that education could be a pleasant experience for youth without sacrificing its goals. In his *Progymnasmata*, Aphthonios recorded that “Isocrates said that the roots of education are bitter, but the fruits are sweet.” Indeed, perhaps the most

important—and most surprising—feature of Isocrates' educational thought is his repeatedly emphasized belief that formal education can contribute very little to the quality of human life and that the first duty of educators is to resist the constant temptation to exaggerate its efficacy. Indeed, his first educational writing, *Against the Sophists* (ca. 390 BCE) opens with a direct assertion that the primary problem in education was that teachers have a poor reputation because they promise that education can attain much more than it can actually attain. He found that educators claimed (then as now) that education could and should achieve a long list of benefits: formal education could prepare any person to be responsible active citizens, critical thinkers, employable and productive contributors to the economy, participants in the arts and cultural life, good parents, moral paragons of tolerance, honesty and justice, and more. In response to such expansive and unproven claims, Isocrates argued that while education could play a vitally important role in the life of an individual and a community, it was false and irresponsible to claim that education could ever come close to achieving these things listed by educators. At the conclusion of *Against the Sophists*, Isocrates claimed that education could only be expected to partly enable a few students, if they possessed the right natural talents and dispositions, to attain a narrow and closely related set of practical goals: moderate their material desires, develop an honest and fair-minded character, make useful practical judgments on personal and political matters, and to effectively express those judgments in discourse.

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## CHAPTER 22

# Plutarch

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*Sophia Xenophontos*

### 1. Introduction

When asked to brainstorm about Plutarch and education, we often think of the treatise *On the Education of Children*, which has enjoyed great popularity from the Renaissance up to modern times. Although the essay contains ideas that agree with Plutarch's thinking, it has now become clear that it is unlikely to have been written by Plutarch (Berry 1958; Abbot 1980). But even if Plutarch did write it, his educational theory is much too rich and complex to be encapsulated in a short treatise, and its power and charm can be traced across his enormous production. Both the *Parallel Lives*, for which he is best known (twenty-two surviving paired lives of a Greek and a Roman hero), the four non-parallel *Lives*, and his corpus of the *Moralia* (a series of seventy-eight extant miscellaneous works) are permeated by issues of educational significance, which show how Plutarch defines education, what he thinks it does to the human being, and exactly how and where he expects it to work.

In this chapter, I shall first explore the early years of formal education through an examination of Plutarch's *On Listening to Poetry*. Then, I shall draw some distinctions regarding male and female education with reference mainly to *Precepts on Marriage*. I shall accompany this with a discussion of educational practices in political life as described in *Political Precepts*. Before all that, however, it is essential to know how Plutarch understands education.

### 2. Plutarch's Conception of Education

By education, Plutarch mostly refers to ethical and not to strictly cognitive training. As its name suggests, ethical education aims at the formation of human character, what Plutarch calls ἦθος, and the attainment of ethical excellence (ἠθικὴ ἀρετή), which enables

us to live the good and happy life. Following the psychological theory of his chosen master, Plato, Plutarch believes that the human soul (ψυχή) is subdivided into two parts or faculties; it contains a rational part (νοερόν καὶ λογιστικόν) administering thoughts, calculations, and mental judgments, and an irrational part (παθητικόν καὶ ἄλογον) dealing with passions, primitive needs, and desires (*On Moral Virtue*, 442A–C). Whereas the rational part is firm and stable, the irrational part is changeable, so that the former needs to prevail over the latter and regulate passions (442A) in a balanced state between excess and deficiency (444B–445B). Influenced by Aristotelian doctrines, Plutarch goes on to argue that the submission of the irrational part to the rational occurs not suddenly, but through long-lasting habituation (ἔθος), thus creating habits (ἔξεις). The habit turns out to be a vice (κακία) if the passion has been managed badly, but a virtue (ἀρετή) if well managed by reason (443D). This means in practice two related things: first, that a certain person is capable of both great good and great evil depending on the nurture (s)he receives (expressed as ἄσκησις, διδασκαλία or παιδαγωγία); and second, that a good nature (φύσις) alone (i.e., right natural endowments), if not accompanied by an equally good nurture, does not guarantee a good character. This formulation comes from Plato, mainly his *Republic* (491e–492a) and *Gorgias* (525e), and is familiar in ancient ethics as “the theory of the great natures.” Plutarch advances this important theory time and again within his work in slightly different terms (e.g., *The Life of Demetrius* 1.7, *On Moral Virtue* 450D–E, *God’s Slowness to Punish* 552C–D; with Duff 2008), but he consistently rates environment higher than heredity.

Plutarch sees education (*paideia*) as an external force, socially institutionalized (452D) with the aim of molding our moral makeup through the medium of philosophy. In fact, for Plutarch, education is not only the transmission of philosophical material during the period of formal schooling, but the ongoing reapplication of that material during adulthood as well. In viewing *paideia* as a process of continued self-exploration, Plutarch seems to be in accord with the philosophical traditions of the Late Republic and Early Roman Empire (Cicero’s *Tusculan Disputations*, Horace’s *Satires*, Seneca’s *Moral Epistles* and *On Anger*). His educational ideas are, nevertheless, presented from a distinctively optimistic viewpoint, via practical guidance (Plutarch’s so-called “practical ethics,” Van Hoof 2010), and always imbued with compassion, his noted *philanthropia*, for the shortcomings of human nature. These are features of Plutarch’s moralism that we shall encounter in both public and private instances of ethical education.

### 3. Education in the Classroom

With that in mind, we now turn to education proper. In Plutarch’s days (late first to early second century CE), for the first seven years, elite children were trained at home with the help of the parents, the pedagogue, and the nurse. From then on, education was provided by the city in the form of a general curriculum called *enkyklios paideia* (“circular” and, by implication, “complete” education). Plutarch’s educational treatise par excellence is his *On Listening to Poetry*, which explores the importance of poetry as a preliminary stage to philosophy. Knowledge of poetry was, of course, a staple of education, and as the school papyri from Graeco-Roman Egypt attest, in the Hellenistic and Imperial period the works of Homer, Euripides, and Menander provided the most popular school



texts (Criboire 1996; Morgan 1998). Even so, Plutarch's use of poetry is not the result of current educational practice but is heavily informed by his educational theory as indicated earlier; to this I shall return.

The debate over the value of poetry was central in Greek thought well before Plutarch's time; some thinkers endorsed it, others did not. The Stoics, for instance, defended poetry as an avenue to knowledge and appreciated its instructive impact. The early Epicureans, by contrast, did not view it as a serious occupation that could promote philosophical reflection. Along similar lines, Plato reproached poetry: as an imitation (μίμησις) of the world of senses, which in turn was an imitation of the world of forms, poetry and its qualities were "three stages distant from philosophical truth" (*Republic* 597e, 602c). Plato even banished the poets from his ideal state (*Kallipolis*) on the grounds that they pervert the mores of the youth with the lies they tell (*Republic* 377a–398b; *Ion* 533e–535a). By attributing to the gods human deficiencies (theft, adultery, etc.), the poets stimulate unlawful passions in their audiences instead of moderating them, animating the irrational part of the soul, and undermining the whole function of education as a means of psychic equilibrium.

On the basis of what we have mentioned in the preceding section, one would expect Plutarch to reject poetry too; yet he does not, despite his general commitment to Platonic philosophy. The rationale that lies behind his choice is a plain one, responding to his own agenda. Plato assessed poetry from the standpoint of his utopian project and applied criteria for its acceptance which were virtually, perhaps wholly, impossible to meet. Plutarch's outlook is more pragmatic, as he gives advice to teenagers of the Graeco-Roman elite to apply during their poetical training; he thus needs to be less austere and absolute than Plato. The mythological, fictional element inherent in poems makes them appealing to young readers, but it also comes at a cost to truthfulness, so that there is the risk that they might be led astray by the delusiveness of poetic representation. It is this risk that Plutarch wants to eliminate not by dismissing poetry altogether, but through the application of reading strategies that will sensitize the reader to the nature of the text. Plutarch believes that the best way to combat the danger is by knowing it.

*On Listening to Poetry*, unlike Quintilian's *Institutes of Oratory* (see Chapter 23), is not a technical handbook devoted to school questions, nor does it resemble Aristotle's *Poetics* in dealing with literary criticism. Plutarch does apply certain hermeneutic tools during his exposition, but his target is always the moral health of his audience. *On Listening to Poetry* encompasses a wide range of poetic quotations from the great classics. These quotations are sometimes drawn from complete texts or from anthologies (*florilegia*) and Homeric scholia that Plutarch consulted, and some others doubtless come from Plutarch's personal notebooks (*hypomnemata*) or even his memory; but in all instances, the author's choice of the material is meant to be morally edifying. Those poetic sayings are there to be critically discussed in terms of ethical appropriateness and then either adopted or rejected. In light of this, *On Listening to Poetry* should be taken as a moralizing essay in which readers exercise their discernment (κρίσις), which will enable them to calm their impulses. As often, Plutarch assigns major responsibilities to his students who ought to be alert, eclectic, and self-disciplined.

Let us now consider practical cases in which Plutarch helps the young reader along by showing him how to approach passages whose morality is suspect. He emphasizes the fact that poets tell many lies ("πολλὰ ψεύδονται ἄοιδοί," 16A) either intentionally or

unintentionally. Falsehood is the raw material of poetic composition (“we do not know any poetry which is without *mythos* and *pseudos*,” 16C), and so readers should not believe everything that they read in it is true. Hence, they should suppress their sorrow at the spectacle of the dead Achilles and Agamemnon because the two heroes are only dead in the *Odyssey*, not in reality (16E). Poets themselves are aware that their narrations are bewildering illusions as, for instance, when they describe the wondrous scenarios of the underworld (17B–D).

In realizing that poetry is an imitative art, readers should assess it according to its success in resembling the original. So when we encounter representations of wicked deeds or reprehensible characters, what we admire is the skill of the imitation, not the act itself. Plutarch here adduces an example from painting (ζωγραφία), which, following Simonides, he sees as a kind of silent poetry (σιγῶσα ποιησις): Timomachus the painter portrayed the dreadful deed of Medea, killing her own children; the infanticide should be enjoyed for the quality of its depiction alone (18B–C). Plutarch continues by stressing that to imitate something beautiful and to imitate something beautifully are two completely different things (18C–D), so that when we come across base words that are nonetheless nicely fitting to the character that pronounces them, there should be nothing discomfiting in that. For this reason we are to be pleased with the words put in the mouths of Thersites the buffoon, or Sisyphus the corrupter of women, or Batrachus the brothel keeper, as long as these are aesthetically successful. In several cases, the poets themselves indicate their verdicts on morally questionable issues: Homer condemned the effeminacy of Paris, the irascibility of Achilles, and the arrogance of Hector; similarly, Euripides punished Ixion on stage for having tried to rape Hera (19E).

Plutarch then gives advice on how to offset the immoral meaning of poetic excerpts: we should find contradictory, more laudable, opinions set out by the same poet on the same issue. In his *Isthmian Ode* 4.48, Pindar argues that “you should do everything to obliterate your enemy,” but to this we should oppose his own saying in *Isthmian Ode* 7.47 according to which “it is most bitter the end that awaits sweet injustice” (21A). In amending poetic citations of this sort, Plutarch employs such terms as ἀντιπαράτιθῆμι (set against), παραβάλλω (interpolate), μεταγράφω (rewrite), and most notoriously ἐπανορθῶ (amend). This terminology was employed by the Alexandrian scholars as part of their textual interventions in the Homeric poems. The editorial practice of ἐπανόρθωσις, in particular, technical though it may have sounded, is redefined by Plutarch into a roughly ethical term. Within *On Listening to Poetry*, it refers to amending poetic passages in order to suit the moral purposes of the author who is deploying them, as previously observed. But more than that, it underpins Plutarch’s moral theory: in *The Life of Aemilius* 1.4, the biographer states his programmatic intention to compose the *Parallel Lives* for the ethical improvement (“πρὸς ἐπανόρθωσιν ἡθῶν”) of his audience and himself alike.

For Plutarch, it is also vital to be aware of the contextual meanings of individual words and not only of learned glosses (γλῶσσαι), rare words with difficult semantic nuances. He draws attention especially to the use of the names of the gods, which sometimes refer to the gods themselves and at other times, via metonymy or metaphor, to the qualities they represent. When Euripides utters in an oath: “By Zeus amidst the stars and Ares murderous” (*Phoenissae* 1006), it is obvious that he names the gods themselves; but when Sophocles says: “Blind and unseeing Ares, women, with a pig’s face causes all kinds of misfortunes” (frag. 838 Radt), the name is here to be understood as meaning war

(23B–C). Particularly interesting also are the poetic meanings of *arete*; this refers mainly to “the correctness of reasoning, the height of reasonable sense, and the disposition of a balanced soul,” as in the verse: “The gods have set sweat before the attainment of virtue” (Hesiod, *Works and Days* 289); but it could also imply “fame, power, or prosperity,” as in: “Zeus makes virtue in men both increase and diminish” (*Iliad* 20.242) (24D–E).

Poetry is an imitation of reality (“ὁμοιότης τοῦ ἀληθοῦς,” 25B), and in consequence the actions and characters it represents cannot be purely perfect; they are rather a mixture of good and evil, and Plutarch calls upon his audience to take a discriminating attitude to what is represented. Examples here abound, but one passage of this type will do: falling deeply in love with Odysseus, Nausicaa longs to marry the man. If she is motivated by her unrestrained passion for sexual union, then her action should be blamed as a sign of boldness and profligacy. If, on the other hand, it is her admiration of Odysseus’ virtuous character that causes her marital desire, she is not to be blamed at all (27A–B).

*On Listening to Poetry* is addressed to those readers who approach poetry not for reasons of amusement but of moral reform (“μὴ παιγνίας ἀλλὰ παιδείας ἕνεκα,” 30E). These must be taught to pay attention to passages that treat the cardinal virtues of courage, wisdom, and justice. The line “Athena was satisfied with the prudent and honest man” (*Odyssey* 3.52) inspires prudence and justice in particular, as the goddess is not pleased, for instance, with wealth or corporal strength (30E–F). Plutarch usually downplays the value of physical characteristics compared to moral qualities. He also encourages control of anger by providing the famous illustrations of Achilles and Odysseus (31A–D) and concludes his essay by asserting the teachability of virtue (32E; cf. 439C). By way of recapitulation, he resorts anew to the method of rewriting poetic lines, which he now calls with its variant παραδιόρθωσις (33C), offering more explicit instances: to Euripides’ saying “What is shameful if its doer think not so?” (*Aeolos*, frag. 19 Kannicht), Plutarch interjects: “A shame is a shame, though one may think so or not” (33C)!

It is such ethical corrections that Plutarch proposes during poetic study. Physicians normally use a medicine not only for a particular complaint but for all other diseases of a similar nature (34B–C), and so poetry too must serve a purpose outside itself, leading us to handle all similar instances of internal discipline. Poetry has its merits and faults; unless misused, it can be beneficial for the formative period of teenagers and for the proper living that lies ahead.

#### 4. Women’s Education

In the previous section, we have discussed how poetical study is expected to prepare young learners for their initiation into serious philosophy. To this intricate issue, Plutarch devotes a whole essay, *On Listening to Lectures*, by means of which he supplements and further documents his ideas in *On Listening to Poetry* (Xenophontos 2010). A third, *On Progress in Virtue*, examines the notion of moral enhancement (προκοπή). These three essays form the backbone of Plutarch’s pedagogy which is predominantly concerned, it seems, with his male audience: they are dedicated to close associates of Plutarch, prominent intellectual men of the imperial aristocracy: Marcus Sedatius, Nicander, and Sosius Senecio, respectively. Yet we should also notice that Plutarch dedicated whole treatises to women of profound literacy too, for instance, to his wife Timoxena and his

friends, Eurydice and Clea. How, then, does Plutarch conceptualize the education of women within his work? And can we detect any limitations imposed on it?

I start with the relationship between husband and wife in *Precepts on Marriage*. Influenced by Xenophon's *Oeconomicus*, Plutarch in this essay gives to the newlywed couple, Eurydice and Pollianus, moral injunctions designed to benefit both of them during their marital life (138B). Such a statement, however, does not imply parity between the two spouses, at least in regard to their roles; one soon comes to understand that it is the husband's task to impart moral education to his wife, and the wife's duty to accept the instruction as an obedient student. The conjugal chamber is described as a "school of orderly behavior" for the wife ("διδασκαλεῖον εὐταξίας," 145A), in which she should consider her man to be her "guide, philosopher, and teacher of the most lovely and divine things" ("καθηγητῆς καὶ φιλόσοφος καὶ διδάσκαλος τῶν καλλίστων καὶ θειοτάτων," 145C).

I turn to certain instances in which the man teaches the wife and which reveal the qualities of female studentship. The husband is encouraged to communicate verbally with his wife (προσδιαλέγου, 145B), whereas the wife should listen to him in silence. In the best case, what is assigned to her is a kind of λαλεῖν but definitely not λέγειν (143C). Plutarch's choice of vocabulary is not a matter of chance; προσδιαλέγομαι refers to the concession of verbal skills to the male and is a term that features widely in the philosophical training of Plutarch's male readers in *On Listening to Lectures* (38E, 39C). Προσλαλεῖν is often tinged with negative connotations denoting restrictions on feminine speech (Auberger 1993).

Modesty (αἰδώς, 139C; cf. 609A) is a quality that distinguishes not only married women but also females from an early age. Eumetis, a wise young girl in the *Symposium of the Seven Sages*, despite her willingness to press her point before a male audience, restrains herself with modesty and blushes (154B). This modesty is a trait of behavior that has a counterpart in men's education, but not an exact equivalent. The male student in *On Listening to Lectures* is advised to hold back modestly while his teacher is still speaking (39B–C), but will have the chance soon enough to raise his own questions and contribute to the discussion. Female αἰδώς restricts feminine agents to silence and compliance, whereas male αἰδώς works as an indication of self-control (*sophrosyne*) and prepares for the proper application of speech (*logos*).

Plutarch's educational agenda rests on the regulation of hearing (ἀκοή) for both the beginner and the advanced male learner in *On Listening to Lectures* and *On Progress in Virtue*, respectively. True, women in *Precepts on Marriage* receive similar advice, but are the two instances really analogous? Disagreements with their husbands, says Plutarch, can open the wife's ears to the malevolent words of bad women (143F), imperiling marital harmony. In male pedagogy, the protection of hearing relates to the moral improvement of the man and is a formal procedure within the lecture room; whereas in female pedagogy, the protection of hearing seems to profit the husband and not the wife, since it forestalls the whispered insinuations of other women against him. On the other hand, female training is informal (i.e., non-institutionalized), limited to the marital environment. The overall pattern so far remains one in which the husband leads the marriage. Does this pattern break at all? And if so, under what conditions?

A rare instance within the *Moralia* in which a woman wishes to rule over and dominate a man ("ἄρχειν καὶ κρατεῖν δοκοῦσαν," 752E) is attested in *Dialogue on Love*. Here, a

wealthy widow called Ismenodora falls in love with Bacchon, a man half her age, and is determined to marry him if not by his willing surrender then by force. Notice, however, that Bacchon's defining attribute is the absence of any independent character, the result of his young age: he is a *μειράκιον* (*ephebe*, probably between sixteen and eighteen), still wearing the *χλαμύς* (cloak) and in need of a pedagogue (752F). More to the point, Bacchon's passive—even at instances effeminate—profile is much in evidence throughout: all his activity is limited to his daily training in the *palaestra* (750A), he is being seized by Ismenodora's men, dressed and crowned as a groom, not displaying any individual will to resist (754E–755A). In this case, therefore, the dominance of the female is facilitated by the youth and weakness of the male. The instance is one of abnormality, and Plutarch does not go on to treat the results of such a distribution of roles. Is it because they are largely debatable?

*The Life of Antony* may be illuminating here since it offers a similar case in which gender roles within a marriage are reversed. Fulvia, Antony's first wife, exercises control over him both in domestic and political affairs. In *Antony* 10.5, we read that “she ruled a ruler and commanded a commander” (“ἄρχοντος ἄρχειν καὶ στρατηγούτου στρατηγεῖν”). Interestingly, Cleopatra in her turn (10.6) needs to pay teaching fees (*διδασκάλια*) to Fulvia for having taught Antony to endure a woman's predominance since she now took him over quite tamed (“πάνυ χειροῆθη”) and schooled (“πεπαιδαγωγημένον”) to obey women. The language is strong and reflects a proper kind of teaching; still the substance of Fulvia's paedeutics consists of licentiousness and excess, not of anything good. This brings to mind what scholars have stressed, that when in Plutarch a woman takes a dominant position this is often for no good. It is also suggestive that Plutarch describes the authoritative roles of Fulvia and Cleopatra as the result of Antony's weakness, as in Bacchon's case above. Antony is a passive juvenile (his acts frequently called *μειρακιώδεις* and himself a *μειράκιον*, 10.7, 16.3, 28.1, 30.1), dedicated to playful scenes, lacking in initiative.

However, if we are to do justice to Plutarch's diverse handling of wives, we need to explore the issue much more broadly. In the *Parallel Lives*, Plutarch depicts several active wives who influence their husbands' public decisions, but who are not always as authoritative as Fulvia or Cleopatra. Blomqvist (1997) is certainly right to have classified them into two categories, “dominant” and “supportive,” the former bringing destruction, the latter generating political concord. Close examination of such cases would take too long given the limited space of this chapter; and so it suffices to say that regardless of its outcome, the wifely contribution in the *Lives* is on the whole restricted, for women gain their “autonomy” only when the male is in a state of physical, political, or ethical fragility, or when there is some kind of male sensitivity at stake. Consider, for, instance the case of King Cleomenes of Sparta, who is married to King Agis' widow, Agiatis. Agiatis is certainly not wicked, but she similarly transmits political instruction to a husband with psychological deficiencies: Cleomenes is obsessed with Agis' innovations, urging Agiatis and especially his follower, Xenares, to narrate to him the same things over and over again, until the latter “rebuked him angrily, calling him unsound in mind, and finally stopped visiting and conversing with him” (*The Life of Agis and Cleomenes* 24.4).

I round off this discussion with Plutarch's *On Female Virtue*. The essay comprises brief stories, mythological or historical, concerned with the public exhibition of female excellence. Plutarch attributes an equal share of virtue to both man and woman (“τὸ μίαν

εἶναι καὶ τὴν αὐτὴν ἀνδρὸς καὶ γυναικὸς ἀρετὴν,” 242F) and sketches instances in which women become ethical models for men, what we call *exempla* or *Vorbilder* in German. It is interesting, however, that these exemplary females teach in an indirect manner via their fine qualities and paradigmatic conduct, and most importantly through silence. They are not proper instructors who employ admonitory diction or the usual teaching register. There is perhaps only a single case in which the teaching analogy is explicitly used; in 245A, the passive participle διδαχθέντες (trained) refers to men, and the active verb ἐκέλευον (urged) to women, but this should be taken as an exception that confirms, rather than invalidates, the general rule: the exemplary women within *On Female Virtue* belong to a distant, idealized past and act in exceptional circumstances of social disorder and crisis, conditions that are much less likely now that the Roman Principate has established universal peace.

We know that Plutarch wrote a lost treatise, *That Woman Too Should Be Educated*, which owed much to Plato (*Laws* 804d–e) but also to Roman Stoicism and in particular to Musonius Rufus’ *That Women Too Should Acquire Philosophical Education*. Yet, as we have seen, Plutarch does not posit that philosophical education really empowers women as independent agents. He believes first, that it qualifies them as adequate male substitutes until men can resume their leading role and second, that the transgression of feminine limits may harm men’s world, a looming danger to it. In literature, this evaluation of women is labeled “equal but secondary” (Stadter 1999: 180–181), which means that women have the same chances for philosophical training provided that they remained subordinate, just as their allegedly natural role demanded and the conditions of an ordered society required. Plutarch does not free himself from the patriarchal biases of his age. This does not entitle us to consider him as a misogynist in the modern sense of the term, simply because the realities of our Western societies have nothing to do with an ancient culture that dates back nearly two millennia. Plutarch, in fact, may be one of the most startling cases of a Greek author who respected women in his own particular way.

## 5. Education and Politics

We have maintained thus far that education in Plutarch is a process of moral development which has no limits in terms of age stage, gender, or life setting. This suggestion can be further substantiated if we turn to education in politics, a sphere of action in which Plutarch was extremely interested. His admiration for the political art is illustrated in his involvement in the local affairs of his birthplace, Chaeronea, a small town in Boeotia in mainland Greece, and in the other political tasks that he undertook, including some well-known embassies to Rome, the administrative center of the empire. In addition to his own activity, Plutarch’s works deeply embed themselves in the sociopolitical peculiarities of his era, in which leader Rome and led Greece are eventually intertwined despite all their apparent or actual contradictions.

A key aspect in the process of cultural contact between the two worlds was *paideia*, not in any general sense, but in its particular form of Hellenic education. This was affected by the philosophical and rhetorical revival of the classical past, mainly reflected in the intellectual movement of the so-called Second Sophistic (first to third century CE). Hellenic *paideia* became so significant during this time as to function as a powerful

weapon in the hands of any individual (*pepaideumenos*, “educated person”) who aspired to social ascent and political impact (Schmitz 1997; Whitmarsh 2001). Furthermore, talk of Hellenic *paideia* was often directed toward non-Greeks. This resulted in the creation of a new code of ethnic identity in which “Hellenism” was determined not by origin but by cultural affiliation, so that many Romans or barbarians that attained Hellenic *paideia* were considered (culturally) Hellenes.

As a child of his age, Plutarch responds in the most vivid way to these intriguing matters. Much interesting work has been done over the past twenty years or so on what is conventionally named “Hellenic *paideia* and Roman Heroes.” The lead was taken by Pelling (1988, 1989) and Swain (1990, 1995), who have shown how the partial or complete absence of Hellenic culture in Plutarch’s Roman heroes brings political failure and ultimately their personal downfall. But this is not all. In keeping with the remit of this volume, I wish to cast some light on how political behavior involves educational perspectives. I shall argue that early education aims to introduce youngsters into a pattern of morally upright adult conduct, providing the aspiring politician, just as any other individual, with the qualities that he needs to lead the good life. Philosophical education equips Plutarch’s statesman to be an ethical teacher for the body politic.

I begin with the striking parallels between Plutarch’s educational and political essays, a testimony to the centrality of philosophy in politics. Plutarch’s key texts in this matter are his *Political Precepts*, dedicated to young Menemachus of Sardis upon his entering public life, and his *Old Men in Public Life*, addressed to Flavius Euphanes in order to discourage him from withdrawing into idle retirement due to his advanced age. The dominant note of both essays is that political activity is not a formal obligation (*λειτουργία*) still less a menial distraction but a way of life (*βίος*) (791C, 823C), and that political engagement and philosophical commitment converge (“ὅμοιον δ’ ἔστι τῷ φιλοσοφεῖν τὸ πολιτεύεσθαι,” 796D).

In his *Political Precepts* (798C ff.), Plutarch advises that the statesman should enter the political arena only after developing a firm *προαίρεσις* (moral choice or intention), which must be based on *κρίσις* (discernment) and *λόγος* (reason). He disapproves of an entry into politics motivated by random impulses. *Prohairesis* is a significant concept of Aristotelian pedigree treated in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, but it also carries Platonic overtones indicating the deliberation that comes from philosophical training (*Phaedrus* 245b; *Politicus* 257c). To make his point more explicit, Plutarch sketches the outcome of two contrasting possibilities: the political career stemming from prohairesis has stable foundations (“ἄτρεπτον καὶ δυσμετάθετον,” 799B), in accordance with the unchangeable rational faculty of the soul; whereas the political career that is driven by passionate desires is in constant disarray (“ταραπτόμενοι,” 798D, “ταραχὰς ἄγονται,” 798E), recalling the irrational part of the soul. Here, the smooth running of the state depends on the prevalence of reason, which is made part, for instance, of the educational program in *On Progress in Virtue* (79A–79B). On the other hand, in his *Lives*, Plutarch often gives us instances of political men whose uncontrollable passions lead not only to their instability of character (*metabolai*/changes) but also to a collapsing political career. State and psyche are one and the same thing, an association Plutarch borrows from Plato (*Republic* 435b).

Plutarch then dissuades readers from being driven by their love for competition and fame. *Paideia* in Roman times promoted competition in preparation for a highly competitive adult society. Our sources show that children participated in school contests

and received praise for winning. In the case of adults, there existed not only organized music and sport competitions, but also declamation contests among professional sophists. In Plutarch, the healthy competitiveness for public offices and honors is known as *philotimia*. But many times, this *philotimia* can also be a negative passion, a sort of ambition that blinds one's sober reasoning and prioritizes self-interest over common welfare. Plutarch discourses at length on the dual connotations of *philotimia*, which are already visible and relevant during one's early education. In the pedagogical essays, *philotimia* sometimes drives the student's passion for learning and his desire to excel (30E, 77B), but it also nourishes self-aggrandizement and egocentric tendencies (39E).

After the politician has regulated his own character in terms of *prohairesis* and *philotimia*, he needs to "attempt to shape the character of his citizens, gradually and unobtrusively leading it towards improvement and taking it gently in hand" (800A–800B). This is a time-consuming task, here articulated by means of a wine simile: just as the wine, which is at first controlled by the character of the drinker, but gradually due to the warmth of the body it mingles with it and itself forms the drinker's character by changing it, in similar fashion the statesman should first accommodate himself ("εὐάρμοστον εἶναι," 799C) to the people's preexisting tendencies (799C), and then progressively transform them. The ability of the political leader to mold the citizens' character presumes his personal assimilation to a compound (συγκραθέν) of individual characters (799B). This adaptability is a quality to which auditors of philosophical lectures are accustomed from their early training, where they learned to concur with the behavioral demands of the classroom, always in relation to their associates: do not interrupt the speaker, be patient channeling your impulses even if you disagree, do not envy your classmate, imitate the better, etc. (39C–48D). Moreover, it is the teacher's adaptability too that is in evidence within the lecture room, since his admonition is tailored to the individual character of each of his students ("πρὸς ἕκαστον ἰδίᾳ," 44A).

It is in this connection interesting that in Plutarch's *Table Talk*, where the symposium is envisaged as a kind of civilized *polis*, the symposiarch or host of the banquet is a teacher of the guests ("διαπαιδαγωγῆ τοὺς πίνοντας," 614B) and seems similarly adaptable, in that he is reconciled with the manners of entertainment of each one of his fellow drinkers (613F, 620E–621A). I shall not treat any further the pedagogical complexities that conviviality involves, but the foregoing briefly sketched parallel does help to explain that the ethical virtues acquired during philosophical *paideia* are expected to have a broad application in certain spheres of adult life, whether in the symposium, politics, or elsewhere. In Plutarch, education is a process of socialization, which accustoms young people to conventional cultural norms.

Politics is for Plutarch an important extension of virtuous behavior, and so in *Old Men in Political Life* he argues that despite their physical infirmity, old statesmen should remain active, in order to teach younger politicians the principles of civic-minded leadership ("παιδείας ἕνεκα τῶν νέων καὶ διδασκαλίας," 790E). It is true, however, that the politician's role as a teacher is not always analogous to that of a philosopher-lecturer since the former needs to develop a sort of street wisdom that may be partly at odds with the morally correct education he has received (e.g., 813A–813C). For Plutarch, politics is a business of real life ("Realpolitik") affected by (often pedestrian or crude) experience rather than idealized theory. Notwithstanding any variations, the lecture room may be seen as an anticipation of political debate.



## 6. Conclusions

As a witness to the demanding structures of the imperial aristocracy, Plutarch realized well enough the golden combination between *paideia* and social status. But in contrast to the tendencies of his contemporary intellectual world, he chose to follow the path of a moralist philosopher, leaving to others the frustrating undertaking of a competent sophist. Dio of Prusa, Aelius Aristeides, and Lucian turned to rhetorical displays aiming at pleasure, personal recognition, sophistication, and rivalry among their peers with regard to the art of persuasion. Plutarch, however, believed in another art, “the art of life” (613B), philosophy, which was the cornerstone of true *paideia* and to which he ascribed a wide range of roles. Being one of the most cultured men of his age, a graduate of the Platonic Academy, a prolific author who wrote extensively on a multitude of topics, Plutarch was additionally the founder of an informal philosophical school in Chaeronea, a place young people from all over Greece would visit to study philosophy. Plutarch was also sensitive in relation to the education of his family; he lectured in Rome, and educated his powerful friends either through lively discussions or by dedicating his works to them. Still, Plutarch is nowadays a benchmark in the history of education for reasons not confined to his lifetime. Plutarch educated Europe from Byzantium to the Renaissance, and from the Enlightenment to the modern era; and it was not just a work misattributed to him, *On the Education of Children*, but the sum of his educational dynamics that renders him so stimulating, not only for teachers and students, but for all individuals preoccupied with the ethical aspects of their existence.

## NOTES

Translations of ancient texts are the author’s own.

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### FURTHER READING

Jones, Christopher (1971), *Plutarch and Rome*, Oxford, Clarendon Press and Russell, Donald (1973), *Plutarch*, London, Duckworth are still the best introductions to Plutarch's life and work. Readers should consult the recent commentary by Hunter, Richard and Russell, Donald (2012), *Plutarch: How to Study Poetry*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press. The most provocative discussions on Plutarch's *Lives* are that of Duff, Timothy, (2002), *Plutarch's Lives: Exploring Virtue and Vice*, Oxford, Oxford University Press and Pelling, Christopher (2002), *Plutarch and History*. London, Duckworth; for politics refer to Aalders, Gerhard (1982), *Plutarch's Political Thought*, Amsterdam, New York, North-Holland Pub. Co. For symposium to the collective volume edited by Klotz, Frieda and Oikonomopoulou, Katerina (2011), *The Philosopher's Banquet: Plutarch's Table Talk in the Intellectual Culture of the Roman Empire*, Oxford, Oxford University Press. For ethical education and moralism in Plutarch, see Xenophontos, Sophia (forthcoming), *Teaching and Learning in Plutarch: the Dynamics of Ethical Education in the Roman Empire*, Berlin-New York, De Gruyter.

## CHAPTER 23

# Quintilian on Education

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*W. Martin Bloomer*

While the reader will find a full and complex picture of the educational activities of the Romans in the chapters of this volume, “Roman education” or even “classical education” as a whole has been understood in antiquity and again since the Renaissance from the pages of Quintilian, who taught rhetoric at Rome at the end of the first century CE. This fact of reception history has had important consequences. Very briefly, Quintilian’s work, the *Institutio Oratoria* (“Training or Foundation of the Orator”), has laid out a plan to educate the boy from first schooldays to rhetorical maturity. The author propounds an authoritative, indeed one might even say foolproof, scheme to bring the boy from puerile speech and games, from his mother’s and nurse’s arms, to a properly virile disposition and virtuosity of speaking and writing. The stated goal of the text, the creation of a mature orator, must be distinguished from the various interests and informations of this diverse text and from its various purposes. To take the latter first, not every reader, indeed not every elite Roman of the later first century, had in mind to become an orator. It is not simply the case here that a text can be used in various ways: the *IO* presents a cultural ideal and an ideal script for reaching that ideal. It is then as much about a cultural notion of male, Roman competencies as it is a how-to book. It is also extremely useful as training or a guide to training in those important skills and protocols, in short, the system of communication that tied an elite together and helped that elite administer an empire. These skills can broadly be called communicative, provided one understands communication as the creation, maintenance, and process of a social, cultural, and political network.

It is important not to be overblown here: Roman rhetoric did not create empire or transform young Roman boys and girls into useful adults; it presented, broadly speaking, an etiquette of thought, speech, and action. On a small scale, it communicated the forms and to a degree the ideas for writing and reading a letter. On a larger or deeper scale, rhetoric (along with the intersecting systems of philosophy, religions, etc.) was an

interpretive scheme. It framed Romans' understanding of human motives while it also provided templates for discussing the nature and operations of government, religion, and social institutions. In the final school exercises of Quintilian's day, rhetoric also taught how to discuss violence and social or political breakdown, and how to describe the weather or landscape. It is important to stress that rhetoric provides the whole compositional process. It is easy at this point of explanation to have recourse to the list, that is, to itemize what rhetoric does. Rhetoric was divided into five practices: discovery of material, arrangement of that material, its stylization, memory, and delivery. Yet this was not a sequence of discrete operations. Rhetoric also provides patterns of thought and not simply words, ideas, and their presentational structures. By patterns of thought, I mean the disposition to see and speak of the world, of our understanding of ourselves and others in certain substantial ways. If there were not these common, shared ways of understanding, no amount of structure or figured language could convince. Of these dispositions most recently scholars have examined ideas of gender (especially with Quintilian ideas of virility). But such dispositions include both unrealized or under-realized cultural ideas of agency and responsibility, of event and causation. There is thus inherent in rhetorical education ethical, psychological, social, even epistemological and ontological categories. In addition, of course, there will be explicit theorizations of these issues. To a degree, the rhetorical training Quintilian is describing constitutes a training in this sort of knowing the world. Thus, a student with such training will come to the problem at hand (and the reasons for speaking are preeminently problems—some collision of two interests that threatens to break into violence) and begin to frame his response. At the most simple, this framing could begin by asking, is this a general problem or a specific problem? Finally, discussions about rhetoric (from the formal treatise to the quips made after a speech or the corrections given a schoolchild's draft) are part of a culture thinking about itself, and notably, thinking about what was taken to be extremely important, the role of speech in maintaining civil society.

The various content and directions of Quintilian's text arise in great measure from its goal: a training in encyclopedic fashion whose sequence of stages will require explanation, exposition, and defense. Thus, the text will detail both exercises for diction and explanations for which authors should be read when. Bad practices will be condemned with specific explanation of their deleterious consequences, most famously corporal punishment, but also homeschooling.

This chapter will describe the content and format of Quintilian's recommendations and will more briefly describe the educational milieu and developments from which Quintilian's classic text arose and which it sought to influence. It is customary and perfectly appropriate to introduce the *IO* with notice of its definition of its goal, the orator; then select notice of praise for the work; and some synthesis of the contents. Such an approach may well miss what can be most pleasurable for the reader, the digressions or asides where Quintilian will tell us that little Romans could learn their letters from blocks or have letter-shaped cookies or, in grander mode, reflect on the development of oratory while he is counseling which authors to read. The richness of this work for the understanding of Roman literary culture and even for the elite attitudes or ideology of the governors of the empire is great and has attracted increasing scholarly attention. But to return to the three elements that seem to stick in the collective memory of scholars and readers: Quintilian reuses a famous saying of the elder Cato, stern moralist and

upholder of traditional virtue, that an orator is a good man skilled at speaking (*vir bonus dicendi peritus*). This is not simply an aphorism. Quintilian means seriously and will return on several occasions to justify the claim that rhetoric is a social and individual good (this will be discussed later in conjunction with the relations of the text to Cicero's *De oratore*). Readers have responded, for the most part, with enthusiasm. Most famously, that most rhetorical of English poets, Alexander Pope, wrote in his "Essay on Criticism," lines 669–670:

In grave Quintilian's copious works we find  
The justest rules and clearest method join'd.

Quintilian's contemporaries, the poet Martial, his student the younger Pliny, and the satirist Juvenal, all mention him (it must be said the Juvenal [6.75] recognizes indirectly and misogynistically the value of our author—he says that women love comic authors but one cannot expect them to love Quintilian). His influence in late antiquity and on the church fathers (Jerome especially) was great. This fame might well be due to all "his" works. Note-takers had taken down his lectures and published two books on rhetoric (see *IO* 1.pr. 7–8 and Winterbottom 1984: xi–xix). A collection of originally 388 declamations (145 survive) was attributed to him (Winterbottom 1984). He had also in fact written a work on the causes of corrupt eloquence (Brink 1989). And, of course, his current fame was owed in part to his school and students, to his own success as an advocate in the Roman (and possibly Spanish) courts, and to the fact that the emperor had selected him in 90 AD to teach his two grand nephews in the imperial complex. As educator to the imperial heirs and as author on the proper formation of the young, he succeeded in symbolic fashion Seneca (whose style he famously disapproved). In his extant work, he often seems to have in mind the ambition if not to succeed Cicero at least to champion and supplement him.

His fortunes in the Middle Ages have been reappraised—after not being well appreciated because of the self-promoting claims of Poggio Bracciolini, who had in 1416 discovered a complete manuscript at St. Gall (Colson 1924: xliii–lxxxix; Reynolds 1983; Winterbottom 1967). Petrarch had a text in his possession in 1350 and addressed a letter to Quintilian. The famous names who knew his text also include Boccaccio—but one should stress that his text was known and used by the not so famous; for instance, he was excerpted and turned into *sententiae* in the twelfth century (McGuinness 1999). Those interested in his importance for the Renaissance should perhaps begin with Lorenzo Valla's annotations of the text (Fernández López 1999). Those interested in opposition to his classical methods should no doubt begin with Rousseau (France 1995).

## 1. Contents and Form of the *Institutio Oratoria*

Quintilian's *magnum opus*, like so many classics, has suffered for reason of its very utility in the schools. In the grim progresses of the literary work to school fodder, the *IO* too could be broken into manageable pieces, and these then "learned" or memorized without much consideration of their original role in the grand literary work. For the *IO* is a grand literary work. Certainly, the account of figures of speech and figures of thought

provided the most thorough Latin exposition of these important topics (it must be added that at times rhetoric is thought of as these figures), and so this section can be treated as a primer in itself; but in scope, themes, and literary form, it merits the title of a classic. In scope, it treats the production of the orator from infancy to maturity. The encyclopedic tendency here is in part inherited from Cicero's idea of the *perfectus orator* (in effect the complete man, practical and not simply philosophical) and in part is a feature of the early Silver Age of Latin literature, where the desire to respond to or outdo the classics could manifest itself in large or universalizing works. The late republican scholar Varro for instance wrote on a vast array of topics, including a monograph on agriculture. The early imperial Celsus, in turn, wrote an encyclopedia that included separate papyrus rolls dedicated to agriculture, law, military science, rhetoric, and the extant medicine. Pliny the Elder's *Natural History* likewise gathers together fact and lore from a host of books, as, in a lesser vein, two writers under the second emperor Tiberius, Velleius Paterculus and Valerius Maximus, made serviceable books that offered a universal history and all the historical exempla fit to be retold, respectively. Quintilian, in fact, represents the apogee of this compendious age. He subsumes a host of early technical writings on rhetoric, treats in one place what had hitherto often been divided (so he covers all the areas of rhetoric where Cicero had devoted a treatise to invention or where Cicero had deliberately avoided the preliminary stages of rhetorical training), and he presents this material in a synthesis which he reminds his reader is practical, which is not simply a flourish of literary ambition but a trope of the early imperial author who responds to the great literary achievement of his Augustan and late republican predecessors with the promise of utility. Rhetorical handbooks had been available in Latin from the time of Cicero's youth (ca. 90 BCE, he wrote a version of lectures he must have attended at Rome, the *De inventione*; the work wrongly attributed to him, the *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, stems from the same period). Quintilian is compendious in a transparent and organized fashion. This is a reflex of his alleged practicality—the book is easier to use than a Ciceronian dialogue because technical material is not embedded in some dramatic situation. The reader does not need to hunt through a dialogue (the *De oratore*) or find the right treatise (the *Ad Herennium* not the *De inventione*) to find the treatment of memory. As Quintilian is writing to ensure the proper formation of Roman youth, he is heir to the literary and cultural ambitions of the elder Cato and the great aristocratic houses of the late second century BCE, the Gracchi or the Scipios, who advertised the excellent education of their children.

Perhaps not too long after the first century (we do not know but we should expect that the ancient reader as well as the medieval equipped his or her copies with headings or annotations for ease of access), Quintilian's sections were provided with titles and subtitles in the manuscripts. Descendants or version of these can be found in earlier printed editions and in the Loeb's introduction and now online. I give here an abbreviated but annotated version of the sequence, followed by some comments on the larger principles of organization. The first book takes the child to school, and so there are instructions on learning the alphabet and encouragement not to homeschool and how to select a teacher. The whole beginning is suffused with the earnest importance of education—that this ethos of the text is rhetorically expressed does not diminish the force of the sentiment. The reader is meant to and does feel the authority of the experienced teacher. Quintilian gives the sense of the maestro—he knows and

anticipates objections, he writes solely for the good of the student and in the best interests of the parent. With all of this fine writing (and his sentences are clear, without the redundancy of Cicero or the mannered play of some of his contemporaries), the reader feels the judicious expert guiding us all to the best possible policy, all of which is underwritten by the basic premise and ultimate principle: education is essential to the human being. Having won his reader to this serious purpose (and the prefaces help establish both the author's authority and his heartfelt *studium* to help parents and children), the author in the second book considers directly what this thing rhetoric is. This is a characteristic reflex of our author: technical, definitional, philosophical material is introduced only after some more emotional and practical preparation. Thus, book two considers the definition of rhetoric, but it is significant that this comes in second place. It is as if his interest is not in abstract matters—what is the science of communication?—but in the eminently practical—what is this Greek import that has washed up on the Italian shore and which, in fact, is the best way to raise a Roman boy to his commanding role in the world? Again, Quintilian does not simply alternate the sweet and the bitter, the practical and the theoretical. His work and his individual books are introduction, exposition, and protreptic.

The first two books are indeed preliminary: they bring the child and the reader to Quintilian's main subject, rhetoric itself, defined in book two but properly treated in Books 3 to 12. The inclusion of treatment of early education is innovative. Cicero had disdained to include it, but the utility for Quintilian to include when to send the child to school and how to teach the basics is multifold. Certainly, the inclusion of early education makes his work complete, and thus in some way ensures that his is the classic treatment. It may also have answered the desires of his readers: Roman interest among the elite in their children seems to have increased from the first century BCE, and the desire on the part of parents for elite children to speak and act as little Romans may well have risen as the empire's governing class broadened to include the elite of the provinces and not simply the traditional elites of the city of Rome (Rawson 2003). The sense that Quintilian is conscientiously looking out for the young Romans is also an essential part of his authorial persona. He writes not so much as the authoritative *paterfamilias* (as the elder Cato had) as the expert adviser to the head of the household and the very Roman advocate of a proper Roman upbringing.

Books one and two describe the early curriculum and advocate (strongly) for schooling in the type delineated. Advocacy includes the earnest urging that the child (always spoken of as the boy though girls are clearly meant to go to this stage of schooling) attend school and not be homeschooled; at what age he be promoted from the grammarian's school to the rhetorician's; that he be motivated through competition and through games; that he not be beaten; and that the older boys should be separated from the younger. Such hortatory passages punctuate the description of the sequence and matter of instruction just as at a larger level Quintilian's prefaces frame his subject in the earnest terms of the bereaved father and zealous teacher or patron giving advice for life and not simply technical directions. These passages seem to reflect Quintilian's objections to other, perhaps standard practices. The sequence has caught the attention of generations of readers. How and when to learn to read and write, and what to read at the early stages of schooling are outlined in the first two books. In rather dry terms, the matter of these books is simply the *progymnasmata* (see Chapter 10), the set of reading, writing, and

reciting exercises that lead from the maxim, chreia, and fable up to composition on a theme. Quintilian could have stopped here (with his final stages of the exercises, thesis and criticism of a law), for the student would next go to declamation.

As practiced by the leading expert of the Augustan and early Julio-Claudian period, the Spaniard Latro, whose work (in pieces) and method (simply performing to auditors) are chronicled by his fellow Spaniard and fan, the elder Seneca, declamation was a performance of one of two kinds of speech for an elite audience: the speech giving advice to some great man at some pivotal point of history (should Cicero burn his speeches if Antony will spare him or should Alexander cross the ocean?) or the speech as a prosecuting or defending advocate on some fictitious violation of a fictitious law which often involves some alleged, essential harm to the family or state. The plot does not mirror real law in being, for instance, a dispute over ownership of a piece of property, violation of some contract, or physical assault; rather it weaves fantasy-like disputes about the duties of the elite to their families and to their Roman republic (a son who has been found by his father mixing drugs is accused by his father of attempting patricide and disinherited—ingratitude, a social sin so to speak for the Roman, runs through many of these declamations). A collection of these declamations, wrongly attributed to Quintilian, the *Minor Declamations*, contain traces of schoolroom practice as the master describes how to divide the issues of the case and offers sample compositions. Clearly, it was possible to go from the rhetorical education provided by the progymnasmata to a school of declamation where practice and imitation inaugurated the young man into the world of oratorical performance (declamation was both a school exercise and the provenance of public performances by professionals or even leading Romans to an invited audience).

Quintilian eschews this route. His magnum opus at book three turns to the subject of rhetoric. That he here presents a theoretical account of the art of rhetoric has had consequences far beyond any attempt to intervene in the educational practice of the late first century CE in the city of Rome. His interest in giving a round account certainly sets him as Cicero's heir (he is in many ways taking up the theme and challenges of Cicero's *De oratore*); it has also meant that his treatment is the fullest and clearest exposition of the centuries-long tradition and developments of ancient rhetoric. So from book three to twelve, the reader can find theoretical questions about rhetoric and a clear description of the various parts of rhetoric. This subdivision into parts, no doubt an inheritance of practical pedagogy, has been something of a disservice to the understanding of rhetoric. Even in some contemporary scholarship, one still finds that a "rhetorical approach" to an ancient author often means that the scholar has assembled an inventory of rhetorical figures or a delineation of the boundaries of the different parts of a speech. Quintilian certainly offers a taxonomy.

The five parts of rhetoric (invention, disposition, elocution, memory, and delivery) are introduced at 3.3; three types of speeches (judicial, deliberative, and epideictic) at 3.4. His work will then follow the five headings of rhetoric. The discovery of material (invention) comes first, lasting from 3.5 through the end of book six. Invention begins at 3.6 with a discussion of *status* (*stasis* in Greek, the categorization of the case at hand into a conventional set of issues: conjectural, definitional, qualitative, that is, did the alleged occur?; is it a case that fits the charge or governing rubric [e.g., is the act one of ingratitude?]; or granted that the alleged happened and was murder, does it have some quality that makes it justifiable?). The structure of a forensic speech is laid out in



3.9: preface, narrative, proofs, refutations, and epilog. Books four and five then describe in detail the proper treatment of these sections of a speech. Book five distinguishes between and discusses artificial and inartificial proofs, that is, those means of persuasion subject to the advocate's activity and those outside his control, invention, or imagination such as precedents, rumors, torture, documents, oaths, and witnesses. Like much of real Roman courtroom procedure, these *realia* are given summary treatment, for the rhetorician is interested in preparing his students' faculties of invention and argument, not their knowledge of legal process. Book seven is devoted to disposition, but Quintilian sees structure as a consequence of the classification of the case into a specific category.

This may seem mechanical or rigid to a modern student of literature, but Quintilian aims at a structure which is clear to speaker and audience—novelty really comes with the next part of rhetoric, elocution or style, which occupies books eight through ten. Quintilian's treatment of style is in very great measure a list of rhetorical figures. However, he does not present his material as simply a list. Book eight has its own proemium. He presents three divisions of style, the most important of which is Latinity, the second clarity, and the third ornament. One would wish that much more had been said about the first two. Perhaps he imagines that Latinity is a consequence of the ongoing exposure to "good" Latin, heard at home and at school, enriched by reading of the right authors, and checked and directed by the teachers. There were long works (by Varro especially) on the Latin language which may have dissuaded Quintilian from a fuller treatment of the subject, but it is also true that ancient rhetoric lacked the analytic methods for describing artistic language (the relations to sociolect or the nuances of a particular author's style hardly emerge from the ancient approach that stresses proper language for the proper subject also conditioned by proper venue or genre). Clarity or brilliance is equally undertheorized. These important subjects take one chapter each; figured language then extends from 8.3 to the end of book nine. It is here, of course, that metaphor and simile and *praeteritio* are defined and described. Quintilian's fundamental distinction is, however, between figures of speech (the tropes of book nine) and figures of thought (the figures of book ten). Figures of speech basically inhere in a single word. A metonymy is then a figure of speech, an apostrophe a figure of thought. So Quintilian, like many ancients, thinks of figured language as a deviation from normal or ordinary expression (he uses the word *proper*).

This section of the *IO* is valuable in addition as Quintilian wrestles with other accounts of figured language and tries as so often to offer what he thinks is a balanced and practical synthesis or *précis* of the overly minute distinctions of the earlier theorists. All of this will be of interest to the student of the history of linguistic (and stylistic) thinking, but a strong legacy of this account of figures and tropes is the idea that figured language can exist on the lexical and the larger structural (or ideational) levels, and perhaps it needs to be added, that Quintilian's discussion leaves his reader in no doubt that artistic language is the preferred mode of expression, even the most effective mode of expression. While it is true that Quintilian emphasizes the necessity that the speaker be a good man, he does not hold the idea that simple or authentic speech will necessarily rule the day. Artistic language is better than inartistic language, or in his terms, figured language is more effective than proper language. Why this is so he does not adequately say (he does not return here, for instance, to relate figured language to the three functions of oratory [pleasing, instructing, and moving]). His

discussion of appropriateness at the beginning of book eleven comes close to being an analysis of why a particular form of expression might work best.

To return to the structure of the work: it should be apparent that Quintilian has several structuring ideas and concerns. The five parts of rhetoric do continue to have a loose, successive hold on the organization: 11.2 treats memory and 11.3 delivery—the (relatively) briefest treatments of the parts of rhetoric (these have been required and trained, of course, from the very start of the curriculum). The other sections and topics of books eleven and twelve reveal some of Quintilian's ongoing interests that his structure has not quite accommodated. Book ten, which like the prior two books is part of elocution, is one of the most read sections of Quintilian. He begins by discussing how to achieve *copia*—that ready facility to write and speak, which in many ways is the end and consequence of all this training (Quintilian's opening sentence calls this *facilitas* and glosses it with the Greek *hexis*). Here too comes the discussion of imitation, which is especially important for developing facility at speech because one must read widely and imitate the best stylists. Thus, the ensuing accounts of the canons of Greek and Roman writers are not stand-alone literary histories but part of the practical advice about what to read and imitate. The remaining sections of this book treat writing exercises and, finally, extemporaneous speaking, which is put last, where it belongs according to Quintilian: the pen and practice must come first. Book twelve is somewhat extraordinary. There is here technical information (the importance of writing to prepare for speaking, the importance of consulting documents in preparing a case, what sort of cases to take), but the whole is a return to the grand themes of his beginning and to his new beginning, the introduction and definitions of rhetoric in book three.

After describing the early schooling of the student in books one and two, Quintilian turned to the rhetorician's school; but instead of continuing with the curriculum, he paused to give a theoretical introduction to rhetoric (2.11 to the book's end—he is being more than technical as the question, is rhetoric an art? goes back ultimately to Plato's *Phaedrus*). The inclusion of this material cannot be explained simply by asserting that Quintilian was a theorist as well as a practitioner. The discussion of rhetoric at the end of book two determines that rhetoric is a teachable art, a virtue, and the *métier* of a man of almost universal knowledge who cedes nothing of ethical expertise to the philosopher. For Quintilian, rhetoric is the result of talent nourished by long experience and prepared by expert early training. No single component—*ingenium* (talent), *exercitatio* (practice), *scientia* (theory and knowledge)—suffices, and it is also not accurate to say that Quintilian thinks the three together constitute rhetoric. Only the process and training in distinct social, institutional, interpersonal, and pedagogic circumstances will create the rhetorical man. Quintilian then promises to return to the subject when he discusses the orator, the topic of Book 12.5 ff. This ending to his work adopts the challenge of Cicero's definition, or rather dialogic investigation, of the perfect orator. It is easy to be flippant about this ideal: Cicero intends that his readers realize he is the complete orator—knowledgeable but not pedantic, the inheritor of the Platonic philosopher-king or rather the Roman solution to the Platonic divide between the orator and the philosopher, and the force that makes and keeps civil society civil. Quintilian's emphasis on virtue, nature, and teaching are then a return to his themes of book three and the answer to the challenge of making the perfect orator.

Cicero remains in Quintilian's pages the great *exemplum* of the orator (both in practice and in theorizing), but the Silver Age author is interested in how to replicate the classical ideal in a non-classical age. Thus, he is interested in indicting the wrong contemporary course and ideals (Seneca and his style or declaimers who devote themselves to overly fantastic themes). He adopts from Cicero's perfect orator the need for knowledge of philosophy, law (12.3), and history (12.4). While the structure and contents of this last book have caused some consternation among scholars, in fact Quintilian is finishing his program of perfecting the orator. This is clear in his insistence, again, that the orator must be moral. Deception is allowed, for the public good (*IO* 12.1.34–45). In fact, Quintilian does not adequately explain how deception for the good of one's client can serve a greater good. But the need to be moral is paramount—this is why philosophy has to be studied. Between these sections, which make reasonable and feasible the Ciceronian call to arms for a perfect orator, and the very end, which is an impassioned protreptic to achieve the great good of being an orator, come sections, much read but whose relevance to the whole has not been appreciated, that describe levels of style.

The low, the middle, and the grand were clearly widely taught modes of speaking and writing (the only manual of rhetoric earlier than Quintilian's to survive from the Latin world, the *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, has an important discussion with model passages). The *IO* embeds the discussion of the three styles in a general history of oratory, which remarkably and famously uses the history of sculpture as an analogy and includes an account of the Asianist–Atticist debate at Rome (a contrast between a fulsome and a restrained, classicizing style). It is important to realize that whereas Cicero's *De oratore* and *Orator* underlay many of the issues of Book 12, Cicero's *Brutus* had offered the authoritative account of the progress of oratory up to its (unnamed) apogee and synthesis in the mature Cicero (*Brutus* 70 had also used the analogy of sculpture). Quintilian in his disparagement of Senecan style, history of oratory, and then re- or extra-theorization of the three styles leads to his hopeful close: Latin style need not be considered in decline, a dizzying descent from Cicero (for such an indictment of the decline of contemporary oratory, see Seneca the Elder's preface to his collection of the declaimers). Quintilian's particular innovation with the three styles is to associate them with the three functions of oratory, and then to break from the rigid trinity by arguing that a range of styles is needed and that appropriateness is the most important criterion. Here Quintilian emerges not as a champion of the modern (as Asper had in Tacitus' study of eloquence, the *Dialogus*), although he does say that modern favorite tricks of style such as the use of *sententiae* have their place, but as the judicious synthesis. This self-presentation reprises Cicero's own persona in his rhetorical and philosophical dialogues. Aided by this *auctoritas*, Quintilian the practical synthesist then delivers an exhortation to realize the goal of becoming an orator. One of the appealing features of Quintilian, beside this masterful creation of the author as authoritative patron ready to help in ways practical and theoretical and besides the clarity of his sentences, which do not wind into breathless Ciceronian periods and while they have point are not keen on puzzling the reader into admiration, is the way that his writing performs the very rhetorical task he expounds.

The grand ending is one example of his ability to tug at the reader's ambitions and emotions while retaining a formal, dignified, and serious mode. His various prefaces achieve the same harmony of sentiment and expression. In the letter to his bookseller Trypho which opens the work, Quintilian had presented himself as the man of affairs,

distracted by *negotium* and only now, somewhat belatedly acquiescing to the insistent calls for his work. He mentions his dedicatee, the Roman magistrate M. Vitorius Marcellus (also the addressee of Statius' *Silvae* 4), and cites Horace on not rushing into print. The letter has that light, literary touch of the best of Latin epistles which can seem both spare and intimate; it verges on the *recusatio* delivered in a spirit of *amicitia*—the literary pretense of the Augustan authors that they cannot engage in a high genre despite the requests, even demands of their lofty friend Maecenas or Augustus himself. Quintilian is establishing his own literary authority in this carefully crafted, familiar Latin.

The preface that immediately follows can then begin in far grander, more periodic style. Quintilian will announce his topic, but he begins by expanding on the theme or pose of reluctance. He writes, we are to understand, at the insistence of friends and for the benefit of the young aristocrat Vitorius. He writes also to provide a solution to the wealth of divergent authorities on the subjects of rhetoric and education. Thus is he the authoritative *patronus*, not a technical expert, but the Roman man of the world recalled by his friends to solve a problem that deeply affects themselves and their families. The sense that benevolent care guides the author is reinforced in many ways, not least in the additional prefaces to individual books. Book three begins anew with the author introducing rhetoric, its history, and the reasons for its study, all the while casting himself as the proreptic champion of the young to their education—he writes of enticing the young (*adliceremus*) and quotes the famous tag from Lucretius about honeying the bitter cup of philosophy. Book four addresses Vitorius again but to give notice that Quintilian's task is all the more serious and grand now that he has been given by the Emperor Domitian the charge of educating Domitian's sister's grandsons (whom the emperor now regarded as his heirs). The preface to book five is brief and announces the topic of proofs with Quintilian again presenting himself as the judicious and practical informant in a vexed and contentious field, but it is the preface to book six that arouses the emotions (book five's preface had reported that some do not think rhetoric should be concerned with emotions) and elevated further the persona of the author. Here he writes of the death of his wife and sons. This is rhetorical, even mannered, but none the less moving. Again Quintilian is broadening his mission: now he writes not for his sons or Vitorius or even the emperor's grand nephews but for all of Roman youth. His rhetorical and philosophical virtues are here on display, for it was a mark of the philosopher not to allow the death of loved ones to disturb him or to keep him from his duties.

The philosophical rhetorical ideal advanced in effect pares down the *perfectus orator* of Cicero's *De oratore*, itself a Romanized reduction of the Platonic philosopher-king, to a more realizable and communal ideal. Plato's *Republic*, the treatise and the slightly fantastic polity, aimed at a very small oligarchy. Perhaps Cicero had in mind a civic leader with no need of the armies that characterized the real leaders of the end of the republic, but his ideal also has a messianic ring to it. He summons an ideal governor as the republic falls to forces that cannot be swayed by speech. Quintilian on the other hand describes a community of speech. Schooling should be done together. Almost all are educable. The sense of the death of the republic has been transposed and thinned to the death of the adviser's family, a loss which is calculated to bring together his readers into a new sort of *familia*. Cicero has been for Quintilian a grand vision incomplete in details, but the details that Quintilian then describes reflect a pedagogic practice whose optimism has changed the tradition of pedagogy. No doubt Quintilian has more civic and less political

intentions for his pedagogy. The Ciceronian dialog hopes for a change from autocracy and imagines a (lost) world of dialogue among aristocrats on matters of great importance for the state. Quintilian's treatise enrolls parents, children, and teachers in the grand project of making good citizens.

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## CHAPTER 24

# Challenges to Classical Education in Late Antiquity

## *The Case of Augustine of Hippo*

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*Hildegund Müller*

### 1. Introduction

The seismic shift of Christianization that took place in late antiquity dislocated almost every part of ancient pagan culture and fractured what had been an organic whole; it was up to the church fathers to put the disjointed pieces together again and shape a new understanding of culture, not least of education. Classical education had always been about more than formal knowledge; ethical, political, and religious axioms had been transmitted by it and had, in the eyes of Christian writers, imbued an essentially neutral process with a partisan agenda. How then could the “harmless,” and sometimes crucially necessary, parts of formal knowledge be salvaged from what had become an inseparable union? How could a good Christian learn to read, write, and calculate without at the same time absorbing the dangerous ethical and ideological flaws of Terence and Virgil? And how could grammar and rhetoric be usefully applied to the understanding and teaching of the Bible without at the same time transporting the vices of arrogance and worldly vanity? It would depend on the answers to questions like these how much space there would be for a new Christian culture to develop in times to come.

Among the Christian authors who wrestled with this adjustment process, Augustine of Hippo holds a special place. He had been a teacher of rhetoric all his adult life; this was how he defined himself and what he built his worldly hopes on before these were cut short dramatically by his conversion. His active involvement with education predated his career as a Christian writer and shaped every part of his thinking. Consequently, Augustine could not discard ancient knowledge as easily as some of his contemporaries; he had to find a synthesis rather than a replacement. This was not a smooth process; the gaps and fault lines manifested and produced by it would become an indelible part not only of his intellectual career, but of the landscape of Western culture itself. In the following pages, we will revisit some of the important stages of Augustine’s handling of the problem of education, both

in his own life and career and in his writings: from the ambitious concept of a liberal education as part of the search for God in his early dialogues and manuals through the depiction of his own schooling in *Confessiones*, in which signs of conflict are much more apparent, to his complex new synthesis in his treatise *On Christian Doctrine*—and finally in his new career as a teacher: the teaching and preaching of the Christian faith.

## 2. Prelude: *De Musica*

In the preface of the sixth book of his treatise *On Music* (*De musica*), Augustine, schoolteacher-turned-clergyman and in the process of reinventing himself and his profession, more or less apologizes for what he has written in the five books prior: “We have wasted our time for almost too long, and in an entirely childish fashion, for five books with tracing numerical relations to be found in prosody. Perhaps this silliness of ours will be excused among well-disposed persons because this was a labor of duty: we only undertook it so that young men, or rather men of any age, to whom God had granted a good intellect, might be torn from the senses of the body and from the letters of the flesh (to which it is hard for them not to adhere) not hurriedly, but step by step and led by reason, and thus filled with love for unchangeable truth might adhere to the one God and Lord of all things, who reigns over human minds without any intermediary. Therefore whoever reads those books will find that we have kept company with grammatical and poetic minds not by choice of cohabitation, but by the necessities of travel” (*Satis diu paene atque adeo plane pueriliter per quinque libros in vestigiis numerorum ad moras temporum pertinentium morati sumus: quam nostrum nugacitatem apud benevolos homines facile fortassis excuset officiosus labor; quem non ob aliud suscipiendum putavimus, nisi ut adolescentes, vel cuiuslibet aetatis homines, quos bono ingenio donavit deus, non praepropere, sed quibusdam gradibus a sensibus carnis atque a carnalibus litteris, quibus eos non haerere difficile est, duce ratione avellerentur, atque uni deo et domino rerum omnium, qui humanis mentibus nulla natura interposita praesidet, incommutabilis veritatis amore adhaerescerent. Illos igitur libros qui leget, inveniet nos cum grammaticis et poeticis animis, non habitandi electione, sed itinerandi necessitate versatos; De mus. 6.1*) The school crowd may content itself with a treatise on classical meter; but the ideal reader, the spiritual man (*de numero spiritualium virorum, De mus. 6.1*) will only allow it if it contributes to a larger goal.

What follows adds to an original and unexpected book yet another astonishing volte-face. *De musica* is not really a treatise on “music” as we understand it, but rather on prosody and metrics, an art rooted in the preexisting, all-embracing numerical relations which define, in the eyes of a Platonist, the order and intelligibility, and thus the godhead, of the universe. What comes out of the divine mathematical order can ultimately be traced back to it; by understanding the principles of harmony in music, we can arrive at an understanding of the source of all harmony. In the sixth book, the manifold metrical examples of the preceding books, all of them taken from pagan Latin poetry, are replaced by a single line from a Christian hymn, Ambrose’s *Deus creator omnium* (*Ambr. Hymn. 2*). This line may have meter and prosody as well, but obviously Augustine cites it for its meaning: “The verse that we have quoted, *Deus creator omnium*, is not only pleasing to our ears because of its rhythmical sound, but much more to our soul because of its

sensible and truthful meaning” (*Quare ille versus a nobis propositus, Deus creator omnium, non solum auribus sono numeroso, sed multo magis est animae sententiae sanitate et veritate gratissimus*, *Mus.* 6.57). Numbers and harmonies, in this last book, have come to refer not only to the overall order of the creation, but first and foremost to its creator. Thus, the long labor of duty, five books of metrical analysis, has finally transcended itself.

Quite apart from its overall intellectual tour de force, the book, even at first glance, has some interesting oddities. While the connection of music and cosmology may be well established after Plato’s *Timaeus* and Cicero’s *Somnium Scipionis*, Augustine’s take on the subject is unexpected. For one thing, why concentrate on meter and not *melos*, as his predecessors chose to do? Why does the author not touch at all on the mathematical properties of the musical scales and the proportional values of the intervals, which offer an easy and well-trodden path to the contemplation of the universe and its maker? It cannot be that the book is unfinished and *melos* was to follow (as has been suggested by Augustine himself: *Epist.* 101.3); the arc spanning eternal numbers and temporal meter, and eternal numbers again, must surely be regarded as complete. There is one seemingly trivial reason for this decision: Augustine at the time probably did not know all that much about music, whether in theory or in practice. A life of academic rigor and Christian asceticism had not prepared him for intimate knowledge of an art connected with worldly pleasure and pagan religion. But he knew a great deal about poetry, which had been part of the curriculum he had been teaching and was dear to his heart. Thus, meter, traditionally part of the discipline of grammar rather than music, stands in for the art of music as a whole. As we can see here already, Augustine takes the liberal arts personally: they are part of his background and informed by his personal inclinations. How, then, are we to read this combination of meter and metaphysics? Was this originally intended as a book about meter, embedded in a metaphysical framework, but still a discussion of a very practical matter of literary analysis, or rather as a book on metaphysics, taking a long and elaborate detour through poetical analysis to make the point that everything is divinely ordered and leads back to God? Modern readers tend to ignore the metrical analyses and focus on the metaphysical books one and six, but whoever takes the time and effort to read the four central books discovers a highly detailed and original analytical system. If Augustine’s treatise has not become a standard work for the discussion of ancient metrics today, this may be because of its idiosyncrasies (famously, in his analysis of the hexameter, he rejects the traditional division in dactylic feet; *Mus.* 5.9–10). All the same, what is presented here is by no means an exemplifying digression, but a serious theoretical treatise in its own right, comprising the knowledge of a lifetime of teaching. In the eyes of the writer, it seems, it is equally meaningful and worth our time to consider Latin verse and Christian metaphysics, particularly since they are two sides of one and the same thing.

Obviously, this is a precarious union, with problems arising on both ends. Christianity is the very opposite of a religion restricted to the intellectual élite; and pagan poetry can bear all sorts of messages, even notoriously irreligious ones. How inevitable, then, is this connection, both as a philosophical concept and as a practical device of teaching Christian youths? At the time when Augustine wrote the preface to book six, the union had clearly already fallen apart, leaving Augustine skeptical of any learning that could not be directly applied either to the interpretation of the Bible or to the personal betterment of the



Christian individual. Enough reason, it seems, for Augustine to insert a precautionary preface into a book that still was in demand from interested friends. Around 408, he replied to a request from a certain Memorius, bishop of a diocese in Apulia, to send him *De musica*—by sending him the sixth book only, together with a letter that sounds suspiciously like our preface: “I have ... not delayed to send to your Charity the sixth book ... Perhaps it will not be utterly unsuitable for a man of your seriousness. For the previous five books seem hardly worth knowing and reading” even by Memorius’s adolescent son (*Sextum sane librum ... non distuli mittere Caritati tuae; fortassis ipse tuam non multum refugiat gravitatem. Nam superiores quinque vix filio nostro et condiacono Iuliano, quoniam et ipse iam nobiscum commilitat, digni lectione vel cognitione videbuntur; Epist. 101.4*) Marrou (580sq.) suggested that it was on the occasion of this request that the preface to book six was written, thus encapsulating the shift in Augustine’s view of secular learning at a precise point in time.

The episode of *De musica* is a fitting beginning for a complex and consequential narrative, and one that is deeply personal. Of all the major figures of the Early Church, Augustine is by far the most interested in the relationship between secular learning and the truth of the Gospel, which clearly has to do with his biography, with the roughly thirteen years he spent as a schoolteacher. Against the backdrop of this life, his engagement with the liberal arts takes on an added existential depth as well as personal urgency. We have to assume that his social environment, before his conversion, consisted in large part of fellow teachers, former students and their relatives, and men deeply interested in rhetoric or poetry; even his connections to the circles of wealth and power were mediated by his profession. Managing the shift away from this consistent unity, and toward a new world view, without damaging his personal network, must have been one of the challenges of conversion, one which he ultimately managed remarkably well, but which may have influenced his intellectual priorities in the time afterward. If he saw the need to merge the liberal arts with the quest for God, he may not only have viewed their intellectual efficacy with a lot of optimism, but tried to salvage as much of his prior life experience and personal status as he could.

At the same time, this relationship is from its very beginning shrouded in ambivalence. As we shall see, not a single one of the major text passages concerned with our subject gives a clear answer to the pertinent questions: is it necessary, or at least desirable, or even permitted, for a good Christian to acquire and show off knowledge in the liberal arts? Are they any good or the epitome of inane worldly arrogance? Should they be replaced, and if so, by what? Starting with the discussion of the “two ways” to God in *De ordine*, to which can be added other passages from Augustine’s earliest surviving writings on the subject, the *Cassiciacum* dialogues, throughout the autobiographical narrative of *Confessiones* and up to the irritatingly equivocal presentation of rhetoric toward the end of his life, in book four of *De doctrina christiana*, statement after statement indicates that the problem was not being resolved, that Augustine ultimately did not know what to make of it.

Yet, thankfully, it may be this very ambivalence that has allowed secular learning and religious contempt for it to survive alongside each other. Perhaps it was Augustine’s personal complexities and waverings, as much as his intellectual superiority and his huge theological influence, that made the Middle Ages possible.

### 3. Augustine's Schooling: *Confessiones*

When Augustine experienced his dramatic conversion in the summer of 386, he was a teacher of rhetoric at the imperial court in Milan. The position was one of two official chairs of rhetoric established by Emperor Trajan, and thus the most elevated and respected teaching position of the empire, closely connected to the court and an acknowledged stepping stone toward a career in higher administration. To obtain it, Augustine had run the gamut of the late ancient school system, first as a student and then as a teacher, and he had made use of every possible expedient to his advancement.

The details of Augustine's schooling and teaching can be gathered from *Confessiones*, where they are omnipresent. This in itself is interesting. Obviously, education, or certain aspects of it, serve as a leitmotif of the narrative, rather than just appear as biographical occurrences. Education is presented as not just a fact of life, but a means to interpret it.

To quickly summarize a well-known story: Born in the provincial town of Thagaste, Augustine is schooled first in his home town, then in neighboring Madaura and finally in Carthage. While the schools form a progression in difficulty and scope of learning, the only clear boundaries between them are the ones between his early, elementary schooling in reading, writing, and simple arithmetic (*legere et scribere et numerare*, *Conf.* 1.13.20), and two geographically distinct later stages, which are variously described as the schools of the "so-called grammarians" (*qui grammatici vocantur*, *Conf.* 1.20) and the schools one attends in order to obtain "grammar and rhetoric" (*litteraturae atque oratoriae percipiendae gratia*, *Conf.* 2.3.5). The latter ones are, in Augustine's telling, focused on a double curriculum of reading of classical texts and (oral rather than written) text production. There is a sharp difference between the first stage and the second and third stages, both in terms of the subject matter taught and of Augustine's (narrated) reaction to it. Attending elementary school in Thagaste is described as nothing short of a traumatic experience, where the young boy endures corporal punishment and the scorn of his elders, and more importantly, the thwarting of his will: thus, a brutal introduction to the hierarchical nature of human relations (*Conf.* 1.14sq.). School serves as a means of (and a simile for) a painful socialization, since it teaches a willful child not so much to read and write, but to obey (*Conf.* 1.16). Yet willfulness, and the pride connected with it, represents original sin; and while the process of submission is unpleasant, it is also necessary, as is the subject matter taught at this elementary stage. Even if the child hates the rote of "one plus one makes two, two plus two makes four" (*Conf.* 1.22), there is usefulness and truth to these simple facts.

All of this changes in the following stages. Here the young student falls in love with literature (mathematical subjects are no longer mentioned), represented first by the *Aeneid* (*Conf.* 1.22sq.) and the works of Terence (*Conf.* 1.25sq.), and somewhat later by Cicero's philosophical treatise *Hortensius*. School is no longer painful, but provides an ecstatic pleasure, fittingly interwoven with the narrative of erotic awakening, as well as the simpler pleasure of vanity, when the young student earns early praise for his rhetorical prowess for declaiming in the guise of the angry goddess Juno (*Conf.* 1.27). Obviously, in the eyes of the later memoirist, this is where the trouble starts. Through the seductive medium of poetry, Augustine is introduced to the lies and the obscenities of pagan myth, through his rhetorical successes he learns pride, the sin of the fallen angel. Ironically, while denounced as a pack of lies, the *Aeneid* also provides the narrative of *Confessiones*

with one of its powerful images: at significant turning points, the structure of the story of Augustine's errors is more or less obviously influenced by the errors of Aeneas (most significantly in *Conf.* 5.15, where Augustine's mother is likened to the deserted Dido). This is not inevitable: there are two competing narratives that serve equally well as an interpretive background for the biography: the story of the prodigal son (*Luke* 15.11–32) and Plotinus's image of the voyage of the soul (*Enn.* 1.6.8). Obviously, the dangerous attraction of poetic truth, while unacknowledged, still holds sway over the bishop's soul.

The encounter with the *Hortensius* (*Conf.* 3.7) at first seems less unambiguously negative than the one with poetry, but it too leads to disaster: through it, he meets philosophy, fails in his attempt to read the Bible and become a Christian and ultimately ends up in the arms of the Manicheans (*Conf.* 3.9sq.). The more advanced secular learning becomes, the less useful it is; the deeper the young Augustine enters into the liberal arts (sarcastically referred to as “the so-called honorable arts,” *studia quae honesta vocantur*, in *Conf.* 3.6), the more he also penetrates into sin.

Socialization too becomes a more important part of his career at this stage, and also more tainted by materialism. Through his schooling, the student enters into a world of financial transactions between “sellers and buyers of grammar” (*venditores grammaticae vel emptores*, *Conf.* 1.22) where the estimation of learning is based on salability rather than truth. This is more than just an economic metaphor; the monetary aspect of education had important personal repercussions for the young Augustine. To finance his schooling at Carthage after his father's death and add to his mother's meager assets, he had to accept the financial help of a patron, thus entering into a complex system of bartering benefactions that provided at the same time support and constraints. If the patron was Romanianus, a fellow citizen with powerful friends and important interests at the court (*Acad.* 2.2.3.) as well as the father of Augustine's future favorite student, Licentius, these are the beginnings of a social network defined by connections made, and obligations incurred, through the schools. Certain achievements would be expected from him as a student and a young professional; promises of future recompense would be made, and eventually broken.

Around 374, Augustine became a teacher of rhetoric himself, first in Thagaste and in Carthage, then in Rome, and finally at the court of Milan. The relationships thus created between student and teacher were sometimes intense and reciprocal; several of Augustine's students followed him from Africa to Italy, and they also followed him on his journey from a vague secularism to Manicheism to skepticism to Christianity (see *Conf.* 6.11sq. about Alypius, 6.17 about Nebridius; the same seems to be true for Licentius). It is unclear if this firm attachment had to do with his personality, or whether it was typical for higher education. Famously, Augustine also complains about the lack of good behavior among his students in Carthage and of financial morals in Rome (*Conf.* 3.3.6; 5.12.22).

What did Augustine teach? The subject matter of rhetoric in his classroom seems to have been structured around readings from various authors, prose and poetry alike, and exercises based on the texts read; in other words, it exceeded its own confines all the time. Not only did it provide its students with a basis in philosophy, history, and mythology, it also opened the door for rather less technical readings of the texts. In a famous episode, Augustine accidentally converts a student from his addiction to the gladiatorial games by way of a joke in a lecture (*Conf.* 6.7.12). Augustine mentions some

of the texts he read with his students; first and foremost Virgil (e.g., *Acad.* 1.15; *De ord.* 1.8.26) and Cicero (e.g., *Conf.* 6.16.26: *De finibus bonorum et malorum*). As in Augustine's own schooling, the readings probably followed a strict canon; and we need only to look at his later writings to see how ingrained this canon remains in his thinking. Virgil, Cicero, and Sallust inform his view of Roman history and religion in the *City of God* much more than his personal experience or oral traditions: he had no access, it seems, to the national character except by a set of canonical school texts.

Nevertheless, the center of the schooling must have been the production of texts, and it is here that Augustine is most critical of his profession. The moral dilemma of rhetoric, by no means new, becomes more poignant from the hindsight of the Christian. "During those years I taught the art of rhetoric. Conquered by the desire for gain, I offered for sale speaking skills with which to conquer others. And yet, lord, you know that I really preferred honest students (or what were esteemed as such) and, without tricks of speech (*sine dolo*), I taught these students the tricks of speech (*dolos*)—not to be used against the life of the innocent, but sometimes to save the life of a guilty man" (*Docebam in illis annis artem rhetoricam, et victoriosam loquacitatem victus cupiditate vendebam. Malebam tamen, domine, tu scis, bonos habere discipulos, sicut appellantur boni, et eos sine dolo docebam dolos, non quibus contra caput innocentis agerent sed aliquando pro capite nocentis, Conf.* 4.2.2). The dissociation of style and content in pagan rhetoric, omnipresent in *Confessiones*, becomes most acute when Augustine's own speaking is concerned; the delivering of a panegyric to the emperor, which was part of Augustine's duties in imperial Milan, but was doubtlessly also considered a great honor, became instead a painful experience: "In it I was to deliver many a lie, and the lying was to be applauded by those who knew I was lying. My heart was agitated with this sense of guilt, and it seethed with the fever of my uneasiness" (*die illo, quo cum pararem recitare imperatori laudes, quibus plura mentirer, et mentienti faveretur ab scientibus, easque curas anhelaret cor meum et cogitationum tabificarum febris aestuaret eqs.; Conf.* 6.6.9). Fittingly, what was to free Augustine from this conflict of language was the religion of the Word; but the transition was by no means a clean one.

#### 4. A New Concept of Education: The *Cassiciacum Dialogues*

Augustine's earliest preserved writings, predating *Confessiones* by about twelve years, bear witness both to the difficulties and to the benefits of this ongoing involvement in the schools. These are the dialogues written at Cassiciacum, where Augustine spent the fall and winter of 386/387 between his conversion and his baptism. A friend had offered him the use of this rural retreat, and Augustine, physically sick and emotionally shaken by his life-changing experience, made use of the place to do what he was most comfortable with: he held school. According to the testimony of the three earliest dialogues, *Contra Academicos*, *De ordine*, and *De beata vita*, Augustine stayed at this retreat in the company of several former or present students, as well as various family members, most importantly his mother, Monica. The time was spent in reading the *Aeneid*, writing poetry, and engaging in philosophical discussions that apparently seamlessly continue the teaching curriculum that preceded his conversion.

Both in form and in content, these dialogues establish a direct relationship with Augustine's former profession. In several places (e.g., *De ord.* 1.2.5), we are told that the books are based on transcripts of the actual conversations between Augustine and his students, which of course needs to be taken with a grain of salt. The literary form of the dialogue is a direct allusion to Cicero's dialogues, among others the *Hortensius*, which according to *Confessiones* was part of the regular curriculum and played such a dramatic role in Augustine's own life. On the other hand, the stylized literary rendition of the discussions between teacher and students is frequently broken into by unfiltered details from real school life. At one point in *De ordine*, the two students Trygetius and Licentius enter into a controversy which degenerates into a nasty game of one-upmanship. Augustine overreacts with anger and tears, for the situation reminds him vividly of the profession he left behind (*De ord.* 1.10.30).

This approximation of life and letters not only breathes new life into the venerable genre of the philosophical dialogue—this is a much more vivacious and unpredictable set of participants than in the typical Ciceronian dialogue—but more importantly for our subject, also serves as a backdrop for Augustine's radical attempt to redefine the value and meaning of formal education in a Christian spirit, in other words, to establish a new legitimation for himself and his profession. That such a thing was necessary is indicated not only by Augustine's own negative take on secular education in *Confessiones*, but also by his Christian contemporaries, most notably Jerome, who also had to bridge at some personal cost the gap between an old concept of learning and a new ideology. Obviously, for the Roman Christians of the fourth century neither was it feasible to scrap their secular education once and for all and replace it with Christian simplicity, nor to continue reading Virgil and Cicero, and studying the liberal arts, as if nothing had happened. In Jerome's case, the ensuing tension came to a climax in the traumatic vision experience retold in *Letter 22*; by intention at least, if not in actual fact, he renounces secular learning from now on. The young Augustine's solution is radically different, and we would be tempted to dismiss it as an abstract thought experiment were it not for its connection with his biography on the one hand and the testimony of *De musica* on the other. Augustine proclaims, in various passages in the Cassiciacum dialogues, most importantly in *De ordine* 2.12.35–15.43, that far from being opposed to the Christian spirit, the liberal arts, each on its own and in their entirety, can actually be used as a propedeutic for the quest for God.

While this assertion may have solved an immediate tension in the recent convert's life, as we have seen, religion and education do not necessarily go hand in hand, and sometimes are directly opposed to each other. Augustine is well aware of this; moreover, he is consciously showcasing it in *De ordine* by including at least one prominent, and prominently uneducated, Christian interlocutor, his mother, Monica. Her constant presence and participation in the discussions puts the problem of the value of education into sharp relief.

*De ordine* discusses the question of theodicy, or the place of evil in a divinely ordered universe. As Augustine points out very succinctly in the preface (*De ord.* 1.1.1), the problem is unsolvable, at least on a theoretical level. Since there is evil in this world, we have to suppose God either wills it or cannot prevent it, either of which is blasphemy. But this apparently trivial truth turns out to be a fallacy, since it does not take into account our limited understanding of divine order. To understand it properly, we have to become

part of it, rather than analyze it from a distance; at which point evil will fall into its logical place in a bigger picture, like a dark piece of glass in a multicolor mosaic (*De ord.* 1.1.2).

The discussion of the dialogue both analyzes and represents this process, and it quickly runs into problems on both counts. A theoretical discussion of order leads nowhere, and the act of philosophizing itself is marred by distractions and altercations. This is how Augustine himself describes the book in his *Retractationes*: “During the same period [...] I wrote two other books on order, in which the great question is explored as to whether the ordering of divine providence includes all things good and evil. But when I realized that this was something difficult to understand and that it was almost impossible to make the matter comprehensible to the people with whom I was discussing it, I decided to talk instead about the order of studies whereby one can proceed from corporeal to incorporeal realities (*Per idem tempus ... duos etiam libros de ordine scripsi, in quibus quaestio magna versatur, utrum omnia bona et mala divinae providentiae ordo contineat. Sed cum rem viderem ad intellegendum difficilem satis aegre ad eorum perceptionem, cum quibus agebam, disputando posse perducere, de ordine studendi loqui malui, quo a corporalibus ad incorporalia potest proficere; Retr.* 1.3).”

The entry presents as a historical fact what surely was an artistic decision. Rather than a *faute de mieux* change of subject, the *ordo studiorum* serves as part of a larger program intended to cure the disorderliness not only of Augustine’s students, but of human minds in general. The subject of the liberal arts is introduced gradually and with interesting bumps in the road. At first, it merely continues the discussion of the role of evil as part of a larger order by presenting further examples: well-ordered poetry is adorned by an occasional solecism, the effectiveness of rhetorical discourse sometimes profits from logical fallacies. Taking the argument one step further, the numerical arts, music, geometry, astronomy, and arithmetic lead directly into a contemplation of divine order itself and thus to the proper disdain for the petty grievances of human life. Augustine continues with a general statement on the propedeutic role of formal education: “Such learning, *if one uses it with moderation (and in this matter, nothing is to be feared more than excess)* rears for philosophy a soldier or even a captain so competent that he sallies forth wherever he wishes and leads many others as well, and reaches that ultimate goal, beyond which he desires nothing else, beyond which he neither ought nor can seek anything” (*Talis enim eruditio, si quis ea moderate utatur—nam nihil ibi quam nimium formidandum est—talem philosophiae militem nutrit vel etiam ducem, ut ad summum illum modum, ultra quod requirere aliquid nec possit nec debeat nec cupiat, qua vult, evolet atque perveniat multosque perducatur; De ord.* 2.5.14). What is as interesting as this line of thought itself is the worried little aside which I have highlighted. Why does the speaker assert the importance of the liberal arts and immediately take it back? How can a series of essential steps on the path to wisdom be used “with moderation” (*moderate*), what is the “excess” (*nimium*) to be feared here? Augustine never really elaborates, but he goes on immediately to relativize the value of formal education in another way: it is not meant for everyone, and it may not even be the best available path to wisdom. Rather, there is, in what is one of the most famous and debated chapters of the book, a twofold path (*duplex via*), through reason or through authority, that is to say either through a formal intellectual education, which culminates in philosophy, or by being a faithful and obedient member of the church. But which of the two is better? Note both the hesitancy and the ambivalence in the following statement: “For my part, if I can give an advice to

my own (*meos*), insofar as I can see, and incline to an opinion, I think (*ego autem ... quantum mihi apparet quantumque sentio, censeo* eqs.) that they are to be instructed in all branches of learning. ... But if those men are too slothful or preoccupied with other affairs or dull of understanding, let them provide for themselves a stronghold of faith (*fidei ... praesidia*)” (*De ord.* 2.5.16). Faith as the path to understanding for the slothful, the preoccupied, and the dull: this is a remarkable statement for a newly converted man, and Augustine hastens to explain that the two branches of the *duplex via* overlap and complement each other: true philosophy teaches the same three natures of the first being that the mysteries of the Church call “Trinity.” Still, the last word belongs again to philosophy and to the secular arts: “For the present, I would have you accept this from me, that if anyone dares rashly and without due order of the branches of learning (*temere ac sine ordine disciplinarum*) to rush to the knowing of these things (i.e., the nature of the soul), he becomes, not a man of learning, but a man of credulity; not a man of discretion, but a man ready to discredit everything” (*De ord.* 2.5.17).

Augustine returns to the question of the liberal arts at a critical point in the dialogue: when it becomes clear to him that the theoretical discussion of divine order is not very successful, that the discussion itself is out of order and thus not leading to knowledge, the teacher changes tack and introduces a completely new subject: how are we to find order in our mind, so as to understand the higher order of things? (*De ord.* 2.7.23) Again, the path is twofold, and it reads like a curriculum for a boys’ school: a strict order of discipline in the life of students is paralleled by a regulated program of studies, organized along the sequence of the liberal arts: they provide, each on their own, an insight into what Augustine calls *rationabile*, the harmonious nature of the universe, which can be understood by the rational mind through self-contemplation. This sequence is hierarchical and leads logically from one step onto the next. The first step, basic knowledge of letters and numbers, is described as “the infancy of grammar” (*velut quaedam grammaticae infantia*); it is followed by grammar, which provides basic understanding of language, and thus of human reason and of human society. From there, the sequence continues to dialectics and rhetoric, music (as in *De musica*, this consists entirely of metrics), geometry, astronomy, and lastly, philosophy.

This sequence is interesting in many ways. The cycle of the arts is not identical with the later canonical one; it excludes arithmetic (which seems to be reduced to a pre-arts schooling in “numbers”) and includes philosophy as its crowning point. More importantly, it both affirms and denies itself. Augustine’s skepticism toward the value of secular learning, and his awareness of its dangers, is noticeable throughout. Grammar, for example, contains the study of history “which is filled more with cares than with enjoyment or truth” (*curarum plenior quam iucunditatis aut veritatis, De ord.* 2.12.37), a startling statement that only becomes clear when we see that “history” includes the study of ancient myth, which Augustine deems unnecessary and foolish. Rhetoric, the most Augustinian of the arts, is given a very short paragraph and is called “more replete with necessity than with purity” (*necessitatis plenior quam puritatis, De ord.* 2.13.38). Astronomy is “a great argument for the God-fearing, but a torment for the curious” (*magnum religiosi argumentum tormentumque curiosi, De ord.* 2.15.42), that is to say those who want to know too much about their future. The ambiguity of the description seems not only to point back to Augustine’s warning about “excess” in the study of the arts, but also forward to its conclusion: it may lead to philosophy, but there are those, like Monica, who do not need it.

Augustine's remarkable, if hesitant, endorsement of the arts as a stairway to heaven occupies a pivotal position in the history of the liberal arts. It has a late ancient parallel in Martianus Capella's prosimetric work *De nuptiis Mercurii et Philologiae* and a possible predecessor in Varro's *Disciplinarum libri* (Topping 2012, 126sq.; Hübner 1995, Shanzer in Pollmann/Vessey 2005, 69sq. against Hadot 1984). On the other hand, as we have seen, Augustine did attempt to flesh out his concept by composing textbooks that provide the connection between one particular art and higher knowledge. Only *De musica* has survived; smaller handbooks on grammar and dialectic have been preserved under Augustine's name; but they are too generic to permit any serious assessment of this claim. In any case, they are far from the philosophical elaboration of *De ordine* and *De musica*.

The work came under severe criticism by its author in *Retractationes*, not least because of its focus on the liberal arts: *displicet mihi ... quod multum tribui liberalibus disciplinis* (*Retr.* 1.3.2). Nevertheless, it is an important step toward the rethinking of the liberal education in Augustine's later works: here, as in *De musica*, the teaching of the liberal arts has to be justified by a higher end. Education is not a merit in itself, but rather a stepping stone; it has to be part of an ultimately religious plan of mental purification to be worthy of our attention at all.

## 5. Utilization: *De doctrina christiana*

For the young Augustine, the study of the highest things, including the understanding of God and his justice, and the understanding of our own nature was achieved with the help of the liberal arts; yet at the same time, he was aware of the danger that this path implied, if taken too seriously and as an end in itself. On the one hand, teaching is never in the abstract only; even the most formal knowledge of numbers and grammatical rules bears cultural connotations that lead the learner away from God rather than toward him. Knowledge of language is embedded in deceitful and immoral myth, knowledge of the universe can be misused for horoscopes. On the other hand, learning takes place in a social context; the learner inevitably becomes part of a network based on the communication of skills of a questionable moral nature and utilized, as he himself experienced, not only for the pleasures of friendship, but all too often for the achievement of worldly ends. Like human society itself, the *civitates permixtae* of the *City of God*, school is both beneficial and tainted by sin.

How, then, to extricate the good from the evil, or at least the unnecessary? The discussion of this question was not forgotten, but delayed. Not long after the failed experiment of *De musica*, Augustine's life took a dramatic and unexpected turn. On a chance visit to the city of Hippo Regius, he was pressed into the service of the Catholic Church, first as a priest and later as a bishop. From now on, all his writings will be set in the framework of his daily interactions with a mixed Christian community, not only a select group of learned friends, and his philosophy will have to make sense as part of a larger cultural and political agenda. It is remarkable that under such pressure, the issue of liberal education did not disappear, but reemerged in a modified shape. In 395, Augustine started writing the four books *De doctrina christiana*, which took a long time to complete; the second half of the third and the fourth book were only added in 426/27.



The treatise approaches the question of secular knowledge and Christian faith from another, ostensibly quite practical perspective: how to make use of secular knowledge, and secular rhetoric, in the service of the interpretation of the Bible. Obviously, this rethinking of education as part of the very specific process of understanding and explaining Scripture is a further step away from the concept of autonomous and self-sufficient secular knowledge; and while Augustine, as we have seen, has been essential in establishing the canon of the *septem artes liberales*, now he is busy dismantling it: anything can be added to or subtracted from it if this makes sense for the larger goal. It is part of the ambiguities of this complex work that as part of this very process of deconstructing the system of classical secular education, Augustine still manages to justify and reestablish it.

In contrast to the upward movement of *De musica* and the argument in *De ordine*, *De doctrina christiana* follows a downward path: it starts out with the highest things, the Trinity itself, and proceeds from there toward its lower-level manifestations in human knowledge and human (though sacred) books. These two aspects are joined in a complex semiotic concept of *res* and *signa*: human knowledge is the art of deciphering signs, most importantly the signs of the divine, which has the unique distinction not to be a sign for anything else, but solely a *res*. Any proper understanding of the *signa* of the Bible will necessarily lead to this one and only truth. Again, this is a remarkable rethinking of the goals of formal knowledge: ultimately, we know already what we will find, there is nothing new to be discovered or understood. Formal education will enable us to find in the Bible what we already know to be there: the three persons of the Trinity, and the double command of Love. From the standpoint of posterity, this devalues the liberal arts (and, incidentally, also the scholarly endeavor of biblical philology undertaken by Jerome at the same time), but that may not have been Augustine's intention: rather, in view of the precarious legitimacy of pagan knowledge in Christian circles, he may have given them a safe niche to survive an even greater onslaught. In the prologue preceding the four books of *de doctrina christiana*, Augustine defends his undertaking against those who, for various reasons, deem a systematic introduction to biblical exegesis unnecessary; the Bible, it is implied, can be understood without the slightest formal schooling—and certainly without the liberal arts (praef. 7–16). This is not pure theory; the complete renunciation of all worldly knowledge down to the elementary skills is at the same time being discussed in monastic literature. Anthony the desert-father, as Athanasius reports in his influential biography, “could not endure to learn letters, not caring to associate with other boys; but all his desire was, as it is written of Jacob, to live a plain man at home.” Certain people “met him in the outer mountain and thought to mock him, because he had not learned letters. And Antony said to them, “What say ye? which is first, mind or letters? And which is the cause of which—mind of letters or letters of mind?” And when they answered mind is first and the inventor of letters, Antony said, “Whoever, therefore, hath a sound mind hath not need of letters.” (73)

Compared to this, Augustine's intellectual reorientation is anything but radical. However, for him as well, secular knowledge is no longer an absolute requirement, nor a fixed scheme; moreover, the danger of superstition looms large. In the lengthy treatment of the liberal arts in the second book, Augustine moves beyond the skepticism he already demonstrated as far back as *De ordine*: here, the canon is not only taken apart and incomplete, but also interspersed with worried caveats concerning the undesirable

hidden meanings carried by pagan learning. After a short unsystematic introduction on knowledge of the natural world (2.59–61), Augustine starts with arithmetic (2.62–65) and proceeds to music—but here the series is already interrupted, for Augustine finds it necessary to deflect the danger of a religious interpretation implied in the very name of the art. After an extended discussion of various superstitious practices, the series proceeds somewhat unsystematically with reading and writing, history, astronomy, various practical arts (carpentry, medicine, and wrestling, to name a few), dialectic with a short embedded passage on rhetoric, arithmetic, and finally philosophy. Even if these latter arts do not, in Augustine's view, lend themselves to the danger of superstitious connotations, they should be handled with caution: "In all these subjects the watchword must be 'nothing in excess'" (2.140); Augustine suggests specialized handbooks that treat only those parts of the arts that might be of practical use to an exegete.

On the other hand, there is truth in all these arts, and truth belongs to God, even if it is found in pagan writings, especially in the books of the Platonists (2.144). As a solution to the ensuing dilemma, Augustine offers his interpretation of a biblical image: like the treasures of the Egyptians, which the people of Israel took away for their own use, "similarly all the branches of pagan learning contain not only false and superstitious fantasies, ... but also studies for liberated minds, which are more appropriate to the service of the truth, and some very useful moral instruction, as well as the various truths about monotheism to be found in their writers. This gold and silver of theirs ... which were used wickedly and harmfully in the service of demons must be removed by Christians ... and applied to their true function, that of preaching the gospel" (... *sic doctrinae omnes gentilium non solum simulata et superstitiosa figmenta gravesque sarcinas supervacanei laboris habent ... sed etiam liberales disciplinas usui veritatis aptiores et quaedam morum praecepta utilissima continent, deque ipso uno deo colendo nonnulla vera inveniuntur apud eos. Quod eorum tamquam aurum et argentum ... quo perverse atque iniuriose ad obsequia daemonum abutuntur... debet ab eis auferre Christianus ad usum iustum praedicandi evangelii* (*De doctr.* 2.145). Traditional learning has become discretionary instead of compulsive; the treasures of the Egyptians are ours to take or leave. The liberal arts have become mere tools in a larger undertaking, a flexible and variable group of skills that might come in useful—or not.

The catalog of the liberal arts in the second book all but omits one important art: rhetoric. It only appears as a digression in the larger subject of dialectic (*De doctr.* 2.132). The gap is filled by the fourth book, which is dedicated entirely to rhetoric. There is no space here to discuss in detail the remarkable rethinking of traditional concepts that Augustine presents here; suffice it to say that he follows his own principle; like the gold of the Egyptians, Ciceronian terms and categories are reorganized and filled with an entirely new meaning. Above all, as in the final book of *De Musica*, examples for rhetorical style have been chosen from Christian writers and from the sacred texts of Christianity. Augustine finds in them both the virtues of classical rhetorical style and entirely new ones (*De doctr.* 4.58). This is more than just an enlargement of a fixed classical canon; it means that the art itself has become negotiable.

More importantly, in the fourth book, the focus of education has shifted. In Augustine's reinterpretation, rhetoric has finally been disentangled from the dangers of pagan and secular ideology; it has become wholly subservient to a higher end: the Christian education of the congregation through the homily. If it is at all necessary to teach formal

rhetoric—and Augustine is quite ambivalent on that—then certainly it is not to be taught as an end in itself. Rhetoric has finally, and firmly, found its place as a vehicle rather than the object of schooling. It is telling for the ongoing ambiguity of Augustine’s discourse on the arts that even at this point the new concept is couched in the words and concepts of Cicero’s *Orator*, rather than a new, radically different Christian language. He did find that new language in his sermons and their entirely unclassical, if highly artistic, rhetoric—but this is another story.

## 6. Conclusion

It is perhaps not astonishing that Augustine’s reinterpretation of the arts was not nearly as successful as one would expect, given the prominence of its author. With Cassiodorus and Isidore, concepts of education will return to a firm and simplified canon of *artes liberales*, rather than the dynamic, if also somewhat indecisive, functionalization of the *artes* in Augustine’s many approaches to teaching. It is therefore hard to gauge precisely what impact he had on the ongoing story of formal schooling in the Latin West. On the one hand, Augustine certainly contributed to the forces that made life difficult for all forms of knowledge that were not directly useful, above all useful for the study of the Bible. On the other hand, his life and works are interwoven with his thoughts on schooling and teaching. In his life, in his theory, and in his homiletic practice, Augustine demonstrated not only what education should consist of, but also what it could accomplish.

### FURTHER READING

The following selection does not do the author or the subject any justice. The question of Christian and secular education is so tightly interwoven with nearly all strands of Augustine’s thinking that any general discussion of his work and thought can also serve as a first introduction to this particular subject. Henri-Irénée Marrou’s *Augustine et La fin de la culture antique* (1938) remains seminal and worth reading, although it has become obsolete in many details, as well as the overall thesis. The compilation of essays in Pollmann/Vessey (2005), in particular Vessey’s introduction, is a good starting point for the complex questions that arise if we reconsider, and deconstruct, Marrou’s narrative. On the practicalities of late ancient schools, see Kaster (1988). For *Confessiones*, see O’Donnell’s commentary (1992) and the biographies, Brown (1967,<sup>2</sup> 2000), Mandouze (1968), Lancel (2002), and recently O’Donnell (2005). On *De doctrina christiana*, see the introduction to the text and translation edited by Green (1995), the essays collected in Arnold-Bright (1995), and, in German, Pollmann (1996). On a “narrative reading” of the *Cassiciacum* dialogues, see Cary (1998). On *De musica*, see now Jacobson 2002, with further bibliography.



PART VI

**Non-Literary and Non-Elite  
Education**

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## CHAPTER 25

# Education in the Visual Arts

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*Jerome J. Pollitt*

In this chapter, I will first deal with the question of how aspiring artists were educated in their professions, and then I will turn to the more obscure question of how Greek and Romans who were not artists learned what they needed to know, or what they wanted to know, about the visual arts. Information about this subject in ancient literary sources is not plentiful. There were no art schools, in the modern sense of that term, in the classical world, nor was there anything resembling present-day courses in “art appreciation” for the general public; and since the visual arts played only a very limited role in the varied pedagogical curricula of classical antiquity, the subject did not provide much to write about for ancient authors who were interested in education.

### 1. The Education of the Artist

#### *a. Apprenticeship*

Apprenticeship was the fundamental institution for learning what one needed to know to become a professional artist. One joined the workshop of a master sculptor, painter, gem maker, etc., became his pupil (Greek *mathētēs*; Latin *discipulus*), and performed various workshop tasks under his tutelage in order to learn the craft. References to masters and their pupils appear frequently in the elder Pliny’s discussion of art and artists in books 34 through 36 of the *Natural History* and in Pausanias’s *Description of Greece*, and the range of the artistic genealogies that they cite extends from what ancient writers understood as the very beginnings of art in the Greco-Roman world down to the early Hellenistic period. Pausanias informs us, for example, that the semi-mythical sculptor Daedalus, who is sometimes associated with what we now call the Greek Bronze Age, had the sculptors Dipoinos and Skyllis as his pupils (2.15.1), and they in turn had the sculptors Dorykleides, Theokles, Medon, Angelion, and Tektaios as their pupils;

Angelion and Tektaios then had as *their* pupil a prominent sculptor named Kallon (5.17.1–2 and 2.32.5), and so on. When he turns to later phases in the development of Greek art, Pausanias's concern for the genealogy of teachers and their pupils persists. In the course of describing a work at Olympia by the early classical sculptor Pythagoras of Rhegium, for example, he takes pains to include a genealogy of Pythagoras's teachers that stretches back through four generations (6.4.3–4). The survival of such artistic genealogies over many centuries (Pausanias is writing, for example, approximately 800 years after the time of Dipoinos and Skyllis) is probably to be explained by something more than simple antiquarianism. It seems to have been a way of validating the fact that most artists who achieved prominence and prestige did so because they could lay claim to a pedigree which guaranteed that they were well taught and that the quality of their work could be trusted. In most cases, the apprenticeship system, one might say, conferred something like an academic degree on its pupils.

Since a respectable artistic lineage was of such practical importance, it is not surprising that apprenticeship in a particular art was sometimes a characteristic of families. Polygnotos, the most prominent painter of the early fifth century BCE, for example, was himself the son of a successful painter named Aglaophon, and his own son and pupil, Aglaophon the younger, also a painter, undoubtedly benefited from his heritage (see *AGSD*: 126–142 and 147). Praxiteles, the most renowned Athenian sculptor of the fourth century, was probably himself the son and pupil of a respected sculptor named Cephisodotus, and his own sons, Timarchus and Cephisodotus the younger, were awarded important commissions by the Athenian government during the early Hellenistic period. Still another famed sculptor of the Classical period, Polyclitus of Argos, seems to have become the tutelary spirit of a veritable clan of relatives who became sculptors and had thriving careers (*AGSD*: 75–81, 105–106).

Although ancient writers seem to have had little interest in the question of what life was like for an apprentice, there are nevertheless a few passages that provide us with brief but useful insights into this topic. In his essay on the painter Zeuxis, Lucian devotes most of his attention to describing the exotic subject matter of one of the artist's most admired works, the *Centaur Family*, but he interrupts his description at one point with a revealing observation:

As for the other aspects of the painting, those which are not wholly apparent to amateurs like us but which nevertheless contain the whole power of the art—such as drawing lines with the utmost exactitude, making a precise mixture of colors and an apt application of them, employing shading where necessary, providing a rationale for the size of figures [i.e., perspective], paying attention to the harmony and commensurability of parts to the whole—let painters' pupils, whose job it is to know about such things, praise them. (*Zeuxis or Antiochus*, 3)

This passage seems to offer a virtual curriculum of the technical achievements that an apprentice painter was expected to master. Some of them, like perspective and proportion, undoubtedly had a theoretical and mathematical component. Others, like learning how to mix colors, appear to have been intensely practical. Pliny makes it clear, for example, that Lucian's "precise mixture" of colors involved not only learning how to combine various hues effectively on the surface of a painting but also how to make



the actual paint itself by grinding up various pigments and putting them into a binding medium. Not only does he mention a Hellenistic painter named Erigonus, who began his career as a “color-grinder” for his teacher, Nealkes, and eventually worked his way to become a “master” with pupils of his own (*NH* 35.145), but he also records, in his discussion of the career of the painter Apelles (who allegedly became court portraitist for Alexander the Great) an amusing, if legendary, anecdote which confirms that color grinding was one of the tasks that apprentices frequently performed. This anecdote also gives us a brief glimpse of the apprentices’ daily life, their professional pride, and their feeling of camaraderie: when Alexander paid one of his occasional visits to Apelles’ studio and began to “express his views about many aspects of painting, despite the fact that he was not well-informed about them,” Pliny tells us, “Apelles politely advised him to keep quiet, because the boys who were grinding the colors were laughing at him” (*NH* 35.85–86).

Given the apparent omnipresence of apprenticeship, it seems unlikely that anyone ever could have had a career as a sculptor or painter without first having been tutored by an established artist who had himself worked his way up through the system. It is true that the careers of the sculptor Lysippus and the influential painter Eupompus, both of whom were from Sicyon, might at first sight seem to be exceptions to the general proposition. Pliny preserves the following evaluation of their achievements, citing as his source the early Hellenistic philosopher, politician, and essayist, Douris of Samos (c. 340–360 BCE): “Douris says that Lysippus of Sicyon was not a pupil of any other artist, but that he was at first a bronze-smith and undertook a career in the arts upon hearing a response of the painter Eupompus. For when the painter was asked which of his predecessors he followed, he pointed to a crowd of men and said that one ought to imitate nature itself and not another artist” (*NH* 34.61). There are reasons for doubting, however, that this passage means exactly what it appears to say. Both artists apparently strove for new, naturalistic effects. Lysippus is said to have invented a new system of proportions which enabled him to represent men “not as they were” but “as they appeared” (*NH* 34.65), and Eupompus, as Pliny says, felt that nature was his real teacher. Eupompus was apparently also a social innovator who strove to raise the social status of the artists of his generation (*NH* 35.75–77; see also *infra*). What Douris’ anecdote probably signifies is not that the two artists had never been apprenticed but that both of them rebelled against the system by disowning their teachers in order to embrace a new style. The fact that the names of the teachers of Lysippus and Eupompus are not preserved is not decisive. When a brilliant pupil of a mediocre teacher became very famous, it is not improbable that the teacher’s name was simply ignored or forgotten. This was apparently the case with the teacher of the painstaking Hellenistic painter, Protogenes of Rhodes, who had humble beginnings and did not become prominent until late in life. “Whoever it was who taught him,” Pliny observes, “cannot, it would seem, be determined” (*NH* 35.101).

Apprenticeship as a way of educating artists almost certainly survived until the end of classical antiquity, but our sources say very little about it in connection with the art of the later Roman Republic and the Empire. This is probably to be explained by the fact that, while Roman intellectuals of the elite classes came to revere the “old masters” of early Greece, their disdain for manual labor as a lower-class phenomenon (see later) inclined them to look askance at the sculptors and painters of their own era.

### *b. Higher education among artists?*

That the education of artists in the practice of their crafts did not come to an end after apprenticeship would appear to be confirmed by the fact that several painters and sculptors of the Classical period wrote technical and theoretical treatises about their art. The most famous of these was the *Canon* by Polyclitus, a treatise on *symmetria* (the commensurability of the parts of the human body as represented in sculpture) which was still being cited as late as c. 200 CE by Roman intellectuals. (For the ancient sources on Polyclitus, see AGSD: 75–79, and on archaeological evidence relating to the sculptor’s work, see Polyklet 1990 and Moon 1995). The existence of other such treatises is also documented. The late fifth-century painter Agatharchus, for example, wrote a treatise on perspective. Euphranor, who was both a prominent painter and sculptor in the fourth century BCE, wrote treatises on *symmetria* and also on colors; and Apelles wrote a memoir that dealt with stylistic assessments of his own and other painters’ work, technical questions about design and proportion, and practical matters such as the use of varnish. (Agatharchus: Vitruvius 7. praef. 11; Euphranor: Pliny, *NH* 35.129 and index; Apelles: *NH* 35. 80 and index. In addition, there were treatises by Parrhasius, *NH* 35, index; Melanthius, *NH* 35, index and Diogenes Laertius 4.18; Asklepiodorus, *NH* 35, index, and by the painters Protogenes and Pamphilus, cited in the *Souda*.) Unfortunately, except for a few paraphrases, and possibly a few quoted words from the *Canon* of Polyclitus, the titles are the only portions of these treatises to survive, and we can only speculate about the audience for which they were written. Given the essentially technical nature of the treatises (how to design the proportions of figures; how to apply colors in an appropriate way, etc.), it is probable that they originated as workshop guides, written by master painters and sculptors for their most advanced pupils. Eventually, when a particular artist acquired prestige and his work became widely influential, his professional colleagues may have become eager (for competitive reasons as well as a natural curiosity) to get a look at his writings. And once copies of such treatises became available beyond the confines of their authors’ workshops, they perhaps became a useful tool by means of which artists who were no longer apprentices could continue to educate themselves.

By the later fifth century BCE there was clearly an urge among artists to escape from the stigma of being simply *banausoi*—humble craftsmen who performed physical labor—and to establish themselves as educated intellectuals who merited a respected position in society; and it seems likely that their treatises played a role in achieving this goal. It has been suggested, for example, that Polyclitus’s *Canon*, in addition to dealing with practical workshop procedures, incorporated Pythagorean philosophical ideas about the nature of numbers and proportion. (The case is made most succinctly by Raven 1951). And even if one doubts this, it is clear that by the later fourth century BCE, the intellectual aspirations of artists were in full stride. Pliny records that Pamphilus “was the first painter who was erudite in all branches of knowledge, especially arithmetic and geometry, without which, he held, an art could not be perfected” (*NH* 35.76). Not surprisingly, Pamphilus was one of the painters who wrote a treatise about his art, and as will be discussed below, his ideas appear to have had a significant influence on the development of general education in the Hellenistic period.

### c. *Vitruvius on the education of the architect*

*De Architectura*, written early in the principate of the Emperor Augustus by the Roman architect Vitruvius, is our sole source for what the education of an architect was like (or, perhaps, ought to have been like). Although the treatise is mainly devoted to describing the buildings, equipment, materials, and techniques that typified Roman architecture in the late first century BCE, it also looks back to, and is heavily influenced by, Greek ideas about what constituted good architecture and sound architectural practice. With considerable fervor, Vitruvius argues in his opening chapter that an architect, if he aspires to master both the practical and theoretical requirements of his profession, must be broadly educated:

Neither natural ability without education nor education without natural ability can make a perfect artist. So he should be well-read, skillful in drawing, erudite in geometry, have absorbed a good deal of history, have listened carefully to the ideas of philosophers, be knowledgeable in music, not ignorant of medicine, up-to-date on the opinions of jurists, and familiar with astronomy and calculations involving celestial phenomena (1.1.3) ... Since, therefore, this profession makes such great demands, embellished and enriched as it is by such vast and varied learning, I don't think anyone can justly claim to be an architect who has not, from his boyhood, climbed the steps of these disciplines and, having been nourished by the arts and sciences, ascended to the temple of architecture at the summit." (1.1.11)

But how would an architect have gotten the sort of education that Vitruvius prescribes? Through his training in some form of apprenticeship? Through normal schooling in youth? Or by educating himself through a program of reading and study? Unfortunately Vitruvius is silent on these questions. We simply do not know how an aspiring architect entered the profession and learned what he needed to know. One thing that we do learn from Vitruvius, however, is that the *De Architectura* stood at the end of a long line of treatises about aspects of architecture, written by architects, that stretched back to the sixth century BCE. Greek architects, it appears, were educated and intellectually ambitious from the beginning (that is, from the time when they first began to build large-scale stone structures in the familiar classical orders). In fact, the first such treatises—by the architects Theodoros and Rhoikos on the temple of Hera at Samos, and by Chersiphron and Metagenes on the temple of Artemis at Ephesos—predate the *Canon* of Polyclitus by more than a century. It may be that the earliest such treatises were more concerned with practical problems of engineering than with theory. Vitruvius (10.2.11–12) and Pliny (*NH* 36.95–97), for example, describe the techniques developed by Chersiphron for moving huge stone blocks and column drums from the quarry to the building site and also how he constructed ramps of sand in order to erect the columns, walls, and doorways for which these heavy components were required. Presumably they got this information by reading descriptions written by Chersiphron himself. In time, however, it is clear that architectural treatises became (as we have speculated was the case with writings on sculpture and painting) more theoretical and prescriptive. Vitruvius supplies a lengthy bibliography of works on proportions and planning written by Greek architects (7.pref.12 and 14), and he also describes at length the theories of the Hellenistic architect

Hermogenes, whose work he particularly admired (3.2.6; 3.3.6–9; 4.3.1). What all this suggests, of course, is that architects educated themselves not only by reading broadly but also by reading one another's work.

## 2. General Education in the Visual Arts

### *a. Formal training*

Unlike music and rhetoric, which were mainstays in the education of free male children in the Greek world, only one visual art—*zōgraphia*, painting and drawing—ever played an official role in any established curriculum of Greek education, and this was a relatively late development. Pliny records that as a result of the prestige of the painter Pamphilus, who, as we have already seen, was renowned for his wide learning, “it came about, first at Sikyon and then in all of Greece, that free-born boys were given lessons in painting on wooden tablets, a subject that had previously been omitted, and thus painting was received into the front ranks of the visual arts” (*NH* 35.77). In this passage Pliny uses the Latinized Greek word *graphice*, which basically means drawing, but this is followed by a clarifying definition in Latin: *hoc est picturam* (“that is, painting”). Some editors omit the definition as a later, spurious addition to Pliny's text, but there is little doubt that he is talking about both drawing and coloration, both of which are subsumed in the English word “painting” and in the Greek word *zōgraphia*. Pamphilus was active in the second half of the fourth century BCE. That this was the time when painting and drawing were introduced into the curricula taught in Greek gymnasiums (i.e., schools), seems also to be confirmed by Aristotle's remark in the *Politics* that the basic subjects taught in Greek schools were reading and writing, gymnastic exercises, music, and “according to some,” drawing (*graphikē*) (*Politics* 8.2.3). (The qualifying phrase suggests that the addition of the visual arts to the curriculum was a recent development.)

Just how long drawing and painting remained a factor in Greek education is uncertain, but it certainly lasted well into the Hellenistic period, because two inscriptions connected with gymnasiums in Greek cities in Asia Minor, both probably dating from late third or early second centuries BCE, record prizes awarded to students for victories in contests that tested their proficiency in *zōgraphia*. (On these contests, and on contests in the visual arts in general, see Donderer 1996 and Ziebarth 1914, esp. the section on *Siegerliste*, 137–141.) One of these is from Teos, a town that came within the cultural orbit of the kingdom of Pergamon and may reflect the Attalid kings' enthusiasm for the visual arts. It records that the prize in *zōgraphia* was awarded to “Dionysios, the son of Dionysios, grandson of Dionysios, and great-grandson of Menekrates,” a student belonging to the “middle level” of the *paides* (boys as opposed to ephebes) (*CIG*, no. 3088a). The inscription's emphasis on Dionysios's genealogy would seem to indicate that achievements like this were a source of great family pride. The second inscription, from Magnesia on the Meander, records that three students—Apollonios the son of Apollonios, Kallistratos the son of Zopyros, and Alkis the son of Zopyros—all won prizes in *zōgraphia* (Kern 1900: no. 107; Dittenberger<sup>3</sup>: no. 960). (Whether they finished in a tie for first place or, perhaps, won prizes for different age groups is not specified.) A third inscription, from a gymnasium in Ephesos and dating to the reign of the Pergamene king Eumenes II

(197–159 BCE), appears to document the winners in contests among teachers in various subjects, among whom one Sōtikos was the victor among instructors in *zōgraphia* (Keil 1951: 332; Merkelbach 1980: no. 1001). The inscription does not say, and we have no way of knowing, whether the teachers were receiving these awards on behalf of their students or whether they were in fact directly competing with one another, perhaps for reappointment or higher salaries. But, taken together, these inscriptions make it clear that painting/drawing was a significant subject in Greek education during the middle of the Hellenistic period. How long such instruction survived in the ancient world is unknown. It was apparently not a feature of the educational system that the Romans devised for themselves, but in the eastern provinces, where Greek cities under Roman hegemony had considerable autonomy in local affairs, it may have continued into the time of the Roman empire.

### b. *Self-education*

Aside from such introductory formal training for schoolboys, the average Greek citizen learned about the arts simply by looking, talking, and reading. The civic centers and religious sanctuaries of archaic and classical Greece were filled with votive and commemorative sculptures; temples and public buildings, like the Stoa Poikile in Athens, often contained famous paintings; and later, in the Hellenistic period, royal art collections, like those of Ptolemy II in Egypt and Attalos II in Pergamon, were sometimes put on public view. (For example, the festival pavilion of Ptolemy II described by Athenaeus 196A [ARSD 34–36] and what seems to have been a collection of “old master” sculptures, of which only the inscribed bases survive, at Pergamon, *IvP* nos. 135–144; Hansen 1971: 316–317; Tanner 2006: 219–234.) The opportunity to see such works undoubtedly generated animated conversations and exchanges of ideas. Often these were probably casual and speculative, like those of the women portrayed in *Mime* 4 of Herondas, but in certain settings they may have been more formal and ambitious. Xenophon’s portrayal of a conversation between Socrates and the painter Parrhasios, for example, in which the philosopher questions the painter about how character and emotions are conveyed in the visual arts (*Memorabilia* 3.10.1–5), may be imaginary, but it probably does reflect the sort of topics that would have been discussed at decorous, serious symposia.

Another source to which an aspiring connoisseur of art could turn for instruction was epigrams. These short poems were originally designed to be inscribed on public commemorative monuments—statues’ bases and grave stelai, for example—but by the third century BCE they had evolved into a literary genre, and while they were still sometimes inscribed, this was no longer a requirement for their creation. Many epigrams dealt with works of art, especially statues and gems, and these were sometimes both didactic and critical. The recently rediscovered collection of epigrams by the poet Poseidippos of Pella (third century BCE), for example, contains an epigram that praises the new style of Lysippus and contrasts it with the “stiff” and “old-fashioned” style of sculptors belonging to what we now call the Late Archaic period. (See K. Gutzwiller 2005: 31, no. 62, with translation by F. Nisetich and commentary by Andrew Stewart, pp. 183–188.)

Those who aspired to a more formal and scholarly understanding of the arts could also turn to a theoretical and biographical literature about art that grew more diverse as time went on. In addition to treatises by professional artists, which, as already discussed,

began as early as the sixth century BCE and culminated in the fourth century, there were also Hellenistic writers like Douris of Samos, already cited above, whose essays about artists seem to have combined biographical details, sensational anecdotes, and art criticism at a popular level. And what seem to have been the first serious histories of painting and sculpture, by the sculptors Xenokrates and Antigonos, also appeared in the in the course of the Hellenistic period. Although this literature is now known only through citations and quotations by later writers, it clearly played an important role in shaping public understanding of the arts in both Greek and Roman culture. Pliny, as his bibliography attests, could not have written his chapters on art without it. (On this literary tradition see Pollitt 1974: 9–71 and *AGSD* 1–9; Tanner 2006: esp. 213–219, 235–276.)

### 3. Learning about the Arts in the Roman World

Although in the middle centuries of the Republic a few aristocrats, like Fabius Pictor and Pacuvius, applied themselves seriously to the art of painting, by the second century BCE a pervasive feeling among the Roman elite that working with one's hands was a characteristic of the low-class and low-born, brought an end to this tradition. (On this development see Pliny *NH* 35.19–20 : *postea non est spectata honestis manibus*. The classic portrayal of the Roman view of artists is Lucian's *Somnium*). No upper-class Roman would have aspired to become an artist. Nevertheless it is clear the Roman aristocracy valued the visual arts as a cultural phenomenon. The fact that Pliny devoted so much space to the arts in the *Natural History* is a clear indication of this, and other ancient authors confirm the Romans' respect for the arts as well. When they came to contemplate sculpture and painting as *arts*, they were willing to overlook the physical labor that was involved in them. In *Protrepticus* 14, for example, the physician Galen (c. 130–200 CE) distinguishes between two categories of arts that men may aspire to practice: a superior “intellectual and holy” category which includes arts like rhetoric, astronomy, and medicine that are mainly activities of the mind and may be practiced throughout a lifetime, and an inferior, “banausic” category that he regards as “reprehensible” because its arts require physical labor and compel a man to retire when he grows old. But in the case of painting and sculpture Galen is willing to waive this distinction and include them in his first category. In the same vein, Philostratus at the beginning of his essay *On Gymnastics* (section 1) draws a distinction between arts that involve *sophia* (here perhaps best translated as “scientific method”) and those that are basically banausic crafts, and assigns painting and sculpture to the *first* group.

Since as early as the late Republic, the visual arts were considered a serious subject for intellectual inquiry and becoming knowledgeable about them became a legitimate, respectable goal, the question once again arises: How did a curious and socially-ambitious citizen learn what he or she needed to know about painting and sculpture?

#### a. Self-education

As in the Greek world the most common ways that most people acquired this knowledge was by looking at works of art, having conversations about them, and reading what had been written about them. In Rome the opportunities for doing this were especially

plentiful. As a result of military conquests, beginning with the sack of Syracuse by the general Marcellus in 211 and continuing into the middle of the first century BCE, vast numbers of Greek sculptures and painting, the spoils of war, were paraded through the city in triumphal processions. As time passed many of these works of Greek art made their way into private collections, and when, eventually, some of these collections were put on display in galleries that were open to the public, they became familiar to a broad segment of the population. (On works of Greek art brought to Rome as military booty see Pape 1975 and Pollitt 1986: 150–159. On the display of Greek paintings in the city of Rome and their gradual transfer to public collections see Pollitt 1978; Miles 2008: chapter 4.) As a result, Romans of the second and first centuries BCE found themselves surrounded by Greek art, and this exposure gradually produced a cultural upheaval that transformed the way they thought about art in general. Plutarch records that many young Romans developed “a taste for leisure and idle talk, affecting urbane opinions about the arts and artists, even to the point of wasting the better part of a day on such things” (*Marcellus* 21.1–5). The end result of all this was that a philhellenic taste in the arts became widespread among the Roman aristocracy (see the thorough discussion in Tanner 2006: chapter 5), and when educated, sophisticated Romans wanted to learn something about the “old masters” of Greece, the way to begin was simply to look around them. Having done that they could engage in conversations with well-known collectors, art dealers, and even with contemporary Greek artists, who were pouring into Rome in order to take advantage of the new Roman art market and had even developed a neoclassical style that would appeal to the taste of wealthy Roman clients. And if they chose to proceed still further, they could also read in the varied Greek literature on art that has already been described.

The mania of the art market of the late republic gradually yielded, during the empire, to a more sedate acceptance of the significance of art. That acceptance is perhaps best embodied in the philhellenic emperor Hadrian, who dabbled in art and architecture and at his villa in Tivoli surrounded himself with sophisticated echoes of the art of Greece. (Sources are collected in *ARSD*, 174–181.) The *Historia Augusta*, Hadrian, 14.8, declares that he was an accomplished expert in painting, and Aurelius Victor (floruit c. A.D. 360), *de Caesaribus* 14.2 asserts that “as a painter, and as a sculptor in both bronze and marble, he rivaled Polyclitus and Euphranor.” In spite of their exaggerations and hyperbole, these late sources undoubtedly contain a kernel of truth about Hadrian’s fascination with the arts. But perhaps the most zealous example of a commitment to learning about art is that of the elder Philostratus, who in his *Eikones* (1.3) confesses that he took up residence for four years with a Greek writer and painter, Aristodemus of Caria, in order to study painting. Philostratus, who was probably both a sophist and rhetorician, made this commitment not because he wanted to become a painter but because he wanted to “master the science” of painting and felt that Aristodemus would be an excellent tutor.

### *b. Formal instruction? Rhetoric and the visual arts*

While there is no explicit evidence that the visual arts played a role in the three-stage system of education that the Romans devised for their own children, it seems quite possible that, in the most advanced stage of the system in which Roman youths aged

15 and older were trained in the fine points of rhetoric, a certain amount of instruction concerning the visual arts was also included. Rhetoric, the art of speaking persuasively in public, was of fundamental importance in the education of young Roman men of the upper classes. If they were to have successful careers in government, law, and military life, mastery of it was essential. Effective public speaking had also been of great importance for the Greeks, and during the Classical and Hellenistic periods the art of rhetoric had been developed to a high level of sophistication and complexity. In the late Republic, the Romans, after a brief moment of hesitation, adopted the Greek rhetorical tradition virtually *in toto* and hired Greek rhetoricians to teach it; and once they had mastered the principles, organizational categories, and exercises of their Greek teachers, they quickly adapted them to the Latin language and Roman social requirements (see Krostenko in this volume).

Most of the writers of the Roman period who show a sophisticated knowledge of painting and sculpture were rhetoricians or teachers of rhetoric, and this is surely a significant fact. Quintilian, a professor of rhetoric, includes a fairly detailed stylistic history of Greek sculpture and painting in the *Institutio Oratoria* (12.10.1–10), and Cicero, famed for his oratorical skills, offers a briefer version of this history in the *Brutus*, 70. In both cases, the purpose of the history is to compare it with the stylistic development of rhetoric. Likewise, Dionysius of Halicarnassus (a Greek who taught rhetoric in Rome early in the principate of Augustus) frequently makes sophisticated and perceptive comparisons between the styles of individual Greek orators and their counterparts in sculpture and painting. (Sources are collected and translated in *AGSD*, 221–226.) This interest in comparing the styles of famous rhetoricians with those of various sculptors and painters appears to have been so pervasive that some scholars have hypothesized the existence of a comparative canon of rhetoricians and artists that was used to facilitate instruction concerning rhetorical styles. The idea of a standard canon of *ten* orators and artists that was advocated by Carl Robert (1896: 47–57, 71–73) and others in the nineteenth century is no longer tenable (see Austin 1944 and Douglas 1956), but it remains possible that informal comparative lists of artists and orators, not tied to any specific number, did exist as early as the Hellenistic period.

The roots of this interest in art among rhetoricians may stem from their early education. As a part of their training in how to organize a speech, choose the right words, formulate coherent arguments, and deliver their points effectively, students of rhetoric were routinely given speaking exercises (*progymnasmata*) on various subjects (see Penella in this volume). They could, for example, tell a story, examine the merits of a familiar saying, or represent a certain type of human character. One apparently quite popular form of these exercises, and one which may have special relevance to the role of the visual arts in education, was *ekphrasis*. Broadly speaking, *ekphrasis* refers to a vivid verbal description of any object. Most the surviving examples of it, however, are applied to works of art, and this would seem to have been its primary and most common use. Although most rhetoricians perhaps first encountered it as a part of their schooling, the genre had a vigorous life beyond the school room. Lucian's description of the *Centaur Family* of Zeuxis (*Zeuxis or Antiochus*, 3), the descriptions of paintings in the two sets of *Eikones* (Latin *Imagines*) by the Philostrati, and the *Descriptions* of Callistratus make it clear that *ekphrasis* was a popular form of rhetorical display among mature and successful rhetoricians.



In order to create such descriptions, however embroidered they may have been by verbal display, rhetoricians must have been obliged to look very closely at works of art and to think systematically about how their visual impressions could be captured in words. It is not implausible that such insights into the visual arts were regarded as an acquired skill that could, like other rhetorical skills, be taught by those who had mastered it to neophytes who wanted to learn it. In other words, at least by the time of the later Roman empire, *ekphrasis* may have evolved something more than simply a rhetorical exercise and taken on the role of something like “art education.” In the introduction to his *Eikones* (1.3), the elder Philostratus makes a declaration that may stand as an epitaph for what seems to have been the final effort to bring the visual arts into the orbit of classical education:

I propose to deliver talks about the imagery of paintings, talks that I have put together for the benefit of the young, so that they may learn how to interpret paintings and recognize what is estimable in them.

## Abbreviations

- AGSD** J. J. Pollitt (1990), *The Art of Greece, Sources and Documents*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.
- ARSD** J. J. Pollitt (1983), *The Art of Rome, Sources and Documents*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.
- CIG** *Corpus Inscriptionum Graecarum* (1828–1877), Berlin.
- Dittenberger<sup>3</sup>** Dittenberger, W. (1915–1924), *Sylloge Inscriptionum Graecarum*, 3rd edition, Leipzig.
- SEG** *Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum* (ongoing series, now online), Amsterdam.

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## CHAPTER 26

# Mathematics Education

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*Nathan Sidoli*

It is difficult to say much with real certainty about mathematics education in the ancient Greco-Roman world. When it comes to discussing their education, the mathematicians themselves are all but silent; when discussing the place of mathematics in education in general, philosophical and rhetorical authors are frustratingly vague; and the papyri related to mathematics education have not yet received the same type of overview studies that the papyri related to literary education have (Crihiore 1996, 2001; Morgan 1998). Nevertheless, this chapter provides a survey of what we can say about ancient mathematics education, on the basis of the evidence from the papyrological and literary sources, and guided by analogies from what we now know about literary education.

Although it was once commonly held that the mathematical sciences made up a standard part of a fairly regular, liberal arts curriculum (Marrou 1948; Clarke 1971), this has been shown to be largely a fanciful characterization (Hadot 2005: 436–443, 252–253), and in the case of mathematics it is difficult to be certain about precisely what was learned at what age, and to what end. Indeed, the diversity of mathematical practices and cultures that we find represented in the sources gives the impression that mathematical education was even more private and individualized than literary education.

In the Greco-Roman period, the range of activities that was designated by the word *mathēmatikē* was not identical to those denoted by our understanding of the word *mathematics*. Although *mathēmatikē* was originally associated with any type of learning, it came to mean those literary disciplines that used mathematical techniques or that investigated mathematical objects—actual or ideal—such as geometry, mechanics, optics, astronomy and astrology, number theory (*arithmetikē*), harmonics, computational methods (*logistikē*), spherics (*sphairikos*), sphere making (*sphairopoiia*), sundial theory (*gnōmonikos*), and so on. In this chapter, I consider mathematics education to be training in any of these mathematical sciences (*mathēmatikai*) or in the methods they employ.

While many educated authors extolled the virtue of mathematics education, their remarks do not give us a concrete sense of what this entailed. For example, Quintilian, in the 1st century CE, recommends that a prospective orator supplement his reading in literature with studies of mathematics (*geometria*) and music (*Inst.* 1.10). He indicates that mathematics was studied under a geometer (*geometres*), but his description of the course of this study is much less detailed than his treatment of literary education. After claiming that one primarily studies mathematics in order to build character and sharpen the mind, he goes on to describe a few more specific benefits. In his opinion, the most significant of these is that mathematics teaches one about the idea of proof (*probatio*) by teaching the most powerful form of demonstration: geometrical proof (*grammikē apodeixis*). The only example of mathematics of this form that he specifically discusses, however, is how to produce an equilateral triangle on a given line, *Elements* 1.1 (*Inst.* 1.10.3). The longest description of actual mathematics in this section is given over to discussing the elementary fact that the perimeters and areas of plane figures do not vary proportionally (*Inst.* 1.10.40–45). Finally, he points out that through mathematics we learn a bit about astronomy, the cosmos and the natural causation of eclipses, and concludes by repeating the claim that geometrical proof (*linearis probatio*) can produce results on matters that are otherwise intractable. Not surprisingly, the general impression is that the amount of mathematics education regarded by Quintilian as sufficient to become a successful rhetorician was slight: basic calculation, including finger reckoning; practical geometry, including calculation of areas and perimeters; modest coverage of theoretical geometry, including at least a few proofs from *Elements* 1; basic spherics, and perhaps some proofs in this regard; basic cosmology, such as the geometry of eclipse theory, and so forth. The important thing was that the educated person should know that mathematics was a powerful and erudite discipline and that its practitioners could achieve a level of certainty that others could not.

In place of these sorts of vague claims about the virtues of mathematics education that we often find in literary and philosophical writings, it may be more useful to think of a three-stage division, modeled on the three stages of literary education (Cribiore 2001). (1) The primary stage involved instruction in basic numeracy, corresponding to basic literacy, and was carried out under a primary teacher (*didaskalos*, *grammatistēs*, *grammatodidaskalos*). (2) Secondary mathematical education corresponded to the school of the grammarian in literary education and was undertaken with either a grammarian (*grammatikos*, *grammatistēs*) or a specialized mathematics teacher, sometimes called a geometer (*geometres*). (3) The advanced stage, pursued by relatively few students, can be divided into two curricula: (a) professional and (b) philosophical. This division of tertiary education corresponds to the primary division of mathematical cultures into those which were more practical and those which were more theoretical (Asper 2009).

The articulation of this three-stage process is, however, simply a schematic, since the actual educational paths pursued by ancient learners must have varied considerably based on socioeconomic, geographical, and temporal differences, as well as the goals of the student (Kaster 1983). In smaller towns, it is likely that often all available stages of learning took place under a single teacher with students of all ages together in one setting. At the secondary level, although in smaller towns grammarians may have carried out mathematical instruction, in larger cities, at least by the Imperial period, there appear

to have been specialized instructors in mathematics, known as geometers (Quint. *Inst.* 1.10.4; *Dig.* 50.13.1). While, for the more involved practice required by a surveyor, clerk, and accountant, mathematics could probably have been studied in professional scribal schools, many novice professionals, such as architects and astrologers, probably studied mathematics in more private settings directly from their masters, or from specialized mathematics teachers. In the philosophical schools, mathematics education would have varied depending on the school's attitude toward mathematics and the abilities and interests of the philosophers themselves. While education in the advanced mathematical subjects appears to have never been formalized to the same extent as rhetoric and philosophy, in the imperial and late-ancient periods mathematics education became increasingly canonical and institutionalized, first to meet the needs of empire and then by being incorporated into the late-ancient philosophical schools (Cuomo 2000: 16–55; Pingree 1994; Watts 2006; Riedlberger 2013: 32–41). Since the expectations of a mathematical education were more diverse than those of a literary education, we should expect that there would have been increasing diversity as a student progressed through their own, individual course of study. Hence, when considering the evidence from the papyri, it is often a matter of interpretive choice to assign any particular piece of evidence to one of the stages rather than another.

Since few people would need any mathematics beyond that taught in the first, or second stages, the availability of papyrological evidence is strongly slanted toward elementary education. Moreover, while individual mathematics curricula diverged more as students progressed through their studies, it appears that the content of the more advanced subjects also diverged over time. While the more elementary and practical subjects appear to have remained fairly constant over the centuries, the advanced, philosophical subjects changed as progress was made in these fields.

## 1. Elementary Education

The mathematics taught in primary education does not appear to have gone much beyond basic numeracy and was probably taught by the same teacher who taught basic literacy (Criboire 2001: 180–183). Along with Augustine's statement that schoolchildren monotonously recited sums (*Conf.* 1.13), we have a fair bit of papyrological evidence for this early stage of numerical education. A list of numbers and a table of squares appear in a 3rd century BCE compilation of materials to be used in elementary education (MPER N.S. 1.23; Guéraud and Jouguet 1938). There are lists of numbers in schoolhands (ex. MPER N.S. 15.143–145, P.Laur. 4.150), tables of additions (ex. MPER N.S. 15.150–151; P.Köln 9.371; P.Berol.inv. 21346r), and many tables of multiplications and parts (ex. P.Berol.inv. 21310; P.Gen. 3.121; P.Mich. 15.686; P.Harrauer 3; MPER N.S. 15.152–157; P.Mich. 3.147; P.Berol.inv. 21303, T.Varie 4–5; MPER N.S. 15.159–171). Although some of the well-written tables may have been ready reckoners for use by professional scribes or calculators, the majority of them were probably written by, or for, schoolchildren (Fowler 1990: 234–240). A number of the papyri related to metrological conversions probably also arose in the context of primary education (ex. P.Köln 8.352). Finally, basic arithmetical operations were applied to the solution of simple word problems, such as calculations of profits or interest (P.Michael 62; T.Kellis

G 90; T.Tebt.inv. 3033). It appears that this stage of mathematics education was fairly constant through much of Greco-Roman antiquity. For example, fractional parts were always handled using tables of Egyptian fractions—what we call unit fractions—and there is no indication that the more sophisticated sexagesimal fractions that Greek mathematicians adopted from Mesopotamia for use in the astral sciences were ever taught in elementary education. Indeed, explicit discussions of arithmetical operations involving sexagesimal fractions in an educational context are found in Theon of Alexandria's *Commentary to Ptolemy's Almagest*, which indicates that this was a topic of the advanced philosophical curriculum.

## 2. Secondary Education

The secondary stage involved a transition to topics in geometry, although still at a fairly elementary level. This stage was probably taught by the grammarian in more rural settings, but by the Imperial period, in larger cities, seems to have been carried out by specialized teachers. A number of examples of the types of problems students would have encountered in their secondary education are preserved in the papyri written by schoolhands. We find a problem dealing with calculating the number of seats in a stadium (PSI 3.186), and three problems dealing with calculating areas and other features of plots of land (P.Col.inv. 157r; Bakker 2007). In one case, a set of elementary geometrical problems appears together with other matters pertaining to the secondary level, such as a passage from Homer and metrological problems, in what is probably a teacher's hand (MPER N.S. 15.178; Bruins, Sijpesteijn, and Worp 1974; Friberg 2005: 196–199). There is some indication that, as well as collections of various matters related to teaching, there were treatises comprising mathematical problems that acted as textbooks for mathematics education at the secondary level. In a letter from Hellenistic Egypt, Sarapion, a student presumably at the secondary level, asks his friend Ptolemaios to send him a papyrus roll that they had previously discussed, so as to help him, as he says, with “some geometrical [problems] assigned to me” (*tisi tithemenais moi geometrikais* (sic.), SB 111.7268). There are some candidates for such treatises among the extant papyri. An example is a collection of elementary exercises related to the calculation of areas, in a decent hand and apparently organized as a series of problems with solutions (P.Chic. 3; Goodspeed 1898).

While the question of what advanced, or theoretical, topics were taught in secondary education is not easily answered, it also seems clear that astronomy was approached through Aratus' *Phenomena* (Maass 1898: 80, 342). Because it is verse, the text would have been suitable for use by the grammarians; and the fact that it was read by nearly all educated people in their youth would have contributed to the well-established popularity of this work in antiquity. Although the commentaries written by Attalus and Hipparchus are not directed at an elementary audience, one of the other commentators of the text appears to have been a grammarian (Maass 1898: 91, 95). This indicates that in mathematical courses, just as in literary studies, students returned again to classical texts at various stages in their education, gradually appreciating them in greater depth. The same is probably true of other elementary theoretical texts, such as Euclid's *Elements* or Theodosius' *Spherics*. Although the introductory material, such as the definitions and

the first few theorems, was probably introduced by some teachers, it is likely that few students approached these texts in any depth until later in their studies. The fact that Proclus' *Commentary to the First Book of Euclid's Elements* was addressed to students working through an advanced course in philosophy supports this hypothesis.

Hence, some of the material collected in Pseudo-Heron's *Definitions* and *Geometry*, such as definitions of various mathematical terms and simple geometry problems, probably originated in texts meant for secondary education, while other portions of it may have come from texts produced for training professionals or elementary texts for the philosophical curriculum. In the case of secondary education, it seems that much of the material taught remained fairly constant throughout the ancient period, such as simple geometry problems; however, new material appears to have been introduced after it became canonical, such as Aratus' poem, or Euclid's definitions.

### 3. Advanced Technical and Philosophical Curricula

More advanced mathematics education was probably quite diverse. Nevertheless, in broad terms we may divide it into the practical mathematics that was taught to professionals who used mathematics in their work and the theoretical mathematics that was taught to individuals with more abstract interests, either philosophical or technical. The practical tradition of Greek mathematics is much less studied than the theoretical, in part because there are so few sources. This material is only known from a few handfuls of papyri and the compilations of problems and discursive material that are included in the Heronian corpus. What is clear, however, is that these texts are closely related to similar material in Mesopotamian and Egyptian sources (Friberg 2005). Hence, the methods used in the practical tradition were highly traditional, almost conservative, often neglecting new, more efficient methods that were developed in the theoretical tradition. Although it is not possible to be sure if all of the papyri from this tradition originated in an educational context, it seems likely that most of them did. By the Imperial period, mathematical education at this level appears to have been carried out by specialists, calculators or geometers (Cuomo 2000: 16–30). The ambiguity in our sources about whether these and similar terms apply to working professionals, such as accountants or surveyors, or to teachers of mathematical subjects is probably due to a number of factors, such as professionals engaging in teaching to supplement their income and novices learning their profession by studying with a practitioner.

A late papyrus from the 6th–7th century CE that preserves a genre of mathematical text common in Mesopotamian and Egyptian sources may have originated in the context of professional scribal education and demonstrates the continuity of this tradition over many centuries (P.Cair.Cat. 10758; Baillet 1982; Friberg 2005: 208–214). The content consists of a seemingly random selection of topics related to arithmetic, probably gathered together by a teacher or a student training to become a practitioner, such as tables of Egyptian fractions, problems involving prices and metrology, problems involving the manipulation of fractions, and what we would call systems of linear equations. There is no general discussion of the problems or their solutions, which supports the claim that the original context for this source was educational, since the teacher could have orally explained how to approach the material. Another text that may have been used in scribal

classrooms, or those of perspective architects and surveyors, is a fragmentary treatise that deals with various solids (MPER 1.1; Fowler 1990: 254–259; Friberg 2005: 234–242). This text begins with some general remarks about measures and then gives a series of problems, in question-and-answer format, that could be used to teach rules for calculating the volumes of prisms, cylinders, pyramids, and truncated cones. These types of texts were probably also used in the education of accountants and other officials who made extensive use of computation (*logistēs, katholikos, calculator, tabularium, numerarius*). A more advanced text that was probably also related to this kind of education is a fragmentary treatise, preserved in a 2nd century CE papyrus, that sets out a tabular method for solving systems of linear equations in two, three, and four unknowns, through the method of false position (P.Mich. 3.144; Robbins 1929; Friberg 2005: 200–208). The fact that this text contains problems whose conditions are unlikely to have been encountered in the course of ordinary work indicate that it has an educational character. That is, the purpose of working through these kinds of problems was to develop general problem-solving skills and ways of thinking, not merely to build a repertoire of methods that could be applied directly.

A number of papyri preserve treatises that may have been used in the education of architects, surveyors, and other professionals tasked with measuring land and its products (*agrimensor, mensor, gromaticus, geometres*). One of these, in a papyrus from the second century CE, is a series of problems, in question-and-answer format, which solve for features of right triangles, using rules equivalent to the solution of a linear-quadratic system of two equations in two unknowns (P.Gen. 3.124; Sesiano 1999; Friberg 2005: 220–221). Another, from the same period and also in question-and-answer format, finds features related to irregular rectilinear figures through the application of rules equivalent to the solution of two linear equations in two unknowns (P.Cornell.inv. 69; Jones 2012; Friberg 2005: 226–233). In both cases, the rules used can also be found in much older sources, going as far back as the Old Babylonian period. Moreover, again we find problems that do not correspond to anything that would have been encountered in actual work and whose purpose must have been to exercise general problem-solving abilities. Hence, the goal of mathematics education in the practical traditions must have been to produce individuals who were capable of solving new and unanticipated problems through the application of various rules that were learned through processes of repeated exposure and application.

Not surprisingly, almost all of the papyri of a clearly educational nature from the philosophical curriculum relate to Euclid's *Elements*. Of course, some of the many tables of numbers related to astronomy and astrology may have pertained to educational contexts, but it is difficult to be certain. There are also a number of papyri that either contain commentaries on mathematical works or works that include some mathematics, but these will be considered later. Aside from one fragment of the text itself (P.Fay 9; Fowler 1990: 212–214, pl. 3), the handful of papyri relating to the *Elements* almost certainly originated in an educational context. The first ten definitions of *Elements* I is preserved on a scrap of papyrus that was not part of a roll and was probably a private extract (P.Mich. 3.143; Turner et al. 1985). It is in a decent hand and was probably written by a teacher or a student who had advanced beyond the basic stages of education. Two papyri preserve an interesting type of digest, and prove that early propositions of the *Elements*, at least, were memorized in educational contexts. Both of these are series



of enunciations of propositions, accompanied by purely symbolic, unlettered diagrams, and hence must have served as aids to memorizing the mathematical content of the propositions, as opposed to their argument. One of them preserves enunciations and symbolic diagrams for *Elements* 1.8–10 (P.Berol. 17469; Brashear 1994: 29–30, Abb. 16), while the other preserves those for *Elements* 2.4,5 (P.Oxy. 1.29; Fowler 1990: 208–212, pl. 2). These types of texts would be useful for students who were expected to master the elementary theorems so as to understand how they were used later in the text, or in other mathematical contexts. A final series of sources should be mentioned in this regard. This is a set of ostraka containing notes on solid geometry that make some reference to *Elements* 13 but contain a diagram unlike anything found in the manuscript tradition of Greek mathematical texts (Mau and Müller 1962). Here we find a rare piece of evidence of someone working through a more advanced text, or, less likely, using an advanced text to do some original mathematical work.

While the discussion so far has focused on elementary education, with some treatment of professional education and a passing reference to studying Euclid, some of the most interesting questions one might have about Greco-Roman mathematics education concern the educational role of advanced, theoretical mathematics. For example: Was there ever anything like a liberal arts education that culminated in the four mathematical fields of arithmetic, geometry, harmonics, and astronomy? What was the role of mathematics education at the various philosophical schools? How did people like Euclid and Ptolemy learn their mathematics? Unfortunately, none of these questions can be fully answered on the basis of our sources. The only approach we have to such questions is to consider broadly the social context of the mathematicians themselves and the nature and contents of the texts that they wrote. One thing that is clear, however, is that the canon of texts that were studied changed over time as new texts were written, although some texts remained classics. The incorporation into education of texts that were almost certainly not written for an educational purpose, such as Euclid's *Elements*, Aratus' *Phenomena*, or Ptolemy's *Almagest*, is one of the defining features of the philosophical curriculum of mathematics education. Indeed, a development from established results, including the incorporation of new methods, is characteristic of the theoretical tradition. Whereas in practical mathematics, outmoded methods and superseded parameters continued to be used long after simpler methods or better parameters had been derived, the theoretical tradition was progressive and cumulative, at least over sufficiently long periods of time. For example, in the theoretical tradition, for centuries after Euclid wrote his *Elements*, or Ptolemy his *Almagest*, no mathematical scholar could be taken seriously who did not know these works and respond to them, whereas in the practical tradition, knowing the latest value of  $\pi$ , or using precise, trigonometric methods, was not regarded essential. For these reasons, the theoretical tradition can be considered scientific, whereas the practical material is sometimes called "sub-scientific" (Høyrup 1990).

Although the scanty nature of our evidence makes it difficult to describe in detail the social circumstances in which Greek mathematicians worked, we can nevertheless paint a picture in broad strokes. In order to assess the social setting, we read discussions of mathematics and mathematicians in literary authors and philosophers, make inferences based on the few places where Greek mathematicians make personal comments in their writings, and make some guesses regarding the role of higher mathematics in education on the basis of the writings of mathematicians, philosophers, and other intellectuals.

It is clear is that, in Greco-Roman culture, unlike professionals who used mathematics in their work, theoretical mathematicians did not form a professional group that had been educated in a standardized way and earned their living through developing and teaching their mathematical skills, although some mathematicians apparently did earn a living through teaching and writing mathematics. Rather, we find a broad array of backgrounds: Archytas was a statesman and a general (Diog. Laert. 8.79), Hippocrates of Chios was a wealthy merchant (Philoponus *In Phys.* A2, 185a 16), Eudoxus was a respected legislator and a philosopher with many students (Diog. Laert. 8.89–91), Eratosthenes was the head of the library of Alexandria (P.Oxy. 10.1241), Archimedes was associated with the royal court of Syracuse (Plut. *Vit. Marc.* 14–19; Polyb. 8.5–8), and Hypatia was the daughter of a mathematical scholar and herself taught philosophy to youths of the Alexandrian social and political elite (Dzielska 1995: 27–46). The one thing that these individuals all share is that they had privileged lives and were participants in the type of high culture that revolved around literary and philosophical pursuits. We know none of the details of their education, but they came from backgrounds that could have provided them the kind of education that resources and leisure allow. They could have had private tutors when they were young, and when they were grown, they could have traveled to those cities where philosophy and rhetoric flourished. Since mathematics had no special institutional settings in the ancient period, and since mathematicians were members of the literate elite, they probably undertook the bulk of their advanced education in the same schools as other intellectuals such as sophists, philosophers, and poets.

Although it is uncertain precisely what role theoretical mathematics had in education, it is clear that this role increased throughout the ancient period. From early times, most schools of higher education were centered around a specific philosophical tradition, and mathematics education would have depended on the importance of mathematics within the school's thought. Of the mathematical curriculum of the most famous school of antiquity, Plato's Academy, we know almost nothing (Zhud 1998). Whereas one could probably study mathematics, and even the history of mathematics at the Lyceum, it is unlikely that much, if any, mathematics was taught at Epicurus' Garden. Throughout the Hellenistic and Imperial periods, the teaching of higher mathematics appears to have become more established, at least in certain times and places. We are told by Pappus, for example, that Apollonius studied under the pupils of Euclid at Alexandria (*Coll.* 7.35). Apollonius says that *Conics* V will be useful for the "student" (*tālib*) of analysis (Toomer 1990: 5), and he appears to have organized whole treatises for use in teaching the techniques of analysis and synthesis in geometry (Saito and Sidoli 2010: 596, n. 43). The fact that some people did study treatises of theoretical mathematics is shown by the Euclidean papyri discussed earlier. By the late-ancient period, teachers, like Pappus and Theon of Alexandria, or Eutocius of Ascalon, were organizing treatises into canons for study, producing new editions of the classics, writing commentaries on important works, and producing text-based studies of specialized fields. Nevertheless, although it is clear that mathematics was occasionally taught, it is not clear if there were any general patterns to the teacher–student relationship. Although in some schools, most students may have listened to lectures on elementary geometry and spherics, it is unlikely that many progressed on to more advanced topics, such as geometrical analysis or advanced, theoretical arithmetic related to our modern number theory, or algebra. Most working

mathematicians would have been lucky to have one or two really advanced students in their lifetime, and in many cases, the “students” referred to in our texts may have been rhetorical students whom the author hoped posterity would furnish.

Throughout the course of the ancient period, it seems likely that Greek mathematicians generally worked alone and not in research groups or schools (Netz 2002). Of course, there are some clear exceptions to this. In Athens, during the Classical period, there were small groups of mathematicians who worked together, or at least on the same set of problems. Some of these, such as Eudoxus, then returned to their homes along the eastern Mediterranean and founded schools of mathematical and philosophical instruction (Diog. Laert. 4.29). During this period, Athens was the main center of mathematical activity, but there were also peripheral nexuses, of which a striking example was the group at Cyzicus (Sedley 1976). Another exception is that of Alexandria during the Hellenistic and Imperial periods. Starting from the time of Euclid, there were almost continuously a few mathematicians working in Alexandria, perhaps associated with the museum and library. Archimedes publicized most of his work by sending it to mathematicians working in Alexandria, but it does not seem that there were more than two or three working there at any time for whom he had much regard (Heiberg 1910–1915: vol. 1, 2–4; vol. 2, 426–430). As mentioned earlier, Apollonius was said to have studied with Euclid’s students in Alexandria. Hypsicles tells us that when a certain Basilides of Tyre was in Alexandria, he and Hypsicles’ father spent much of their time discussing a mathematical work by Apollonius (Vitrac and Djebbar 2011: 53, 89). Thus, Athens and then Alexandria acted as centers that attracted talented young mathematicians from the peripheries, while in other cases, they were cultural nexuses where people studied and disseminated the works of important mathematicians, such as Eudoxus and Archimedes, who chose to live in peripheral locations.

It seems that it was in the Imperial period that theoretical mathematics education began to become standardized. In fact, a number of treatises that were clearly written for educational purposes—such as Geminus’ *Introduction to the Phenomena* and Theon of Smyrna’s *Mathematics Useful for Reading Plato*—were composed during this period. To get a concrete sense of one particular example of mathematics education during the Imperial period, we may consider the autobiographical testimony of the second-century physician Galen, who speaks of himself at every available opportunity. Although Galen cannot be taken as representative, because of the diversity of educational experiences there is little sense in hoping for a typical example. Nevertheless, Galen makes it clear that there were certain subjects and works that he regarded as canonical, usually by way of pointing out that his intellectual opponents lacked a secure foundation in just those matters. Galen had received his mathematical instruction from his father, Nikon, a man whom he held in high regard, and who “had trained in geometry, number theory, architecture and astronomy” (Galen *De aff. dig.* 7.1–4). Under this tutelage, Galen learned to harbor a general disdain for those “unpracticed in the deductive method, nor in the other mathematical sciences, which hone the soul, such as geometry, number theory, computation, architecture and astronomy” (Galen *De pecc. dig.* 2.1–8). In his *Commentary on Hippocrates’ Airs, Waters, Places*, which survives only in medieval translations, Galen criticizes the Roman astrologers because of their lack of mathematical knowledge. We are told that although most of the Romans studied geometry in their youth, they did so only superficially: some studied only Euclid’s *Elements* and *Data*, a

few of them studied spherics, but almost none of them studied conic theory (*fī ashkāl al-bayḍah wa-al-ṣanawbar*) (Toomer 1985: 199). From this, and a few other passages, we may infer the order of instruction along which Galen had been led. He states that general training with numbers is followed by computation and number theory (*De pecc. dig. 2.1–2*), that the *Elements* is followed by spherics (*sphairikos theōrēmatos*), with the implication that this is followed by the theories of conics (*kōnikos*) and sundials (*De pecc. dig. 1.4*). Although he does not clearly say that analysis was taught last, this may be inferred from the fact that he spends the latter half of his *Diagnosis and Cure of the Soul's Errors* discussing the importance of the analytical method (*analytikē methodos*) for any discipline that seeks to produce knowledge about the world (*De pecc. dig. 5*). That his idea of analysis and synthesis derives from his mathematical, as opposed to philosophical, studies is made clear both by his derision, in this text, of discursive, school-based philosophy and by the fact that all his examples are mathematical, such as dividing a line into a proposed number of parts (*Elements 6.9*), circumscribing a regular figure with a circle (*Elements 4*), or marking lines on a sundial or water clock (*De pecc. dig. 3*). It is not certain when each of the stages of his mathematical education took place, but since he continued to live in his father's house at the age of fourteen when he began to listen to the lectures of the local philosophers (*De aff. dig. 8.3*), it is likely that he continued to study the exact sciences under his father while he began his philosophical studies. From Galen's remarks, we learn that by the Imperial period there was a fairly standard course of philosophical mathematics education, which he regarded as important both for the habits of mind that it imparted and for the benefits that it offered to those who mastered it in proposing solutions to problems encountered in the real world.

Our knowledge of the substantial texts of Greek mathematics comes through the filter of the scholarship of the mathematicians of late antiquity, most of whom were associated with schools of philosophy and regarded mathematics as an important part of a broader cultural and educational project centered around philosophy and religious activities. The mathematical texts of the earlier periods were edited and commented upon by these mathematical scholars, and this process acted as an informal process of selection, in so far as texts which did not receive attention had a dramatically reduced chance of being passed down.

These late-ancient scholars were primarily responsible for creating the image of theoretical mathematics that was transmitted to the various cultures around the Mediterranean in the medieval and early modern periods. Through their teaching and scholarship, they established various canons of the great works of the past, arranged courses of study through select topics, reinforced a sound and lasting architecture by shoring up arguments and making justifications explicit, and, finally, they secured their place in this tradition by intermingling their work with that of their predecessors and situating the whole project in contemporary modes of philosophic discourse.

One of the most mathematically minded of these scholars was Pappus of Alexandria, who was a competent mathematician, a gifted teacher, and made important strides in associating mathematics with areas of interest in philosophy by constantly arguing for the relevance of mathematics to other aspects of intellectual life. Pappus worked in many areas of the exact sciences, wrote commentaries on canonical works, such as the *Elements* 10 and the *Almagest*, and produced a series of short studies that were later gathered together into the *Mathematical Collection*. It is clear from Pappus' writing that he was

part of an extended community of mathematicians and students who had regard for his work and interest in his teaching. The fact that his commentary and explanation of spherics, *Collection 6*, is followed by that on analysis, including the *Conics*, *Collection 7*, may be an indication that by this time an advanced geometry curriculum proceeding from spherics to analysis had become canonical.

The other mathematical scholars of the late-ancient period were also involved in teaching and expounding the classics, and hence mostly worked through the medium of commentaries. Theon of Alexandria edited works by Euclid and wrote commentaries to Ptolemy's *Almagest* and *Handy Tables*. Hypatia, his daughter, collaborated with her father on various projects and wrote commentaries to Apollonius and Diophantus. Proclus of Athens wrote a commentary on the *Elements* that was meant to be preparatory for students pursuing his advanced lectures in philosophy. Eutocius of Ascalon edited works by Archimedes and Apollonius, and wrote commentaries to them.

This work was a continuation of a tradition of commentating and editing that began in the Imperial period. The scholars of this period paid particular attention to issues of logical completeness, formal structure, and readability. They produced fuller texts with more explicit arguments, wrote auxiliary lemmas, introduced internal references to other parts of the canon, restructured the treatises and individual elements of the text, added introductions and conclusions, advocated explicit classifications, rewrote theories from new perspectives, and summarized long works for the purposes of study (Netz 1998). The goal of much of this work was educational, in that it paved the way for larger numbers of students to access these sometimes obscure classics (Bernard 2003).

All of this was part of a broad trend, begun in the Imperial period by authors such as Geminus, Heron, and Ptolemy, to incorporate the mathematical sciences into philosophical traditions (Feke and Jones 2010). Although in the Classical and early Hellenistic periods, philosophers showed interest in mathematical approaches, there is little indication that mathematicians had a similar regard for philosophy. The mathematicians of the late-ancient period, however, were concerned that mathematics be part of an education in philosophy and rhetoric (Bernard 2003; Riedlberger 2013: 34–38). Their texts show a combination of modes of thought from the traditions of pure mathematics with those from the various exact sciences, and a mixture of philosophical concerns with mathematical issues. Their project, situated as it was in the philosophical schools, argued both explicitly and implicitly for the value of an advanced mathematical education.

It remains to discuss briefly what texts and other aids were used in this advanced philosophical curriculum. It would seem that as the mathematical sciences developed, and as significant texts were produced, more and more of this material was presented in educational settings. Probably most mathematics education in the philosophical curriculum focused on reading standard texts—such as Euclid's *Elements*, Theodosius' *Spherics*, and Ptolemy's *Almagest*—and the commentaries that were written about them in order to help a growing number of students progress through this sometimes difficult material. The fact that such texts later came to be used in education, however, should not compel us to believe that they were originally written with education in mind. These texts were written as treatises (*pragmateia*, *suntaxis*) expounding a mathematical field on a structured foundation; they were not originally meant to guide beginners. Just as

literary education focused on works that were composed for adults, so technical education was focused on reading and understanding the achievements of past masters. There was nothing quite equivalent to a modern “textbook” in ancient mathematics education.

Nevertheless, mathematical scholars were interested in guiding readers through their works (Mansfeld 1998); a number of authors produced introductory texts (*eisogōge*, *encheiridion*), and in some cases the exact sciences were taught with physical aids (Cicero *Tusc.* 5.64, 113; Geminus *Elem. Astron.* 5.69). Examples of introductory texts are Nichomachus’ *Introduction to Arithmetic* and *Introduction to Harmonics*, which later received their own commentaries and epitomes; Geminus’ *Introduction to the Phenomena*; and Pappus’ *Introduction to Mechanics*, which became Book 8 of his *Collection*. These works, however, were not exclusively directed at students and were also of interest to educated adults and scholars. Mathematical sciences were also discussed at an elementary level in the course of studies on philosophy more broadly, such as in commentaries on Plato’s *Theatetus* or lectures on Stoic cosmology (Diels and Schubart 1905; Bowen and Todd 2004). In the late-ancient period, the primary approach to mathematical scholarship was through commentaries, which although apparently directed at students were also a way for scholars to make their own contributions to the mathematical sciences. As discussed earlier, almost all the scholars of this period produced commentaries on past mathematical works. Although there is no physical evidence for teaching aids other than papyri and writing instruments, there is considerable evidence that Greek mathematicians made various instruments to model the mathematical objects with which they worked, and many of these were probably used in educational settings (Evans and Berggren 2006: 51–53; Sidoli and Saito 2009: 605–607).

This survey of the available evidence suggests that although there was never anything like a stable curriculum in what later came to be known as the *quadrivium*, mathematics education at the lower, and professional, levels was fairly constant throughout Greco-Roman antiquity, while students who had an interest in theoretical mathematics pursued these studies according to their own abilities and means. As significant work was done in the mathematical sciences, it was commented upon and organized into more systematic curricula. By the late-ancient period, advanced theoretical mathematics education came to be subsumed within the theological curricula of the late-platonic schools, but this seems not to have affected mathematics education at the elementary levels, or in professional contexts.

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## CHAPTER 27

# Musical Education in Greece and Rome

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To a greater degree than most other disciplines, musical education may show a marked dissociation between theoretical knowledge and practical skills. In fact, it is perfectly possible to learn to sing, dance, or even play an instrument quite well without ever being taught how to analyze tonal or rhythmical structures from a theoretical point of view. On the other hand, one may acquire a fairly detailed understanding of such structures, and also the ability to assess the merits and shortcomings of musical performances without ever having touched an instrument or even learned to sing. Our sources on ancient musical education reflect this antinomy in a curious way: on the one hand, we get some impressions of practical schooling in classical Greece—of course, centered on Athens—and we do not really know how much “theory” the average student would have absorbed there; on the other, Roman imperial sources convey the impression of valuing encyclopedic handbook knowledge, even if superficial, over the acquisition of any active skills. However, it is often difficult to discern if and how the bias of the extant sources misleads us: in some way or other, the focus of many later texts on classical Greece tends to obscure contemporary practices.

Quite apart from those elite circles for whom a basic musical training of whatever kind was just part of a decent education, there were, of course, some individuals who reached a level of technical advancement that might earn them a living. The professional training involved here was very different from ordinary education and, even though we know little of the details, it seems clear that at least from the Hellenistic period many musical professions were physically demanding to a degree that in modern times is associated only with athletics (Bélis 1999: 186–191; Barker 2008; Melidis 2012). Finally, musical activities were usually quite different for men and women, and here it is once more hardly possible to obtain a balanced picture.

Many aspects of Greek musical culture were already firmly in place in Homeric times. Epic singing to the lyre is the musical activity foregrounded in the epic songs and is also

envisaged as a proper occupation for a nobleman (Achilles at *Il.* 9.186–191); nonetheless, the Homeric poems already present an element of ambivalence in the evaluation of musical activities which is attested in various forms throughout antiquity: from Hector’s reprimand of Paris, it transpires that a special emphasis on musical skills may conflict with the mindset or training of a ‘real man’ which, in this context, is that of an excellent warrior (*Il.* 3.54; also 13.730f. cf. Plato, *Rep.* 410c; Aristid. Quint. 2.6, p.59.14–21 Winnington-Ingram). In any case, it is clear that the Homeric texts seem to presume some kind of musical schooling. In an interesting contrast, however, they also portray a professional singer boasting about not having had any masters, implying that his skills are a direct gift from the gods (Phemios at *Od.* 22.347f.; cf. Hesiod, *Works and Days* 22–34). In addition to singing and playing the lyre, the epics depict young people of both sexes engaged in apparently complex dances, which again presume some form of dedicated training (*Il.* 18.590–602).

Different kinds of dances, either solo or in groups (*khoroi*), accompanied by instruments or not, remained a core musical activity throughout the Greek world for long, and are still partially relevant nowadays. Conceivably some communities contented themselves with a traditional repertoire, which young people would acquire quite naturally; others may have sought refinement especially in relation to bodily movement, an aspect that obviously left hardly any trace in the record (cf. the *Odyssey*’s portrayal of the Phaeacians’ skills: *Od.* 8.262–265, 370–384).

Therefore, our ideas of boys’ and girls’ choruses are largely informed by those particular places and periods in which dance performances were coupled with music of exceptional literary quality, composed by the finest poets of a certain time. The prime example are Alcman’s *partheneia*, extended strophic compositions created for maiden choruses in Sparta which seem to have been re-performed for centuries (cf., for instance, Aristoph. *Lys.* 1247–1315, with Bierl 2011 and Carey 2011; on male re-performances of Alcman’s songs, cf. Sosibius ap. Ath. 678c and Plut. *Lyc.* 28.4f; on female education in Sparta, cf. Pomeroy 2002). The only surviving extensive fragment of this genre, the so-called *Louvre Partheneion* (Fr.1), gives a tantalizing glimpse into a world that celebrated beauty and ability in the context of a cultic event which, under some respects, was akin to a rite of passage, a kind of coming of age of noble girls who presented themselves and their skills to their community. The prominent status enjoyed by the chorus leader (who is addressed with both the proper term *khorhāgós* and her own “name,” *Hāgēsikhórā*, which have identical meanings), as well as the intense feelings expressed by the chorus toward her, suggest that the role she played in their lives went beyond rehearsing for a single event. It seems more likely that the preparation they received—in the house of a certain Ainesimbrotā?—encompassed everything they needed to be accepted as adult members of their social class and, therefore, also to be regarded as suitable brides (Calame 1997: 43–48, 73; and especially 221–244). Around the same time, a comparable kind of tutoring is usually assumed to have taken place in Sappho’s “circle” on Lesbos, as well as in similar institutions run by the poetess’s “rivals.” Once more, the original sources are elusive in many respects; in any case, it is clear that whatever happened there included a good deal of musical activity (fr. 96.4f V.). These references to music-centered educational practices involving girls in two rather distant places around 600 BCE—places which, as we have seen already, are spotlighted only by the presence of exceptional poets—gives rise to the suspicion that similar institutions were more widespread in the Archaic age.

Such a grounding of “general” education in musical schooling is in line with the report that the term *khorós* was used, especially but not exclusively in Dorian literature, in the more general sense of “school” (*didaskaleíon*) and *khorēgós* in the sense of “teacher” (*didáskalos*) (Pollux 9.41; Quint., *Or.* 1.10.17f).

The emphasis placed on the musical aspects of education may be less surprising if one considers its connection with many aspects of a citizen’s life. Dance figured not only in ritual and private merrymaking, but was also part of military training in the form of dances in armor. Song was an indispensable element of religious activities, and the presence of an instrument seems to have been customary also in many everyday ritual occasions such as libations. Wherever the symposium established itself as a major expression of upper-class lifestyle, guests would have been expected to prove their refined education by contributing to the after-dinner entertainment with some musical performances, either to the accompaniment of an *aulós* player or accompanying themselves on the lyre. Finally, citizens would occasionally take part in semi-professional performances, at Athens for instance, as chorus members in dithyrambic contests or even in drama.

Notwithstanding the virtually unanimous acknowledgment of the importance of acquiring some sort of musical education, single cities differed widely with regard to the specific nature of this kind of education, a variety that is reflected in the philosophical discourse. For instance, we are told that fourth-century Spartans would have been proud of being able to pass judgment on musical performances without having learned to play an instrument themselves (Aristot., *Pol.* 1339b; implicitly criticized at 1340b; more radically, *Dissoi logoi* 2.10 DK). In classical Athens, by contrast, the boys’ musical training took place at the *kitharistēs*, complementing the education in letters received at the *grammatistēs* and physical exercise at the *palaístra*. From Plato’s wording, one might even infer that some kind of musical education was required by law, though nothing else is known about such legislation (*Crito* 50d–e).

The term *kitharistēs* must not be mistaken to imply that music teachers were generally players of the professional instrument known as *kithára*. Instead, the term comes from the verb *kitharízein*, which refers to playing any kind of lyre (Aristox. ap. [Ammonius], *De adf. vocab. diff.*, p.151.). Contemporary iconography invariably portrays the tortoise-shell lyre as the typical stringed instrument used in school, since it was relatively simple, light, and affordable. While it was originally equipped with seven strings, at some point between the late fifth and the third century the number of strings was increased, apparently in the wake of the technical evolution of the *kithára*. One of the first things a student had to learn was to tune the instrument to one of a traditional set of scales (Aristoph., *Eq.* 986–995; *Nub.* 968) starting from establishing concords such as fifths, fourths, and octaves, and probably adjusting some smaller intervals by ear (Hagel 2009: 115 with n.34). Then students were taught to accompany themselves while singing, as these small lyres were hardly equipped for producing instrumental music in its own right. The repertoire would have been largely traditional, even though some passages in Old Comedy mock the new trend of imitating the style of contemporary virtuoso music, apparently in fashion among young people (Aristoph., *Nub.* 969–971). Although playing the lyre does not normally involve fingering techniques that would change the note sounded by each individual string, acquiring the skills needed in order to produce a decent accompaniment may still have been quite demanding, as both hands were possibly involved in complex actions. The right hand wielded the plectrum and thus gave the

rhythm by sweeping over the row of strings; at the same time the fingers of the left hand, which also held the instrument by means of a band running around the wrist, muted the strings that were not supposed to sound, and also engaged in plucking. By contrast, Plato recommends using the lyre in classroom only to produce a note-to-note accompaniment, as a sort of prop for the still inexperienced voice. In doing so, he apparently sought a compromise between the Spartan renunciation of instrumental skills and Athenian customs; however, his account of how *not* to use the lyre gives an excellent impression of what an advanced student may actually have achieved:

“... a different and manifold playing of the lyre, in which the strings emit one melody and the composer who has put together the vocal melody another one, setting dense movements against wide distances, quick against slow tempo and high against low pitch both in concords and discords, and fitting in the same way all kinds of rhythmical intricacies to the sounds of the lyre ...” (Plato, *Laws* 812d–e).

At any rate, learning music was not meant to be fun (Aristot., *Pol.* 1339a), and education at the *kitharistês* was apparently no less violent than elsewhere (Aristoph., *Nub.* 970f).

Earlier in the fifth century, many Athenians had also been trained in the art of the *aulôs*, the other dominant type of instrument in antiquity (Aristot., *Pol.* 1341a, based on epigraphical evidence; cf. Aristoph., fr. 221 K = 232 K.-A.; Wallace 2003: 81–83). As a double-pipe reed instrument, the *aulôs* was capable of producing a continuous resonant sound which was markedly different from that of the lyre, and, in accord with its double nature, exploited the effects of intervallic sequences. Of course auletes were able to accompany somebody else singing, but not themselves; for this reason, solo *aulôs* performances were much closer to a modern understanding of music “for its own sake”, devoid of the literary component that constitutes such a strong element of almost all pieces of ancient music that have come down to us. However, studying the *aulôs* went out of fashion in Athens early in the second half of the fifth century—a development that was anecdotally connected with the rejection of this instrument on the part of the young Alcibiades, despite the fact that the sources associate him with the best available, and probably ridiculously expensive teacher (Pamphila ap. Gell., 15.17.1 names Antigenidas, while Pronomus is mentioned at Duris of Samos ap. Ath. 184d; cf. Plut., *Alc.* 2.5–6; Plato, *Alc.* I 106e). In general, *aulôs* teaching probably involved a number of traditional “airs” or perhaps styles of improvisation. A plausible example is the “libation style,” which apparently remained a cultural constant over many centuries, and from which Aristoxenus quotes a number of notes used in the accompaniment that would typically go with particular melodic notes: such “harmonic pairings” would almost certainly require specific schooling (Aristox. ap. ps.-Plut., *Mus.* 1137b–d).

Other cities embraced the *aulôs* much less half-heartedly. So we are told that “everybody” learned to play it in Sparta—before Aristotle’s time that is, if we keep in mind the aforementioned testimony (*Pol.* 1339b)—and above all in Thebes, which was the home of the most important virtuoso auletes of the Classical era, such as Pronomus and Antigenidas (Chamaeleon ap. Ath. 184c; Aristot., *Pol.* 1341a. On Sparta’s musical reputation in the sixth and fifth century, cf. Plut., *Lyc.* 21; Ath. 632f; on Pronomus, see for instance the so-called *Pronomus Vase*, with Taplin and Wyles 2010). Nevertheless, the relentless rise of the Athenian cultural hegemony, whose attitude eventually informed

the whole Hellenistic world, together with the destruction of Thebes widely discredited *aulós* playing as a skill worthy of non-professional performers. One can only speculate about the ultimate reasons for this dramatic shift (Wilson 1999 and 2004). After this instrument had been construed as the archetype of cultural “otherness,” its doubtful reputation seemed all but natural; however neither its association with the Dionysiac sphere and other ecstatic cults, nor its alleged opposition to a rational and liberal lifestyle, enshrined in the Marsyas myth and associated with the preclusion of verbal communication on the part of the performer, seem to constitute a sufficient explanation, apart from in hindsight.

On the contrary, the *aulós* was universally acknowledged as producing the most calming, sobering and soberly religious effects on ancient listeners (Dion. Hal., *Dem.* 22; Sext. Emp., *Adv. Math.* 6.8; Iambl., *v. Pythag.* 25.112). It was held in high esteem even, if not especially, by philosophers of Pythagorean background (Ath. 184e); it constituted the model on which important parts of music theory were shaped and eminent Athenians played it as well (Aristox., *Harm.* 2.39, p. 49.1–5; 37–38, p. 47.1–16 Da Rios; ps.-Plut., *Mus.* 1136d–e; Wallace 2003). In addition, as regards music without text, there is little which would have stopped Greek thinkers from welcoming its beauty for its own sake, as a pure reflection of the cosmic harmony; after all, no philosopher seems to have ever complained about a lack of lyrics in the cosmic music of the spheres. Perhaps, therefore, one of the most significant decisions that shaped musical education in the Hellenistic and Roman period was just due to a political coincidence, the strife between Athens and Thebes in the late fifth and early fourth century, which led the Athenian elite to disparage an art in which they could not possibly outdo their rivals.

In any case, the negative evaluation of the *aulós* was canonized for the rest of antiquity by Plato and by a possibly young Aristotle, who, in this case, followed his master closely. Both in the *Republic* and the *Laws*, Plato discusses extensively the value and dangers of musical education, though from very different viewpoints. He explicitly emphasizes its importance in forming the identity of a social group thanks to a common city-specific repertoire, as well as its related potential to shape individual characters by assimilating them to the values expressed in poetic performances, both through textual and musical means. In Book 3 of the *Republic*, Socrates and Glaucon undertake a radical selection of the musical forms to be employed in the ideal education of *Kallipolis*, admitting only two *harmoníai* (Dorian and Phrygian) and banning the *aulós* from all educational practices. By contrast, the approach of the *Laws* is much more nuanced and realistic, since here different types of music are accepted or rejected not simply on the basis of technical criteria: a key role in this selection process is attributed to the experienced judgment of aged citizens, who are able to discern the crucial influence of musical pleasure on the ethical development of Magnesia’s future citizens.

The idea that purely musical elements, such as tonal systems (*harmoníai*) and rhythmic movements, may substantially influence the character of the listeners and even more that of the performers was especially important in Pythagoreanizing thought, but it was not at all limited to Pythagorean circles (Wallace 1991; Lynch 2013; Hagel forthcoming). Wherever the soul was conceived as a kind of harmony (which turns the body into a living being) or as consisting of parts which need to be in harmony with each other, it was all too easy to reach the conclusion that characters could be “tuned” by exposing them to different musical harmonies. There is little doubt that this idea was

grounded in personal experience, since different emotional states can be elicited by different kinds of music. Of course, a large part of the experienced effects was probably due to cultural conditioning rather than deriving from anthropological constants of music perception.

Even though Aristotle, out of a concern for political values, sided with Plato in restricting the types of musical activities that should be practiced by good citizens, others plainly denied any ethical relevance of music (*Pap. Hibeh* 13 [e.g. Avezzi 1994]; Philod., *Mus.* e.g. xxiv.9–22; xxxii.4–xxxiii.10). In the long run, however, a Platonizing view prevailed, and with it also a general suspicion toward modulating instruments, such as the *aulós* and the harp; nevertheless, we do not know whether the *Republic's* insistence on disposing of all *harmoníai* apart from the Dorian and (curiously) the Phrygian was ever reflected in any later curricula (for a possible explanation of Plato's choice in the *Republic*, see Lynch forthcoming). According to Aristotle, the Dorian mode was the only one above suspicion; regarding questions of detail he points students who wish to discuss these matters further to “those who happen to be versed in questions of musical education” (Aristot. *Pol.* 1341b).

A curious assortment of medieval manuscript pages is worth mentioning here, which seem to go back to a single work known to Byzantine scholars as something like “The Music” and may have been a sort of lyre schoolbook including some repertoire (Hagel 2009: 132 n.79). It probably contained the surviving compositions by Mesomedes of Crete (Pöhlmann and West 2001, nr. 24–28), who was active at Rome in the early second century CE. All of them are notated in the Lydian key—which actually reflects a Dorian lyre tuning (Hagel 2009: 56–61). The musical setting to a number of other pieces by the same poet is lost, but some surviving headings testify to their tonality; and almost all of these used—once more—the same tuning. The only exception indicates a Hypodorian tuning (as it is written in the Hypolydian key), which however could be conceived simply as a variant of the Dorian (Heracl. Pont. ap. Ath. 625a). Furthermore, it seems that a table containing tuning instructions was also copied from this work, and it details only these very two tunings (though a list of others is given at the margin). A close association of this collection with a long-standing schooling tradition is suggested especially by the fact that, almost three centuries later, the philosopher Synesius still quotes one of these pieces as something that “we sing to the lyre” (*Ep.* 95). Synesius himself composed philosophical hymns which contain prominent references to the lyre and its tunings (*Hymn* 3.49; 6.1–9; 7.48–53; 9.1–13. 71–75); in one place he specifically puns on the ambiguity between *hypò dōrion harmogán* (“to a Dorian tuning”) and *hypodōrion harmogán* (“a Hypodorian tuning”) (*Hymn* 7.1). Of course, it may be a coincidence that all potential traces of Roman imperial lyre education are Dorian in nature; anyway, in late antiquity “the ethical superiority of the Dorian” had become a commonplace of popular musical philosophy.

On the other hand, Hellenic musical schooling was never entirely Platonized, not even in the heydays of widespread Platonism. A foundational inscription for a public school at Teos in Ionia (Hirschfeld 1875), from the early third century CE, calls for the appointment of a music teacher (who was, by the way, significantly better paid than his colleagues who taught letters), and here not only a *kitharistēs* would qualify for the job, but also a *psáltēs*: obviously the Teians did not care whether their children were instructed in the use of the plectrum or learned to pluck with their fingers (*psállein*), most probably on

some kind of harp or many-stringed *lyra*. This was neither a regional peculiarity nor a late development: studying at a *psaltēs* is attested for early Hellenistic Athens as well (Menander ap. Quint., *Or.* 1.10.18), where it might even have been part of a much older tradition. The Teians' training in instrumental performance took place over the final two years of schooling (probably at an age of about 14–16); at the same time they were taught *tá mousiká*, a course which they continued to attend also as ephebes. What “the musical matters” comprised exactly is open to speculation; it seems plausible that practical activities such as singing and dancing were involved. However, some more theoretical sort of instruction cannot be excluded either, especially since from the early Hellenistic period on all the fundamental ideas of different flavors of *harmonics* had been set down in comprehensive forms; in earlier times, such matters were probably examined only in advanced courses given by teachers like the “sophists” (Plato, *Prot.* 318e, *Hipp. Ma.* 285d, *Hipp. Mi.* 368d). On the one hand, tonal material was analyzed in terms of tetrachords, scales, and modulating systems, as well as that of rhythmical structures, both canonized by Aristoxenus in the late fourth century. On the other hand, the mathematical description of intervals in terms of ratios was neatly distilled, around the same time, into the set of propositions that form the so-called *Division of the Canon*. Finally, we ought not to forget the cosmological repercussions of ancient musical lore, especially as the idea of a universal harmony created by the spheres of the planets was not exclusive to “properly Pythagorean” writers concerned with providing a mathematical description of the universe in terms of ratios.

What, if anything, of these subjects was a part of Hellenistic and Roman imperial schooling is difficult to guess. In general, the appealing concept of a cosmic harmony understandably enjoys a greater popularity in the literary sources than tables of notes do; on the other hand, analyses of scales and rhythms as the fundamental ingredients of almost all musical activities would have naturally complemented the practical aspects of musical schooling. At any rate, inscriptions testify to the existence of competitions among Teian youths which included a number of musical subjects, such as lyre playing (*kitharismós*), singing to the lyre (*kitharōidia*), comic and tragic performance, dances in arms and, notably, also *aulós* playing; the inclusion of the latter presupposes not only that this art was regarded as being quite respectable, but also that it was taught to a significant number of children (*CIG* 3088; cf. 3089 and 3090 for dance in armor and *aulós* playing). In addition to these well-understood competitions, the lists include winners in *rhythmographía* and *melographía*, literally writing of rhythm and melody; the latter is also attested at the neighboring city of Magnesia (*Syll.* 3.960). It does not seem very likely that *rhythmographía* and *melographía* would have involved musical dictation, an ability of dubious value in ancient musical culture; the adolescents who took part in these competitions probably showed their skills by composing on the one hand instrumental pieces, focusing on rhythm as do the brief exercises transmitted as an appendix to a compilation of musical treatises (Anon. *Bellerm.* §97–101; 104 = Pöhlmann and West 2001, nr. 32–37; on the various rhythms exemplified there, cf. Hagel 2008); on the other hand, they probably composed songs: compare the fact that Socrates' late musical education, which he allegedly undertook together with schoolboys, enabled him to compose a hymn (Plato, *Euth.* 272c; *Phaedo* 60c–61b). Anyway, given the explicit notion of *-graphía* in both cases, we must expect that some kind of musical notation was involved. Learning the signs needed for this task would not have been very demanding. In fact, even though

the comprehensive system of ancient scales might appear intimidating, only a small fraction was actually employed in any given kind of music (cf. the list of keys used with different instruments in Anon. Bellerm. §28). All the *kithára* tunings reported by Ptolemy, for instance, would require no more than fourteen signs, covering a comfortable ninth (Hagel 2009: 95f). Also, there was nothing arcane about the shape of the notation: in its “vocal” flavor, twelve of those fourteen signs are identical to letters of the alphabet, and the remaining two consist of rotated letterforms. Mapping them to the strings of the instrument (or to particular tuning variants in the case of those three strings whose pitch depended on the mode) might even have facilitated the teaching of melodies by providing a visual prop. Keeping in mind that the aforementioned collection, which contained notated versions of Mesomedes’ songs and some notation tables, was probably related to lyre education, we may reckon with a school tradition which, although certainly far from universal, made use of notation no less than common musical education does in many countries nowadays.

With all the technicalities that were possibly involved, we should not, of course, forget that common musical education was not generally regarded as an end in itself. Plato takes it for granted that teachers (both of letters and of music) were expected to put more emphasis on the general conduct of their pupils than on their particular subjects (*Prot.* 325d–326a; *Clit.* 407bc; *Laws* 812b), and this resonates with Aristophanes’ hints about the enforcement of desirable bearing during music lessons (*Nub.* 966; cf. 972f). Since putting too great an emphasis on a particular skill potentially involved the danger of losing sight of the more important aspects of education, Aristotle underscored how the practice of any kind of professional instrument should be banned from the education of free citizens; however, he did not so much argue against people who would have embraced *kithárai* and *aulói*, but rather against rigorists who regarded *all types* of musical activity as undignified and as a threat to manlier virtues (*Pol.* 1340b–41a), thus carefully steering his customary path between opposite extremes. Reading his testimony in the context of the fourth-century Athenian musical discourse, it is all the more illuminating that he assumes that an adult man would no longer engage in performing music like he used to do as a teenager: in Aristotle’s view, the ultimate purpose of musical education is the development of critical abilities. This, in turn, chimes in with another line of argument put forward against the *aulós* and in favor of the lyre: while the latter advances the intellect, the former appeals merely to emotions; this idea is reflected also in Aristoxenus, whose statement that woodwind instruments are easier to play than stringed ones is presumably based on the counterintuitive strumming-while-dampening lyre technique, which would not come naturally, and perhaps also on the need to establish a tuning before starting to play (Aristox. ap. *Athen.* 174e).

While Hellenic musical education apparently continued, at least at certain places, in a very traditional way, with the expansion of the Roman Empire our literary sources betray the growing influence of Roman ideology. The expanding Rome was in the process of adjusting to the cultural shock of absorbing Greek poetry and music; in hindsight, Rome lacked anything like the Greek poetic tradition and therefore also the basis of a similar musical education (Cato ap. Cic., *Tusc.* 1.4; 4.2; *Brut.* 19.75). Historical memory at least maintained a vision of ancient symposia where heroic deeds were praised in song accompanied by the *aulós* (Latin *tibia*) (Cic., *Tusc.* 1.3; Quint., *Or.* 1.10.20), and indeed the much earlier imagery of their Etruscan neighbors testifies to a musical culture oriented



toward sympotic models, such as those embraced in contemporary classical Athens. In any case, starting from the second century BCE, Latin poetry began to reestablish itself according to a Greek paradigm, preventing local traditional music from becoming part of sophisticated education. Since there was no Roman counterpart of the institutionalized Greek musical schooling, part of the Roman elite tended to frown upon people with musical skills, perhaps not unlike late classical Sparta. As rhetoric and dialectic were the only performative arts foregrounded in Latin culture, in the long run the traditional Greek idea of music as an indispensable part of liberal education shifted toward the side of theoretical knowledge. So musical education, which a few centuries earlier had enabled the citizens to prove their refinement by performing among companions, ended up in the pool of required abstract learning known as the *quadrivium*, alongside mathematics and astronomy.

However, beneath this growing intellectual trend, we can still discern a lively undercurrent of practical musical schooling in the literary sources. This ambiguity is exemplarily reflected by Quintilian's approach to the role of musical education. On the one hand, he finds it necessary to argue at considerable length in favor of educating the future orator in the arts, and especially in music as "the most beautiful art," against a palpable wall of utilitarian skepticism (*Or.* 1.10.1–33). On the other hand, the kind of musical education he has in mind obviously includes at least voice training, and it is illuminating that he ridicules the idea of reading the ancient poets without any previous musical schooling. In fact, from the late republic on, musical skills seem to have been widespread in the Roman upper class (Colum., *De re rust.* 1 pr. 3; Sen. mai., *Contr.* 1 pr. 8; *laus Pisonis* 163–168; for an especially early example, Cic., *De or.* 3.87), perhaps especially among women (Ov., *Ars* 3.315–328). However, notwithstanding the existence of "music schools" (mentioned, e.g., in Colum. 1 praef. 5 or Sen., *Ep.* 90.19, possibly alluding to schools for professional low-class entertainers or slaves; cf. also Hor., *Sat.* 1.10.90f), musical studies were much more individualistic than in the better-known Greek instances. This is perhaps no wonder in a huge city, where, in contrast to the Greek *poleis* and their festivals, adolescents could not be integrated on a large scale into musical events that ultimately reinforce a communal identity. While the whole text-centered curriculum—from learning letters to rhetorical studies (including also some basic arithmetic)—became very much a norm, practical musical skills seem to have been regarded as an extra; on the other hand, a purely intellectual presentation of musical doctrines could be easily integrated within literary education. In such an environment, the monochord may have found its place as a means to demonstrate the ratios of the concords.

This intellectual shift of common education tallied well with "Pythagorean" harmonics, which emphasized from its early days the connection between the "sibling" sciences of music, mathematics, and astronomy, while showing little interest in describing or contributing to actual music-making (Archytas, fr. 1). This strand of thinking supplied basic interval mathematics—knowing which ratios would correspond to the primary consonances and the whole tone—as well as set pieces of more general intellectual discourse, such as the theory of a cosmic harmony. But Aristoxenian music theory was strong enough to have its share as well, providing exact definitions and lists that may have appealed to some schoolmasters for their precision and to others for offering stubbornly replicable material. It was probably such a type of education that spawned the production of Greek musical handbooks throughout the Roman imperial period, a

surprising number of which are extant. Their content is very different: for instance, the work of a certain Cleonides presents nothing more and nothing less than a neat digest of arid Aristoxenian harmonics, comprising the traditional seven chapters on notes, intervals, genera (“flavors” of scales), scales, keys, modulation, and composition. The treatise transmitted under the name of Gaudentius deals with similar material but inserts also “Pythagorean” interval mathematics and adds a description of musical notation, thus giving a comprehensive account of what a student of liberal arts might need to know. However, Gaudentius emphasizes at the outset that his treatise is useful only for those with musically trained ears: some practical schooling is envisaged as a necessary requirement for instruction in harmonic theory. Another integration of the different strands, loaded with Pythagorean rhetoric, is attempted by Nicomachus of Gerasa in his *Introduction to Harmonics*, directed to a noble lady as a reminder of more extended oral instruction; he composed also another much longer work on the subject, now lost. The work transmitted under the name of Bacchius “the old” seems to reflect closely actual teaching practices. This text is structured in the form of questions and answers, very much as a teacher would test a student; it starts from “What is *mousikê*?—The knowledge of melody and its attributes” and gradually covers all the basic aspects of Aristoxenian harmonics and rhythmic, sometimes supplying curious details that are not mentioned in other sources. When talking about notes and their relations, it uses notation freely, evidently presuming at least a basic familiarity on the part of the student with the signs used for the natural Lydian key—the same one which was employed in the citharistic manual mentioned earlier. In answering such questions, the disciple was probably expected to supply the complex names of the notes corresponding to the signs (as the oldest manuscript actually does). So it seems that in late antiquity one may have acquired at least a rudimentary familiarity with musical notation also outside professional education; in the sixth century CE, Boethius still finds it useful to employ note signs in a work dedicated to the preservation of encyclopedic learning (*De institutione musica* 4.3–5.15f).

However, the book that really draws all strands together is not a schoolbook: as he emphasizes at the beginning of his treatise, Aristides Quintilianus set out to cover for the very first time all matters related to music within one work (1.2, p.3.12–18 Winnington-Ingram). In between the technical background and wide-ranging associations with mathematics, cosmology, physiology, psychology and ethics, the second of his three books *On Music* is devoted to education, intended as a process that shapes and reshapes the soul by musical means. The work is programmatically dedicated to a Greek and to a Roman man, and Aristides cites Cicero just as easily as Plato, reflecting the cultural *koiné* of the upper classes in the Roman Empire, who participated in Greek musical taste and learning (cf. 2.6, p.63.19–22). His psychological model is mainly derived from Plato: music easily accesses the soul by means of the pleasure it gives, and works on it by means of “likenesses” inherent in melody and rhythm no less than in words—a process conceived of as instilling a kind of sympathetic vibration. Oriented toward and purportedly reviving “ancient” practices of education and therapy through music, Aristides construes a whole system of ethical meaning in relation to instruments, rhythms, and even individual notes and letters on the basis of a permeating gender dichotomy, as well as of a solmization system that seems to have been broadly used (*Anon. Bellerm.* §77). Prudent treatment would produce a mix of ingredients that is

close enough to the existing character of a person as to be accepted by him or her, while at the same time leading it toward the desired disposition by means of gradual adjustments. Even though this sophisticated system may seem artificial, the concept testifies to the philosophically loaded heirloom many a contemporary music teacher might have prided himself on, an heirloom which readily integrated musical studies within an increasingly neoplatonist philosophical mainstream with strong Pythagoreanizing leanings.

It may be doubted that anybody really experimented with Aristides' recipes of psychological guidance through music. However, if we interpret his text within an environment in which basic lyre skills were not uncommon and in which the solmization system may have been familiar to a wider public, his ideas may have been intended to represent more than just an intellectual exercise.

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## FURTHER READING

Many sources are now conveniently collected in Barker 1984 and 1989; for the Roman world, see Wille 1967. On ancient music in general, see West 1992; on education, see Anderson 1966; Corbeill 2001; and Griffith 2001.

## CHAPTER 28

# Medicine

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*Herbert Bannert*

### 1. Medical Education

Becoming a doctor in antiquity required no special education. The *communis opinio*, as it were, seems to have been that to be aware of one's body and to have experienced illness, with others as well as by oneself, would be the best education and would produce the best kind of physician. This is summarized by Socrates when, discussing the ideal state, he insists on ascertaining that the best kind of *polis* should also have the best doctors (and the best judges as well):

Physicians [...] would prove most skilled if, from childhood up, in addition to learning the principles of the art they had familiarized themselves with the greatest possible number of the most sickly bodies, and if they themselves had suffered all diseases and were not of very healthy constitution. For you see they do not treat the body by the body. If they did, it would not be allowable for their bodies to be or to have been in evil condition. But they treat the body with the mind—and it is not competent for a mind that is or has been evil to treat anything well. (Plato, *Republic* 3, 408d–e; translation: Paul Shorey 1935)

Access to the medical profession was not formally regulated. Medical knowledge was, for a long time, passed on from father to son or to an apprentice by observing and assisting his master. This can be proved as early as from Homer's *Iliad*: the well-known surgeons-in-war, Machaon and Podaleirios, are sons of Asklepios (*Iliad* 4.194; cf. *Iliad* 2.731 and 9.833), and Cheiron the centaur, teacher of Achilles, is also referred to as the medical instructor of Asklepios himself (*Iliad* 4.219). Moreover, it was said that Hippocrates' father and grandfather were physicians in Knidos; his sons, Drakon and Thessalos, and his son-in-law, Polybos, were likewise medics. (Biographical information on Hippocrates and his family is scanty and adumbrated by fictional details and anecdotes; cf. Soranos' *Vita Hippocratis* [Ilberg 1927: 3–152], and the entry on Hippocrates

in the tenth-century Byzantine lexicon *Suda*). Furthermore, according to ancient biographies (*vitae*), Aristotle, the philosopher of Stageira, son of Nikomachos, the personal physician of King Amyntas of Macedon, is said to have received a basic medical education from his father.

The *Oath*, preserved in *Corpus Hippocraticum*, but unfortunately of uncertain date, includes in the very beginning, in the second sentence, commitments of the oath-taker to his master, his teacher, and co-practitioners:

I swear by Apollo the Physician, by Asclepius, by Health, by Panacea [*lit. Cure-all*] and by all the gods and goddesses, making them my witnesses, that I will carry out, according to my ability and judgment, this Oath and this indenture. To hold my teacher in this art equal to my own parents; to make him partner in my livelihood; when he is in need of money to share mine with him; to consider his family as my own brothers, and to teach them this art, if they want to learn it, without fee or indenture; to impart precept, oral instruction, and all other instruction [i.e., written, oral and practical] to my own sons, the sons of my teacher, and to indentured pupils who have taken the physician's oath, but to nobody else. (Translation Jones, Hippocrates I 1923: 299)

That is to say that—although the very age of this part of the *Oath* cannot be determined exactly—medical instruction, beginning in the times of Hippocrates, was regulated by obligation and bondage, within the family according to inheritance law; for those alien to the kin, it was formally contracted, probably mostly taken by handshake, the first document of a written contract originating from the late third century BCE (see page 415 below). Liability thus was defined, and the fact of instruction was laid down. The *Oath* binds the student to his master and to his family, not to a guild or corporation (Jones, Hippocrates I 1923: 293; Edelstein 1943; Temkin 2002: 21–48; Schubert 2005).

The basic requirement to become a physician is stated in the *Corpus Hippocraticum*, in a short treatise entitled *Law*, most probably of the second century CE:

He who is going truly to acquire an understanding of medicine must enjoy natural ability, teaching, a suitable place, instruction from childhood, diligence, and time. [...] The learning of medicine may be likened to the growth of plants. Our natural ability is the soil. The views of our teachers are as it were the seeds. Learning from childhood is analogous to the seeds' falling betimes upon the prepared ground. (Hippocrates, *Law* 2–3; translation Jones, Hippocrates II 1923: 263–264)

Accordingly, knowledge and experience mostly depended on the capability, skills, and competence of the teacher. Medicine in antiquity was a “productive” craft (*techne*), and health was the product, or, as Galen put it, medicine could be compared to that part of architecture that engaged in the repair of houses (Galen, *On the Art of Medicine—De constitutione artis medicae* I, p. 230 Kühn). Doctors were seen as craftsmen, education was a kind of apprenticeship, and knowledge as well as know-how were acquired by what in fact was learning-by-doing (in Homer's *Odyssey*, the medics are called *demioergoi*, “demotic workmen”: 17.383–384; cf. Hippocrates, *De arte* 1.6.2; Plato, *Phaedrus* 270b; Aristotle, *Eudemian Ethics* 2.11, 1227b26; *Politics* 3.11, 1282a). Medical training took the form of apprenticeship to another doctor, with whom the advanced learner went to

the patients and sometimes was left in charge to carry out instructions of the master and to administer the treatment (Hippocrates, *Decorum* 17, Hippocrates II 1923: 299); it included attendance at medical lectures or as a spectator at public anatomical demonstrations (which were heavily criticized by Hippocrates when performed as shows by quacks or laymen: “As to the practitioners who devote themselves to this kind of thing [i.e., to stretch a man on a ladder in order to straighten a humpback or relocate a fracture], those at least whom I have known, are incompetent” [Hippocrates, *On Joints* 42; trans. Withington, Hippocrates III 1928: 283]).

An early, although isolated, document, leading, as it seems, back into the sixth century BCE, is given by the historian Diodorus of Sicily, who, speaking of certain legislative assignments in Thurii (southern Italy), refers to a law whereby all the sons of citizens should learn to read and write, and states that the lawgiver “excelled former lawgivers who had required that private citizens when ill should enjoy the services of physicians at state expense” (Diodorus 12.13.4; trans. Cohn-Haft 1956: 9). Unfortunately, Diodorus does not say how these public physicians were educated, but there is information that education could be supplied through some kind of public stipend. However, this is a unique document, and publicly supported education generally was unknown in classical Greece and rare in Hellenistic times, only to be established with the Romans.

To conclude from Socrates’ famous remark in Plato’s *Protagoras*, it seemed to be taken for granted that Hippocrates himself accepted pupils: “Suppose, for example, you had taken it into your head to call on Hippocrates of Cos, the Asclepiad, and pay him money as your personal fee, [...] what would you intend to become?—A doctor” (Plato, *Protagoras* 311b–c; trans. W. R. M. Lamb 1967; cf. Plato, *Meno* 90c–d). In fact, Hippocrates had, save for the members of his kin, apprentices also coming from other localities and therefore his teaching can be called a “school” (*scholê*), a term which in the fifth century BCE usually indicated a certain place located in a city, in which a master provided teaching to an assembly. (In the city of Kos, near the harbor, between the citadel and the Hadschi-Hassan Mosque, one can visit the famous plane tree, said to be from the age of Hippocrates, whose boughs and branches today are supported and underpinned by scaffolding.)

Later on, we have information that a student could formally enroll with a teacher to be accepted as an apprentice in the medical arts: the rhetor Aiskhines (1, 40) mentions a certain Timarkhos who was in the *iatreion* of Euthydikos in Peiraieus as *a pupil of the art of medicine* (*tes technes mathetes*). So in the mid-fourth century BCE, it was certainly possible for a student to be accepted by a distinguished physician as a trainee. A later document proves that students could formally enter into a contract with a master. From the year 215/213 BCE, there is preserved on papyrus an apprenticeship contract which, although there are some inconsistencies which seem to indicate that this contract was merely a draft, nevertheless constitutes proof that such contracts did exist: a physician, an apprentice, his father, and his legal guardian as contracting parties signed a contract for six years in order to provide the apprentice with a full medical education. (Pap. Heidelbergensis III 226, published by Sattler, P., *Griechische Papyrusurkunden und Ostraka der Heidelberger Papyrus-Sammlung* [P. Heid. III], Heidelberg 1963: 12–14. The problem is that the fee which the partners agreed upon is only two drachms, which of course is incredibly low; perhaps there is a slip of the pen, or the document is just a

draft—or else, a joke. The contract also shows a possible income source for practicing doctors besides their ordinary medical fee.)

Medical education was fundamentally practical. Not earlier, as it seems, than the fourth century BCE, when major parts of the medical writings attributed to Hippocrates were already at hand, did students begin extending their practical knowledge by reading, even learning by heart, books or treatises on medical—and, as it were, also philosophical—subjects and themes. It is, in fact, interesting to see that in a legendary tradition, the ancients thought Hippocrates himself had qualified as a physician by learning medical practice from the “cures” inscribed on the walls of the temple of Asklepios at Kos (thus combining rational medicine with a kind of oracular source originating in the intuitions of religious creed, notwithstanding the fact that archaeological investigation indicates that the Asklepieion of Kos was built only in the late fourth century BCE), and at the same time it is shown that medical knowledge seems to have been thought particularly to be based on written documents:

The history of medicine lay hidden in darkest night until the Peloponnesian War. Then Hippocrates, who was born on the island of Cos, among the foremost in fame and power and sacred to Aesculapius, restored it to the light. It had been customary for patients recovered from illness to inscribe in the temple of that god an account of the help they had received, so that afterwards similar treatment might prove beneficial. Hippocrates is said to have written out these inscriptions, and, as Varro among us believes, after the temple had been burned, founded that branch of medicine called “clinical.” (Pliny the Elder, *Natural History* 29.2; trans. Longrigg 1998)

Hence, the life and times of Hippocrates of Kos (c. 460–c. 370 BCE) can be seen as the starting point of written information about medicine and of medical learning from books. The so-called *Corpus Hippocraticum*, a collection of some seventy medical works, lectures, clinical records, case studies, and philosophical essays, written in Ionic Greek, ranging from the fifth century BCE to the first or second century CE, mirrors the fact that written documents were needed. The treatises of the *Corpus* were written at different times and by different authors, and were collected most probably in Alexandria, in the late third century BCE, aiming at different audiences, both specialists and laymen. *Epidemics 1* and *3*, *Prognostic*, *Airs, Waters, Places*, and the special chirurgic treatises *Fractures* and *Articulations* were probably authored by Hippocrates himself; *Nature of Man* commonly is attributed to Polybos, Hippocrates’ son-in-law (see Jones, Hippocrates I 1923: 141–144; Grensemann 1968; Lloyd 1991: 194–223; Grmek 1999: 31–38; Oser-Grote 1998b: 457–461). Texts from the *Corpus Hippocraticum* are also present “among the roughly thirty known papyri that represent fragments of works that have otherwise survived” (Jones 2009: 354–356). The Hippocratic texts include parts of *Epidemic* and the *Letters*, texts that have little practical application but are obviously designed to be introduction material for students or physicians: they seem to represent fragments of schoolbooks or texts for further reading (Hanson 2010).

At the end of *Prognostics*, written probably toward the end of the fifth century and generally attributed to Hippocrates, the author, in order to secure knowledge which enables *prognosis*, that is to “make accurate forecasts as to those who will recover, and



those who will die, and whether the disease will last a greater or lesser number of days,” insists on learning by heart (*ekmanthanein*) the symptoms described (*Prognostic* 25; trans. Jones, Hippocrates II 1923: 55; 2.188.9 Littré). Rufus of Ephesus (c. 100 CE), in the very beginning of his book *On Pulse*, advises his readers to read the text closely and memorize it (Rufus of Ephesus, *Synopsis de pulsibus*, Prooemium 1). Galen later justifies the emergence of written texts on the grounds that the practice of disseminating medical facts and knowledge within families had died out. Therefore, Galen holds, written texts (*hypomnemata*) must preserve and perpetuate the profound knowledge (*theoria*) of the art (*techné*), and he regards Hippocrates’ *Aphorisms* as essential for every physician (Galen, *On Anatomical Procedures—De anatomicis administrationibus* 2, II, pp. 280–283 Kühn; Kudlien 1970: 5). There were also visual instructions in anatomy (Galen, *On Anatomical Procedures—De anatomicis administrationibus* 1, II, pp. 217–218 Kühn), as can be seen, for example, on a famous wall painting in the catacombs of Via Latina in Rome (a fresco of the fourth century CE): A dissection is demonstrated, the pathologist, dressed in a philosopher’s cape, standing among the students (cf. Krug 1993: fig. 86 on p. 191). In contrast, Celsus, *On Medicine* (Prooemium 2–6) states that learning by written scripts implies separation of nature itself (cf. Kollesch 1979: 507–513; on medical school-books generally see Kollesch 1973: 13–46).

Avianus Vindicianus, a friend of Augustine, a *vir clarissimus*, and a physician, wrote a covenant with his grandson committing his and his father’s medical library to the next generation, thus imparting the art and the written documents of the art to their successors. The fifth-century African Christian Cassius Felix wrote a Latin treatise *De medicina* in order to communicate Greek medical knowledge to those who did not understand Greek and therefore were unable to draw on Hippocratic writings directly. Likewise, in the sixth century CE, Caelius Aurelianus made Greek medical texts accessible to those without knowledge of Greek by composing a compendium in Latin, which he presented, for didactic reasons, in question-and-answer form.

Ancient Greece lacked an educational or licensing system for medical professionals, and so the author of *Law* (second century CE, *Corpus Hippocraticum*) says:

Medicine is the only art which our states have made subject to no penalty save that of dishonour, and dishonour does not wound those who are compacted of it. Such men in fact are very like the supernumeraries in tragedies. Just as these have the appearance, dress, and mask of an actor without being actors, so too with physicians; many are physicians by repute, very few are such in reality. (Translation Jones, Hippocrates II 1923: 263; cf. *De medico* 2, Hippocrates VIII 1995: 303f.)

On the other hand, a kind of examination for the public appointment of a city-physician, obviously equivalent to the usual *dokimasia* which every candidate for a public position had to undergo, is indicated by Xenophon (*Memorabilia* 4.2.5) and also by Plato (*Gorgias* 514d3–e1), where a public hearing is mentioned. Essentially, the apprentice system at least provides one possibility to ensure the personal qualification of a doctor by inquiring “who was the master under whom a given doctor had received his training, and also attendance at one of the schools, preeminently that on Cos, would provide evidence as to the doctor’s qualification” (Cohn-Haft 1956: 18; cf. Massar 2010: 169–186). In the fourth century CE, for example, Alexandria had

gained the reputation of offering the highest level of medical education available, as stated by Ammianus Marcellinus:

Moreover, studies in the art of healing, whose help is often required in this life of ours, which is neither frugal nor sober, are so enriched from day to day, that although a physician's work itself indicates it, yet in place of every testimony it is enough to commend his knowledge of the art, if he has said that he was trained at Alexandria. (Ammianus Marcellinus 22.16.18; trans. J. C. Rolfe 1940; cf. Haas 1997: 113 and 416)

We have information about competitions (*agones*), as in other disciplines, for physicians as well, at least in the second century CE: inscriptions from Ephesos indicate competitions among physicians in the field of surgery, solutions to medical problems, manufacturing of special tools and instruments, and composing a written paper. It goes without saying that such contests had influence on the reputation of the participants (Merkelbach 1978: 148; a list of documents is given by Meißner 1997: 76 n. 41; cf. Massar 2010: 169–186).

The first medical “schools” were established at Kos, where Hippocrates was born, and at Knidos, just opposite of Kos on the mainland of Asia Minor. But these “schools” were not educational institutions, but rather assemblies and meeting places headed by a famous or outstanding master. The schools of Kos and Knidos were distinct from the very beginning by their different approaches in assessing the practical duties of healers. In short, the physicians of Kos studied the symptoms of a disease by asking the patient and his family. They kept information concerning the location of the city and even the habitat where a person fell ill (*anamnesis*), and only then did they decide on a cure by prescribing remedies, herbal drugs, or other modalities of healing. The Knidan doctors, on the contrary, first identified the disease by name (*diagnosis*), and then made prescriptions according to a standardized list of pharmaceuticals and applications (*systemic medication*).

However, the instruction provided in these “schools” (and later on, there emerged other communities such as the Empiricists, Methodists, Pneumatists, and the so-called Sicilian physicians) was not legally attested or certified, but to be a “doctor educated at the Asklepieion of Kos” (or elsewhere) was a rather prestigious branding. We know that in later Alexandria the student was expected to read sixteen books of Galen and twelve books of Hippocrates as special basic learning material, and then pass on to philosophical writings: “for a physician who is a lover of wisdom (*philosophos*) is godlike,” says the author of the Hippocratic treatise *Decorum* (ch. 5, Jones, Hippocrates II 1923: 287). But in the oldest and most influential treatises of the *Corpus Hippocraticum*, *On Ancient Medicine*, and *On the Nature of Man*, whose authors are regarded to be Hippocrates himself and his son-in-law Polybos, respectively, there is an exhaustive and vivid discussion as to the scientific methods to be applied: philosophical speculation should only give the background of thought, but medical knowledge should be based on research, study, and observance (Edelstein 1967: 349–366; Oser-Grote 1998b: 462–468; Schiefsky 2005). In later times, therefore, medicine emerges as the ideal form of philosophy, and philosophical education from the very beginning was intertwined with medical literature in the instruction courses of medical trainees. In a short treatise entitled *That the Best Physician Should Also Be a Philosopher*, a kind of specification sheet for medics and healers, Galen presents the standards, both professional and ethical, which a physician has to maintain in order to gain appreciation and authority, with philosophy understood as the

paramount education in science and knowledge. The basic standards, given by Hippocrates, are to live a life of modesty, undertake medical research, travel to gain experience, and get training in logic, ethics, and coherent thinking (cf. Kudlien 1970: 23). The famous sentence in the historical overview given by Celsus, *On Medicine* (Prooemium 8), does not contradict this but simply says that science and medical knowledge, separated from cosmological speculation of the nature philosophers, are made a separate branch of learning by Hippocrates: “But it was, as some believe, Hippocrates of Cos, a man first and foremost worthy to be remembered, notable both for professional skill and for eloquence, who separated this branch of learning from the study of philosophy. After him, Diocles of Carystus, next Praxagoras and Chrysippus, then Herophilus and Erasistratus, so practised this art that they made advances even towards various methods of treatment” (Trans. Spencer I 1935: 5–6).

The education of a Hippocratic physician was demanding. According to the mostly deontological writings grouped together as the *Testament of Hippocrates*, the doctor-to-be had to study grammar, astronomy, arithmetic, geometry, and music; philosophy, too, should be taught together with medicine (Deichgräber 1970: 94–96). It seems that in certain cases study of medical matters began early in education: Athenaios of Attaleia (first century BCE), in his book *Helpful Advice*, which is preserved in an abridged version by Oreibasios, claimed that in the course of their education and schooling young people, beginning at fourteen years of age, should “hear” (*katakouein*) about medicine in their classes, but we do not know if Athenaios means special talks by professional medics or lectures on medicine as part of the curriculum (Oreibasios, *Corpus Medicorum Graecorum* VI 2.2, p. 139, 19–21; cf. Kudlien 1970: 20; Nutton 2013: 207–208; and Kulf 1970: 109 and 122).

Thessalos of Tralleis, a representative of the school of the Methodists, according to a very critical remark by Galen of Pergamon in the first century CE, claimed to be able to instruct medics, freemen, as well as slaves, regardless of which profession they held before, within sixth months (Galen, *On the Method of Curing Diseases—De methodo medendi* I, X, pp. 4–5 Kühn). This, of course, is an extremely exaggerated promise and, as a matter of fact, education was never strictly regulated by any prescription, Galen himself having studied medicine in different places and with different teachers as well as from Hippocratic writings for twelve years, from the age of sixteen to the age of twenty-eight (Galen, *On the Composition of Drugs According to Kind—De Compositione medicamentorum per genera* XIII, p. 599 Kühn). In fact, an ancient physician did not “graduate” in the modern sense of the term.

## 2. Medical Practice

Perhaps most attempts at healing began by placing faith in the recuperative powers of the living organism, the *vis mediatrix naturae*, the true healer, through the self-help of simple herbalism. Such treatment is attested in literary sources. Machaon grinds herbs (given to his father Asklepios by the wise centaur Cheiron) in order to treat Menelaos, who had been wounded by the arrowhead of Pandaros’ bowshot (*Iliad* 4.217–219); and Cheiron himself similarly treats the wounded and wailing god Ares (*Iliad* 5.899–905). This could be combined with prayer or incantation, as we find in the *Odyssey*,

when Odysseus is wounded by the boar and his grandfather Autolykos and his sons stop the blood by binding and by chanting a blood-staunching spell over the wound (*Odyssey* 19.457). Much of the treatment for injuries and ailments as well as palliatives came from folk medicine that used herbs and drugs in accordance with traditional lore. Some of the famous mnemonics in the *Corpus Hippocraticum* (mostly of unknown author and unknown date) run thus:

A wise man should consider that health is the greatest of human blessings, and learn how by his own thought to derive benefit in his illness.

In fact, though physicians take many things in hand, many diseases are also overcome for them spontaneously.

It is well to touch the part as little as possible, for it is a good remedy sometimes to use nothing (*Regimen in health* 9; trans. Jones, Hippocrates IV 1931: 59; *Decorum* 6; translation Jones, Hippocrates II 1923: 289; *On Joints* 40; translation Withington, Hippocrates III 1928: 277).

Among the ancient physicians there were no specialists except for a few who were, however, considered to be merely craftsmen. For example, the risky and dangerous operation of the bladder stone in the Hippocratic *Oath* explicitly is committed to surgeons (“I will not use the knife, not even, verily, on sufferers from stone, but I will give place to such as are craftsmen therein” (trans. Jones, Hippocrates I 1923: 299–300). There were also specialists for ophthalmology, especially glaucoma and cataracts; dentists for the extraction of teeth; and, probably in daily practice along with midwives, obstetricians, all of them trained by apprenticeship (Kudlien 1970: 25–26).

Veterinary medicine was not at first a specialist science. Animal and human healthcare practices had long been entwined with methods usually blending folk remedies and cult practice. In the opening episode of Homer’s *Iliad*, the first account of disease in the Western tradition is the plague which Apollo sends to the Greek army. The god first shot his arrows at mules and dogs in the camp, and only later at the Greek soldiers themselves (*Iliad* 1.9–10 and 48–52). The Greeks appeased Apollo with sacrifices and supplication, a healing method that has never lacked popular support. Veterinary medicine obviously was confined to companion and farm animals, and special knowledge usually was imparted by oral instruction and practice. The first written text, in Latin, is the *Mulomedicina Chironis* (fourth century CE), the first comprehensive collection of veterinary medical texts being the books of the equine and veterinarian authors of the third to the fifth century CE, collected in the Byzantine period (*Corpus Hippiatricorum Graecorum*, tenth century).

### 3. Greece

By the second half of the fifth century BCE, Hippocrates’ famous works, together with other texts collected in the first issues of the *Corpus Hippocraticum*, had become the reference work in the field of medical science. *Ancient medicine*, a lecture on the subject and method of medical studies, the author of which might have been Hippocrates himself, refuted the opinions of prior physical theories and summarized the basic facts of medical doctrines, namely, that medical science is founded on observation and reasoning,

not on speculation, least of all is it philosophical. In the first chapters of *The Nature of Man*, of which Polybos, Hippocrates' son-in-law, is commonly credited as author, the theory of the four humors is developed: *blood*, *phlegm*, *yellow bile*, and *black bile* are the constituents which cause and influence health and disease, a theory that lasted until modern times. Among the most famous works of the Hippocratic corpus is the treatise *Airs, Waters, Places*, an early primer on environmental medicine, commonly attributed to Hippocrates. The book is divided in two parts, the first of which is aimed at specialists, the second part, describing landscapes, peoples, and the different climes in the Greek world and beyond, obviously addressed to a broader public (Oser-Grote 1998b: 462–468; Gourevitch, in Grmek 1999: 104–138; Schiefsky 2005).

In Hellenistic times, we have information that in public or private venues lectures were given, most probably by renowned lecturers hired by contract. Extant inscriptions reveal physicians being honored for their lectures given to ephebes in a *gymnasium* (honorary inscriptions, Marrou 1981: 287–290 and 410–411; from Elateia, second century BCE: Cohn-Haft 1956: Doc. 40 [= *Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum* 3.416]; from Perge in Pamphylia: Cohn-Haft 1956: Doc. 48). On the other hand, those very performances are criticized in a short compilation of Hippocratic argument called *Precepts*, written most probably no earlier than the first century CE: “And if for the sake of a crowded audience you do wish to hold a lecture, your ambition is no laudable one, and at least avoid all citations from the poets, for to quote them argues feeble industry. For I forbid in medical practice an industry not pertinent to the art [...]” (*Precepts* 12; translation Jones, Hippocrates I 1923: 327; Agarwalla 2010).

In Ptolemaic Alexandria, in the late third century BCE, the ground was laid for the intensive study of medical theory and practice. The two greatest figures in Alexandrian medicine at that time were Erasistratos of Keos and Herophilos of Chalkedon, both noted for their discoveries in anatomy and both influential teachers who demonstrated and taught medicine and especially anatomy to a broader public, who later were criticized by Galen, both for their content and for their sensationalism. Unfortunately, circumstances, localities, and paraphernalia of their lessons are unknown (Longrigg 1998: 86–100; Nutton 2013: 130–141).

## 4. Rome

In Roman times, healers were mostly foreigners, usually Greeks, as can be seen from a decree released by Caesar in 46 BCE, which gave Roman citizenship to foreign physicians (Suetonius, *Divus Iulius* 42.1). The emperor Augustus likewise granted tax exemption to all resident doctors, thus demonstrating the official importance of healthcare (Below 1953: 22–40; Deuse 1993: 819–821). Later, the training of professional healers was organized by an edict of Emperor Severus Alexander (222–235 CE), which guaranteed payment for instructing medical teachers as well as the right to use public buildings and lecture halls for the purpose of lessons for pupils (*Scriptores Historiae Augustae*, *Alexander* 44.4).

At that time, just as in earlier decades, the alternative career path for most prospective healers was that of apprentice or assistant to an established practitioner. Usually a larger group of pupils attending their master came to visit a patient to apply and practice their knowledge. Martial once complains, mocking the entourage of his family doctor, when

“a hundred freezing cold hands” poked and jabbed him in order to take the temperature: “I didn’t have fever before, Symmachus, but now I do!” (Martial, *Epigrams* 5.9; Jackson 1988: 58ff.).

Medicine in Roman times, then, at least beginning in the second century CE, was dominated by the outstanding figure of Galen of Pergamon, both in theory and medical practice. Galen successfully integrated his extensive clinical experience, which he had acquired as a surgeon to gladiators, into his basic theoretical knowledge, thus providing a comprehensive medical system destined to survive for nearly 1,500 years (Kudlien 1970: 26–28; López Férez 2010).

Galen was born 129 CE at Pergamon, which was at that time a center for medical education, and there he studied medicine, beginning at age sixteen. However, little is known about the kind of instruction he received or the classes he attended. Galen then continued his studies in Smyrna in Asia Minor, at Corinth on mainland Greece, and finally at Alexandria in Egypt, where he remained until 157, thus fulfilling the famous twelve years of studying. When he returned to Pergamon, he was chosen to treat gladiators wounded in public games. In 162, he arrived in Rome, where he practiced and taught medicine, attained a reputation as a practitioner and a public demonstrator of anatomy. There he wrote his numerous treatises on various objects of medicine and also philosophy, turned out to be a polemical author as well as an influential and trend-setting medical scientist, and became a personal physician to the family of the emperor Marcus Aurelius (Mattern 2008: 3f.). Galen held the belief that being a physician obliges one primarily to help and cure patients, but not for the sake of remuneration. He also held that the apprentice in the end should be equal to his master, therefore an apprentice has to be very careful to choose the right teacher representing the right theory, “school” or sect of medical science, because, as a matter of fact, the impression of the first teacher with most of the apprentices might last forever (Massar 2010: 169–186):

Now people of the present day do not begin by getting a clear comprehension of these sects, as well as of the better ones, thereafter devoting a long time to judging and testing the true and the false in each of them; despite their ignorance, they style themselves, some “physicians” and others “philosophers.” No wonder, then, that they honour the false equally with the truth. For everyone becomes like the first teacher that he came across, without waiting to learn anything from anybody else. And there are some of them, who, even if they meet with more than one teacher, are yet so unintelligent and slow-witted that even by the time they have reached old age they are still incapable of understanding the steps of an argument. In the old days such people used to be set to menial tasks. What will be the end of it God knows! (Galen, *On the Natural Faculties—De naturalibus facultatibus* II, p. 52 Kühn; trans. Brock 1916: 83)

As a teacher, Galen lectured for his “friends” and pupils, sometimes, it seems, to demonstrate the correctness of his studies when attacked by adversaries or scientific opponents.

Galen not only gave demonstrations and lectures in public (*demosiai*) but also taught “privately” (*idiai*). In particular, he calls on his readers as witnesses to dissections and vivisections that he has performed both in public and in private. [...] In the same way, Galen draws a distinction between books he intended for publication and works produced for individual “friends and companions.” (Mattern 2008: 16)

As a matter of fact, many of Galen's publications were the result of such lectures, recorded immediately after oral presentation and then distributed to those who were interested in the form of written notes (cf. Galen, *On the Natural Faculties* 10, II, pp. 179–180 Kühn; Brock 1916: 279f.). Most of these numerous texts came to be used as manuals by learners and practitioners, and their authority has lingered on until modern times.

Finally, an edict of Emperor Valentinianus I issued in 368 CE regulated the institution of public healthcare practiced by the so-called *archiatroi* in the city of Rome (*Codex Theodosianus* 6.16.1 [Mommsen, Th. and P. M. Meyer, eds., Berlin 1905]; Temkin 1991: 217f.). These *archiatroi* were well-educated Hippocratic physicians, and they were obliged to serve the rich as well as the poor, thus providing healthcare for all social classes.

## 5. Late Antiquity

In late antiquity, physicians, both pagan and Christian, were educated in Hippocratic medicine combined with lectures on philosophy (which in late antiquity came to mean Neoplatonism), just as they had been throughout antiquity, and there is no evidence that medical education for Christians essentially differed from that for pagan healers: both used amulets, for example, both had their holy men, and healing often depended on faith and belief in miracles (Temkin 1991: 116–125 and 160–170; Nutton 2013: 13 and 307–317). Still Alexandria provided the lecturers and the classrooms, and auditoria such as those in a late fifth- or early sixth-century CE university complex unearthed at Kom el-Dikka in Alexandria. Twenty-five lecture halls adjoining each other were arranged as part of a scholastic quarter that included a public theater, a colonnaded portico, and a large open space. These lecture halls had a capacity of twenty to thirty people, and similar complexes existed in Athens, Beirut, and Constantinople (Littman 1996; Haas 1997: 155–157; Watts 2012: 471f.). The buildings were constructed as lecture halls, and as instruction in philosophy, sciences, and medicine often were given by the same master, it is likely to imagine a medical master giving lectures to his pupils in these small amphitheatres, reading, demonstrating, and discussing certain issues which were scheduled or spontaneous. As far as we know, the treatment of patients was not a part of this teaching method.

Medical education was acquired through close reading and constant repetition of basic works of the *Corpus Hippocraticum* as well as of canonical texts by Galen.

They were read in a specific order and were further explicated by means of formal lectures and commentaries. They offered a coherent and well-structured syllabus, beginning with first principles, as laid down in *On Sects* and the *Art of Medicine*. There followed brief guides to taking the pulse and therapeutics, before the student embarked on more extensive and specialized treatises. In modern terms, he was instructed in anatomy, physiology, pathology and therapeutics, ending possibly with dietetics and hygiene. (Nutton 2013: 305; cf. Roueché 1999)

Oreibasios, who was a personal physician to the Roman emperor Julian the Apostate (361–363), studied in Alexandria in the fourth century and by order of the emperor

compiled collections of excerpts from the writings of earlier medical scholars in seventy books, two thirds of which have been lost; he also compiled an abridged version in nine books dedicated to his son, who too was a physician. Oreibasios also wrote a medical handbook for his close friend Eunapios of Sardis, the Greek historian and biographer. Eunapios himself was an amateur physician, and the wish to have a comprehensive treatment of simple medical facts and remedies to be applied in emergencies when no doctor was available attests to the general level of basic medical education characteristic for the time. In his *Lives of the Sophists*, a compilation of biographies of older and contemporary pagan philosophers, Eunapios also includes some physicians, among them his friend Oreibasios (Penella 1990: 6–7 and 114–117).

In the late sixth and in the early seventh century, Stephanus Alexandrinus authored classroom lectures for medical students which were published as commentaries, on Hippocrates' *Aphorisms*, on *Prognostics*, or on some books of Galen; works which are known to have been basic texts for freshmen in the Alexandrian syllabus. The lectures are didactic, with an emphasis on theory and theoretical explanations. They communicate the fundamentals of Hippocratic-Galenic medicine, and there is no evidence of any applied medical training. As in courses in philosophy, the audience seems to have been a small number of students, who listened and asked questions.

Isidore of Seville, early in the seventh century, summing up the tradition of Greco-Roman medical studies in his treatise *On Medicine*, outlines the study of medicine as follows:

Some ask why the art of medicine is not included among the other liberal disciplines. It is because whereas they embrace individual subjects, medicine embraces them all. The physician ought to know literature to be able to understand or to explain what he reads. Likewise also rhetoric, that he may delineate in true arguments the things which he discusses; dialectic also so that he may study the causes and cures of infirmities in the light of reason. Similarly also arithmetic, in view of the temporal relationships involved in the paroxysms of diseases and in diurnal cycles. [...] It is not different with respect to geometry[...] Moreover, music ought not be unknown by him, for many things are said to have been accomplished for ill men through the use of this art. [...] Hence it is that medicine is called a second philosophy, for each discipline claims the whole of man for itself. Just as by philosophy the soul, so also by medicine the body is cured. (Isidore of Seville, *On Medicine* 13; trans. Sharpe 1964; cf. Maas 2010: 297–299)

Paulus of Aegina, around the same time, provided doctors and students, as Oreibasios did in the fourth century, with a kind of handbook, known as the *Medical Compendium in Seven Books*, a manual for medical practice compiled from the works of the ancients, as he says himself in the prooemium, to be at hand in cases of emergency (Temkin 1991: 228–231). A translation into Arabic by the famous translator Hunayn ibn Ishaq (809–873) eventually helped to transfer ancient medical knowledge into the Islamic world and into the Middle Ages (Pormann 2010).

## 6. Medical Education for Women

There is not much information regarding the involvement of women in medical practice other than obstetrics and gynecology. The earliest source attesting to women doctors in antiquity is given by Plato, when in *The Republic* Socrates states that in an



ideal state of course each profession should be conducted by subjects qualified for them, and he includes female doctors along with male physicians, provided they be skilled enough to manage the job (Plato, *Republic* 454d2–455e7; Gourevitch 1996; Parker 1997: 131f.; Parker 2012). Female medics and midwives (called *maia* in Greek), who usually were trained by other midwives, had a high social reputation akin to the reputation of physicians (Nutton 2013: 100–103). We have the famous epitaph of Phanostrate in Athens, who is called “midwife and physician” (*maia kai iatros*), still then in the male form (*Inscriptiones Graecae* II<sup>2</sup> 6873, fourth century BCE; Demand 1994: 132f.; Nutton 2013: 101). At least since the second or first century BCE there existed the denomination *iatrine* (“doctor,” female form of *iatros*), shown on the epitaph of Mousa of Byzantion, who is depicted accompanied by a maiden, two dogs, and with a book roll in her hand, probably another proof for medical education by practice and learning from scripts (Istanbul, Archaeological Museum, *Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum* 24.811). Later, in the Roman Empire a female doctor is called *iatromaia* (Kudlien 1970: 17–18; Parker 1997: 132–133; Horstmanshoff 2010: 221–321).

Rather puzzling is the case of Metrodora, renowned as the first female author of a medical monograph *On the Diseases and Cures of Women*, preserved in a twelfth-century manuscript in Florence (Codex Laurentianus Mediceus 75.3). Her treatise essentially on gynecology (but excluding obstetrics) is based on the *Corpus Hippocraticum* and on popular medical lore. Unfortunately, nothing at all is known about her and her age, the name perhaps being derived from the Greek medical term *metra* (“womb”).

## Guide to Further Reading

The seminal work is Kudlien’s article of 1970, providing an excellent survey by collecting ancient sources and giving a thorough evaluation of secondary literature. Horstmanshoff (2010) is a very useful contribution on several aspects of medical education, presenting surveys of medical training and education programs. Special attention is paid to the reception of the works of Hippocrates and Galen up to the Middle Ages and also in medical studies of modern times.

Basic information, and a historical survey of the problem, is provided by Cohn-Haft (1956), another pioneering work of historical research; general accounts of ancient medicine are Edelstein (1943) and Edelstein (1967), Grmek (1999), and Jackson (2011). An updated, comprehensive survey of the history of medicine in antiquity, a treasure trove of information, is given by Vivian Nutton in the second edition of *Ancient Medicine* (Nutton 2013). The cultural and intellectual background, including philosophy and medicine practiced and discussed by doctors as well as by laymen, is illustrated by Penella (1990) and Cribiore (2001).

The text of the *Corpus Hippocraticum* still is cited by volume and pages of Littré (1839–1861); an English translation by Jones et al. is available in the Loeb series, comprising almost the whole *Corpus*: Hippocrates (1923–2012), in ten volumes. For references to the prolific and wide-ranging work of Galen of Pergamon, Kühn’s edition with Latin translation in twenty volumes (1821–1833) is still indispensable. English translations, as well as French and German translations, are available only for a few treatises, and there is some confusion with Greek, Latin, and English titles (reference lists are provided on the Web).

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## CHAPTER 29

# Sport and Education in Ancient Greece and Rome

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### 1. Introduction

In the modern Western world, the notion that participatory sport is an activity that carries inherent and obvious benefits for young people is often taken for granted. Educational institutions from grammar school through the postsecondary level support a wide array of athletic teams, and participation rates are high. It is no surprise, then, to find that our culture is thoroughly inundated with an abundance of commonplace beliefs about the merits of athletic participation: it can not only help children maintain good health and appropriate weight, but also supports good self-esteem and wards off negative anxiety and stress, keeps children out of trouble, and teaches such benevolent virtues as hard work and persistence.

We are, then, used to both the idea of an intimate link between sport and education and the idea that participation in sport is a meritorious pursuit, on the basis of our own cultural norms and traditions. Thus, it does not strike us as particularly surprising to find that the ancient Greco-Romans also categorized sporting activities and educational pursuits along the same lines. However, while the link between sport and education seems quite natural to us, and while sport, writ large, seems to be something approximating a human universal, it is not true that the link between sport and education is a natural one, and many societies throughout human history have not built physical training for competitive sport into their educational systems.

In the classical world, vast differences in the educative use of sport divided the Greek and Roman worlds. Despite some superficial similarities and within their own Mediterranean context, the Greeks were often considered to be fundamentally extreme or even insane because of the intensity with which they pursued athletic valor and competitive superiority, often in the absence of much material incentive (Herodotus 8.26). The most famous

evidence for this is Lucian's dialogue *Anacharsis*, in which the Scythian interlocutor is thoroughly bewildered by the gymnastic exercises of the Greeks, proclaiming,

“Solon, what are your young men doing? Some of them are ... groveling in the mud, wallowing around like pigs.... Please tell me what is being accomplished by this. Frankly, it looks to me more like insanity than anything else.” (1–8, 28–29)

Given that the association of sport and education was inherently non-obvious even to many of the ancient Greeks' contemporaries, in order to understand how and why there was a close relationship between sport and education in classical antiquity, it is necessary to consider the particularities and potential origin of this link in some detail: what is the nature of Greek and Roman sporting education, and how and why did it come to be?

This chapter reviews the current state of scholarship about the role and nature of sport in the educational structure and thought of the Greek and Roman worlds. The chapter is divided into four parts. I begin by describing the evidence for a very close relationship between sporting activities and traditional Greek education, and then consider the political and historical origins of that relationship. I next suggest that although the Romans absorbed a great deal of Greek cultural attitudes, the assumption that virtue and athletes went together was not among them; indeed, Roman intellectual attitudes toward participatory sports were distinctly pejorative, and serious intellectuals in the Roman elite were urged to spend as little time as possible engaging in physical activity. Finally, I reflect on one area in which Greek and Roman evidence dovetails—the literary and philosophical use of sport as an educational tool and metaphor.

Since the words “sport” and “sporting” are so common as to be vague, and since physical activities in ancient Greece and Rome include a huge variety of possibly confusing permutations, some clarification of terms is called for. While physical education and physical fitness were commonly practiced in both the Greek and Roman worlds, this essay will focus on the relationship between sport “proper,” which I take to mean public, physical activities, especially those with competitive elements, pursued for victory and the demonstration of excellence (Guttman 1978: 1–14). Thus, my focus will be on activities that were explicitly concerned with the pursuit of competitive physical contests (either their actual contestation or activities that are explicitly concerned with preparation for contests), rather than pursuits that were simply meant to generate a sound body for its own sake. For the sake of variety and as a matter of style, I will use the terms athletics and sport interchangeably in what follows.

## 2. Athletics in Education: Archaic and Classical Greece

In ancient Greece, all citizen males were generally expected to be athletes *and*—as a matter of course—to compete in both intra-state and Panhellenic athletic competitions on behalf of their community if they demonstrated any capacity for strength, speed, horsemanship, or agility. As Gardiner stated in his classic study of Athenian sport, “Every educated youth [was] an athlete, and every athlete [was] an educated youth and a citizen of the free state” (Gardiner 1910: 101). To this end, a main prong of the formal system of education consisted of athletic training, which served

to ensure participation of all citizens in sports and to harness the benefits that sporting competition was thought to develop in its citizens for the good of the state. How and why did the system of Greek formal athletic education function and what purpose did it serve?

Ancient Greece consisted of numerous, relatively small, constantly warring states which shared a small, resource-poor environment. These states were not properly unified until the conquests of Philip II, Alexander the Great, and the Macedonian successor kings in the late fourth century. Thus, while ancient Greeks before the Hellenistic period did conceive of themselves as ethnically linked in significant ways, each community developed its own idiosyncratic institutional tendencies within a general set of Hellenic traditions. This internal diversity of state institutions makes it difficult to generalize about the nature of athletic education in ancient Greece, and some geographical variation within the practices cataloged later in this chapter ought to be assumed (for the probably exceptional cases at Sparta and Athens, see Chapters 5 and 6).

Formal educational institutions took shape in Greece sometime in the sixth century BCE, and eventually evolved into a system that seems to have generally taken the same form in most Greek communities (Ducat 2006; for the possible existence of educative systems in place before the Archaic period, see Chapter 1). Public education was not initially widespread, and so only families that could afford to pay for schooling did so. During their formative years (approximately between the ages of seven and fourteen), children of sufficiently wealthy families studied with three separate teachers. One taught reading, writing, and mathematics; one taught music; and one taught athletics.

The tutors who were responsible for teaching ancient Greek boys about athletics were known as *paidotribai* (singular *paidotribés*) and worked in a facility known as the *palaistra* (plural *palaistrai*). The purpose of the *paidotribés* was, in the words of Protagoras, one of Socrates' interlocutors in a Platonic dialogue, to condition young bodies "so that they may have a body capable of serving their superior intelligence and no cause for cowardice either in war or other activities on grounds of physical deficiency" (Plato, *Protagoras* 326b–c). The *palaistra* was a square building with an inner courtyard, usually surrounded by shady colonnaded porches on all sides. The purpose of working with the *paidotribai* was not "physical education" as we know it today in the abstract—that is, the children were not being trained in general good health—but seems to have been geared specifically to teach boys the rules and methods of excelling in the kinds of sporting competition that were popular in Archaic and Classical Greece. These included three separate footraces (covering 200 meters [the *stadion*], 400 meters [the *dianulos*], and 8 kilometers [the *dolichos*]), a race in which contestants ran 400 meters carrying a hoplite shield and wearing a helmet (the *hoplitodromos*), pentathlon, wrestling, boxing, and the *pankration* (a combination of wrestling and boxing).

The *paidotribai* not only trained their charges for standard Greek sporting events, but taught them the technical rules by which these events were contested. While Greeks probably engaged in sport during most of the Early Iron Age (1050–700 BCE), it is unlikely that any mutually agreed upon, inter-regionally codified set of standards for competition existed until much later. However, the eighth-century archaeological evidence suggests that Greeks began to gather at mutually agreed upon sacred locations, most notably Olympia and Delphi, in order to participate in group religious worship and to compete against one another in games and contests.



These games and contests became increasingly popular during the Archaic period, and it appears that standard rules for each event were eventually agreed upon. For instance, SEG 48.541, an inscription found at the archaeological site of Olympia and dating to about 525 BCE, presents a litany of contemporary rules for wrestling. Combatants were not permitted to break each others' fingers, and judges were instructed to punish and signal violations of the rules by way of a robust stick lashing administered during the competition. Vase paintings attest that this practice was indeed common, as *paidotribai* are frequently seen in black- and red-figure Athenian vase paintings carrying forked sticks, watching their pupils during practice bouts, and prepared to use corporal punishment if necessary to ensure adherence to standards of fair play. Thus, just as the teacher of letters was expected to instruct students in the rules, appropriate uses, and structure of language, the *paidotribés* taught the boys under his care the rules and structure of athletic contests.

After the age of fourteen, boys were turned out of the care of the *paidotribai*. This event marked the end of the course of their formal athletic education, though many if not most citizen males continued to practice the sports that they learned in the public *gymnasia* (singular *gymnasium*) under the guidance of private trainers or, in Athens, through the mechanisms formalized in the system of the *ephebeia* (see Chapter 11), a compulsory training regime for potential Athenian citizens which encompassed military training and further physical education (cf. Aristotle, *Athenaion Politeia* 42).

### 3. Greek Sport in Education: Rationale and Origins

Clearly, athletic training formed a significant segment of the normal educational program and young life for a typical Greek male. Why were the ancient Greeks so interested in athletic training? Part of the answer must lie in the basic agonism that seems to form an essential part of ancient Greek culture. It is clear from the epigraphic and literary evidence that both *paidotribai* and the officials in charge of *gymnasia* throughout Greece organized a wide variety of athletic competitions throughout the year where athletes had a chance to hone their skills and demonstrate their valor. The very best athletes would go on to compete at one of the great Panhellenic festivals at Olympia, Delphi, Isthmia, and Nemea (festivals that attracted competitors from all over the Greek world), a victory at which brought immense honor both to the victor himself and his city-state, though the prizes for these victories consisted only of wreaths fashioned out of the branches of the plant most sacred to the relevant god (e.g., laurel for Apollo at Delphi, oak for Zeus at Olympia). Though an Olympic victor did not directly become wealthy on account of his efforts, worldly rewards for victory in major athletic events could potentially be vast. Athenian victors at any event in a major Panhellenic festival were given free meals on the state ledger for life and front row seats at major state events (*IG I<sup>3</sup>* 131) and winning an event at the quadrennial Panathenaic (all-Athenian) Games could net the victor the contemporary equivalent of \$10,000 (Young 1984: 115–127).

Given the high value that the Greeks placed on victory in the stephanitic games (games for which the prize was only a *stephanos* or wreath) and the lucrative possibilities presented by a demonstration of valor in the chrematitic ones (games for which a monetary prize was offered), it is plausible that some of the motivation for the tight integration of

sports and education came from the desire of each city-state and family to maximize its production of victors by ensuring that all potential champion athletes were identified and trained accordingly. However, the ratio of individuals who were educated in athletics in the average Greek city (e.g., those who could afford the fees of the *paidotribês*) to those who eventually went on to become victors in Panhellenic games must have been very small indeed, thus eroding the credibility of the idea that *palaistra* served a primary purpose of generating Olympic victors.

A variety of lines of evidence, including the explosion of scheduled athletic competitions, the earliest construction of *stadia* and other specialized architectural structures at Panhellenic sanctuaries, and the increasing investment of artists (both poets and vase painters) in exploring athletic themes, suggests that interest in athletics rose dramatically among a broad segment of the Greek populace during the sixth century. Passages from classical literature make it seem very likely that, at least at Athens, non-wealthy members of society were common participants in athletic education, by the Classical period. For instance in a document called the *Constitution of the Athenians*, written by an unknown individual traditionally referred to as the Old Oligarch, we read that “The people ... know it is the wealthy who provide for athletic contests, but the people who are presided over ... in the games” (1.13). In a passage from Xenophon, we hear Socrates quip to Pericles, “Don’t you see what good discipline [the Athenians] maintain in their fleets, how well they obey the umpires in athletic contests, how they take orders from their chorus trainers as readily as any?” (*Memorabilia* 3.5.18). Neither passage makes much sense in the absence of an unspoken assumption that participation in athletics was widespread among the citizen populace. Indeed, a recent calculation puts participation in the neighborhood of 5%–10% of the entire population, a number that is small by modern standards, but which largely accords with the number of adult Greek males who merited full social and political privileges (i.e., excluding women, children, slaves, resident foreigners, etc.) (Christesen 2012a: 160).

The evident increase of participation in athletic education is hardly likely to have emerged as a result of the desire for individual city-states to generate more Panhellenic victors, or the individual desire of all Greek citizens to attain athletic glory and riches. Yet it is apparent that all families for whom it was financially feasible to hire a *paidotribês* did so and in fact felt morally obliged to provide this basic athletic education for their sons (Plato, *Crito* 50d). In order to understand such widespread investment in athletic training on the part of Greek families, we must seek other facets of Greek thought, politics, and society that might help to explain the Greeks’ interest in sporting education.

A variety of beliefs about the relationship between athletic training and training for life seem to have contributed to the prominence of athletic education among Greek *poleis*. First, the Greeks believed that practicing sports contributed not only to excellence in the events themselves, but also to excellence in arenas which demanded characteristics that were akin to those fostered by athletic training. Greek philosophical texts make it abundantly clear that the kinds of skills that are learned in athletic training were believed to be laterally transferable to life in general, in the pursuit of the all-important attainment of *arete* (loosely, excellence) by members of Greek communities (cf. Aristotle, *Politics* 1337a–1339a; “the education of the body must precede the education of the mind.”). Athletes who went on to earn praise in the form of *epinikian* odes (songs commissioned for victors in important athletic contests) were often taken to represent model citizens, their athletic prowess serving

as a proxy for what was understood to have been universal virtue. A particularly good example of this is Pindar's *Olympian 7*, in which Diagoras of Rhodes, a victor in boxing contests throughout Greece, is praised not only for his athletic achievements, but for the fact that he "travels the straight path which despises *hubris*, and he has learned well the righteous precepts of good forefathers" (7.92–93).

In this sense, the Greeks are supposed to have believed something along the lines of what John Hargreaves has observed about the nature of sport as a forum for "discourse on some of the basic themes of social life—success and failure, good and bad behavior, ambition and achievement, discipline and effort, and so on" (Hargreaves 1986: 12). Thus, investment in sport education was often presented rhetorically as part of a general effort among Greeks to shape children by way of analogous behavioral training in such a way that they are optimally suited to live a productive and virtuous life. This position is supported by the fact that entrance to *palaistrai* and *gymnasia* and the appointment of the officials responsible for physical education were tightly regulated (*SEG* 27.261; *SIG*<sup>3</sup> 578), the implication being that the business of physically tutoring the *paidēs* was a delicate matter and needed to be carried through by responsible parties sensitive to the virtues that ought to be transmitted during the training process (Aischines, *Against Timarchos* 12: "And the *gymnasiarchos* shall in no way allow anyone outside his age limit to participate in the Hermaia. The *gymnasiarchos* who allows this and does not exclude an overage person from the *gymnasion* is to be subject to the law about the ruination of the freeborn").

Although it was widespread, the idea that Greek athletic training prepared young bodies and minds to serve the state was not uncontroversial. This was true even as early as the sixth century, before the influence of the sophists, who were thought to have been hostile to traditional physical education, intervened. Archaic poets certainly regarded athletes as beautiful (Achaeus of Eretria 20 F 4), but acceptance that this beauty went beyond the superficial was not necessarily universal. A fragment from the lyric poet Xenophanes decries the rewards lavished upon Olympic victors, which he contrasts with what he perceives as his own lack of compensation, complaining that "... the city-state is not a bit more law-abiding for having a good boxer or pentathlete or a wrestler or a fast runner ... there is little joy for a state when an athlete wins at Olympia, for he does not fill a state's coffers" (Xenophanes, frag. 2). The tension between the values placed on wisdom versus strength by Greek states would increase during the fifth century, as revealed in the disagreement between advocates of traditional physical and "sophistic" philosophical education recorded in Aristophanes' comic play *Clouds*.

A second, but related, impetus for high investment in athletic education is generally thought to have involved the nature of Greek military organization during the Archaic and Classical periods (Pritchard 2010: 75–78). While warfare during the Early Iron Age seems to have consisted primarily of unorganized raiding by small bands led by ruling aristocrats of limited power (*basileis*), a variety of factors in the Archaic period led to the adoption of a new form of pitched warfare in which the size and discipline of the combatants were decisive factors for victory. This form of warfare was called hoplite battle after the round shield (*hoplon*) which soldiers carried. Most scholars believe that the advent of this new sort of combat must have had something to do with the prominence of physical education in ancient Greece, since new realities of combat increased the incentive for states to maximize the preparation of all able-bodied male citizens for battle.

Training all eligible citizens in athletics was thought to produce superior soldiers for a fighting force consisting entirely of citizen soldiers, and Greek literature is full of explicit analogies between the skills learned by boys in the *palaistra* and acumen that was useful to them on the battlefield. Xenophon has Socrates rebuke an Athenian youth for not remaining fit in a manner that would ensure his preparedness to enter battle, should the need arise (*Memorabilia* 3.12.1–8), while Plato frequently expounds upon the utility of sport for military training (e.g., Plato, *Laws* 795b–c). The utility of training in sport for excellence in battle is also made clear by the existence of specific contests within local athletic contests and programs which contained military overtones, such as pyrrhic or military dancing events (in which participants conducted complex, choreographed dancing routines while clad in heavy armor) and the *hoplitodromos* footrace.

In addition, several scholars have argued that training for sport in ancient Greece was part of an effort by states to socialize young people in ways that were desirable for producing a cohesive and functional society (Gruneau 1983/1999; Christesen 2012a; 2012b). According to this line of thought, the purpose of encouraging parents to send their children off for education with an athletic trainer was to ensure that citizens internalized their proper place in society at a young age. Not only did athletics encourage obedience to rules and the expenditure of extreme efforts in order to bring glory to a bigger community, they may have been used to “inculcate compliance with norms that valorized subordination of the individual to the group” (Christesen 2012b: 197). In addition, exercising naked in the gymnasium served both to mark out citizens of a certain status from those who did not participate in athletics and to generate a sense of cohesion and group identity among those who did (Bonfante 1989; David 2010).

Though compelling, none of the foregoing explanations accounts entirely for the cultural overlap between sport and education in Greece. Rather, these theories of causation suggest that we ought to be seeking a functional use-value cause that led to a binding link between Greek sport and education. That is to say, the foregoing explanations help both modern scholars and classical Greeks to make sense of a highly athleticizing culture of education that was clearly a prominent aspect of Hellenic life throughout Greek history the existence of which is difficult to explain.

Setting aside this rationalizing urge, it is alternatively reasonable to posit that Greeks trained their children to be athletes because sport was always a part of what they understood to be their fundamental ethnic identity. According to this view, later explanations attributing use-value to athletic education represent a retroactive interpretation of a vaguely understood tradition of initiatory athletics that was inherited from the primordial stages of Greek history.

This suggestion is plausible because the earliest evidence that we have for unified, Panhellenic culture as it emerged after the Mycenaean period all contains evidence that sport was one of its basic fundamental elements (For an in-depth survey of Mycenaean sport and its relationship to later Greek educational athletics, see Chapter 2). The earliest literature that survives from this period are the two Homeric poems, the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, written down sometime in the second half of the eighth century BCE, right about the same time that dedications and primitive athletic contests are thought to have begun taking place at Olympia. Though the Homeric poems do not contain explicit evidence of formal athletic institutions, they do imply that being an athlete and competing in physical contests was a deeply embedded component of the identity of the Greek male from the

earliest days of Greek history. In both the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, part of the job of being a Homeric *basileus* entails participation in athletic contests. The ties between Homeric kingship and sport are most evident in the *Odyssey*. When Odysseus initially declines to participate in festival games at the Phaeacian court, one competitor named Euryalos attacks him: “I never took you for someone skilled in sports, the kind that real men play throughout the world. Not a chance! ... You’re no athlete, I see that” (*Odyssey* 8.184–5, 9). Odysseus is clearly deeply offended by this rebuke, and retorts, “Your slander fans the anger in my heart! I’m no stranger to sports—for all your taunts—I’ve held my place in the front ranks, I tell you ... I’ll compete in your games, just watch. Your insults cut to the quick—you rouse my fighting blood” (*Odyssey* 8.206). Odysseus then puts his mettle where his mouth is and hurls a discus far beyond the best efforts of the Phaeacians.

From this scene and from the book-length treatment of the funeral games of Patroclus in the *Iliad*, we can deduce that participating in athletic competitions was an important part of being a Homeric aristocrat. Thus, some component of the education of an Homeric prince would necessarily have involved tutelage in sporting events described in Homer, though we unfortunately do not have the necessary evidence to reconstruct how this system of education might have worked or whether it was similar to the *paidotribēs* system that would arise later in the Archaic period.

At any rate, early Greek heroes were, generally speaking, *universally* conceived as athletes. In early Greek poetry, the greatest of Greek strongmen, much-suffering Heracles, is attested as the very first *pankratiast* (Bacchylides 13.46–57) and is commonly seen wrestling or boxing in early Greek art. Likewise, the hero is a common patron of athletes (Diodorus Siculus, *Bibliotheca Historica* 12.9.5–6; Pausanias 6.5.5) and is implicated in the foundation and organization of a variety of early Greek athletic festivals, though admittedly most of these tales are either confusing, apocryphal, or both. Nonetheless, the nature of Heracles’ athletic associations, among other relevant stories involving the Seven Against Thebes (founders of the Nemean games) or Theseus (another champion wrestler), make it abundantly clear that young Greeks were inundated throughout their lives by *both* the state *and* overarching shared myths and legends with the idea that victory in significant athletic competitions was one of the highest achievements that any Greek could attain.

Likewise, the earliest archaeological evidence at Panhellenic sanctuaries suggests that the participation of youth in competitive physical contests was an original component of the activities carried out there. Rites of passage involving a physical trial of some kind and a standard cycle of separation, liminality, and reintegration are widespread in ancient cultures throughout the world, and ancient Greece was no exception. Scholars, such as David Sansone, who trace the origins of Greek athletic competitions to initiation rites, cite the early existence at Olympia of a race for young girls (the Heraia) that had overt initiatory aspects (Sansone 1988). Footraces as initiation rites are themselves quite common in ancient Greece, and the original program of the Olympics was thought to have consisted of a single foot race, the *stadion*. Very little is known about when and how the Heraia and the original Olympic *station* race came into being, and no single feature of the Olympics can be definitively identified as being derived from an initiation rite. Nonetheless, it is clear that athletic events, the integration of youths into society, and the development of Panhellenic identity by way of collective action at sanctuaries were somehow linked in early Greek history and thought. These links may have generated non-obvious connections between sport,

Greekness, and the education of youth that elicited rationalizing, anachronistic explanations from Greek authors of the Archaic and Classical periods.

Thus, any attempt to explain the role of sport in the educational institutions of ancient Greece ought to take into account not only attitudes toward physical education in later Greek authors, but also the origins of mass athletic participation in Greece. The *paidotribai* were specifically concerned with training the *paides* in events that were contested at festivals and games. Since these festivals and games form one of the earliest and most important aspects of shared Greek identity, it may be a mistake to discount the idea that sport and education could have originated at the same time. That is to say, if being part of a unified Greek community, practicing a common religion at shared sanctuaries, and initiating youths by way of physical contests were elements that all emerged simultaneously during the early stages of the formation of ancient Greek culture, it may be misguided to seek an ordered explanation for the existence of physical contests within Greek educational institutions (However, see Chapter 2 for possible external influences on the formation of these institutions).

From this perspective, athletic competitions can be envisioned as playing an active role in the formation and crystallization of Greek identity, the education of Greek citizens, and Greek culture in general, rather than comprising an active development pursued by Greek states for rational ends. This may help to explain why scholars have had such a difficult time generating a mutually agreeable explanation for the prominent role of sport in Greek education, since neither sport nor education may have any meaningfully ordered existence separate from one another in the endogenous self-conception of the Greeks themselves.

Despite the obscurity of the origins and rationale behind Greek sporting education and unified identity, clearly by the fifth century BCE an intimate relationship obtained between sports and the state of being Greek. It is therefore not surprising that as the Greek world expanded through the conquests of Alexander the Great during the Hellenistic period, exercising in a gymnasium and competing in the events that were associated with Greek festival games became a fundamental part of what it meant to “belong” to Hellenistic society. This process was helped along by the fact that the Macedonians themselves seem to have been wildly enamored of *gymnic* training and exercise, and practiced their sporting excellence in competitions at many stops during the army’s march across the Near East (Athenaeus, *Deipnosophists* 12.539C). By the Hellenistic period, learning to compete in gymnastics as the Greeks did was a fundamental component of the process of Hellenization. Thus, when a certain Jason became the leader of Jerusalem after Antiochus Epiphanes became King of Syria in 175 BCE and “straightaway changed his countrymen to Greek customs” (Maccabees 2.4.9–15), the first evidence given to attest to his policy is that he “founded a *gymnasion* right under the acropolis ... for such was the acme of Hellenism.” As a result, education in the ways of Greek sporting remained an important part of the upbringing of the elite in the Hellenistic East long after any concept of its origins had been forgotten.

#### 4. Sport and Education in Roman Thought

While Greek-style athletics continued to be practiced during the Roman period, attitudes toward the integration of physical contests into formal education were vastly different between Roman and Greek intellectuals. Most relevant for the current

discussion, Roman education did not include a significant athletic component. For reasons that are not immediately obvious, Romans did not share any of the convictions that galvanized the Greeks so strongly with regard to enthusiastic participation in organized sports. On the contrary, Roman attitudes about participatory athletics were consistently negative, and we find no evidence that physical education played any role in the shaping of the minds and bodies of the Roman educated classes. While Greeks tended to elevate successful athletes to a higher moral, physical, and military plane than mortal man (Kyriakou 2007), the Romans did just the opposite, treating competitive athletes with disdain.

The best evidence for this comes from Seneca, a Roman Stoic philosopher. Seneca explicitly states his belief that that in the education of the young the training of the mind is paramount, while physical exercise ought to be viewed as entirely auxiliary and subordinate (Seneca, *Letters to Lucilius* 15.2–5). His view of the situation is highly pragmatic: he posits that any effort to integrate large amounts of physical exercise into education to be foolish, since no man, regardless of how broad his shoulders or strong his lungs, will ever be able to equal the brute strength of an ox. According to Seneca, there is a finite amount of effort that a given individual can devote to educational pursuits, and this is a zero sum game: the more time you allot to physical education, the less is available to train the mind. Thus, he recommends that the man of letters limit his physical activities to “simple exercises that tire the body quickly and save time,” such as running, which he practices by racing his slave Pharius (83.3–5) rather than by hiring a physical education coach or teacher.

Likewise, both Martial and Juvenal express deep skepticism about the relevance of athletics for pursuing the good life, or even for being a capable soldier. Martial suggests that digging holes in a vineyard is a more useful way to build strength than lifting “frivolous dumbbells” (*Epigrams* 14.49), and considers “indulging in various sports” to be “mere idleness” (*Epigrams* 7.32) rather than a means of personal betterment: actual, real work is preferred to inane activity. Similarly, in Juvenal’s third satire, the poet includes athletics and *gymnasia* among the undesirable intrusive elements of Greek life that have begun to take over domestic Roman habits (*Satires* 3.67: “See, Romulus, those rustics of yours wearing Greek slippers, Greek ointments, Greek prize medallions round their necks”).

Other Roman authors are outright scornful of the Greeks and what they perceived to be excessive gymnastic habits. Pliny the Younger records Trajan’s contempt—“[t]hose little Greeks have a weakness for *gymnasia*” (*Letters* 10.40.2)—and later goes on to report that Greek gymnastic contests had been abolished in Vienne in southern Gaul because they had harmed the moral character of the inhabitants (*Letters* 4.22.1ff). Tacitus is similarly straightforward insofar as he makes it abundantly evident that he regarded idly bobbing about in naked Greek athletics to be a completely inappropriate way to train a Roman soldier—rather, he argued, Roman gentlemen should be trained by engaging in real combat, or simulations thereof. Tacitus reacted very strongly against the idea that any high-ranking person should ever appear in public as an athlete—competing in the arena or the stadium was considered the purview of slaves and other low-class individuals rather than an important part of the life of a Roman citizen. It is clear from the literary evidence that, at least by the Imperial period, the Romans did not consider sport to be a useful or necessary part of education.

## 5. Sport as a Paradigm in Greco-Roman Education

Given the highly divergent nature of Greek and Roman policies on the integration of sport into educational institutions, it is surprising to find that both cultures used sport as an educative paradigm in very similar ways, especially considering the lack of cultural and social relevance of Greek-style sport among elite, educated Romans. However, unequivocal literary evidence suggests that just as we now teach children the value of hard work and dedication by telling them about the exploits of tenacious athletes that exemplify the triumphs of the human spirit and by constantly using sporting metaphors in our day-to-day language (e.g., “hit one out of the park”), there was a strong tradition of sport-as-paradigm in Greek and Roman rhetoric.

In Greek traditional education, the *gymnasia* and *palaistrai* scattered liberally about the cities of the Hellenic world served as venues not only for physical activity and training, but also as the context for many early philosophical discussions (Isocrates *Panathenaicus* 18, 33; Diogenes Laertius 6.1–13; Plutarch, *Amatorius* 2.749c). Greek sophists have been equated with today’s “public intellectuals” (Jaratt 1991: 98), and so it is not entirely surprising to find that they conducted much of their business in the quintessentially Greek public space, the city *gymnasia*. These facilities were sprawling and offered plenty of shade and water, and were additionally attractive to those seeking an audience insofar as they provided a default audience of young, high-status citizen males.

On a larger level, occasional Panhellenic festivals provided philosophers and scientists with a cosmopolitan venue and natural gathering place to share their ideas and speeches, and there is much evidence that a large part of the activity on the grounds of sites like Olympia, Delphi, Nemea, and Isthmia entailed the spirited shoutings and ravings of various intellectual men. Since many philosophers and rhetoricians would have spent a great deal of time thinking and speaking within the confines of facilities that were notionally intended to serve as training grounds for athletes, it is only natural to find that much early philosophy and rhetoric has distinctly athletic overtones (e.g., Isocrates, *Antidosis* 180–184).

One example that illustrates both the presence of philosophers at athletic festivals and the no doubt intimately related phenomenon of athletic metaphor in Greek philosophical reasoning can be found in Dio Chrysostom’s tale of the Cynic philosopher Diogenes’ adventures at the Isthmian games in 358 BCE (8.4–6; 9–12; 26; 36). When one man asks Diogenes why he is at Isthmia, he replies that he has come to compete—but *not* in the athletic contests. Rather, Diogenes claims he intends to contest with,

[h]ardships, which are severe and unbeatable for men who are gluttons and puffed with their own worth and snore at night, but which can be conquered by men who are thin and lean and have waists thinner than wasps. The man who is noble considers hardship his greatest competitor and struggles with it day and night, and not, like some goat, for a bit of celery or olive or pine, but for the sake of happiness and *arete* throughout his whole life.

Here, Diogenes is using an athletic metaphor to illustrate one of his philosophical positions in a speech described as having taken place at an athletic festival in the fourth century by an orator who is himself at Olympia for a festival four hundred years later, a rich illustration of the thoroughgoing interpollination of sport and education that pervaded ancient Greek culture.



Such inherent linkages between athletic and philosophical thinking are evident throughout Greek philosophical texts (e.g., Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 1128.13–15; Aristotle, *Rhetoric* 1365a; Epiktetos 1.6.23–28). While Roman intellectuals did not believe that the practice of sport was a worthy investment of time for Roman citizens, the fact that their philosophical tradition descended directly from Greek predecessors led to their adoption of a similar rhetoric of athletics, in which stories about athletes and physical metaphors for philosophical concepts served as a sort of currency in which complex or abstract ideas could be conveyed easily.

Returning to Seneca, we have already learned that he was not a fan of athletic pursuits in his daily routine. However, he frequently used athletics as an educational tool. Once, when he decides to skip out on a session watching a boxing match at the stadium, he finds himself reflecting instead on the fact that

if the body can be trained to such a degree of endurance that it will stand the blows and kicks of several opponents at once and to such a degree that a man can last out the day and resist the scorching sun in the midst of the burning dust, drenched all the while with his own blood ... how much more easily might the mind be toughened so that it could receive the blows of Fortune and not be conquered, so that it might struggle to its feet again after it has been laid low, after it has been trampled underfoot? (*Letters to Lucilius* 80.1–2)

Such metaphors appear throughout Seneca's letters (e.g., 78.16; 4.14.2), and probably represent a *topos* in Roman thought derived from a Greek tradition in which the educational use of athletic metaphor in the context of the *gymnasion* and *palestra* were more appropriately suited to the level of integration of athletics with education in general (Wistrand 1992: 52). Thus, despite the lack of participation in sport by the Roman educated classes and the absence of much physical education at Rome, it is clear that the philosophers and leading lights of Roman society did believe that sport and spectacle were highly valuable as education tools, a tendency they may have inherited from the Greek intellectual tradition.

## 6. Conclusion

On balance, it is clear that the ancient Greeks found the integration of sporting competition into both private and public educational institutions to be expedient, insofar as it helped to imbue students with discipline and to teach them the methods of acquiring *areté*, equipped them with the physically fit and coordinated bodies that they would need to complete their required military service, and taught them their appropriate place within the social fabric of the Greek *polis*. While all of these factors can help us to explain the enduring tradition of sport in Greek education, it does not necessarily shed light on the origins of this tradition, which are coterminous with our earliest evidence for shared Greek culture, going back to the eighth century BCE. The Roman intellectual tradition, on the other hand, did not take athletic training to be an important part of education, but rather found the idea of participation in organized athletic competitions to be antithetical to the purpose and aims of the pursuit of the good life. That said, *both* Greeks and Romans used metaphorical or paradigmatic language to integrate sport as a concept into the content of educational texts.

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## FURTHER READING

With the exception of Forbes' dated and old fashioned treatment (Forbes 1929) of *Greek Physical Education* there exists no general work on the role of sport and athletics in ancient Greek and Roman education. That said, general introductions to the topic as it relates to the Greeks can be found both in Kyle's excellent introduction to classical sport (2007: 73–93 and throughout) and in Christesen's up-to-date and thorough discussion (2012b: 119–183). For a helpful introduction

to the ancient textual evidence on Greek sport, the best available sourcebook/anthology of primary source material is the newly updated edition of *Arete* by S. Miller.

For specific details regarding the physical education of Greek athletes, Miller 2004 provides the best introduction in *Ancient Greek Athletics* (see especially pp. 176–195), though Forbes's treatment of the details of the systematic training system for Greek children remains more thorough, if exhaustingly dry. The most thorough extant discussion of archaeological evidence for games and festivals from early Greek sanctuaries is provided by Morgan 1990, though see also the contributions in Raschke 1988.

Owing to the general lack of Roman interest in participatory sport, work on this topic is sparse. Good places to start investigating Roman attitudes toward sport include Gleason's 1995 book, *Making Men*, on the idea of Roman physical manliness and the compelling evidence gathered by Wistrand 1992. In addition, Kyle 2007: 274–275 provides a helpful introduction to the status of participatory sport in ancient Rome.

## CHAPTER 30

# Roman Legal Education

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*Andrew M. Riggsby*

Legal education occupies an anomalous position in Roman culture. On the one hand, education in the law as such seems to have been a distinctively Roman development. If only because Roman law was so much more elaborately and extensively articulated than any other contemporary system, only Romans needed such specialized legal instruction. On the other hand, even the Romans themselves did without legal education as such for much of their history; law schools seem to be a purely imperial development.

This chapter will trace Roman legal education in three phases. The first section treats the transmission of legal knowledge in the Republican period, before the advent of specialized formal institutions for the purpose. The second section addresses the rise of formal legal education during the principate. Of particular interest here will be the nature of the two great “schools” identified in legal sources as protagonists in a number of substantive legal disputes. The third section will treat the much more elaborately bureaucratized process of legal education that developed under the later empire. A brief concluding note will consider the possibility of other forms of legal instruction (at all periods) for people “lower” down the social ladder.

## 1. The Republic

The earliest Roman law was largely in the hands of priests, and knowledge of it would have been passed through the same (largely private, collegial) channels as other sacred knowledge. Yet by the time we are able to discern much of either the substance or practice of Roman secular law, they had already been thoroughly cut off from these roots. (Whether the religious origin had a lasting effect on the “spirit” of the law is not relevant to present purposes.) Legal expertise was a possession of the ruling elites, originally fairly broadly shared within that class. The giving of legal advice was a characteristic patronal duty. Over the last two centuries of the republic, however, a small and self-defining circle

within the elite were increasingly able to monopolize legal authority. These men “responded” to legal questions put to them by friends, clients, and even members of the broader public. They also increasingly produced written work in various genres aimed mainly at each other. Still, the position of these “jurists” depended on informal prestige and on social position, without any formal credentialing system. At the very end of the republic, there is an increase in the importance of jurists of a slightly lower standing, but this is a shift to a different (less storied, less political) fraction of the propertied classes rather than a democratization. The rest of the present section will be devoted to education in the context of this, most unstructured, state of the legal system.

The much later legal writer Pomponius tells us that the first Roman to profess the law was Tiberius Coruncianus (d. 241 BCE; *D.* 1.2.2.35, 38), but this seems to be a misunderstanding of his source. Cicero (*de Or.* 3.133) makes Coruncianus one of the first to offer public consultations, but this is a matter of legal advice, not instruction. The public lectures Pomponius seems to suggest would have been anachronistic even a century or two later, when law seems to have been learned by apprenticeship.

Our principal window into this system is the case of Marcus Tullius Cicero in the early first century BCE. Cicero was not himself a jurist, but appears to have had an unusually strong interest in the law as part of what he felt should be a matter of general elite competence. He mentions (*Leg.* 2.23) learning the XII Tables, the original fifth century BCE law code, by heart in school, but he speaks of this practice as already outdated by his own adulthood. And even in his own youth, it must have been more of a patriotic exercise than a genuinely legal one. Real legal education would come later. As one would expect of a member of the political class, Cicero spent much of his teens and early twenties attached to powerful men to whom his family had connections, such as Lucius Licinius Crassus and the two Quinti Mucii usually distinguished as “the pontifex” and “the augur.” The latter two of these were among the leading jurists of the day, and Cicero was present for their consultations on real cases. In addition, this allowed Cicero the opportunity for conversation on more general or hypothetical cases, access to the texts that circulated among “real” jurists, and the ability to discuss those as well. It should be noted that the Mucii were senators who held political and religious office at Rome, not “just” jurists, and so none of this would have been particularly distinct from the apprenticeship of a would-be politician without Cicero’s particular legal interests. In fact, Cicero goes out of his way to indicate that Mucius *pontifex* did not teach law as such, but made his working consultations available to interested persons like Cicero (*Brut.* 306). Cicero would have observed how his patrons navigated a variety of political, business, and social obligations, not just legal ones. The difference in legal education would lie in (a) at least partially random availability of family connections to patrons who happened to be interested in the law, and (b) the extent to which individual protégées exploited the legal opportunities available to them.

Conversely, as far as we can tell, the education of a contemporary who did have a more “professional” (or at least “specialist”) interest in the law would not have been substantially different in form. Cicero’s slightly younger contemporary Servius Sulpicius Rufus was one of the preeminent jurists of their generation, and his training seems to have been no different. A much later legal source lists a number of the notable jurists of the following generation as “auditors” of Servius (*Pomp.* *D.* 1.2.2.44), but there is no contemporary evidence that the term refers to anything but the same kind of informal relationship that I have just described, and in fact Pomponius uses it of earlier “teacher-pupil” relationships

that could only have had the more patronal character. And it is hard to believe that the “real” jurists who studied under the Mucii (Pomp. *D.* 1.2.2.42) did so in an entirely different fashion than Cicero did.

There are no recorded legal textbooks from this period. Traces of information about literary form have suggested to some that various attested works had a more general or introductory character. The parallel of Cicero’s *de Legibus*, however, calls into question whether, even if we have correctly assessed the formal character of these works, they had or were meant to have any kind of educational function.

The absence of formal legal education in this period is hardly surprising. Teaching as such, of course, remained a relatively low-status profession, while the law itself was one of the few areas marked as the province of free citizens. In fact, despite the newly “lower” status of the equestrian jurists of the end of the republic, it was still largely a monopoly of the propertied, educated classes. Those qualified to teach would have found it beneath themselves to do so, especially in any kind of sustained, systematic way.

## 2. The Principate

Under the early empire, the trend toward specialization in the law and autonomy of jurisprudence from politics, rhetoric, and the elite social interaction that had marked the end of the republic continued. And jurists emerged from yet lower strata of society, though still very much from at least local prominent families. But in this period, the specialization was also inflected (and perhaps accelerated in some ways) by imperial interest in the law. This interest took at least two forms. First, from as early as the time of Augustus, emperors granted certain jurists a “right of giving [legal] responses publicly.” The force of this “right” is unclear, and in formal terms was likely minimal, but at the least it established official recognition of legal knowledge as a distinctive and valuable thing. This practice perhaps faded in importance after adjustments by Hadrian, but over that time a second form of state intervention—the direct employment of jurists by the state—became a more important phenomenon. Starting roughly under the reign of Vespasian, legal experts began to hold more or less stable salaried posts under the emperor as part of a general trend toward remunerated employment of “respectable” persons in public administration. The most successful of these also went on to hold honorific offices, even the consulship.

Formal state training of jurists, or even certification for most practitioners, did not arise in this period, but distinctive legal training seems to appear very soon after the establishment of imperial rule. While discussing a point of civil procedure, Aulus Gellius (13.13.1; second half of the second century) mentions quite casually that it had been a matter of controversy “at Rome in most of the offices (*stationes*) of those teaching law publicly and giving [legal] responses.” That is, apparently, some jurists were not only consulting with clients with live disputes in view, but also presenting themselves as teachers of law more generally. *Stationes* could in principle encompass a variety of establishments, but its connotations are typically of respectable professionalism, not imperial connection or even aristocratic noblesse oblige. (Juvenal [1.128; cf. scholia ad loc.] perhaps alludes to a particular one of these near the temple of Palatine Apollo.) Even earlier, there are perhaps traces of formal instructional apparatus. Pliny the Younger (7.24.8)

mentions a “Cassian school” connected to the jurist C. Cassius Longinus, who died around 70. This mention may be the tip of an iceberg, and we will return to it shortly. Pomponius (*D.* 1.2.2.47) tell us that the Augustan jurist Antistius Labeo spent half his year writing in seclusion, and half at Rome “with the *studiosi*.” These *studiosi* could be his “professional” peers, but could just as well be students. A couple of decades later, Massurius Sabinus was said to have been dependent on support from his auditors because he was not wealthy (1.2.2.50). (By the early third century, it was established that law professors—like practitioners of some other liberal arts—could not sue to recover unpaid fees, or rather *honoraria* [Ulp. *D.* 50.13.1.5]).

Moreover, it is from this period that we first see written works that clearly have an instructional purpose. The most prominent of these is Gaius’ introductory textbook (*Institutiones*) of private law, which has survived more or less intact. This dates to the middle of the second century, but another work of the same title (by Florentinus and now largely lost) may slightly predate it. And there are other mentions of four *Institutiones* attributed (in varying degrees of plausibility) to several notable jurists of the early third century. Beyond these clearly educational works, we have longer and shorter excerpts of summary, declaratory works that might or might not have had educational aims: Massurius Sabinus’ three-book outline of the *Civil Law* (first half of the first century), Pomponius’ *Handbook* treating the history of legal institutions and personalities (middle of the second century), and a variety of collections of “rules” and “definitions,” the earliest of which appears to date from around 100. Sabinus’ work, at least, seems to have become well enough known to stand in generically for “law book” (Pers. 5.90, Front. *M. Caes.* 2.11.4), though that does not make the intended audience entirely clear.

Returning now to the “Cassian school,” we encounter a long-standing set of scholarly debates, but also at least the possibility of some more detailed knowledge of specific institutions of legal education. Pomponius’ *Handbook* (*D.* 1.2.2.47–53) tells us of two “schools” (more on the term later) of jurists at Rome during the course of the first and second centuries. His information is very schematic, limited primarily to lists of the succession of the “heads” of the two schools.

Proculians	Cassians/Sabinians
Labeo	Capito
Nerva Priscus	Massurius Sabinus
Proculus	Cassius
Pegasus	Caelius Sabinus
Celsus (elder)	Iavolenus Priscus
Celsus (younger);	Alburnius Valens;
Neratius	Tuscianus; Julian

The appearance of Labeo and Cassius on these lists fits with the other evidence for their instructional activity cited earlier. Gaius, in his *Institutiones*, makes it clear that he was an adherent of the Cassian school, but also reports his opinions of the opposing school. And

the clustering of opinions on various specific issues reported in the *Digest* confirms in general terms this division of the two lineages.

The names of the schools are somewhat problematic, since neither go back to the putative founder. Moreover, we have a number of texts that call the “Cassian” school “Sabinian” instead. Gaius uses neither of these terms, but refers to individual authorities (especially Sabinus and Cassius). This might be taken to suggest that the two schools were not so much educational institutions as “schools of thought.” At least some of the “heads” were of sufficient status and burdened by public office that they could hardly have been full-time teachers. Doctrinal differences, while perhaps not deep or systematic, seem to have been real enough to identify members of the two groups. Less radically, one might imagine that the educational function of each lineage became only gradually formalized (perhaps explaining why neither school was named after its putative founder) and/or that the two did not actually function in precise parallel (teaching is somewhat better attested on the Sabinian/Cassian side).

On the other hand, while the Latin terminology for “school” (*secta*, *schola*) is not entirely unambiguous, at least the latter word strongly suggests an actual educational institution. And Gaius refers repeatedly to his “teachers” (*praeceptores*), sometimes including among them the long-dead Sabinus and Cassius. Given the fact that formalized legal instruction is clearly attested for this period, there seems to be little reason to doubt that the Sabinian/Cassian and Proculian schools had developed an instructional apparatus by the mid-second century, if not considerably earlier. Principal instruction was probably not conducted by the named “heads,” though their positions were not necessarily purely honorific. If we imagine institutions that exist over time (indeed, centuries) with a variety of personnel, and even multiple instructors at a given time, then we have traces of something potentially different from the instruction already discussed. That is, Gellius could easily be referring to lawyers who taught individually, and even then not necessarily as the whole of their practice. Several of the earlier named teachers (Labeo, Cassius) might perhaps also have taught on such an individual basis. But the totality of the evidence for the two named schools suggests a more elaborately articulated institution.

We know little for certain about the curriculum and methods (beyond what is suggested by Gaius’ textbook), but imagining some attempt at standardization and (within limits) comprehensiveness is not anachronistic. There is perhaps one negative point about teaching methods worth making. An occasional part of modern legal curricula is the mock trial exercise, in which students take up the parts of parties to more or less fictional cases and act out trials. Roman education knew a superficially similar exercise called the *controversia*, and perhaps even made it a more central part of the curriculum. Advanced students spent much of their time arguing as advocates in clearly fictional court cases. The crucial difference, however, between the ancient and modern practices, is that the former was (as far as our evidence goes) purely a creature of the rhetorical schools, not those of law. The “laws” under which cases were conducted were simple, largely fictional, and rarely discussed or interpreted by the participants. In short, they provided virtually no instruction in either the specifics of the law or the process of legal reasoning. It is not impossible that the law schools used a parallel, more “legal” form of a similar exercise, but no trace of it remains, and the rivalry between law and rhetoric would perhaps have discouraged it.



Most of the evidence discussed earlier centers on the city of Rome, but it is worth noting that by the mid-third century a (Roman) law school existed at Beirut. We will return to the importance of this school in the next section, but here it is worth noting two things. First, while other provincial schools are only attested later, that may have to do with the bias of our Rome-centric sources; we have this early reference only through an incidental autobiographical mention (Greg. Thaum. *ad Origenem* 5). Others of the provincial schools may well have stretched this far back as well. Second, the school at Beirut seems not only to have existed, but been a destination at the time of Gregory's interest. Thus, it may well have been founded considerably earlier.

### 3. The Later Empire

Like much of Roman society, law in general and legal education in particular become the object of increasing centralization and state intervention in the later empire. This presumably involved an evolution over time, but most of our evidence dates from the early sixth century, when much of the development seems to have taken place already. The issue was a particularly acute one because the state saw fit to collapse, at least partially, the ancient division between advocates and jurists. At least in the eastern part of the empire, a legal education became a prerequisite for pleading as an advocate; rhetorical studies were no longer sufficient. Moreover, legal studies became a requirement for some positions within the imperial bureaucracy itself (Just. *Inst.* pr; *Const. Omnem* 11).

By 425, there seem to have been state-employed professors of law at Rome, Beirut, and (in a new development) Constantinople. These were very few, perhaps a handful in each city, but they seem to have been surrounded by many additional private teachers. The fact that the latter had to be forbidden by imperial decree from using public auditoria for their teaching may suggest that their audiences were not distinct from those studying with the public professors (*CTh* 14.9.3 pr).

By this time or slightly later, there was also a set curriculum, helpfully described by the emperor Justinian on the occasion of its replacement by a new one in 533. The fifth-century version was as follows.

Year	Texts Studied
1	Gaius, <i>Institutes</i> (partial); four single-topic introductory works (marriage, guardianship, wills, legacies)
2	Edict (perhaps by way of learned commentary)
3	Edict (cont.); Papianian, <i>Reponses</i> (partial)
4	Paul, <i>Responses</i> (partial)
5	Imperial constitutions (selection unknown)

The revised curriculum was on a similar scale, but focused on the new texts produced by Justinian's codification of the law rather than selections from centuries' worth of scattered (and potentially inconsistent) scholarship.

If the syllabus is fairly clear, the methods of instruction are less so. The professors are said to have “handed over” the material of the first through third years, but not the fourth (and, presumably, fifth); rather in the fourth year, the students “recited Paul by themselves, and even then not entire but according to a partial and unfortunately customary and inconsistent course” (Just. *Const. Omnem* 1). The systematic character of all this suggests that it was only the public professors who withdrew themselves, and that private tutelage was important (for which there may be traces of independent evidence). That raises the question whether private instruction also operated in parallel with the public at earlier stages, as suggested earlier in connection with the use of public facilities. Presumably in either case there were lectures. The fourth-year students at least were apparently dedicated to solving various set legal problems, so they would have had to perform as well. Such exercises may, of course, have figured in the curriculum earlier as well, though we have no direct evidence. By the middle of the fifth century, a system of formal certification had also come into being. Professors of law were to produce sworn statements of their students’ competence, and (at least in the East) an examination was set for those who wished to practice as advocates in the imperial courts.

When Justinian introduced his new curriculum in 533, he also abolished in passing the schools of law at Alexandria, Caesarea (in Judea), and indeed in all cities beyond Rome, Constantinople, and Beirut (*Const. Omnem* 7). There are traces of evidence for legal instruction at Athens, Augustodunum (in Gaul, modern Autun), and Antioch. The school at Augustodunum is of particular importance. The city is known to have been an educational center, but a school of law (as opposed to rhetoric) is evidenced only by a manuscript of a locally produced commentary on Gaius rediscovered there in the late 1800s. The lack of literary attestation of a law school and the poor quality of the scholarship of this text have suggested a distinctly second-tier institution. This may be the case, but if so it further suggests that other such “minor” schools may have existed without leaving any trace. Justinian’s decree of abolition seems to suggest that the Alexandrian and Caesarean schools were merely the most prominent in view.

#### 4. Other Lawyers, Other Legal Educations

The last section closed by positing the likely existence of lesser provincial law schools, at least in late antiquity, that has been overlooked by the sources. Those sources are focused on a narrow legal elite, meaning that they are almost entirely interested in Rome and (later) Beirut and Constantinople. But it also means that they are focused, at all times and places, on the highest tier of legal education—the juriconsults and/or state officials who shaped the law rather than merely practicing. But that elite level of jurisprudence was never the whole enterprise. We know that there were legal specialists of various sorts (experts in narrow areas; professional drafters of documents) who might have worked alone or under the guidance of more notable jurists. And in smaller towns or at lower social levels in the cities, persons in need of legal advice had to rely on inexpert individuals, perhaps less distinct from advocates and scribes than they would be at the elite level. These men may have made up the numerical bulk of legal professionals in the Roman world, and we have almost no idea how they were educated. Self-study of whatever legal texts were available? Apprenticeship in the old fashion? Study at “lesser” schools? In

Petronius' *Satyricon* (46.7), the character Echion (a rag dealer) mentions that he bought some law books for his son's instruction, though his goal is business or advocacy, not a strictly legal profession. Presumably all of these options were used, but precisely how or in what proportions we cannot say.

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## FURTHER READING

The topic of legal education has apparently been of more interest to scholars of the law than to those of education. The most recent, albeit brief, treatments of most of these matters are to be found in the relevant chapters of the *Cambridge Ancient History* (Frier [1996], Ibbetson [2005], Johnston [2005], and Liebs [2000]). (Many of Liebs' other publications also touch on these issues, especially isagogic writing, at least in passing. See especially Liebs [1976].) The most useful and comprehensive account probably remains that of Schulz (1946), despite his sometimes overaggressive textual criticism of the legal sources. Schulz's material on schools and school writings is part of a larger narrative of the development of "Roman legal science;" for a more compact account, see Pharr (1939) or Chroust (1955). An independent and much more skeptical account is that of Atkinson (1970). The literature on the Proculian and Sabinian schools is enormous, though not generally tied to the narrow issue of instructional practice. For reviews, see Liebs (1976) and the introduction to Leesen (2010).

## CHAPTER 31

# Toys and Games

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### 1. Introduction

The death of a child was an all too common occurrence in Greek and Roman antiquity, with approximately one third of children dying in infancy and nearly half by the age of ten (Golden 1988: 155; Laes 2011b: 26). This high mortality prospect may have cast an unpleasant shadow over childhood for some parents. However, images and texts consistently refer to happy moments in children's lives, and quite naturally these involve toys and play. An allusion to a treasured plaything of Greek children, for instance, appears on the funerary stele of Mnesikles, where a small boy of four or five grasps the handle of a push-toy in his chubby right hand (Neils and Oakley 2003: cat. 122). Five-year-old Geminia Agathe, who speaks to wayfarers through her epitaph (*CIL* 6.19007), declares with all the candor of a small child: "While I lived, I played" (*dum vixi, lusi*). These memorials are part of the modest, but chronologically and geographically diverse body of evidence for children's play, that stretches from the eighth century BCE to the sixth century CE, and throughout the breadth of the Mediterranean basin. Preserved remains and images for all toys and games mentioned in textual sources are not extant, nor are there descriptions for all toys uncovered by archaeologists. Nonetheless, the surviving material provides a good picture of the range of toy types and activities suited to children of different ages. It likewise emerges that the ancients regarded play as a fundamental part of the formative years, so it is rather surprising that in the whole of the Greek and Latin corpus there is no extended treatment of children's recreation, nor of its role in their development.

The lack of attention to play's educative potential may explain why this subject has received only modest consideration by specialists, and why discussion has been limited chiefly to monographs on ancient childhood (e.g., Golden 1990; Rawson 2003). We can give substance to these meager sources, however, by employing the work of contemporary theorists who see play as preparation for the future. Especially notable in this regard are Jean Piaget and Brian Sutton-Smith, whose conceptions of play-based learning align

well with the educational philosophies of ancient writers (Shumka 1993). With the aid of theory, this chapter examines a few of the ways that toys and games mediated the physical and cognitive development of classical children, and their social formation. When utilizing contemporary perspectives, it is essential to remember that the cultural divide between pre- and post-modern children is at times immense, and that the nature of childhood, play, and education is shaped by cultural mentalities that differ. Applied judiciously, however, play theories extend and deepen our understanding of one path by which classical children received the education—be it physical, intellectual, social, or moral—that was essential for making their way in the world.

## **2. Ancient and Modern Conceptions of Enculturation**

From a modern Western perspective, teaching children about their gender identities, about their social duties, about their environment, and preparing them for adult roles are vital processes that help integrate children into their communities. This type of education takes place in virtually all cultures and begins at an early age. Within a familial context, adults may instruct children that while it is permissible to yell and scream on the playground, this same behavior is inappropriate in a schoolroom or religious setting. Children who disobey their parents may have their leisure activities curtailed or be banished to their bedrooms to contemplate their actions. In these situations, parents attempt to provide their children with positive behavioral guidelines that enable them to participate successfully in society, for children require an understanding of what society demands of them as adults and the consequences of rejecting social dictates.

Child socialization assumes a variety of forms, and is administered by an assortment of persons in different settings. Not surprisingly, the strongest influences on the young child, who is generally regarded as a highly malleable being, are found in the immediate family. Under their parents' tutelage, children acquire skills that they employ first in private and then in public discourse. But while parents may have the initial and prime responsibility for instructing children, society comprises any number of individuals (e.g., teachers, doctors, athletic coaches) who also influence them. Additionally, the inculcation of traditional habits may appear in more simple forms such as wearing specific types and colors of clothing, engaging in gender-typed games, or playing with toys.

Apart from their diversionary capacity, toys are objects which encourage the development of motor skills and mental faculties, such as eye-hand coordination and reasoning ability. Those with special properties function as media through which children learn facts about the world around them. When they play with a rubber ball, for instance, children learn that the ball can bounce and that its spherical shape facilitates rolling. They may play with building blocks that come in a variety of shapes and sizes, but quickly discover that the blocks must be arranged in a certain fashion to prevent whatever they have constructed from collapsing. Toys can stimulate and advance the use of imagination or role-playing. A boy given a miniature hammer and saw may pretend to be a carpenter, or a young girl holding a baby doll may pretend she is a mother, though children often adapt such articles differently depending upon their environments. Perhaps the most conspicuous feature of toys is their ability to transmit cultural messages. When children interact with them they are entertained, but they are also

introduced to ideas about gender functions and orientation, cultural expectations, and acceptable modes of behavior.

Classical authors express genuine concern for the physical and scholastic well-being of children, but it is difficult to produce hard evidence for any correlation between parenting practices and the belief that play and toys prepare children for the future. The concept of the child as an object that needs to be shaped is clear from the comments of several writers. Anecdotal evidence describes children as changeable (Arist., *EE* 1.1214b.30) and pliant (Sen. *Helv.* 18.7–9; Quint. *Inst.* 1.12.11–12), and it is universally agreed that they require sound moral and intellectual instruction because the lessons learned in childhood leave an indelible impression. There is also appreciation for the roles that different individuals play in fashioning a child's character, with primary responsibility ascribed to parents (e.g., Plaut., *Mostell.* 120–123). But while society idealized parental obligations, children were regularly placed in the care of individuals who became responsible for their every need. Nurses (free and servile, male and female) nurtured children from an early age, and pedagogues accompanied them to school or on public outings, inculcating (along with parents) sound moral values.

Among ancient writers, the philosopher Plato is unique in seeing (*Leg.* 1.643b–c) a direct connection between toys and enculturation. He advises adults who are entrusted with children's welfare to give them toy implements or engage them in activities that might prepare them for a specific profession. To his way of thinking, anticipatory socialization—whereby children are groomed for adult roles—involves tomorrow's carpenters building toy houses and tomorrow's soldiers learning to ride. Aristotle's thoughts on play are, unsurprisingly, similar to those of his teacher (*Pol.* 7.1336a29–34; cf. Golden 1990: 54), while the medical writer Galen counsels parents (*De san. tuen.* 12.2) to nurture the aptitudes that will be most advantageous to their children as adults. Of those writers who mention play and games, most tend to highlight their benefits. The historian Xenophon remarks (*Hipp.* 5.10) that cheating at a guessing game is in fact training for the future, because deception is a component of military strategy, but in no way recommends that duplicitous behavior be encouraged. Despite his advocacy of a strict instructional regimen for boys, the educational theorist Quintilian concedes (*Inst.* 1.1.20; 1.3.9) that play is a much needed respite from constant study, which dulls boys' minds and dampens their enthusiasm for instruction. He too has high regard for play-based learning, like guessing games (1.3.11–12), because they are an opportunity for children to sharpen their intellectual skills (cf. Plato, *Leg.* 1.643b–c). Play and education are obviously related in the minds of some writers, but apart from Plato and Aristotle none offers more than a few casual remarks on the link between the two.

### 3. Physiological and Cognitive Development

The lack of direct commentary notwithstanding, we may infer the agency of classical toys in children's cognitive and physiological development. Tops, for example, which come from Greek mortuary contexts and sanctuaries where children dedicated their toys upon reaching adulthood (Neils and Oakley 2003: nos. 16, 77), taught children about the natural world and fostered eye–hand coordination. Over time, children might learn that the top's conical shape is conducive to spinning but its speed must be maintained,

through intermittent lashing, to prevent it from wobbling. Depictions of this activity (André 1991: fig. 69) indicate that it was well suited to older children (and women), probably because it required a practiced hand (cf. Tibullus 1.5.3–4). For children whose coordination was not sufficiently developed, there were smaller tops, like a wooden specimen from Roman Gaul (André 1991: fig. 70). Similar to the teetotum of the modern historical period, this top is essentially a disk which spins on a center peg or axle, and at just under two inches in diameter it was easily manipulated by little fingers. These tops would have been effective in cultivating the manual dexterity that was essential for tasks like fastening a pin, tying a knot, spinning wool, or writing.

Other amusements fostered gross motor skills, that is, those that require control of large muscle groups. There were simple games such as balancing a stick on the index finger, juggling, and throwing activities that required players to toss a ball or knucklebones at a target (Neils and Oakley 2003: nos. 79–81). Children also improvised games while on their rambles, aiming stones or nuts at the trees which they passed (*Anth. Pal.* 9.3). Medical practitioners endorsed hoop trundling and ball playing for young and old alike, but Sextus Empiricus remarks (1.106) that they were especially popular with children. Boys seem to have been the main participants when it came to bowling hoops (Neils and Oakley 2003: no. 76; Amedick 1991: no. 289; Hor., *Carm.* 3.24.54; Mart. 14.168), but it is not inconceivable that girls joined in when brothers, sisters, and other children from one household played together (Phaedrus 3.8). As we might expect, each of these activities enhanced children's eye-hand coordination and motor planning, that is, their ability to decide what skill to use before they actually performed it, but also the motor skills that helped them to run, jump, and negotiate their way smoothly in a crowd of people.

Improvised and manufactured toys were excellent tools for teaching children about natural properties such as texture, size, and weight. Nuts were used in gambling games, as were animal knucklebones and those fashioned from glass and metal (Andres 2000: no. 74; Neils and Oakley 2003: nos. 89–90). Manufactured from cloth, reeds, and other materials, balls came in a range of sizes and densities, from small durable handballs to inflated examples that somewhat resemble modern soccer balls. A number of representations depict children carrying or trundling hoops, but physical specimens have not survived; this suggests that they were made of ephemeral materials like willow and other supple woods, or that children used discarded wheel bands as hoops, as was common in later historical periods. Comprehension of the natural world could be strengthened through children's handling of these objects during play: the surface of a nut or bone may be rough or smooth; knucklebones and walnuts are small when compared to balls; hoops and balls have similar shapes but must be manipulated differently; and a top is heavier than a knucklebone. As children matured, their ability to perceive, differentiate, and rationalize became more acute, and they applied these skills increasingly as they adapted to their physical environment (Piaget 1965: 244–253).

#### 4. Anticipatory Socialization

In all of the material culture for toys and games, the object which seems most designed to convey particular messages about sex and gender, or to promote sex-type play, is the doll. These were crafted from a variety of media, including rag, bone, and terracotta;

they were also jointed with limbs attached at the shoulders or hips by means of wire or string. Female figures are nude predominantly, while their male counterparts are clothed. Coroplasts and carvers took great care when rendering the somatic characteristics of female dolls. Broadly speaking, they have elaborate hairstyles, molded breasts, and schematically rendered pudenda (André 1991: nos. 20, 22; Shumka 1999: pl. 222). Doll sophistication varies. On some models, the articulation is enhanced by additional jointing at the elbows and knees, while on others the anatomical details extend to a precise rendering of toe and fingernails. Most dolls have been found without accessories, but a few of the female figures were accompanied by clothes (Janssen 1996), jewelry, and other accoutrements.

On the eve of marriage, so writers tell us (*Anth. Pal.* 6.280; Persius 2.70), girls usually dedicated their dolls and childhood toys to Artemis or Venus. Burial assemblages reveal that girls who died before this pivotal event in their lives were interred with their dolls and other possessions (e.g., Scamuzzi 1964; Oleson et al. 2013). Greek stelai also depict small girls (André 1991: fig. 34) clasping versions of the dolls that proliferate in the material record. Since these toys were associated first and foremost with female children, we might conclude that they played a dominant role in their socialization. Dolls were certain to reinforce the physical differences between male and female, for in preindustrial societies clothing and ornaments (together with language and gestures) demarcated gender roles (Crone 1989: 114). Nude dolls especially would have encouraged the type of dress-up activity that society deemed the prerogative of adult women. Whether dolls stimulated some form of mothering behavior is much debated, for infant dolls are absent from the archaeological evidence. It is unlikely that the terracotta statuettes of small children in fixed poses (André 1991: figs. 26–27; Andres 2000: no. 142) served as toys, in spite of their child-friendly size (30–35 cm tall). The lack of evidence for baby dolls and the fact that we have no way to assess a mother's influence on her daughter has led to skepticism about the doll's ability to teach Greek and Roman girls about their reproductive roles (e.g., Rawson 1991: 20).

It is curious indeed that there were no infant dolls, given that coroplasts were adept at producing votives of swaddled infants (Miller Ammerman 2007), and daughters may not have spent enough time with their mothers on a continual basis to cultivate female behavior. But they could and did learn from nurses with whom they had close relationships. The philosopher Plutarch, writing after the death of his two-year-old daughter Timoxena, recalled fondly (*Mor.* 608d) how she would take her playthings and present them to her nurse for breastfeeding. The toddler apparently encouraged her nurse to feed other children too, and this type of interaction between the nurse and her charge obviously supplied the girl with information about women's biological and social roles. Whether dolls fostered maternal behavior is not perhaps the most critical point. The mere fact that girls played with representations of adult females created a fertile environment in which notions of maternity (among other ideas) might be explored (see Dolansky 2012). In present-day society, where the rise of feminism has discouraged parents from conditioning their daughters in specific ways, there is still an array of playthings that do so, the most conspicuous of which is the Barbie doll. Yet even this doll's physically mature appearance does not deter small children from treating her as they might a baby doll: feeding, cuddling, and putting Barbie to bed.



The issue of whether dolls facilitated boys' socialization is more difficult to resolve, for we have little in the way of material or literary evidence to assess. Articulated figures have been found in sanctuaries of Apollo where boys sometimes dedicated their toys to mark their transition to adulthood (Elderkin 1930: 455), but there are no textual references to male children playing with dolls. Material remains from different geographical contexts confirm the production of mold-made warrior figures wearing belted, knee-length tunics, and holding round shields and swords (Andres 2000: nos. 101–103 and 117); gladiator figures wear protective gear resembling the armor worn by *secutores*, *hoplomachi*, and *retiarii* (Dardaine 1983: pl. 7; Andres 2000: nos. 115–116). These figures were entirely appropriate for boys who lived in societies where gender and social roles were deeply entrenched.

Our evidence for boys playing with dolls is thin, but we do not press it too much in maintaining that action figures helped boys to identify with the tasks assigned to males (cf. Golden 1990: 55). They also helped to create an adventure world which encouraged boys to imagine scenarios involving war and combat, through which they might learn about leadership and the competitive ethos that was so much a part of life in classical antiquity. Our efforts to understand the socializing capabilities of action figures, however, are complicated by the fact that one of the finest examples of an articulated legionary soldier was found in the tomb of a ten-year-old Gallic girl (André 1991: fig. 28; *CIL* 13.2108). The toy's find-spot does not prove that children engaged in cross-gender play, and there may be other explanations for the presence of this toy in the girl's tomb. But when we weigh the possibility of children sharing recreational space, it is not improbable that girls played with the dolls of their male companions out of childish curiosity or because their comprehension of social expectations and gender roles was not fully formed.

There was still much scope for boys to acquire the social skills and information required by their sex, and one of the most stimulating environments for this was the world of games and make-believe. Ancient writers attest to children's preferences for pretend activity and mimicry, with one observing that children had a penchant for imitating just about anything they saw and admired (Epict. 3.15). Boys also liked to invent games, according to Plato (*Leg.* 7.793e–794a), but creative and empowering activity such as this had to be monitored, in his view, for fear that boys might grow into nonconformists. It is no accident that some of the games played by boys contained elements of power and status differentiation (Golden 1990: 55; Wiedemann 1989: 150). Tug-of-war contests (Poll. 9.112; Pl., *Tht.* 181a), tag games (Pl., *Tht.* 146a) and role-playing which involved kings, magistrates, lawyers, and gladiators (D. Chrys. 4.47; Sen., *De constant.* 12.2; Plut., *Cato Min.* 2.5; Epict. 3.15.5) were a natural adjunct to both the physical and educational training boys received. These activities all contained reflections of the leadership roles that males were expected to assume upon attaining full adult status.

## 5. Social and Moral Formation

Just as toys aided children's comprehension of gender roles, so they contributed to their social education. In his book *Toys as Culture*, Brian Sutton-Smith amply demonstrates the influence of toys in the enculturation of contemporary children, tracing the growth of certain social precepts from infancy to the period when the child's interest in toys

begins to wane (i.e., around the age of twelve). In addition to the standard explanation of toys as educational tools, Sutton-Smith illustrates how toys foster a child's facility to play independently of parents and child minders, how the manipulation of toys can teach a child the difference between exerting control and being controlled, and how toys in the guise of gifts can convey such ideas as obligation and loyalty (Sutton-Smith 1986: *passim*). For instance, in the weeks preceding the Christian celebration of Christmas, many children promise earnestly to be on their best behavior in the fervent hope that the mythical figure of Saint Nicholas will reciprocate by bringing the items painstakingly enumerated on wish lists (Sutton-Smith 1986: 20). In both public and private settings, children may be taught the nuances of gift giving, that is, the donor's expectation that something will be given back by the recipient.

When we consider the intra- and extra-familial obligations of classical children, the ability of toys to habituate children to social realities becomes even more apparent. Writers from Homer to the Younger Pliny make it plain that the debt children owed their parents was significant (Parkin 2003: 205–206, with references). Elite children lived a life of relative ease and comfort, but tremendous emphasis was placed on compliance with parental expectations and on upholding the family name and honor. These children were expected to marry within their own circle, and their marriages were often negotiated for the family's social, political, or economic advancement. Less privileged children were not necessarily involved in political and social power-broking schemes, but the responsibility placed upon them was no less onerous. Children who were capable of working helped to supplement the income of economically disadvantaged households. It was also anticipated that these children—along with those in elite families—would care for aged or infirm parents when parents could no longer look after themselves (Xen., *Mem.* 2.2.3; Sen., *De ben.* 3.31–32). With recalcitrant children, the rights of the household head could certainly be invoked, but we hear very little from our sources about children's refusals to fulfill their obligations, and this may reflect the fact that children grew generally to understand and accept their duties. How was this accomplished?

Classical texts and material culture tell us that children received toys from parents, relatives, and child minders as simple tokens of affection and as diversions. Rattles, for instance, were the perfect means of distracting squalling infants (Poll. 9.27; Mart. 14.54), and those that have survived indicate that they were rendered in appealing shapes like farmyard animals (Neils and Oakley 2003: no. 69, Andres 2000: nos. 110–111) and lapdogs (Grandjouan 1961: Pl. 18, nos. 750 and 756). A toy's diversionary function may have been uppermost in the minds of nurses and parents if Aristotle is to be believed, for he suggests (*Pol.* 8.1340b.25) that when children are occupied with toys they wreak less havoc in the house. But other sources tell us that baubles, sweets, and toys especially, functioned as incentives. Teachers coaxed children to learn the alphabet by giving them sweets (Hor., *Sat.* 1.1.25), and Saint Jerome recommends (*Ep.* 128.1.4) that parents motivate their daughters to complete their school lessons in timely fashion by offering them a shiny trinket or pretty doll. Among the things which Ovid and Seneca say children are eager for we find colored balls and knucklebones (*Met.* 10.260; *De constant.* 12.2). A gift which excites a child of three, however, may not interest a child of seven. For older children there were terracotta puppets (Andres 2000: nos. 104–109), wheeled horses, sometimes with riders (Andres 2000: no. 128; Neils and Oakley 2003: no. 70; Wilfong 2012: figs. 14.15–14.16) and the jointed figures already described, that served to bond children to their parents and nurture

the concept of filial duty. As Greek and Roman children matured they, like their modern counterparts, no doubt came to realize that presents could involve accountability and that there was prestige to be gained from suitable deportment.

Comprehension of the bond-obligation concept was also essential for extra-familial relationships. Reciprocity permeated all aspects of classical life and culture, but was a mainstay of public life in particular. Humble individuals within society attached themselves to powerful men who endeavored to support them as best they could, and in return patrons expected unwavering support in their own social, economic, or political ventures. The ties that bound the two had no basis in law, but turned on their mutual respect for loyalty and personal honor. From the lowly individual who needed help with a legal matter to the society luminary who used patronage for political and social gain, the idea that the donor of a gift required—and expected—something of the recipient was understood by all.

In classical antiquity, there were festivals that involved gift giving, and the recipients included children. The spring festival of the Anthesteria, for example, was a special time for Athenian children. On the second day of this celebration, children participated in contests and games and received as gifts the small jugs known as *choes* (Neils and Oakley 2003: no. 86), on which we often find depictions of children at play. In Roman culture, the festival of the Saturnalia was a special time for everyone and also included the exchange of gifts. Children specifically, so we are told (Sen., *Ep.* 12.3; Macrob. 1.2.49), were given small figurines or *sigillaria* as presents, and permitted certain freedoms that were restricted at other times of the year. We do not know how children responded to the generosity of adults during these festivals, nor can we state categorically that parents consciously used gift giving to ensure proper conduct. But it is reasonable to assume that children reacted to such a gesture in appropriate fashion, especially if exemplary conduct had been rewarded with presents or tokens on other occasions.

While the concepts of bond and obligation were an essential part of children's social education, there were other lessons to be learned, lessons which helped to shape children's moral values. Textual and material evidence frequently portray children in pairs or groups, in the street or at home, playing elaborate games with nuts and knucklebones, and tossing balls (Huskinson 1996: nos. 1.20, 35, 37, 42; Neils and Oakley 2003: no. 86). In Greek and Roman society, as in other preindustrial societies, a group mentality prevailed, and the aspirations of the individual were generally subordinated to collective interests (cf. Crone 1989: 108). Both societies were heavily stratified, and their stability depended upon their membership recognizing and maintaining social boundaries. Prior to full-fledged participation in the community, children required an awareness of the social group to which they belonged and the consequences of this affiliation. For example, free and slave children who lived under the same roof may have been playmates when small, but such relations would not continue indefinitely. Eventually, the slave child would take up the anticipated responsibilities, resulting in not only physical but gradual emotional separation from freeborn and freed playmates, as was the case of Seneca and his chum Felicio (cf. Sen., *Ep.* 12.3).

Games generally were excellent learning opportunities. For the sake of efficient and peaceful completion of the game, common agreement upon rules and structure would have been essential. Naturally, children do not acquire this perception of games immediately, but over time they develop what has been termed “rule conceptualization.” The developmental

psychologist Jean Piaget formulated this theory after an intensive study of marble games and the rules governing them. He concluded that children could acquire moral standards through play, and suggested that the child's impression of and ability to utilize rules evolved with age (Piaget 1965: 14–15). Between the ages of one and three, children do not conceive of rules as coercive, but instead they simply accept them as “obligatory realities.” Between the ages of four and eight, children believe game rules are inviolable, and the fastest way to be ejected from a game is to break them. By the age of nine or ten, children perceive rules as being determined by social consensus; they may be altered only by soliciting the opinions of others and negotiating with them (Piaget 1965: 28). Perhaps the most important stage of learning, at least as far as moral development is concerned, is between the ages of seven and twelve. For Piaget, it was during this time that children's conceptions of winning, individual and mutual control of rules, and notions of conformity solidified (Piaget 1965: 26–27).

Greek and Roman children had their own adaptations of marbles in addition to knucklebone and nut games. But there were others, like the popular piggyback game called *ephedrismos* (Poll. 9.119; Neils and Oakley 2003: no. 83), a form of blindman's bluff, hide-and-seek (Deiss 1985: 50), and a wide variety of ball games with specific rules (e.g., Poll. 9.104; Mart. 12.82, 14.46). Although enjoyable, these activities were also instructive because they created situations in which children might be compelled to distinguish between right and wrong, to fathom the importance of social conformity and community, and to learn about cooperation and negotiation. A well-known decorative panel from a Roman child's sarcophagus (Huskinson 1996: no. 1.37) provides some sense of how rough-and-tumble children's interaction might develop, and of the squabbling over rules or fair play that inevitably occurred. The relief depicts two crowds of children deeply engrossed in gambling games. While the girls play quietly, the boys are much more aggressive, jostling, slapping, and pulling hair. It is worth noting, too, that textual sources provide very few allusions to independent play among classical children. They appear most frequently in pairs or groups, where they swim, skip stones at the seashore, or engage in imaginative play (e.g., Verg., *Aen.* 7.377–378; Min. Fel., *Oct.* 3.5). Implicit in much of this evidence is that opportunities existed for children to acquire and then implement their knowledge of rules through group dynamics, thus sharpening the interactional skills that would help them in their adult relationships. Quintilian, for one, believed (*Inst.* 1.3.12) that every child had the capacity to differentiate between right and wrong, even at a tender age.

Admittedly, play was not the only means by which Greek and Roman children gained information about conformity or socially relevant behavior. They could observe the behavior of adults within the household or accompany their parents and child-minders in public where they were exposed to the rich mosaic of classical life. The peer pressure that existed within most groups in preindustrial societies also compelled individuals to recognize their social roles through sheer repetition (Crone 1989: 114). Children could observe, for example, that girls played in one fashion and boys in another or that games for girls might not be appropriate for boys. Differences between non-elite and freeborn children might also begin to emerge. Since slave children were sometimes put to work as early as age five, helping with light domestic or farm chores, it is probable that their playtime was significantly curtailed. Or slave children may have been assigned only marginal roles in games or make-believe activities by their free playmates. Within this

context the concept of community was reinforced, and in such an environment children could come to understand generally that the will of the individual had to be affirmed by group consensus. Additionally, play mediated children's comprehension of sexual identity, distinctions in rank, and the respect accorded individuals of different status.

## 6. Conclusion

Theories of play demonstrate clearly that children have a tremendous amount to learn before they are capable of participating successfully in society, and that toys and leisure activities help children to comprehend socially relevant behavior. The hierarchical nature of preindustrial societies demanded that every individual understand his or her position within the social order, obey superiors, and in turn command the respect and acquiescence of inferiors. We cannot assume that then, as now, toys and play carried all the same connotations nor that all public and private relationships were reciprocal. Yet it seems likely that parents and child-minders, to varying degrees of consciousness, used toys to inculcate social and moral values in their children. When we consider such things as bond and obligation, community and conformity, we see concepts that are intrinsic parts of society, both ancient and modern. Classical children were seldom celebrated for themselves as talented individuals, especially females. Instead, personal achievement was measured by the honor children brought to their families. The attainment and perpetuation of prestige was contingent, in part, upon the careful nurturing and education of children. Parents and child-minders alike had to instill in them a sense of obligation and loyalty (among other things). Familial and social continuity thus demanded children's careful nurturing, shaping, and molding, and the contribution of toys and games to this process was significant.

Finally, in our efforts to understand the enculturation of classical children, we should not forget that toys and games offered them simple pleasures. As Seneca quite rightly pointed out (*De ben.* 4.29.3), gifts do not always involve accountability or obligation. Children had a natural inclination to play with toys, to create their own imaginary worlds, and to exasperate parents and schoolmasters through inattention to schoolwork. All this was part of their brief holiday from adult life and is understood best in the context of the demographic realities with which this chapter began. Small wonder that in her epitaph (*CLE* 1167), twelve-year-old Crocale admonished her playmates: *ludite, felices, patitur dum vita puellae saepe et formosas fata sinistra trahunt*. "Play while life allows you to be happy, girls; for often deathly fate carries you off in dread."

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## FURTHER READING

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- Golden, Mark (1990), *Children and Childhood in Classical Athens*, Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University Press. Remains the most comprehensively researched and lucidly written study to date of children and childhood in classical Athens.
- Laes, Christian (2011b), *Children in the Roman Empire: Outsiders Within*, New York, Cambridge University Press. A highly readable introduction to Roman children and childhood, which engages in cross-cultural comparison, with a variety of cultures and historical periods, to great effect.
- Neils, Jennifer and Oakley, John (eds.) (2003), *Coming of Age in Ancient Greece*, New Haven, Yale University Press. Offers a collection of essays on traditional topics in the study of Greek childhood. It is richly illustrated and includes a short catalog of images and material remains for toys and games.
- Sutton-Smith, B. (1997), *The Ambiguity of Play*, Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press. Examines the concept of child and adult play as it has been defined and debated over the past century by specialists in a variety of disciplines.

## CHAPTER 32

# Slaves

*Kelly L. Wrenhaven*

### 1. Introduction

For many, education in Greek antiquity evokes images of children in classrooms being schooled in music (*mousike*) and letters (*grammata*), much like in the scene on the famous drinking cup by Douris, or outside practicing physical education (*gymnastikē*). In Rome, children were also educated in “reading, writing, and reckoning,” either at home by private tutors or, if they were less wealthy, in classrooms (Bonner 1977). Although by the Roman period education was more evenly spread among the population (most Romans, regardless of their socioeconomic status, had some degree of literacy), in both Greek and Roman antiquity liberal education, or “free education” as Aristotle called it, was generally associated with free persons (*Pol.* 1338a 32–34). This association continues in modern scholarship, where there has been little consideration of slave education, even in books committed to the study of ancient education (for example, Too 2001, where the word *slave* does not even appear in the index).

The issue seems to be one of definition; it is not that scholars fail to recognize that some slaves were literate. Indeed, there is plenty of evidence to the contrary, particularly in the Roman sources (Mohler 1940; Forbes 1955). It is rather that education tends to be restrictively associated with the liberal arts, which was not the most common type of education that slaves received. In Greek antiquity especially, the kind of education described earlier was connected with free children from elite families. What has been termed “liberal” or “elite” education differs significantly from the type of “popular education” that most children, both slave and free, would have received. In contrast to “elite” education, “popular” education was vocational and involved “the transmission of skills in farming or other trades” (Joyal, McDougall, and Yardley 2009: 1). Although “popular” education would therefore have been much more widespread, modern scholarship tends to reflect our source material, which focuses primarily upon the concerns of the wealthier sections of ancient society.



How are we, then, to describe “slave education”? To begin with, when considering the education of slaves, it is crucial to remember that the primary purpose of slaves was to be useful. Aristotle reflects this idea when he famously refers to slaves as “animate tools” (*Pol.* 1253b24–54a13), and there are dozens of examples of slaves described on Greek tombstones as “useful” (*chrestos*) (Scholl 1986: 307). Not surprisingly, slaves were trained in whatever would make them the most useful, whether it was in household duties, crafts, agriculture, entertainment, or in the many other myriad capacities that utilized slave labor in antiquity. To this end, if a slave was required to make perfume, she would be given the appropriate training; if he was required to serve as a doctor, teacher, or weaver, he would be trained to perform these tasks. We must keep in mind, however, that there were few jobs confined to slaves. Free persons also often had to take paid employment, and sometimes worked side by side with slaves (Balme 1984; Brock 1994).

While slaves were educated in most of the same areas as free persons, the purpose of their education was rather different. Unlike free persons, slaves were not educated for their own sake, or to make them better people (in Plato’s *Protagoras*, for example, it is argued that free children are instructed so as to ensure that they are “as good as can be,” 325c5–325d7). Any instruction a slave received was intended to serve as a direct advantage to the master. Educating slaves was an investment, and educated slaves were more lucrative, whether through their work or sale; both Greek and Roman inscriptions indicate that skilled slaves sold for significantly more than unskilled slaves (Carlsen 2010: 81). Any benefit a slave might have received from his education was incidental, at least from the master’s point of view (which is the only point of view that matters in a slave society).

That said, regardless of whose needs the education of slaves served, educated slaves were integral to Greek and Roman society, which relied heavily upon slave labor, from domestic work, to agriculture and crafts, to retail, banking, and teaching. After all, a slave who had no skills at all would not be very useful. The first part of this chapter will focus upon educated slaves, with an emphasis on the types of tasks for which slaves were trained. Since slaves did not receive “elite” education, the word *educated* in this context is broadly defined as the learning of any skill, which includes, but is not limited to, literacy.

The focus of Section 3 is on slaves as educators. While it should come as no surprise that slaves were educated in antiquity, the fact that slaves also served as educators might be less known. It has already been mentioned that some slaves were schoolteachers. Slaves also served as educators in the less formalized capacity of *paedagogi* (child minders) and nurses, where they provided not only practical education, such as how to perform simple, everyday tasks, but also moral education. This is just one of the many paradoxes intrinsic to slavery, namely, that free children in antiquity were cared for and given moral instruction from arguably the most detested figure of all: the slave. The Greeks and Romans certainly recognized this contradiction in terms, but they nonetheless continued to use slaves in the capacity of educators throughout antiquity.

## 2. Educated Slaves

Before discussing educated slaves, it is useful to consider briefly ancient views of education. This is important because, unlike the modern tendency to extol education, the Greeks and Romans did not necessarily view an educated person as de facto better

than a comparatively uneducated person, nor did they seem overly concerned with potential problems that might arise as a result of teaching slaves to read and write. This is in contrast to later slave societies, such as the antebellum American South, where as early as the mid-eighteenth century legislation was passed banning free persons from teaching slaves literacy; in the event that this was done, the accused was liable to a fine, or even to being whipped (South Carolina Act of 1740; Virginia Revised Code of 1819; Monaghan 2007). On the contrary, some ancient sources reflect a general distrust, even a distaste, for education which dates from early Greece and endured throughout the Classical period. In the late sixth century, the philosopher Heraclitus wrote that “learning many things does not make one sensible” (fr. 40). This does not mean, of course, that the Greeks devalued education, but there were certain elements intrinsic to education that were deemed slavish, not least the subservient position of the student, who was subject to corporal punishment, and the low status of early childhood educators. In Plato’s *Lysis*, for example, Socrates criticizes the power that slave *paedagogi* exercised over their free charges, and even goes so far as to compare Lysis’ and Menexenus’ *paedagogi* to divine beings owing to their control over them (208c1–208d2, 223a1–223a5).

The relatively low value placed on education, educators, and the educated is at least partially connected with the idea that wisdom was not something learned, but was rather inborn. As Pindar wrote in the early fifth century BCE, “wise is the man who knows many things by nature” (*Olympian Ode* 2.86). We might compare this to Aristotle’s contention, written a century later, that the natural master, who is naturally free, has the innate ability to reason, whereas the natural slave does not (*Pol.* 1254b 22–24). The purpose of considering these views here is to emphasize that, even if a slave was literate and his master was not, or more broadly, if the slave had some sort of knowledge that his master lacked, this did not make the slave better in the eyes of the Greeks and Romans. Put another way, no matter how much a slave might “know,” this did not make him wise.

Something similar might be said of ancient views of the skilled trades, what the Greeks called *technai*. While today we might praise an artist for creating a beautiful sculpture, painting, or building, such praise was not normally showered upon craftsmen in antiquity. One of the reasons for this is because craftsmen usually came from the lower segments of society, which included poor citizens, resident aliens (metics), freedmen, and slaves. Since craftsmen worked for pay and were dependent upon customers to make their living, they were seen as “slavish,” whether slave or legally free. With some exception, the Greeks and Romans did not normally recognize or concern themselves with the idea of individual talent; “the craftsman followed his trade as a bee gathered honey or a spider span its web, and that was that” (Burford 1972: 185). In order to distinguish themselves from the working class, it was important for elite members of ancient society “to maintain an independence of occupation ... and at all costs to avoid seeming to work in a ‘slavish’ way for another” (Fisher 1998: 70). Aristotle in his *Rhetoric* pointedly defines a free man as one who does not live under the control of another (1367a27), which included the relationship between a craftsman and his customer. The menial trades of craftsmen were even thought to be reflected in their bodies and characters, which were considered suitably stooped and misshapen by labor. The bodies of elite free men, on the other hand, were considered beautifully formed by athletic exercise, which was associated with those who had the leisure to commit time and energy

to this pursuit (Wrenhaven 2012: 55–57, 63–64). The distinction made between the bodies of laborers and the leisured wealthy even found its way into the law. In the second century BCE, a law was passed in the Macedonian city of Beroea banning slaves and marketplace types (e.g., craftsmen and merchants) from using the gymnasium and anointing themselves with oil, since their very presence was considered contaminating (Hubbard 2003: 85, source 2.28=SEG 27.261, Gymnastic Law from Beroea).

In view of such ideas, the Greeks and Romans did not see a conflict between education and slavery. On the contrary, it was taken for granted that as much use should be made of slaves as possible, and that meant training them to perform a variety of tasks, whether this involved reading or writing, or some other skill. There was even some discussion about how best to educate slaves. Ischomachus in Xenophon's *Oeconomicus* discusses at length how to train bailiffs and other chattel slaves (12.3–14.10), a topic which was also of great interest to Roman agronomists, particularly Cato, Varro, and Columella. Columella posits that “the future *vilicus* must be taught, in the same way as the future potter or carpenter” (*De re rustica* I praef. 5 and 11.1.4–5; Carlsen 2010: 77–86).

To this end, slaves in Greek and Roman antiquity could be seen occupied at virtually every task, with the exception of political and religious offices. Many slaves did, however, serve as clerks and civil servants, which would have provided them with ample opportunity to learn about civic affairs and laws. Although most of these slaves would have been state owned (what the Greeks called *demosioi*), some were hired out by their masters on contracts. The fourth-century BCE Attic manumission inscriptions (or *phialai exeleutherikai*, “freedmen’s bowls”) list over three hundred privately owned (chattel) slaves, including a *grammateus* (“secretary”) and a *hypogrammateus* (“under-secretary”) (IG II<sup>2</sup> 1556.14; 1561.32). In Athens, some public slaves were trained to identify fraudulent coins and worked at tables in the Athenian marketplace (*agora*) and port (Piraeus). These *dokimastai* (“coin-testers”) held significant authority over the regulation of silver coins, which they had the power to confiscate at their discretion (for the inscription and commentary, see Osborne and Rhodes 2007: 112–118). Similarly, some chattel slaves were able to gain wealth and prestige as bankers, even securing their freedom and, in some cases, citizenship (for banking slaves, see Cohen 1992: 61–110). Slaves involved in mercantile trade also exercised a considerable amount of freedom and control, and even had some legal power (Cohen 2000: 139–141).

Similarly, in Rome some slaves were highly skilled and held a significant amount of power within their sphere of operation. Arguably the most notable evidence for this is the *Familia Caesaris*, which refers to the personnel, comprising slaves and freedmen, who served the Roman imperial family until at least the third century (Weaver 1972). Besides a range of slaves serving as personal servants, cooks, butlers, and footmen, there were also many slaves occupied as various grades of clerks and financial administrators, all of which would presumably have required a certain degree of literacy. We must keep in mind, however, that such highly skilled and important slaves were in the minority and constitute exceptional cases.

Most slaves belonged to private individuals and were trained in domestic or agricultural tasks, or both depending upon the needs of the masters. As a reflection of their very real importance within Greek households, slave characters were a predictable part of the background of many Greek plays; some even had important roles, such as the nurse in Euripides’ tragedy *Hippolytus*, whose lack of discretion is one of the major factors

leading to the unraveling of the household. In Athenian court speeches, moreover, slaves are frequently mentioned as witnesses to household events. That said, in Greek society the roles of most slaves were versatile and lacked specialization (Andreau and Descat 2011: 67–68). Roman masters, on the other hand, tended to think of slaves as divided into two categories based upon the kinds of work they performed most: city slaves (*familia urbana*) and country slaves (*familia rustica*). City slaves usually worked in crafts and trade, while country slaves were occupied primarily with agricultural tasks. Since slaves were defined more by what they did than where they lived, however, an urban slave might live in the country but be occupied in some sort of craft or vending, while a country slave might live on an urban estate but be involved with a “rustic” task, such as gardening or the production of oil (Joshel 2010: 162, 168, 183).

Although we know a great deal about the types of work slaves performed in ancient societies, it should be clear by now that most of the evidence we have for slave education is indirect, stemming from references made to slaves in Greek and Roman literature, where slaves were assumed to be part of the domestic and urban settings. There is also a relatively large amount of inscriptional evidence in which slaves are sometimes mentioned, along with their occupational designations. In general, there was very little interest in discussing slavery, let alone the education of slaves. We must, therefore, deduce information about the types of education slaves received from the types of work they performed. The previously mentioned Attic manumission inscriptions provide some important details about slave occupations in Athens in the fourth century BCE (Lewis 1959 and 1968). They list slaves who worked as retailers of a variety of products, from salted fish to frankincense, as well as smiths, shoemakers, launderers, and vine dressers, to name a few, and provide a detailed picture of the myriad occupations of slaves in this ancient city. If we are to assume that these lists are typical representations of the types of slaves manumitted in ancient Athens during the fourth century BCE, then it appears that it was the skilled slaves who were freed most often, perhaps because they were the most likely to be able to accumulate enough money to purchase their own freedom.

While masters provided their slaves with training, either themselves or through apprenticeships (see Chapter 33), we must not overlook the fact that many slaves must also have learned through “an informal exchange of knowledge between master and slave or slave and slave” (Mohler 1940: 263). Learned men doubtless often discussed matters of interest with their closest slaves, perhaps while strolling around their estates or through the city streets. Moreover, formal teaching, of the type that took place in schools, tended to be restricted to the lower segments of society, so elite men who were of the teaching persuasion conceivably indulged their desire to instruct with their slaves. Even if their masters did not directly include them in discussions, slaves could learn simply by being present during conversations between their masters and other free persons. The Greeks and Romans were well aware of the fact that their closest slaves had extensive knowledge of their affairs, a reality which put slaves in a peculiar position of power. Some slaves also learned by simply attending with their charges during their lessons. A famous example is Quintus Remmius Palaemon, who was a weaver before he was chosen to be a *paedagogus*. He was able to learn a great deal by listening in on lectures and, after being granted his freedom, became one of Rome’s most famous grammarians (Suetonius, *Grammatici* 23). Within larger Roman households, some slaves even attended “schools” called *paedagogia*. These informal schools were useful for

a variety of reasons, including occupying young, bright slaves who might otherwise have posed a disciplinary problem, and training them early on to execute important functions within the household, such as relaying messages and performing administrative tasks (Mohler 1940).

In short, all slaves received instruction in something, and some more than others. Although some slaves might have entered slavery already educated (as former free persons), most slaves were educated informally, whether by their masters or by other people put in charge of their education.

### 3. Slaves as Educators

Considering the lowly position of slaves, it might come as a surprise that slaves served as educators in Greek and Roman society. Free men, however, were largely unwilling to take on teaching, which was considered demanding and servile work, for any length of time, so slaves were often used to mind and to teach children. As Plato wrote, “Of all wild beasts, the child is the most difficult to manage” (*Laws* 808d). Although the practice of entrusting the education of free children to slaves was common and expected, this practice did not go uncriticized. Plutarch, for one, lamented the fact that some fathers make slaves who are useless for any other task *paedagogi* (*Moralia* 14 a–b). Similarly, Pericles is said to have commented when he saw a slave fall from a tree: “There’s another *paedagogus*” (Hieronymus of Rhodes ap. Stob., Flor. 31.121).

But what exactly did a *paedagogus* do? In general, these were adult male slaves who were put in charge of young boys from the age of six, the time when boys entered formal education. Not all boys would have had *paedagogi*, only those who came from wealthier families who could afford slave attendants. The primary role of *paedagogi* was not so much to instruct in reading and writing (although there is some evidence that they helped with homework; see Plutarch *Marcus Cato* 20.4), but rather to supervise their charges and act as their guardians. In Plato’s *Lysis*, the young man tells Socrates that his *paedagogus* leads him to school (208c). This was not only to ensure that the boy actually went to school, but also to protect him from possible advances by older men along the way.

What *paedagogi* are perhaps best known for, however, was demanding strict discipline from their charges, which indicates that they were entrusted with educating boys in proper behavior. *Paedagogi* apparently used straps and staffs to punish recalcitrant boys (Young 1990: 83–84), and a terracotta from Myrina depicts a *paedagogus* twisting the ear of a presumably disobedient boy (Daremberg and Saglio 1907: IV.272). This method of punishment is also mentioned by Plutarch, who claims that Cato did not think it right that his son should have his ears tweaked by a slave *paedagogus*, and so decided to educate his son himself (*Marcus Cato* 20.4). Yet, judging by the frequent representation of *paedagogi* in ancient literature and art, Cato’s misgivings do not seem to have been shared by the greater part of Greek and Roman society. *Paedagogi* must have been a familiar sight in the ancient cities, as they accompanied their charges through the streets or minded them at festivals and in theaters, where they sat together. *Paedagogi* are relatively common characters in Greek tragedy and comedy; they also appear in Greek and Roman art, where they are shown as mature, bearded men overlooking boys as they take their lessons, or holding their charges’ hands as they walk (Young 1990).

While the primary task of the *paedagogus* seems to have been to ensure proper behavior, there is also evidence of a close bond that could develop between the *paedagogus* and his charge. In a comedy by the Greek poet Menander, the *paedagogus* Daos, an Asiatic slave, opens the play with a monologue describing the (presumed) loss of his master in battle. In a reflection of affection that often accompanied such relationships, Daos sounds much like a father, lamenting that his master lost his life so early, before he was able to enjoy the fruits of his campaign and see his sister married off (*Aspis* 1–10). This play also provides evidence that some *paedagogoi* remained the companions of their charges, even after they had grown into young men. Several Attic tombstones have been found for slave *paedagogoi*, which were erected, no doubt, by affectionate masters to memorialize their most trusted slaves.

The female counterpart to the *paedagogus* is the slave nurse (although not all nurses were slaves, only the poorest free women would take on this task and then only for a short period of time). Unlike the *paedagogus*, however, nurses cared for both male and female children in their infancy; many nursed the infants in place of the mothers, which frequently resulted in a strong bond between nurses and their charges that, like the *paedagogus*, carried through to adulthood. One of the litigants in an Athenian court speech claims that he took back into his home an elderly widow who had been his wet nurse, even though she had long ago been freed by his father (Ps.-Dem. 47.55). It is further noteworthy that the majority of Greek tombstones commemorating slaves are for nurses. These memorials, some of which must have been rather costly, often include not only the nurse's name and her occupation, but also beautifully carved reliefs in which the nurses look little different from free Athenian women (Wrenhaven 2012: 92–100).

Although boys would typically come under the watchful eye of a *paedagogus* by school age, girls would continue under the guardianship of their nurses well into womanhood, sometimes even after marriage. Nurses not only fed and otherwise cared for their charges, like *paedagogoi*, they also provided companionship, guidance, and moral instruction. In a reflection of their importance within Greek households, Athenian drama furnishes several examples of nurses, who were among the most important slave characters (Karydas 1998). They can often be found offering advice to their mistresses and sometimes even admonishing them for immodest behavior (surprising, coming from a lowly slave). In Euripides' *Hippolytus*, Phaedra's nurse tells her mistress to sit still and be calm, reminding her that she is not the only woman to have endured hardship. She even reprimands her for speaking out in public, behavior that is not seen as becoming of an elite woman in Greek society (207–214). Although the nurse was a common feature of Greek literature and art, there appears to have been little formal discussion of this important job. Roman sources, on the other hand, show a great deal of concern for the qualities of the wet nurse in particular. Not only were they concerned about the nurse's health, but also her moral qualities. Doctors urged parents to choose wet nurses who were wise, clean, good-tempered, and self-controlled with respect to eating and drinking. That said, some Roman writers, such as Tacitus and Favorinus, criticized their fellow citizens for choosing wet nurses carelessly and apparently at random (Aly 1996: 87–88).

We might compare the ancient slave nurse to the American mammy, who was likewise well known for her strong, matronly, and seemingly indispensable presence within the household. Like the slave nurse, the mammy was also the first to receive newborns, the first to nurse them, and the first to teach them to walk, to talk, and to behave properly.

In both contexts, the fact that slave women, and *paedagogi* for that matter, were entrusted with such important tasks as raising free children and instructing them on behavior appropriate for their status paradoxically contrasts with the low expectations of slaves in general.

While the education provided by slave *paedagogi* and nurses might be considered informal, slaves also served as teachers of both free and slave children. Similar to the task of child minding, it was usually only the poorest of free persons who would take on the task of being a schoolteacher, and then only for a short duration. In a famous speech, the Athenian orator Demosthenes vilifies Aeschines' father for being a schoolteacher (*On the Crown* 129). Although there is some doubt as to whether Aeschines' father was ever a slave, or even a schoolteacher, Demosthenes clearly expected to stir up the contempt of the jurors, which indicates that this occupation was viewed as servile. Slaves, on the other hand, neither had the luxury to choose their occupation, nor to worry much about reputation. As early as the fifth century BCE in Athens, slaves seem to have received some sort of formal instruction, probably by teachers who were themselves slaves. Although it is no longer extant, the comic poet Pherecrates is said to have written a play entitled *Doulodidascolus*, "The Slave-Teacher" (Athen. 6.262b–c). The duties in which slaves were instructed were almost surely those pertaining to servile work, namely, the skilled or semi-skilled trades and other duties (Arist. *Politics* 1255b 22–30; Joyal, McDougall, and Yardley 2009: 8.22; POxy 724).

In Rome, similarly, since schoolteachers worked for pay, this occupation tended to be confined to men of the lowest class and slaves (Plut., *Roman Questions* 278e). Indeed, until the education of children became more formalized in the later Republican period, many wealthy Roman boys appear to have been taught letters at home by Greek slave *paedagogi* (Plut., *Marcus Cato* 20.4–5). Although some children continued to be educated by private tutors, by the second century BCE most families utilized the less costly public schools. The invariably low status of teachers might be one of the reasons for the correspondingly low opinion of early childhood education expressed by many Roman writers. Moreover, the relatively straightforward teaching of letters, which was the primary focus of early education, was seen as something which did not require a great deal of learning on the part of the teacher (one might compare this to Greek ideas about crafts). Quintilian, for instance, laments that many *grammatici* of his day were going beyond the limits of their craft and were also attempting to teach rhetoric, a study which he felt should be restricted to men of more advanced learning (2.2.1–8).

As mentioned earlier, many Roman households also incorporated formal instruction for slave children called *paedagogia*. The teachers were usually slaves themselves, or at the most, freedmen, and were designated *paedagogi puerorum*, which means, rather vaguely, "minders of children." As was the case with the *paedagogi* of free children, these teachers demanded strict discipline from their charges, which was of particular importance for slaves (Mohler 1940: 267).

Although there is no question that teaching, at the lower levels at least, was not a highly esteemed profession, just as *paedagogi* and nurses were held in high regard, some students valued and esteemed their teachers. Expensive tombs were sometimes erected by free and slave (former?) students and vice versa (Forbes 1955: 267). As is the case with any study of the ancient world, although we are limited to what remains, the original picture would have been much more complex than our ancient sources would lead us to believe.

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In recent years, there has been little direct consideration of slave education. The most comprehensive studies to date remain Mohler 1940 and Forbes 1955. There are, however, several helpful discussions of slave education as part of broader topics. Weaver 1972 includes a detailed discussion of the institution of Roman paedagogia; Golden 1990 examines the special role that *paedagogi* and



nurses played in raising children; Young 1990 considers the representation of *paedagogi* in Greek art and literature; Karydas 1998 provides a fascinating study of the figure of the nurse in Greek epic and tragedy, where the nurse often acts as a moral compass (for better or worse); Cohen 2000 discusses at length the evidence for wealthy slaves in Athens, which presupposes that many slaves were educated; Joyal, McDougall, and Yardley 2009 include several references from ancient authors concerning different types of education and views of teachers; and Carlsen 2010 provides an insightful study of the training of slaves as bailiffs. Also useful are studies of occupations frequently undertaken by slaves, which again presuppose a certain amount of training on the part of slaves. The most in-depth study of ancient craftsmen remains Burford 1972, which includes discussions of the relationship between craftsmen and their patrons, and views of manual labor in Greek and Roman society. For more general examinations of ancient slavery, Fisher 2001 provides an admirably concise yet comprehensive study of Greek slavery, and Joshel 2010 is a useful introduction to Roman slavery, which focuses primarily upon slavery from a sociohistorical perspective. For a recent study of the similarities and differences between Greek and Roman slavery, see Andreau and Descat 2011.

## CHAPTER 33

# Masters and Apprentices

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*Christian Laes*

### 1. Introduction

According to his eloquent epitaph which survived from Spanish Tarragona (Roman Tarraco), Iulius Statutus must have been a nice man and a gentle master. He is described as wealthy, kind, and well-mannered. He enjoyed the simple things in life: having a bath at the first and the sixth hour of the day (*sexta*—the Spanish siesta immediately comes to mind) and the good company of friends. He had earned this comfortable life with his profession as a goldsmith—counting men, women, and girls among his clientele. When he died, his three apprentices, all of equal skill and age, took over the workshop. One of them, named Secundinius Felicissimus, solemnly promised to make annual vows on the remembrance day of his master’s death. The sad occasion gave the opportunity for some typically rhetorical wordplay: the apprentices were taking over the workshop (*statio*) of their master named Statutus; and the apprentice was Felicissimus (“the most happy”), in name only (*nomine tantum*) (RIT 447).

At first sight, this text looks like a snapshot of daily life in a Roman province. But on second thoughts, most of what we would like to know is left unsaid. At what age did the three apprentices enter their master’s workshop? Where did they come from? Were they all of free status (from his name, we can be certain that at least Secundinius Felicissimus was a free person)? Did they board with Iulius Statutus, or did they return each night to their homes? How were they paid for their work? Who took care of their clothing, food, and other needs? Did Iulius Statutus have a wife and children of his own? If so, why are they not mentioned in this inscription, and why did he not choose to have them as his main assistants in the workshop instead? Is it possible that he also placed his children with another artisan? And was the kind and congenial relationship between master and apprentice as it appears from this inscription typical of Statutus’ age, or was it rather an exception to the rule which therefore needed to be stressed all the more?

In this chapter, I will approach the phenomenon of apprenticeship from three different levels: daily reality, economical background, and the educational attitude that underlay such working relations. Also, I will include some cases which may look like apprenticeship, but possibly obscure a quite different reality for at least the children involved. I define artisans as people relying on a technical skill to perform their profession: in societies which were lacking technical or professional schools, such skills were transferred in a working relation between a master and his apprentice.

## 2. Daily Life of Masters and Apprentices

The most detailed accounts of the practicalities of the daily life of masters and apprentices are apprenticeship contracts which have come down to us from Roman Egypt, numbering about fifty papyri. As in many issues, one must question whether a practice of the province of Egypt can be generalized as typical for the whole Roman Empire. Since none of the papyri mentions a typical regional trade, and since Roman legal regulations seem to point very much in the same direction, there is no reason to doubt that these contracts could have been found more broadly in the empire.

Let us start with a short though typical example of such an apprenticeship contract, dating from the late second century CE, from the town of Oxyrhynchos:

Platonis, who is also called Ophelia, daughter of Horeion, from the city of Oxyrhynchos, together with her guardian, her brother Platon, has come to an agreement with the weaver Lucius Tisaius, son of mother Ision, originating from the Little Oasis.

Platonis, who is also called Ophelia, will hand over to Lucius the underage slave girl Thermouthion, whom she has in her possession, for a period of four years, beginning from the sixth month Tubi of the current year.

Such are the conditions. She will feed and clothe the slave girl, and bring her to her master each single day from sunrise to sunset. The girl will do everything the master commands her regarding the aforementioned art. In the first year, her wage will be eight drachmas per month, in the second year twelve drachmas, in the third year sixteen drachmas, and in the fourth twenty drachmas per month. Each year, the master will give the girl eighteen days off during the feasts. If she shall be ill or late on certain days, then she will compensate the master in due time. The taxes on craftsmen and the expenses are for the master, .... (*P. Oxy.* 14.1647)

Though weavers are the most often mentioned in the apprenticeship contracts, other professions appear: builder, carpet weaver, stenographer, wool comber, embroiderer, brocade worker, nail maker, physician, coppersmith, and embalmer. The duration of the training varied from one to eight years (in the case of the brocade worker) and averaged between two and three years.

There is just one contract that specifies the age of the apprentice: a fourteen-year-old slave girl worked as a weaver in Antinoopolis (*PSI* 241). Some documents explicitly state that the child was underage, and all were signed by parents, masters, or other relatives. The apprentice was never considered a legal person, which makes an age in the early teens for entering the apprenticeship quite likely (fourteen being the age of legal majority in Egyptian law).

Regarding the gender of the children concerned, most of them were free boys (over 75 percent of the apprenticeship contracts' cases). There is only one attestation of an apprenticed freeborn girl (*P. Heid.* 4.326), though there may be two more late ancient cases (Van Minnen 1998). Apparently, learning a trade securely at home seems to have been the norm for free girls.

Furthermore, the apprenticeship contracts imply that most children involved did not come from the lowest classes. These were typically agreements between the slightly better-off people from the so-called "middling classes": through mutual agreement, they apprenticed their children to fellow artisans in order to invest in their future skills. They likewise apprenticed their slaves: about 25 percent of the contracts concern slave children (six of whom were girls; Laes 2008: 277). All girl slaves mentioned in the papyri were trained in the art of weaving. None of the crafts seems connected specifically to the children's free status or slave status.

Free boys were usually sent by their fathers, and occasionally by their mothers, grandparents, or brothers. From a sample of 26 apprentice contracts, 42 percent (11 contracts) were made by someone other than fathers (Krause 1995). Demographical calculations for Roman antiquity estimate that about 30 percent of children had lost their fathers by the age of thirteen. At age sixteen, this amounts to 40 percent (Scheidel 2009: 34–36). Being fatherless thus had a limited impact on the possibility of being apprenticed. Quite often, fathers made the decision to place their children as apprentices: their learning a new trade could be an investment for the family business.

Some contracts provide further details about the daily lives of masters and their pupils. As in the example cited earlier, some apprentices were required to work from sunrise to sundown, and could only return home at night. In other instances, the apprentice lodged at the master's. Here, the distance between the home and the workshop, as well as the availability of accommodations in the master's home, could have contributed to the choice of arrangements. Contrary to the Oxyrhynchos agreement concerning the girl Thermouthion, some contracts stipulate that the master is required to provide food and clothing for his apprentice. Conditions regarding holidays, as well as for days of absence and illness, appear regularly in the agreements, often providing compensation for the master. Four contracts mention a kind of exam that the apprentice would need to take in the presence of others at the end of the training period (Bergamasco 1995: 129–134 on regulations and stipulations). One boy insisted that he should be allowed to conclude his apprenticeship with a test before a master other than his own father. Acknowledgment and recognition by a non-relative apparently guaranteed greater objectivity. The master pledged to refund a certain sum should the result of the apprenticeship be unsatisfactory (*P. Oxy.* 2.275).

### 3. The Economic Rationale for Apprenticeship

Was it economically profitable for a Roman father to apprentice his son in a trade different from the one the boy could be taught in his own family? And did it make financial sense to a master to accept an apprentice and thus incur the risk of having an inexperienced workforce in his shop?

Since we lack material such as financial acts of guilds or extended bookkeeping accounts of private enterprises, it may seem impossible to answer such questions authoritatively. But ancient historians are accustomed to utilizing even the smallest scrap of evidence, and more can indeed be extracted from the inscriptional source material. For the city of Rome, Cameron Hawkins has identified about 1,220 inscriptions referring to workers whom we might term artisans, 146 (12 percent) of which point to at least one unambiguous relationship of the artisan involved (Hawkins 2006: 149–150). In this collection, Hawkins was able to demonstrate an overwhelming pattern of servile links (relationships founded on slavery, mainly slaveholders commemorating freed slaves and vice versa), a relatively small percentage (10 percent) attesting to relationships between members of a nuclear family, and an even smaller sample (5 percent) of son-to-father dedications (Hawkins 2006: 147–159 and 269–271). Of course, Hawkins' method might be questioned. One must imagine that an artisan father could honor his deceased son without explicitly identifying himself as an artisan on the tombstone. For the passers-by who somehow knew the family, or even through the use of gravestone iconography, it might have been obvious that the inscription had been erected in the context of an artisan's family. Such an epitaph would consequently not appear in the collection studied by Hawkins. Hawkins, however, is most cautious in his handling the evidence: he compares these epitaphs with commemorative patterns as they appear in epigraphical collections unrelated to artisans, and he introduces a sound collection of data from comparative evidence from much later periods in Western history. I therefore consider his conclusion most plausible. It appears that most artisans (with the exception of such highly specialized professions as doctors) tended to have their sons work outside the family business. In artisan's families, family labor did not play the vital role it has often been believed to have played: instead, slave workers, freedmen, and apprentices from other families were far more important (Hawkins 2006: 159–179).

Similar research has been done for the late antique city of Rome, specifically for the fourth to early sixth century CE. Here 220 inscriptions refer to artisans, a mere 16 percent (36 out of 220) reveal information about the relationship between dedicators and dedicatees. In this sample, the nuclear family is prominent: at least 70 percent ( $n = 12$ ) for a first sample (artisan commemorated) and 58 percent ( $n = 11$ ) for the second category (artisan commemorator). Apprentices or *discentes* are seldom mentioned. Slaves do not appear at all. The changed commemorative pattern from the late antique inscriptional sample might thus reflect a change in the artisans' household strategy: as slavery was in decline and economic growth stagnated, they resorted less to sending their own children away in order to learn another trade. Instead, the profession became more like a family business. Artisans in Rome had always been subject to unstable demand, caused by the occasional call of capricious elite customers, fragmentation (guilds were not regulating forces and whoever wanted to set up a shop of his own could do so), seasonality, weather, and various factors which caused temporary migration of the well-to-do. There was usually a shortage in the skilled and specialized labor force: the presence of apprentices, even the ownership of a slave, might have been a solution to this problem. When artisans found themselves short of temporary workers, they did not hesitate to call on their wives or children as auxiliary forces. In better times, the latter could be sent away to learn a trade which might come in handy for the family business. The decline in the Roman population from the fourth century CE onward undoubtedly contributed to

the progression toward family business: fewer children or slaves were apprenticed, as smaller and less affluent artisan shops simply tried to cope in economically less prosperous times (Laes 2015).

#### 4. Apprenticeship and Educational Attitudes

The discussion of the treatment of young apprentices—and the educational attitude which underlie it—often ends in judgments about ancient educational practice. Obviously, the inscription to master Statutus cited at the beginning of this chapter belongs to the positive side of the picture. It is not too difficult to find other examples, such as the metric epitaph from Nicomedia whereby the tailor-patcher Euphras remembers his master Vitalis, who died at age thirty-five. The young age of the deceased as well as the Greek diction leads one to suppose that Euphras had lived in Vitalis' home since early childhood, possibly as a foundling or alumnus. Benevolent kindness seems to have been the guiding principle of Vitalis' educational style (Drexhage 2002). Christian evidence could likewise be adduced, as the following short and touching epitaph from the city of Rome: “To the holy and good spirit of Florentius, who lived for thirteen years. His master Coritus, who loved him more than if he had been his own son, erected this stone together with mother Coideus for her son who well deserved it” (*CIL* 6.10013; Diehl *ILCV* 3393). Obviously, abuse or harsh treatment would not have been mentioned on a gravestone which serves commemorative purposes.

Regarding the darker side of the picture, scholars have pointed to the second-century writer and satirist Lucian who claims to have run away after being thrashed by his uncle-master after having broken a marble plaque on his first day of work (Lucian. *Dream* 1–5). Similarly, some legal passages have been presented (Thomas 1961): the case of the cobbler who—with the intention of punishing and teaching (*monendi et docendi causa*), though not intending to cause permanent damage (*non faciendae iniuriae causa*)—accidentally blinded his freeborn apprentice boy with his last (*Dig.* 9.2.5.3); or the mentions of apprentices fleeing to escape harsh punishment (*Dig.* 21.1.17.5). A lead tablet from the Athenian Agora of the fourth century BCE preserves the story of a freeborn apprentice who was suspended and beaten by his master: “I am perishing from being whipped; I am tied up; I am treated like dirt more and more” (Jordan 2000). The case of young Lucian, who eventually runs away to find his own destiny, thereby rejecting parental expectations, can hardly be considered representative of the life experience of young people in antiquity; and the legal records, of course, attest to problem cases.

Is there no way of placing a discussion of the educational practices of apprenticeship in a broader context? Education in antiquity certainly included an amount of physical punishment hardly tolerable to our present-day Western sensibilities (Laes 2005). Comparative evidence from the seventeenth-century city of London mentions excessive abuse of apprentices, either by their masters or by slightly older apprentices. Disciplining through corporal punishment was, by law, one of the tasks of mentors in seventeenth-century London. But even in such scenarios, apprentices did not shy away from taking legal action against their masters if they had inflicted serious physical or psychological abuse on them (Smith 1973). Furthermore, the subject of proximity and personal

attachment needs to be taken into account. Unlike the schoolmaster or the grammarian, the craftsman was not a social outsider or inferior to his pupils: he belonged to the same social class as the parents of the apprentice. Apprentices stayed with their mentors for at least a whole working day, sometimes even overnight. As such, the artisan master could become an example, a role model, even a new sort of father. It is possible that he had a considerable impact on the life of the young people entrusted to him. This was a major difference from *ludimagistri*, who taught their pupils for just a few hours a day in a subject matter that was entirely foreign to them and that, certainly in the case of children of the lower classes, seemed to have little bearing on daily reality (Frasca 1999: 150–153).

## 5. Apprenticing, Selling, and Pawning: The Grey Circuit?

That apprenticeship was linked with other forms of child labor is clear from the apprenticeship contracts themselves, which do not constitute a self-evident category of their own (Vuolanto 2003 and forthcoming). In the year 16 BCE, the master smith Nilus admits that the contractual bond with his apprentice had come to an end, as the parents had paid off the loan of 100 drachmas he had given them for the apprenticeship of their son (*BGU* 4.1124). One wonders what would have happened to the boy in event that his parents were unable to pay off the loan. In 10 BCE, a boy worked seven years till a debt was completely paid off (*BGU* 4.1154), while some forty years later an oil maker complained that an apprentice girl had run away from him. She was the daughter of a man to whom he had loaned money, and apparently served as a pledge (*P. Ryl.* 128). The working conditions of such apprentices might have been quite similar to those of fellow colleagues, though it is equally possible that more discipline or constraint was applied. And what is one to think about the case of a leading councilor of Alexandria who murdered a prostitute around the year 360 CE? The court awarded the mother of the girl compensation: her daughter had been her main income. The mother is depicted as being old and poor, and she had therefore given her daughter to a pimp. In a sense, the girl also came to the brothel to learn a trade; but in all likelihood her daily life reality was different from that of other apprentices (*BGU* 4.1024 esp. 7.lines 8–18; see Kotsifou 2009: 350 for a detailed discussion). The phenomenon of lending out children as apprentices and labor forces was very much one of *longue durée*. In Coptic papyri from the eighth century, parents gave their children to monasteries. These documents are not about novitiates or oblation; rather, they deal with ownership, economic transaction, and the work to be performed by the children (Kotsifou 2009: 351–352; Schroeder 2009).

Working relations which began as apprenticeships might have resulted in other realities. In Justinian's *Novellae*, there is a case in which creditors have actually taken their debtor's children as slaves and even leased them out (*Nov.* 134.7). And at the end of the 590s, tradesman Cosmas Syrus was so badly in debt that he had to give his children to his creditors. Pope Gregory the Great discreetly ordered his deacon to inquire about the case in order to have the children redeemed (Greg. M., *Epist.* 3.55 and 4.43).

In the year 527 CE, Cassiodorus famously described a market in Lucania where girls and boys were up for sale (*sub pretio*) (Cass., *Var.* 8.33.4). He stresses that “slavery” meant an advantage for these children. Instead of having to perform the arduous chores in the country, their parents provided them with more comfortable jobs as employees of a master in town. Technically speaking, Cassiodorus is not talking about slave children (he explicitly uses the term *libertas*). It is rather about freeborn boys and girls who are being sent by their parents to a third party in town. Was this an apprenticeship, hired servitude, or a condition resembling that of a slave? We must recognize as a grey zone the intersection of the technicalities of law and the realities of this group of children. Under Roman law, it was not possible to sell freeborn children into slavery, since this signified a transgression of the status of *ingenuus* to *servus*. Sales of children occurred, but it was a taboo met with social stigma—not least for those involved in the trade—and was thus preferably shrouded in silence or concealed by tacit mutual agreements. Summarizing earlier Constantinian legislation, the Justinian Codex acknowledged exceptions in cases where the child was bought as a newborn (*sanguinolentus*) and the parents were forced by poverty or necessity (*paupertas, egestas*) (CJ 4.43.1–2; 534 CE; see Vuolanto 2003: 185–186). To return to the example of Cassiodorus: the boys or girls taken away from their parents in order to live in a town could have encountered a sheer variety of living conditions, which all depended on the interplay between such numerous factors as the master’s attitude; their parents’ relationship or acquaintance with the master; their own abilities and skills in coping with the situation; their age, life experience, and gender; and the new environment which they confronted. There is no need to depict a bleak and somber image, but naive optimism is likewise misplaced.

## 6. Concluding Remarks

The utilization of children is a key concept to understanding ancient attitudes toward childhood and education. Nowhere is this more apparent than in apprenticeship documents, where children’s training and upbringing are carefully regulated by contract in which the children are only silent third parties. Behind these regulations lay an economic rationale which at least implicitly recognized the economic value of the training of skilled labor as an investment for the future. Owing to such factors as close proximity and the importance of the role model, the educational attitudes and practices of apprenticeship differed quite drastically from training in schools, though at the same time the authoritarian and more violent approach played an important role in both institutions.

A closer analysis of some borderline cases informs us that the lines between apprenticeship, servitude, and slavery—even those between freedom and slavery—were not always as clear-cut as a strictly legal perspective would encourage us to believe.

Unfortunately, we have no first-hand description of the lives of apprentices. But this absence of evidence should not lead us to any anachronistic interpretation, either by stressing the dark side or the rosy picture—such as appears in some of the more positive epitaphs. Both anthropologists and historians have taught us that the “instrumental” attitudes toward children can be combined with emotional attachment to and involvement with the younger members of society.



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### FURTHER READING

Essential introductions to child labor in the Roman Empire, with due attention to the master–apprentice relationships, include Schulz-Falkenthal (1972); Bradley (1991); Bergamasco (1995); Petermandl (1997); Laes (2008); and Laes (2011: 148–221). Hawkins (2006) is an excellent doctoral dissertation which sheds a new light on the economic rationale of apprenticeship among artisans. Publications by Vuolanto (2003 and forthcoming) have drawn our attention to phenomena which were often closely linked to apprenticeship: the selling and pawning of children.

## CHAPTER 34

# Military Training

*Preston Bannard*

### 1. Greece

With the notable exception of Sparta, the states of Greece in the period before the Peloponnesian War seem to have had relatively little formal military training, either before or during military service. Thus, Aristotle wrote of the Spartans that “they used to excel not because they trained their young men in this manner, but because they alone trained and their opponents did not” (Aristotle, *Pol.* 8.3.4 1338b). Xenophon echoes this thought (specifically discussing Athens): “I tell you, just because the state does not publicly train for war, you must not cultivate it any less yourself” (Xenophon, *Mem.* 3.12.5). In place of formal military training was gymnastics, which Plutarch (*Mor.* 639c), Lucian (*Anach.* 24), and Plato (*Rep.* 3.404) all point to as specifically serving the function of training for warfare. Generals such as Epaminondas and Philopoemen advocated specific gymnastic exercises that focused on agility, eschewing those that aimed at strength. Likewise dance was recognized as a valuable tool for training; as Athenaeus (14.628f. ) writes:

And Socrates in his works says that the most beautiful dancers are the best in warlike matters ... for dancing was very like military maneuvers, and was a display not only of discipline but also of care for the body.

The last element of this informal military training was hunting; Xenophon in his treatise *On Hunting* encourages youths “not to look down on hunting or other education, for from these men become good in war ...” (1.18). Between exercises in the *gymnasium*, the ritual dances, and hunting, men were expected to gain all they needed to be well prepared for war. Notably absent, as Anderson (1970) points out, is weapons training; the hoplite weaponry was apparently considered straightforward enough not to require significant training beyond what was received through dance and the hunt.

There is likewise little evidence for any training that takes place during military service at this time; Wheeler argues that the simple logistics of so many men running together in armor would have required some form of “preliminary training” (2007: 208), but he provides no specific evidence in support of this view. Pritchett, in contrast, describes the organization of the phalanx as “relatively simple,” (1974: 230) and doubts the Greeks’ proficiency in training and formation rose above an “elemental level”; Van Wees (2004) and Lendon (2005) agree. Even Sparta, as Hodkinson (2006) convincingly argues, likely conducted little training in military maneuvers; instead, according to Xenophon, they required all Spartans to practice gymnastics regularly throughout the campaign. Ultimately, this is the major difference of Spartan training; what in other states was left to the initiative of the individual, whether training for military service or training while in military service, in Sparta was rigorously enforced by law and custom.

The major exception to this general practice was elite groups of fighters—several states had small corps of citizens whose training was paid for by the state. Pritchett (1974) surveys each of the seven such groups for which we have evidence, stretching from the Syracusan Six Hundred as early as 461 BCE to the Carthaginian 2500 from 340 to 310 BCE, with the most prominent being the Theban Sacred Band and the Argive One Thousand. As Pritchett points out, the existence of these elite groups that did train regularly and at the expense of the state only testifies to the lack of any such formalized training for the citizenry as a whole.

The fourth century BCE saw a rise in the use of training in Greek armies, as there was a slow progression toward the more professional armies of the Hellenistic period in the years following the Peloponnesian War. As Lendon (2005) notes, armies were also becoming increasingly diverse at this point, now including significant numbers of light-armed peltasts, archers, and cavalry in addition to the traditional hoplites, and the extra complication this would add to battles would certainly reward additional training; in particular, we begin to see weapons training become more popular. Mercenary troops were on the rise, and just as in the case of the elite corps from cities, we would expect these professional soldiers to train in a more organized fashion. Lendon notes several examples of this training, which almost invariably involve some level of competition: Agesilaus turned his camp into a “workshop of war” with constant competitions in conditioning, horsemanship, and weapons skills (Xenophon *Hell.* 3.4.16), while Jason of Pherae competed alongside his men in the drills, and Iphicrates would have his ships race each other to the shore. The implication is that while commanders were becoming increasingly aware of the benefits of training, the soldiers themselves still needed an incentive to compensate for the independence they formerly enjoyed in this area.

By the late fourth century BCE, this pattern had expanded to the training of young men for military service; by the 330s BCE, Athens under Lycurgus had reconstituted the *ephebeia*, a two-year period of national service. While Vidal-Nasquet (1986) traces the origins of the *ephebeia* earlier than this period, Xenophon’s complaints about the lack of publicly supported military training in Athens strongly suggest that the system could not have existed for this purpose much earlier than 370 BCE. During this period of time, Aristotle records that the ephebes received instruction from hired trainers (known as *hoplomachoi*) in hoplite, or heavily armed, fighting, archery, javelin throwing, and firing the catapult; they received their shield and spear after a year’s training, gave a drill performance, and went out to garrison the frontier (*Ath. Pol.* 42.3–4). While

Vidal-Naquet (1986) sees this practice as anti-hoplite, embodying many irregular activities antithetical to hoplite warfare, Rawlings (2000) points out the usefulness and application of these same skills in hoplite warfare at this time; certainly they would be all the more effective given the changing face of warfare in the Greek world.

The model of the Athenian *ephebeia* soon became the dominant practice of the Hellenistic Age, with many states requiring for their young men a period of military training and service on the border at around eighteen to twenty years of age. This training could prepare men either to serve their own state as part of the citizen militia (particularly active in this period both to repel raids and conduct their own raids, as Chaniotis [2005] notes) or to enter a mercenary troop. Likewise, athletic competitions began to incorporate contests in specific weapons skills, from fighting in hoplite gear to stone throwing (possibly with a sling or even catapult) to fighting with a long shield (Lendon 2005). Hellenistic kings, beginning with Philip II of Macedon and Alexander, raised professional armies that not only made innovations in weaponry but also conducted more complex battlefield maneuvers that required additional training as a group.

The commanders themselves, beginning in the fourth century and continuing throughout the Hellenistic period, increasingly began to value the study of military tactics, leading to a number of works being published on the subject (Chaniotis 2005). As the generals competed with each other for mastery of tactical skill, it would be crucial for their armies to be well trained in order to execute the designs of their commanders (and indeed this training would be an integral part of the general's tactical skill). Thus, Quintus Curtius Rufus would write of Alexander's phalanx: "Intent on the order of their commander, they have learned to follow the standards and preserve their ranks; what is commanded, they all obey: to stand fast, to surround, to run around the wing, to change the formation" (3.2.13–14).

It is important to note, though, that the heights of training reached in the Hellenistic world were not necessarily consistent; this is particularly true of the various forms of *ephebeia*, which came and went at points in different states. Athens, for one, went from having a minimum property requirement of 1,000 drachmas from 317–307 BCE (Chaniotis 2005) to non-obligatory, single-year training from 306 to 268 BCE (Pélékidis 1962). Sparta's strict training (*agoge*) waned during the fourth century BCE, was revived by Kleomenes III in the late third century BCE, and was eventually abolished by Philopoimen in 188 BCE (Chaniotis 2005). Mercenary and professional armies likely saw some of the same fluctuation simply based on the ability of the commanders, though we might expect such weaker commanders not to hold power for long.

## 2. Rome

Ever since Machiavelli and Justus Lipsius encouraged their contemporaries with the example of Roman military training, it has been widely assumed that the Roman army underwent regular and rigorous training in every period of its history (see, e.g., Keppie 1998; Stephenson 1997; Goldsworthy 2000). The scholarship of Pritchett (1974) and Anderson (1970) on the relatively late development of formalized Greek training prompts a similar, critical reconsideration of these assumptions about the training of the Roman armies of the republic.

Vegetius describes the ideal training of the Roman imperial army at its greatest point of evolution and elaboration. Basic training for recruits included marching in step and with heavy loads, keeping ranks during battle, running, jumping, and swimming, as well as extensive training with bows, javelins, slings, and swords (*Mil.* 1.8–19 and 2.23); newer soldiers would receive training twice a day, while veterans trained once daily (*Mil.* 2.23). The high level of training recorded in Vegetius may have occurred only rarely—Vegetius is urging the Roman army to return to a level of training that he himself admits is nowhere recorded in contemporary books.

With that said, a regular training regimen, if perhaps not the all-consuming type described by Vegetius, was certainly in place by the Jewish War of 66–73 CE, as Josephus describes it with considerable admiration: “As if completely natural in arms, they take no break from training nor do they await appropriate times” (*BJ* 3.72). He even goes so far as to call Roman training “battles without blood” (*BJ* 3.75), seemingly a reference to the mock battles that Rance (2000) argues were a common form of training in the republican and imperial army (though I would argue that, like other forms of training, they were exceptional during much of the republic—a point to which I will return). Likewise, a monument at Lambaesis in Northern Africa records a speech of Hadrian praising (and occasionally criticizing) troops for their performance in a range of drills, including archery, javelins, slings, cavalry maneuvers, and setting up camp. It is clear that these are regular drills that the emperor is used to inspecting. Yet a reexamination of the sources demonstrates that this regular training goes back no further than Augustus, and that training during the republic was intermittent and at the whim of individual commanders. There was neither regular training upon induction into the army nor systematic training in camps as was the case for imperial armies.

Before examining the practice within the army, however, it is worth considering briefly the training men would have received before being drafted into the army. This training lay, first and foremost, in the hands of the paterfamilias; thus, Cato the Elder (Plutarch, *Cat. Ma.* 20.4):

He himself was not only the reading teacher but also was himself the teacher of law and the athletic trainer, teaching his son not only to hurl the javelin, to fight in armor, and to ride, but also to box, to suffer heat and cold, and to swim through the eddies and billows of the river.

This is likely the ideal practice of the wealthy classes of the early and mid-republic, and it provides two points of interest; first, that this preliminary physical education belonged primarily to the familial, rather than the public, sphere. Second, there was training both in fitness and with specific weapons; indeed, the items listed were all specifically useful to military service. The Campus Martius was certainly a convenient site for boys and men to practice these skills, and indeed both Vergil and Horace refer to it being used as such (Vergil, *Aen.* 7.162–165; Horace, *Odes* 3.7.25–26).

The most telling evidence for the republican army’s lack of systematic training is the conspicuous absence of any such system in the writings of Polybius. Polybius, who was certainly aware of the extensive training in Hellenistic armies at this time, describes in depth the choosing of commanders; the division of troops into *velites*, *hastati*, *principes*, and *triarii*; the marshaling of the legion; the construction of the camp; the system of night watches; the standard punishments and rewards; and the procedure for breaking

camp and marching (Polybius 6.19–42). If the Romans trained, especially in a manner as impressive as that later described by Josephus, Polybius would not have failed to mention it. Furthermore, we would expect newly levied troops, those in greatest need of training, to undergo some equivalent of the modern boot camp upon enlistment (as Vegetius later describes), but Polybius—despite recounting the process of levying in enormous detail—provides no signs of training here either.

There were, in fact, multiple points within the levying process at which training could have easily been implemented, but in each instance the soldiers were merely sent home. The men were first divided into legions, then sent home with a new date to report; on that later date, they were divided into four different ranks before once again being sent home with a new date to reassemble. On this final date, the consul took command, auxiliaries were chosen from the assembled allies, and the consul led them straight off on campaign. Between the initial levy and the beginning of the campaign, there would likely have been at least a month, possibly more, in which training could take place, yet we read instead that the soldiers spent this time at home.

There is also evidence that the Romans did not train regularly while in the field, the clearest example being the army Spurius Albinus handed over to Quintus Caecilius Metellus in Numidia in 109 BCE. Albinus had allowed discipline to lapse entirely—the army was kept in a permanent camp, moved only “when the smell or the need of fodder had forced them to change the place” (Sallust *Jug.* 44.4); the camp was not fortified; proper watches were not kept; and men wandered where they wished, when they wished, regardless of duty or regulations. Significantly, though, Sallust does not mention training as being neglected at this time; and since it was clearly not taking place in such a lax situation, we can only assume he does not mention it because it was not part of army routine. Indeed, the aspects of usual Roman practice which Sallust states to be neglected—camp fortifications, night watches, and moving camp—are exactly the same as those described as regular by Polybius, confirming that this is a complete list and that the omission of training is not accidental.

While there are a handful of examples in the sources of training occurring in the republican army, these are ultimately the exceptions that prove the rule. Each instance in which training is recorded comes in one of two situations—either unusual circumstances make training necessary, or the commander needed an activity to keep his men from idleness. Thus, in 215 BCE, Tiberius Sempronius Gracchus put his newly levied army through very basic training (i.e., frequent marches) because it included a large number of slaves just freed following the Battle of Cannae. These slaves would have had no experience fighting in the Roman style (and possibly no experience fighting at all) and were being trained precisely because of their un-Roman character. Significantly, the remedy to this problem is hardly complex, as these inexperienced soldiers, as Livy says, merely need to learn “to follow the standards and to know their ranks in the battle-line” (Livy 23.35.6).

On occasion, generals might also train their troops in a new and unusual skill necessary for a particular situation. In 211 BCE, when the Romans were having trouble with the Capuan cavalry, Livy records that they trained young men to ride behind the Roman cavalrymen and then to dismount when they neared the enemy cavalry and throw their javelins (Livy 26.4.4–10). Here a specific group of soldiers needed training for a daring and probably unique tactic. Similarly, in 205 BCE, Scipio Africanus had his Sicilian cavalry

equip and train Romans to serve in their place because he sensed the Sicilians did not wish to fight in Africa (Livy 29.1). In all of these situations, we have soldiers in unique circumstances, requiring a skill or set of skills which they did not otherwise acquire, and so these small groups of soldiers are specifically trained as appropriate to the circumstances.

There are, in addition, a few examples of Roman republican commanders instituting general training for all their soldiers. Most of these, though, involve only basic elements of training, and even so are clearly exceptional. Thus, in 295 BCE, Quintus Fabius abandoned a permanent camp in favor of marching every day in order to make the army “fitter and more mobile” (Livy 10.25.9). Such marches were perhaps the simplest form of training, designed to improve the physical fitness of the troops and prevent them from idling. As sensible as it was, it was also specifically reversing the policy of his predecessor, and so Livy feels the need to explain the reasoning behind Fabius’ decision—“he was denying that it was useful that the army remain in one place”—suggesting that the decision was an unusual one (Livy 10.25.9).

Scipio Aemilianus, who took command in Spain in 134 BCE, also had to deal with an army in far from ideal shape; in this case, the army was rampant “with license and luxury” (Livy, *Per.* 57.1). After throwing out the prostitutes and camp followers, Scipio trained his men in two ways—forced marches and daily work (Livy, *Per.* 57.2), for which Appian gives further detail (*Hisp.* 86):

Not at all, however, did he venture to fight before he had trained his men with many toils. Going around all the nearest plains, on each day, one after another he erected and destroyed a camp, dug very deep trenches and refilled them, and built great walls and pulled them down, personally overseeing everything from dawn to dusk.

Such training is, again, of a fairly basic nature—Scipio was aiming to get his troops into shape physically and to keep them well disciplined by occupying their time with military tasks. This is an exceptional circumstance, almost a punishment, inspired by the appalling lack of discipline he had found in his army. Quintus Caecilius Metellus Numidicus, taking command of a similarly undisciplined army in Numidia, copied Scipio’s methods (Valerius Maximus 2.7.2). Metellus’ choice to consciously imitate Scipio (as opposed to following some general Roman practice) demonstrates that these were the decisions of individual commanders and in no way standardized throughout the army.

The most elaborate instance of training within the Roman manipular army was by the elder Scipio Africanus when he was encamped at New Carthage in Spain in 210 BCE. Both Livy and Polybius describe how Scipio trained his troops using a four-day rotation involving marches at double speed on the first day, cleaning and care of armor on the second, a mock battle on the third, and rest on the fourth (Livy 26.51.3–10, Polybius 10.20). In order to train his men in this manner, Scipio actually had to instruct the tribunes on the methods of training he wished to use (Polybius 10.20.1). Both Livy and Polybius also record how Scipio turned the city into a “workshop of war” with everyone making arms and armor—some of wood, undoubtedly for practice weapons—while Scipio oversaw them. The mass construction of practice weapons suggests that the Romans did not normally have such tools for training and mock battles.



Scipio's reasons for training his troops in such an exceptional way were likely twofold. As he was at that time also repairing the walls of New Carthage and conducting diplomacy, it is possible he was acting in a manner similar to other commanders who trained their legions to prevent them from idling. Perhaps more significantly, Scipio was very much influenced by Greek thought, and so it is hardly surprising to see him using elements of Greek military theory, including training, in his army. Scipio did train some of his soldiers while encamped in Sicily later in the war; he may have done so with the whole army, as a group of visiting senators was quite impressed with the maneuvers they could perform (Livy 29.22.11). Scipio certainly employed Greek tactics in some of his battles, and both his actions at Sicily and New Carthage are reminiscent of the Spartan king Agesilaus, as well as a mock battle described by Xenophon. Despite his success, Scipio does not seem to have initiated any general policy of training, nor did he introduce, apparently, other aspects of Greek training, perhaps because he was often attacked in later life for his Hellenophilic tastes (particularly by Cato the Elder, a prominent and successful general in his own right).

Unsurprisingly, the Romans did recognize that raw recruits were inferior to veterans, and they often delayed battle in order to improve a newly levied army. While individual commanders may have occasionally chosen to do so through training, another method seems to have been more common—that of skirmishing frequently with the enemy or raiding enemy territory in order to season the troops in battle while risking little strategically. Thus, Lucius Aemilius Paullus in 217 BCE sent orders to his legate Servilius

that he should not at all contrive a general battle, but effect skirmishes against a part as vigorous and frequent as possible, for the sake of training and preparing the new soldiers, and making them be of good courage for a general battle; for it seemed to them that their earlier mishaps happened, above all, on account of their using newly levied and entirely inexperienced soldiers.

Polybius 3.106.4–5

Similarly, Cato the Elder at two different points in his campaign in Spain in 195 led his army, full of new recruits, in frequent raids; first, according to Livy, “so that the delay not be wasteful, he took that entire time for exercising his soldiers” (Livy 34.9.12). Livy goes on to describe this “exercising” as the devastation of nearby land in order to help feed the army. Shortly afterward, Cato repeated the tactic, and here Livy elaborates on his purpose (34.13):

From there he led the soldiers against the fields of the enemy for plunder ... This strategy trained new soldiers, and a great might of the enemy was taken away, and they did not dare to go out beyond the walls of their forts any longer.

It is not difficult to determine why Roman generals seemed to have preferred skirmishing—it inured their troops to the dangers of battle, lessened their fears, and built morale, while also often achieving strategic goals.

The practice of skirmishing as a form of training does not, however, explain the lack of training in two particular areas: marching in formation and weapons training, both of which were key elements of the Roman imperial army. Considering the system of fighting

in the manipular army, in which the first two lines of men—the *hastati* and *principes*—fought in a spaced, individual manner, there was little need for training the soldiers to stay in formation, as there was no rigid formation that needed to be preserved. As long as the maniples stayed together (a matter of discipline, not training), the formation would not be compromised. Indeed, the lack of training in the manipular army provides an explanation for its age-echelon system of *velites*, *hastati*, *principes*, and *triarii*. The skirmishing of the young and inexperienced *velites* before battle would have served a similar purpose to the skirmishing of the entire army discussed earlier; the slightly older men in the *hastati* and *principes* might or might not have had experience in warfare, but they would not need much experience in the loose formation in which they fought. It was the *triarii* who fought in close formation; so they were by necessity the oldest and most experienced men.

There was no great need, then, of training soldiers to march in formation, but the Roman army would still have benefited from weapons training. In addition to the informal training from soldiers' youth, a certain amount of such training did occur while on campaign, but it seems to have been an individual responsibility of the soldiers, rather than a general form of training instituted by a commander. A *sententia* of Aemilius Paullus in 168 BCE is particularly enlightening; he told his army "that a soldier ought to have a care for these three things, that he have a body as healthy and agile as possible, well cared for arms, and food prepared against sudden orders" (Livy 44.34.3). The strong implication is that the soldiers were responsible for their own training and conduct in battle, independent of the commander, while the commander was simply supposed to maneuver his army into a favorable situation for battle, motivate them, and array them well to do their duty in the field. Indeed, following this speech, we see the soldiers return to these tasks of their own accord:

Some sharpened their swords; others rubbed their helmets, cheek-pieces, and breastplates; others fit their arms to their body and tried out the agility of their limbs under them; others poised their spears; others flashed their swords and watched the point.

Livy 44.34.8

The lack of unity among the soldiery in these tasks—each man is doing as he, personally, sees fit—also emphasizes the lack of an overarching system of training. Ultimately, individual initiative seems to have been the hallmark of the early to mid-republican army; not only did commanders run each army as they thought best, but individual soldiers had a great deal of responsibility and control over their own preparation and training for battle.

With the rise of Marius, the army underwent certain changes that increased the need for training. In 107 BCE, Marius enrolled volunteers for the war against Jugurtha from the *capite censi*, a group that had previously been ineligible for military service. Within a short time, the property requirement for serving in the army had been permanently abolished. Around the same time, the distinctions between the different ranks of soldiers were eliminated, so that the *velites*, *hastati*, *principes*, and *triarii* were subsumed into a single body of heavy infantry. These changes would have made training far more attractive, as the poorer classes now enlisted would have had no prior weapons training, and there was no longer a specific subset of the army who had the experience to fight in more complex formations (the former *triarii*). As these changes were taking place, Greek influence on Roman thought was continuing to grow; Marius could accuse other generals

of having no experience of command other than reading the Greek military handbooks (Sallust *Jug.* 85.12). Even if these military texts were only being read as a substitute for experience in the field, they clearly were being consulted with growing frequency, leading to an increased exposure to and acceptance of Greek ideas about warfare, including a regular training regimen for armies.

Despite these factors, Roman generals continued to have disparate methods of training in this period; while training was becoming more common, it certainly was in no way systematic. In one case, Marius' colleague Publius Rutilius hired gladiatorial trainers to provide his army with weapons training; Valerius Maximus notes that Rutilius is the first general to institute such a method (2.3.2). When Marius took over this army from Rutilius, he also trained it, but in a very different way—"in running of all sorts and long marches" (Plutarch, *Mar.* 13.1). In addition, older "models" of preparation were still utilized. Marius, with the army he commanded against Jugurtha (this one a mix of recruits and soldiers taken over from Metellus) chose to skirmish instead of training (Sallust, *Jug.* 87.1–2). Sulla, during the Mithridatic War in 85 BCE, similarly exercised his men by means of raids (Appian, *Mith.* 55.224).

This trend continues in the later years of the republic, as more armies received training, but the methods differed depending on the commander. Caesar seems to have varied his use and methods of training significantly depending on the situation. There is very little reference to training in *De Bello Gallico*, and there was certainly no time for him to train the two new legions he raised in 58 BCE before the Battle of Bibracte at the start of the Gallic War. Caesar did deploy the veteran legions at the front in this battle, so he may have been counting on the newly enlisted men gaining experience while playing a less crucial role in the battle. The following year, he enlisted two more legions in Cisalpine Gaul that had little to no time for training before they were needed in battle.

Given Caesar's style of campaigning, characterized by speed and constant action, it is unsurprising that he preferred to improve his troops through battle experience rather than taking time to train them. He confirms this strategy in his account of the Battle of the Sambre in 57 BCE, when his troops were able to repel an enemy attack because they were "trained by previous battles" (Caesar, *de Bello Gall.* 2.20), a phrase he likewise repeats after the Battle of Pharsalus (Caesar, *de Bello Civ.* 3.93.1). In his advertisement of the success of these two battles, training played no part.

At certain points, however, Caesar did train his men outside of battle. As he contemplated invading Italy, he used forced marches, much like previous commanders, to keep his troops in shape. Before the Battle of Pharsalus, since Pompey's cavalry was superior in number, he had his lightly armed infantry drill and skirmish with the cavalry. Finally, when his troops were struggling to deal with the hit-and-run tactics of the Numidians and Quintus Caecilius Metellus Pius Scipio, Caesar introduced far more rigorous training:

Against enemies of this sort, Caesar trained his troops not as a commander would a veteran and victorious army with the greatest accomplishments, but as a manager of gladiators would train new gladiators: he instructed them as to how many feet they should retreat from the enemy, in what way and in how small a space, turned toward their enemies, they should make a stand, how to now run forward, now draw back, and to threaten an attack, and almost in what place and in what way to throw their weapons.

*de Bello Afr.* 71.1

This passage is enlightening in several ways; first, it enforces the pattern for Caesar and Roman commanders more generally of instituting training as a response to the situation, rather than a general practice. Second, this training is marked by the introduction of gladiatorial techniques instead of a seasoning of new legions by experience into a veteran army. The converse implication that a training regimen did exist for a veteran army makes little sense if there were no regimen for new legions—the more logical conclusion is that this line refers to the variety of ad hoc methods used as circumstances required.

Pompey trained his troops in a very different manner from Caesar; while consolidating his forces at Dyrrachium in 49 BCE, he trained both infantry and cavalry using some sort of drills, possibly competitive and therefore likely involving athleticism and weapons skills. Appian reports that Pompey himself took part in the exercises and surpassed all (implying that they were competitive). Most significant, though, is Appian's final line about the training: "Everyone thronged to the drills of Pompey as to a spectacle" (*de Bello Civ.* 2.49). Such a commotion around this form of training suggests it was viewed as extraordinary.

There is likewise one instance of Octavian training his army that also has unique elements. In 44 BCE, he welcomed two legions into his army that had deserted Mark Antony; he then "watched the exercises of the two legions that had deserted from Antony, arrayed against each other and performing completely the action of battle, excepting only death" (Appian, *Bell. Civ.* 3.48). Octavian was apparently "delighted with the spectacle," suggesting this was not a normal practice for his own troops but rather one that Antony had used with them previously. In any case, it is another method of training specific to an individual commander, though Octavian's delight with these mock battles may be significant given that they would become an important element of Roman imperial training.

Octavian's victory in the Civil Wars and assumption of power signal a key transition point in the use of training within the Roman army, as a systematic training regimen became both more necessary and easier to implement. First, there would now be legions stationed year round throughout the empire, providing a great deal of time when the soldiers would be idle if they did not have a training regimen. Second, there was now a single figure ultimately in command of all the legions who could thereby regularize the training methods; this would have been very difficult with the myriad competing commanders of the republic. In addition, Augustus had been "trained and educated in military matters" as a youth in Macedonia, including taking part in cavalry drills (Appian, *Bell. Civ.* 3.9), and was, as we have seen, of course favorably impressed by the mock battle of Antony's legions. It is highly likely he had a positive impression of training from the beginning of his rule.

Furthermore, we learn from Suetonius that "[i]n military affairs, [Augustus] both changed and instituted many things, and also restored some things to the ancient custom" (Suetonius, *Aug.* 24.1). Vegetius (*Mil.* 1.27) provides at least a partial clue as to how this applied to training:

Furthermore, an old custom remained and was preserved by the decrees of the divine Augustus and Hadrian, that three times a month the infantry just as the cavalry was led out to march, for they named this type of drill with this word. The foot soldiers, wearing armor

and equipped with all their weapons, were ordered to go ten miles in military step and return to camp, in such a way that they completed some part of the march at a quicker pace. The cavalry divided into their squadrons and, armored similarly, were also completing such a march, in such a way that they, according to cavalry practice, at times followed and at times yielded, and then renewed the attack with a certain return.

It is unclear to what extent this “old custom,” known as the *ambulatura*, was actually in use prior to Augustus (does this refer to the forced marches that several generals of the republic used?); the greater significance, though, lies in Augustus formalizing it into a regular practice.

There is unfortunately no additional evidence for specific changes made by Augustus, but by 9 CE, Augustus’ adoptive son Gaius was taking part in training exercises with a legion (Cassius Dio 55.6.4). As Gaius was twelve at the time, it is likely that Augustus was doing for Gaius what Julius Caesar had done for him—namely, sending him to train with the army at a young age to gain military experience. Significantly, however, Gaius trained with a Roman legion, rather than the cavalry auxiliaries from an area (Macedon) with a long history of training. Furthermore, in 17 CE, just three years after Augustus’ death, Gnaeus Calpurnius Piso’s wife Plancina was able to observe “the drilling of cavalry and the maneuvers of the cohorts” (Tacitus, *Ann.* 2.55.5). These drills gain significance when one considers that Piso had allowed “sloth in the camp, license in the cities, and a roving soldiery running wild throughout the fields” (Tacitus, *Ann.* 2.55.4.). By this point, even an otherwise neglected army was undergoing training exercises; the clear implication is that these troops were used to a system of training.

By the time of the late republican army, and certainly throughout the army of the empire, many mid- and upper-level positions would have required at least a basic literacy in order to conduct the daily business of the army, from setting passwords to writing brief and formulaic letters; indeed, we know that there were teachers who focused specifically on these needs (see Chapter 8). Recruits seem to have picked up these skills prior to enrollment within the army—at least typically—as Vegetius notes that these skills are something that those examining recruits should look for (*Mil.* 2.19). Certain specific positions required a greater level of literacy and numeracy, such as the *signiferi*, clerks who kept the regimental savings; the *librarii*, clerks in charge of a variety of specific types of record keeping; and *exceptores* and *notarii*, stenographers for the officers. Further, the army needed trained specialists in engineering and building, such as *agrimensores*, surveyors, and *metatores*, those who set out the lines for a camp.

Literacy could be a means to rapid promotion, especially for those serving in regions of lower literacy, and at the least their ability to perform more specialized tasks often gained literate soldiers exemption from the more physically taxing duties (Webster 1969: 119–121). Furthermore, as the importance of some of these roles grew with the increasing complexity and professionalism of the army, emperors began to look to these more educated soldiers for promotions outside of the army. Teitler argues that in the third and fourth century CE emperors began to choose their stenographers increasingly from the military *notarii* instead of from their own slaves and freedmen (1985: 49); Watson similarly notes that emperors at least as early as Trajan looked to the army when they needed architects and engineers (1969: 144).

Just as in the Hellenistic world, it is likely that the impressive training regimen of the empire described in Josephus and Vegetius ebbed and flowed based on the decisions of the individual emperors and their generals. Tacitus and Fronto both tell of armies that fell into even greater levels of sloth and corruption than that of Piso (Tacitus, *Ann.* 13.5.3 and Fronto, *Ver.* 2.1.19), in which training must have certainly waned if not disappeared entirely. Hadrian would not have had to institute the supposedly ancient custom of forced marches revived by Augustus had the practice not fallen into some level of disuse in the intervening years. Indeed, Davies (1968) credits Hadrian with significantly strengthening the training program throughout the Roman army, and it is arguable that under his vigilant rule the Roman army reached its peak level of skill and fitness for war.

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**Cross-Reference**

The Hellenistic *Ephebeia*; Athletics.

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