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## 4

# LIFESTYLE AND BEHAVIOUR IN ARCHAIC AND CLASSICAL GREECE

## The other language of citizenship

*Alain Duplouy*

All the world's a stage,  
And all the men and women merely players

(William Shakespeare, *As You Like It*)

These are the opening lines of Jacques' famous monologue in Act II Scene VII of William Shakespeare's pastoral comedy *As You Like It*. The speech, which compares the world with a stage and life with a play, has long been commented, offering a variety of interpretations and variations. Without stressing too closely the analogy, Shakespeare's words could also be applied to the practices of citizenship in archaic and classical Greece, for which lifestyles and behaviours offer an alternative language to Aristotle's institutional approach and his well-known *metechein kriseōs kai archēs* formula, 'to have a share in the administration of justice and in the holding of office' (*Pol.* 3.1275a.23). Looking at how citizens acted as citizens in order to be accepted as citizens – as I will further explore here – has also been a particular focus of research in social sciences when applied to current notions of citizenship, especially – but not exclusively – in America.

When defining the contours of the American democracy, the Founding Fathers left unsettled the exact significance of 'We the People', leaving the arduous task of determining the meaning of American citizenship and its content for future generations. Being a nation of immigrants, America has always known the tension between welcoming newcomers and being concerned by a possible alteration of the character of its citizenry. From the earliest times, guidelines have been issued to instruct prospective citizens on American history, values, symbols, rights, and responsibilities: *How to become a citizen of the United States*, *Gateway to citizenship*, *Handbook for immigrants to the United States*, *Guide to the United States for the Jewish immigrant*, *Assimilation of the Italian immigrant*, etc. Beyond practical matters of enfranchisement and a general description of the State and its government, many of these brochures also focus on aspects of the American way of life, exploring what it means to be an American and how

to behave accordingly.<sup>1</sup> In forging an American identity, American citizens acted not only for themselves and for future generations, but also to instil in outsiders, whether immigrants or newly enfranchised groups, a shared ideal of citizenship, as well as common beliefs and behaviours. Of course, a practical achievement of citizenship does not preclude the existence of a legal definition of citizen rights and duties; it, nevertheless, supplements it, extending the matter of citizenship to a variety of perspectives.

Social sciences have been at the forefront of current academic research and political debate on citizenship, as several contributions to this volume make clear. Beyond the conventional view of citizenship as an established legal institution and the enduring narrative that assimilates citizens to members or subjects of an abstract polity (State), a new research field has emerged on the notion of performative citizenship in contemporary societies, demonstrating how much citizenship is anything but a stable concept, and is actually enacted in everyday acts. Engin Isin (2017, 2019), for example, highlights how people creatively perform citizenship rather than simply follow a script of given rights and duties, both in democratic and non-democratic polities, as well as across polities. This means that in today's world the way people endorse their citizenship actually plays a role in shaping and constantly re-shaping the concept itself, notably through social and political struggles, attaching new meanings and functions to it. When people act as citizens, they are not only following rules but may also transform them. Civil, political, or social rights generally come into being and become effective through acts and conventions, such as rituals, behaviours, traditions, protocols, etc., which may also include outsiders. Indeed, as Isin writes, 'the subject positions of citizens, strangers, outsiders, and aliens are neither static nor impermeable. There is a huge variety of social groups that move through or across these positions' (2017: 504) or, to put it in another way, 'since citizenship is brought into being by performing it, non-citizens can also perform citizenship' (2019: 50). Eventually, the notion of performative citizenship involves the 'art of being with others, negotiating different situations and identities, and articulating ourselves as distinct yet similar to others in our everyday lives' (Isin 2019: 53). This is not to deny the importance of the legal aspects of citizenship in general, but to refuse any prior delimitation by a given form or procedure.

Although this emerging field is dominated by American and British scholars, European and, especially, French researchers are not to be ignored. Extending Arendt's famous formula on the 'right to have rights', the French philosopher Étienne Balibar (1995 [with Hobsbawm]; 2001, 2011) has abundantly argued for defining citizenship not just by *having* rights, but also by *claiming* them, especially across borders, whether at the supra-national level of the European Union or in relation to the so-called 'illegal' immigrants. Instead of considering that citizenship exists *in abstracto*, he proposed to conceive it as a process, as a condition always in the making. Beyond strictly juridical approaches considering it as a fixed status, therefore, citizenship can be analyzed anthropologically as a social and political construct, as a pursuit carrying a variety of meanings and representations (see also Neveu 2004 and in this volume). More precisely, Catherine Neveu (2015) demonstrated that acts of citizenship also involve daily enactments, which can be rather consequential even if lacking a high level of visibility. Accordingly, approaching citizenship processes 'from the ordinary' appears as a fruitful perspective from which the political dimension of routine practices can be grasped (see also Gautier and Laugier 2006). It allows the exploration of the eminently political implications of practices, spaces, and times that are not usually considered as such.

Of course, all these studies may find particular resonance when applied to the ancient world, and they will certainly do so in the coming years, as more and more classicists are exploring alternatives to the Aristotelian definition. I have to admit, shamefully, that my own formulation of ‘citizenship as performance’ presented a few years ago (Duplouy 2018, though initially elaborated for a conference held in 2009) was achieved without knowledge of the growing literature that had established performative citizenship as a new avenue of research in social sciences. Beyond ancient texts and material culture – which constituted the starting point and the core of my research – I rather elaborated on the idea of performative citizenship on classical sociology and historical anthropology, as I will explain here before developing the citizen value of an athletic lifestyle.

### ***Stand, body, habitus, Lebensform, schēma: the other language of citizenship***

‘Men make the city’ (*andres gar polis*), wrote Thucydides (7.77.7), following Alcaeus (fr. 112, 426). Accordingly, the Greek city is not to be defined as ‘one of the most totally institutionalized societies in world history’ (Hansen 2006: 113), but rather as a *Bürgerstaat* (Heuss 1946: 39; Walter 1993), or ‘citizen State’, that is a community having an existence well beyond the domain of formal institutions. This means that contrary to the Aristotelian perspective, the *polis* was not restricted to the sole political or judicial activities achieved through formal institutions. There is a long tradition, of course, of investigating the ancient Greek city-state as a community, starting at least from Fustel de Coulanges’ book *La Cité antique* (1864). Especially, François de Polignac’s approach, strongly influenced by French anthropological structuralism and anchored in the so-called ‘Paris school’ charted by Vernant’s, Vidal-Naquet’s, and Detienne’s works, led to a definition of the archaic city as ‘a social entity founded upon a network of relations between the various members of a territorial community’ (Polignac 1995: 78). More precisely, by focusing on the function of sanctuaries in the formation process of Greek cities, he assimilated the *polis* to the expression of a form of cultic cohesion, thus outlining the contours of citizenship that was elaborated and enacted through cult practices. ‘Participation in religious rituals guaranteed a mutual recognition of statuses and set the seal upon membership of the society, thereby defining an early form of citizenship’, concluded Polignac (1995: 153).

This truly citizen facet of cults was central in the life of Greek cities. As Josine Blok has shown in a series of recent studies (2011, 2014, 2017), ancient sources clearly define the *polis* primarily through its cults. As expressed in the recurring formula *meteinaí* or *metechēin tōn hierōn kai tōn hosiōn*, ‘to have a share in the affairs of the gods and in all those of men that please the gods’, the Greeks considered the city as a cultic community whose members, men and women alike, benefited from a covenant with the gods. Even the integration – albeit limited – of foreigners as metics implied their participation in specific city cults (Wijma 2014). Beyond cults, however, the notion of participative citizenship can also be arrived at through a consideration of sociological and anthropological models, as I explore in my last book (Duplouy 2019).

Max Weber’s concept of *Stand*, or status group, offers an interesting model to figure out what the Greek city was. In Weber’s work (1921: 531–540; see Gerth and Mills 1946: 180–195; Roth and Wittich 1978: 926–940), the notion of *Stand* is firstly contrasted to the concept of class. If the history of archaic Greece has often been conceived as the product of a class struggle between an elite of landowners and a *dēmos* of peasants (e.g.,

de Ste. Croix 1981; Rose 2012), Weber reminds us that classes are not communities. Class-situation being exclusively determined by market-situation, classes do not offer a practical model to understand Greek cities as communities. In contrast to classes, however, status groups can offer a valid social model for Greek cities. According to Weber, a *Stand* is a social group whose members have the same degree of prestige. But more than the various qualities that individuals possess, it is the community's recognition of the expected qualities and their positive evaluation that confer the social dignity constituting the status.

The notion of *Stand* is thus tightly linked to a 'positive or negative social estimation of honour': 'above all else a specific style of life is expected from all those who wish to belong to the circle' (on *atimia*, see also Rocchi in this volume). In Weber's model, social evaluation depends not only on individual qualities and how they are implemented, but also on the standards that other members of the community value, honour, and respect. In this sense, members of a status group adopt a particular way of life (*Lebensführung*), that is, a set of behaviours and practices that derive their unity from specific mental dispositions and ethical qualities, themselves linked to education, culture, profession, tastes and ways of being, as well as social traditions and conventions. In short, it is the way of life itself that constitutes the group. A status group is, therefore, formed around particular values, norms, and a specific lifestyle. Its members maintain a sense of belonging and share the same statutory markers, so that status groups are often relatively closed communities. They appear through mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion in which recognition by others is related to complying with the lifestyle valued by the group while excluding cultural practices – sometimes even strict endogamy – quickly erect symbolic and social barriers between distinct status groups.

I am convinced that there is value in investigating archaic Greek cities using the model of the Weberian *Stand*, and stressing the importance of behaviours and lifestyles in the constitution of the group and its sustainability. Instead of focusing on institutions when dealing with the *polis*, looking at behaviours and how they were enforced and transmitted is, therefore, another way to investigate ancient citizenship, describing it as a performance (Duplouy 2018). Instead of membership in a legal organization, which introduces a view from the top, archaic citizenship should be described as a form of participation. This is actually the very meaning of Aristotle's concept of *metechein*, although he restricted it to participation in formal institutions. As a community, however, the *polis* was tied to all kinds of activities that the citizens had in common in their everyday lives (Schmitt-Pantel 1990; Ampolo 1996). This means that, well beyond the Aristotelian perspective, the core of the *polis* was not restricted to having a share in the administration of justice and in the holding of office.

In ancient Greece, what we may call the 'political' was embedded within society and actually related to a number of activities, be they social, judicial, political, military, religious, cultural, artistic, or economic. Since many aspects of the archaic institutions were deeply embedded in social practices, we have to lay great stress on the multiple behaviours through which citizenship could be asserted or even claimed. Besides attending the Assembly or a people's court, which implies formal institutions, the exercise of citizenship extended to all areas of collective activity and individual performance, to all spheres or behaviours that contributed to sketching the outline of the citizen community. This was the actual double meaning of the Greek word *politeia*, applied not only, on the one hand, to forms of government and citizen rights, but also, on the other hand, to the way of life of the citizens, to their habits, to the frame of mind of

a citizen community, which the Greeks also designated by the terms *nomoi*, *tropoi*, or *epitēdeumata* (Bordes 1982: 17; Schmitt-Pantel 2009; Murray 2012). Lifestyles were thus an integral part of the way in which the Greeks conceived the city.

To this point, it is worth mentioning the importance that Marcel Mauss once gave, in defining societies, to the ‘techniques of the body’ (Mauss 1973), in other words to the ‘ways in which from society to society men know how to use their bodies’. These attitudes of the body concern all the gestures acquired by learning, from the ways of walking to the ways of sitting, dancing, swimming, and eating; from the ways of giving birth to those of breathing; from the postures of the body to the techniques of sleeping, etc. ‘These “habits” do not just vary with individuals and their imitations, they vary especially between societies, educations, proprieties and fashions, prestiges’, noted Mauss. Referring to a ‘collective and individual practical reason’, he emphasized the importance of education and imitation in the establishment and reproduction of these techniques: ‘The child, the adult, imitates actions which have succeeded and which he has seen successfully performed by people in whom he has confidence and who have authority over him’ and ‘It is precisely this notion of the prestige of the person who performs the ordered, authorized, tested action vis-à-vis the imitating individual that contains all the social element’. In a way, according to Mauss, there are no natural or meaningless gestures. On the contrary, these techniques, which vary in particular by gender and age, are determined not only by education but also by the circumstances of life in common, in short by society itself. This set of attitudes, whether permitted or not, is in fact part of a well-defined environment, and it even participates in the definition of a particular social context: ‘In every society, everyone knows and has to know and learn what he has to do in all conditions’. Accordingly, the study of these ways of life is part of the way of apprehending and understanding any society.

More precisely, in ancient Greece, the ways of being and behaving were not mere representations of social and political statuses defined in other instances. They were themselves structuring the community. In ancient Greek cities, because of the absence of a register certifying one’s legal status, the quality of a citizen had to be permanently demonstrated in order to be acknowledged and accepted by others. Adopting the normative behaviours of the citizens in all aspects of one’s lifestyle, therefore, provided a good means of being acknowledged as a fellow citizen. Put differently, in order to be accepted as a citizen, one had to behave like a citizen. Complying with the citizen lifestyle made you a legitimate member of the community, whereas rejecting it or being unable to adopt it made you an outsider. In this perspective, two other concepts borrowed from modern sociology and philosophy offer interesting food for thought in relation to the definition of citizenship as a performance. These are Bourdieu’s notion of *habitus* and Wittgenstein’s concept of *Lebensform*.

Although originating in ancient thought and medieval scholasticism, the notion of *habitus* was given emphasis and popularized by the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu. *Habitus* refers to the lifestyle, values, dispositions, and expectations of social groups that are acquired through the activities and experiences of everyday life. In Bourdieu’s own words, they are ‘structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures’ (Bourdieu 1977: 72, 1990: 53). The *habitus* is a ‘structured structure’ because it is produced by socialization and organizes both the behaviours and the representations of individuals; and it is a ‘structuring structure’ because it generates an infinite number of new practices. Through their education and the stages of their integration into the community, young people gradually incorporate an image of the objective structures



of the social world in which they live. These durable and transposable dispositions, which constitute the *habitus*, enable them to guide their own actions, in the form of behaviours that they develop almost unconsciously. In so doing, they contribute to reproducing the set of dispositions that they themselves have integrated and which structure the way of thinking, perceiving, and acting in the world of all the members of the community to which they belong or wish to belong. In a way, the system is self-perpetuating and contributes to its own sustainability, while adapting to changing social, political, and historical conditions.

Overall, the *habitus* refers to socially acquired schemata, sensibilities, dispositions, and tastes that are repeatedly reproduced through individual behaviours, therefore reinforcing the strength of the *habitus* itself. By adopting, consciously or not, a lifestyle that is valued by the whole citizen community, individuals behave in order to be accepted as insiders and to be distinguished from outsiders. Of course, in archaic and classical Greece, each city – if not each of the various communities making up a city (Duplouy forthcoming) – had its own citizen *habitus* or lifestyle, defining a variety of idiosyncratic patterns of behaviours that allowed individuals to be identified as citizens. Sometimes, beyond mere identification of insiders, these behaviours may even have allowed participating outsiders to become more and more recognized as acceptable citizens-to-be.

From this point of view, Wittgenstein's concept of *Lebensform* offers another interesting tool to account for the importance of lifestyles in ancient Greek cities. Used by Wittgenstein sparingly – no more than five times in his work – this concept has given rise to extensive literature (e.g., Kripke 1982; Laugier 2008), as well as to interesting historical case studies. For example, the Italian philosopher Giorgio Agamben (2013) takes Wittgenstein's concept and applies it to the history of Western monasticism and to the study of monastic rules (*vita vel regula, forma vivendi, or forma vitae*). Without entering into the complexity of Wittgenstein's philosophical thought on language, the concept is actually related to the justification of one's behaviour, which is often implicit and not explicitly stated when performed. Ordinarily, people do not step away from their activities in order to justify how or why they say and do what they say and do. And yet, on closer inspection, one's words and actions will be found to reflect a particular 'form of life' (*Lebensform*), a mental and cultural framework that provides a justification for those very actions (Wittgenstein 2001, § 241) – a kind of 'practical sense', as Bourdieu would have put it.

In other words, there is often a kind of hidden justification to the people's deeds, which can be explored and eventually explicitly stated. The concept thus refers both to a way of life and to the principles that underlie it: following a rule is nothing else than conforming to the established usage of a community. According to Wittgenstein, behaviours are not idealized as an external system to be conformed to, as theoretical grammar rules could be, but they nevertheless comply with a practical set of references that are commonly shared by a community. And of course, forms of life can be understood as changing and contingent, dependent on culture, context, and history. Beyond the notion of *habitus*, with its self-enforcing aspect of continuously reproduced behaviours through the simple fact of repetition, there is in Wittgenstein's concept of *Lebensform* a further aspect of justification, which is interesting for the study of ancient behaviours: people do not act by simply reproducing or mimicking what others do, but also because they share a system of references that explains their actions in relation to the community. This allows us to set all kinds of behaviours at the heart of ancient

communities as social institutions, beyond or beside the sole formal, political, or judicial ones (see also Meister and Seelentag 2020 on the diversity of social institutions). Accordingly, when applied to the Greek *polis*, the concept implies that citizens behave as they do because they assume a given form of life, which gives meaning to their actions, to themselves as citizens, and to the citizen community as a whole.

We can go one step further. Rather than being only a matter of legal affiliation to a previously defined state or an issue of political rights and duties, citizenship can also be conceived as a matter of communication about individual and collective identity. To this point, another theoretical concept – this time forged by the Greeks themselves – allows us to go deeper into the way the ancient Greeks thought about themselves. In a very stimulating book, Maria Luisa Catoni (2005) focused on the processes of non-verbal communication in ancient Greece. Through close terminological analysis, the Italian classicist highlighted the function of *schēmata* in Greek culture. In Greek, the term *schēma* is polysemic and affects many technical meanings, particularly in the fields of geometry, astronomy, arts, and medicine. However, in visual communication, the *schēma* – in the singular – is the way in which someone appears in the eyes of others. The term refers not only to an individual's general external appearance, but also to facial expressions, posture, manner of dressing and walking, attitudes, and body language.

More generally, someone's *schēma* encapsulates his or her lifestyle, ethical values, social position, function, role, and origin. The term also refers to the impression that an individual makes, at a glance, to the observer. Of course, this implies that the community shares this particular knowledge of body language. In the plural, the word *schēmata* refers specifically to dance figures – this is the meaning of the word in the famous episode of the marriage of Agariste of Sicyon (Hdt. 6.126–131) –, but more generally to the gestures which allow a sketch of the *schēma* of a person and to read the behavioural norms to which he or she is referring. In everyday life, the *schēma* is composed of not only clothes and ornaments, but also gestures and attitudes. It embodies and gives visual evidence to the values that people intend to communicate, assuming that the audience is perfectly literate in that language.

Of course, an individual's *schēma* could also be manipulated: the use of existing codes can provide the desired recognition, which is then based not on who you are, but on what you appear to be. One famous example is the disguise of Phye as Athena during Pisistratus' second takeover of Athens. Herodotus (1.60) tells how Pisistratus had a tall and beautiful girl riding in his chariot, carrying weapons and presenting the *schēma* of the goddess. The stratagem worked so well that the rumour spread in the city that Athena herself was bringing Pisistratus back. The trick only functions, of course, if the spectator is willing to believe in appearances, and paradoxically, if the spectator is willing to believe, there is no mystification. There is an alignment between the *schēma* and reality, if not an assimilation of reality to the *schēma*.

The possibility of manipulation was certainly a source of concern for the Greeks, but it was not until the end of the fifth century, particularly in Socratic teaching, that this concern became an obsession. Only then, when the reflection on *mimēsis*, the imitation of nature, was current, especially in Platonic thought, did the relationship between appearance and reality become a philosophical question. According to Plato (*Rep.* 4.420e–421a), if the *schēmata* were to be the foundations of the social and political order, then the risk would be that the city rests on appearance rather than on being. From a Platonic perspective, this seems like a nightmare, one of the most dangerous and subversive forces for society, directly threatening the permanence and fixity that



are expected from social rules. By the end of the fifth century, this had become an obsession: the Old Oligarch ([Xen.] *Ath. Pol.* 1.10) complained about being unable to distinguish between a slave and a citizen in the crowd because poor citizens were no better dressed than the slaves and metics. The appearance had become deceptive.

However, these concerns did not distract the Greeks of the archaic and early classical periods, so we should avoid projecting these late classical philosophical doubts onto earlier times. Contrary to an ontological vision of social and citizen statuses, which is intrinsically linked to classical thought, citizenship in archaic Greece – that is, broadly speaking, participation in common affairs – was firmly established on the behavioural dimension of relationships with others. This body language concerned all moments of social life: the way of appearing in the agora, the manners adopted during rituals and ceremonies in sanctuaries, attendance and training at athletics venues, the ways of hunting and fighting, but also conduct in private banquets, philosophical conversations, and erotic relationships. As Paul Zanker (1995: 48; see also Hölscher 2015: 60) once put it:

In Classical Athens, the appearance and behaviour in public of all citizens was governed by strict rules. These applied to how one should correctly walk, stand, or sit, as well as to proper draping of one's garment, position and movement of arms and head, styles of hair and beard, eye movements, and the volume and modulation of the voice: in short, every element of an individual's behaviour and presentation, in accordance with his sex, age, and place in society. It is difficult for us to imagine this degree of regimentation. The necessity of making sure their appearance and behaviour were always correct must have tyrannized people and taken up a good deal of their time.

This 'tyranny' of appearance and behaviours, which were accepted and expected by the community, was part of the Greek way of life or, more precisely, depended on each Greek city, for every *polis* had its own ways. Eventually, citizenship may thus be equated with the definition of collective identity and the individual efforts made to comply with it.

### **Austerity and the athletic lifestyle**

A passage of Thucydides offers one of the most interesting sources alluding to the diversity of archaic and classical lifestyles (*diatai*) in ancient Greece:

The Athenians were the first to lay aside their weapons, and to adopt an easier and more luxurious mode of life (*es to trupherōteron*); indeed, it is only lately that their rich old men left off the luxury (*to habrodiaton*) of wearing undergarments of linen and fastening a knot of their hair with a tie of golden grasshoppers, a fashion which spread to their Ionian kindred and long prevailed among the old men there. On the contrary, a modest style of dressing, more in conformity with modern ideas, was first adopted by the Lacedaemonians, the rich doing their best to assimilate their way of life to that of the common people (*isodiattoi*). They also set the example of contending naked (*egymnōthēsan*), publicly stripping and anointing themselves with oil (*gymnazesthai*) in their gymnastic exercises. Formerly, even in the Olympic contests, the athletes who contended wore belts across their middles; and it is but a

few years since that the practice ceased. To this day among some of the barbarians, especially in Asia, when prizes for boxing and wrestling are offered, belts are worn by the combatants. And there are many other points in which a likeness might be shown between the life of the Hellenic world of old and the barbarian of today.

(Thuc. 1.6.3–6, trans. R. Crawley)

In this passage, full of the tropes of fifth-century Athenian propaganda, Thucydides opposes two very different lifestyles: an old one, to *habrodiaiton*, enshrined in luxury, which used to be common among Ionian people and in the old days of the Athenian *polis*, and a new one, characterized by a more austere style of dressing that went along with the diffusion of athletics, which was first adopted by the Lacedaemonians and then, after the Persian wars, by the Athenians. Incidentally, by assimilating the old way of life of the Athenians to that of the barbarians, Thucydides also depreciates and condemns past behaviours, hence the assimilation of archaic *habrosunē* ('luxury') to Oriental *truphē* ('luxuriousness'), which is typical of post-Persian Wars thinking (Miller 1997). Having already explored various luxury behaviours (Duplouy 2018, 2022), I will turn here to a more in-depth analysis of the athletic lifestyle.

According to Thucydides, austerity, equality, and athletics were the essential elements of a 'modern' way of life, adopted first by the Lacedaemonians, then by the Athenians of his time, and which would henceforth distinguish the Greek from the barbarian. In a mirroring passage, Herodotus (1.10) reports the same conviction about the Lydians: the barbarians consider it shameful to be seen naked, 'even for a man'. For Thucydides, this change in habits occurred 'a few years ago' (*ou polla etē*) and according to Plato,

it is not long (*ou polys chronos*) since the Greeks thought it disgraceful and ridiculous, as most of the barbarians do now, for men to be seen naked (*gymnous*). And when the practice of athletics began (*tōn gymnasiōn*), first with the Cretans and then with the Lacedaemonians, it was current for the wits of that time to make fun of these practices.

(*Resp.* 5.452c–d)

The reportedly pioneering character of this lifestyle has been a matter of intense discussion for a long time (e.g., Crowther 1982; Bonfante 1989; McDonnell 1991; Stewart 1997: 24–42; Golden 1998: 65–69). For various political and ideological reasons related to the construction of his work, it seems that Thucydides situated this change in customs in a largely imagined historical evolution. The oldest figurative representations of naked athletes go back to the mid-seventh century, and even to the eighth if one considers naked warriors on Late Geometric vases. On Athenian pottery and in sculpture, such images had already become very common towards the mid-sixth century, so the cultural turn apparently happened more than a century before Thucydides supposed. Nor does Thucydides' sequence from one way of life to the other exactly match the realia.

Wolfgang Filser (2017: 100–101, 591–594) recently compared the chronological distribution of horses, banquets, and athletes in Athenian images: for each of these themes, the occurrence is continuous throughout the sixth century. If the horse representations begin slightly earlier than the other two, their peak around 520 occurs 20 or 30 years earlier than that of images of banqueters (around 500) and athletes (around 490), somehow confirming Thucydides' sequence, but certainly not the substitution of

one practice by another. Instead of a strictly chronological evolution between these behaviours, they were contemporary and probably competing ways of life within the Athenian community throughout the sixth and the fifth centuries. Similarly, the precocity of the Spartans in athletics – which perhaps corresponds to the numerous victories credited to Spartan athletes in the first Olympiads – and the anteriority of the Cretan customs – which is no more than a Platonic reflection of the Cretan origin of Spartan institutions – are hardly assured. In terms of chronology, recent scholarship has thus helped to nuance old convictions.

Although athletics were also part of an agonistic culture – which explains the growing success of local, regional, and Panhellenic contests throughout Greece –, the ancient Greeks perceived the gymnasium and the stadium as two very distinct contexts. As demonstrated by Paul Christesen (2002), the word *gymnazō* was restricted to citizen nudity and strictly related to military exercises, with no connection with athletic competitions. Athletic performances were used as socialization processes and qualification procedures for future citizens. All over the Greek world, cities incorporated the development of athletic skills into the education of young, prospective citizens and often made athletic achievements deciding criteria in enfranchising foreigners (Fisher 2018).

Nudity, which is a characteristic of the athletic way of life according to Plato and Thucydides, repeatedly appears in Crete in various initiation rites that lead the young to adulthood and citizenship (Vidal-Naquet 1986: 116–117). According to Hellenistic inscriptions, in Malla (*IC I 19.1*), Dreros (*IC I 9.1*), Lyktos (*IC I 19.1*), and Axos (*IC II 5.24*), the future citizens undress before taking their civic oath. This nudity rite probably preceded the handing over of weapons, since on the eve of their citizen enlistment the young people are said to be ‘unarmed’ (*panazōsthoi* or *azōsthoi*) or ‘undressed’ (*egduomenoi*). According to the Hellenistic author Nicander of Colophon (quoted by Ant. Lib., *Met.* 17), there was also a festival of ‘undressing’ (*Ekdysia*) in Phaistos that celebrated the miraculous transformation of a girl into a boy. This etiological myth probably provided a framework for an initiation ritual in which the young men of Phaistos converted the feminine garments of childhood for a more masculine way of dressing – whether athletic nudity or the bearing of arms – and took the oath that would allow them to enter the society of adult citizens. Although our sources do not allow us to retrace the custom back to the archaic period, it is nevertheless possible that such rituals already existed in relatively early times. Incidentally, a rite of unveiling and abandonment of clothes seems to have been part of the Athenian practice as well, during the procedure through which young men were enrolled in their father’s deme at the age of 18: according to Aristophanes (*Vesp.* 578), ‘when young boys pass the inspection (*dokimasia*), we are allowed to contemplate their sex (*aidoia*)’.

According to Plato (*Leg.* 1.625d), the carrying of light weapons, due to the mountainous nature of the Cretan terrain and the practice of running, was a remarkable feature of the lifestyle of Cretan cities, as were communal banquets (*syssitia*) and athletic exercises (*gymnasia*). In Crete, the link between running and citizenship is persistent. From the archaic to the Hellenistic period, a small series of inscriptions from various Cretan cities (Gortyn, Datalais, Lato, Olous, Lyktos, Knossos, Hierapytna, Praisos, Malla, Itanos, Eleutherna) mention the terms *dromos* (race) or *dromeus* (runner, pl. *dromeis*). As Yannis Tzifopoulos has definitively shown, in the Cretan institutional vocabulary, these terms respectively designate, on the one hand, athletic and military exercises – it is then a synonym of *gymnasia* – and, on the other hand, young people who have just entered adulthood and been admitted as citizens: ‘The examination of the evidence indicates that in

Crete *dromos* is an “institution” or better a Cretan way of life that seems analogous to the Athenian *ephēbeia* and the Spartan *agōgē*’ (Tzifopoulos 1998: 164; on the institutionalization of Cretan *poleis*, see Seelentag 2015, and in this volume). Significantly, the young people who immediately precede this age are called *apodromoi* in the Gortynian Code. It goes without saying that the purpose of running was not to prepare athletes for competitions but to provide military training for young citizens of military age. According to Ephorus (*FGrH* 70 F 149, quoted by Strabo 10.4.16), long walks in the mountains were part of the education of future citizens in Cretan cities. And by contrast, according to Aristotle (*Pol.* 2.1264a.21–22), the Cretans forbade only two things to their slaves (*douloi*): ‘to practice athletic exercises (*ta gymnasia*) and to possess weapons’, validating the exclusive relationship between nudity, athletics, and citizenship in Cretan cities.

In Sparta too, austerity, nudity, and athletic exercises were inseparable from a citizen community of equals (*homoioi*), whose inception is traditionally linked to the reforms of Lycurgus. Notwithstanding the so-called Spartan mirage and the difficulty to assess pre-classical Sparta, the Spartan military training for adult citizens was somewhat rudimentary and unspecialized, as was the case in most Greek cities before the fourth century. It typically involved athletic exercises and dancing in arms (van Wees 2004: 89–93; Hodkinson 2006: 137–138). As elsewhere, preparation for war also involved hunting, so that middle-aged Spartans could, in the words of Xenophon (*Lac.* 4.7), ‘endure the fatigues of military campaigns as much as young men’. Physical activity was an essential step and an important element in the education of young Spartans, but it was also a regular activity for adults: Xenophon attests to this on several occasions by mentioning the presence of middle-aged citizens in the gymnasium (*Lac.* 5.8, 9.4). Pausanias (3.14.6) also refers to the ‘ball players’ (*sphaireis*), whom he defines as the young Spartans just coming of age. What had become in Roman times a component of a reformed Spartan education as well as the occasion for many agonistic dedications was apparently in classical times – and perhaps before – a performance open to all adult citizens (Kennell 1995: 38–43, 110–111, 131). As Xenophon explains (*Lac.* 9.5), those who had shown themselves cowardly on the battlefield were generally not chosen by their fellow citizens to engage in this game; they were also excluded from the common meal, the gymnasium, and the choruses, in short from everything that constituted the Spartan way of life. Finally, participation in athletic competitions does not seem to have been prohibited by the city, as evidenced by the numerous victories of the archaic and classical periods at Olympia and elsewhere (Hodkinson 1999). According to Plutarch (*Lyc.* 22.4), the – typically Spartan – reward granted by the city to the winner of a major contest was the privilege of fighting at the king’s side.

In addition to an educational system involving abundant athletic testing (cf. Xen., *Lac.* 4.2), a way of life with a recurrent emphasis on physical exercise and incitement to take part in regional competitions, it was also the great religious festivals that gave nudity and physical performances a central place in the way of becoming, living, thinking of oneself, and showing oneself as Spartan. In particular, the Gymnopaedia was an annual festival and an initiation rite that contributed to defining Spartan identity (Pettersson 1992; Richer 2012: 383–422; Ducat 2016: 265–274). Held in the heat of summer in honour of Apollo, it involved – at least from the end of the archaic period – a music and dance contest in which the Spartans competed by age group (*paides*, *andres*, *gerontes*). Presented as a commemoration of the Spartan victory over Argos for the control of the Thyreatis border region – the famous ‘Battle of the Champions’ of the mid-sixth century, narrated by Herodotus (1.82) – the festival was intended, according

to Plato (*Leg.* 1.633c), to test the physical endurance (*karterēsis*) and military courage (*andreia*) of the Spartans, especially of the young during their education. Besides the ball game – which may have been part of the festival –, the Gymnopaedia, as its name suggests – ‘naked dance’ (i.e., also ‘unarmed’), rather than ‘naked boys’ – emphasized, above all, the athletic nakedness of the participants and hence their equality, since they were consequently devoid of any distinctive attributes.

These dances were performed in the public square, in an area of the agora that Pausanias (3.11.9) calls the *choros*, whose name itself refers to the practice of dancing and singing. According to Athenaeus (14.630d, 631b), the *gymnopaidikē* was a peaceful counterpart of the pyrrhic dance, the armed dance *par excellence*; its movements were similar to those that could be observed in the palaestra or during the pankration. The stages of the festival, the location, the setting, the involvement of several age groups, and the solemnity of the moment were all conducive to a representation of Spartan society as a whole in its most characteristic form, both for the Spartans themselves and for foreigners, who we know were admitted as spectators (Xen., *Mem.* 1.2.61, Plut., *Cim.* 10.6, *Ages.* 29.3–4). Everything was done, in short, to indicate that through athletic practices and the maintenance of military capacities, the Spartan way of life of the late archaic and classical periods promoted a conception of citizenship based on equality, which may, of course, have contributed to forging and maintaining the image associated with the Spartan *homoioi*.

The most ancient occurrences of athletic training in Athens are the two Olympic victories of Kylon and Alkmaion, both at the beginning of the sixth century (on their chronology, see Lévy 1978; Giuliani 1999). Taking advantage of his Olympic aura and the support of his Megarian father-in-law, the former attempted a coup in Athens, the failure of which may have precipitated Solon’s intervention, while the latter gained some fame in the first Sacred War for control over the sanctuary of Delphi. Likewise, in view of these early Athenian victories at Olympia, various pieces of legislation attributed to Solon have been regularly invoked and could obviously make sense in support of the early development of athletics in Athens (Thompson 1978; Kyle 1984), although a critical assessment of our sources is also required.

The first Solonian provision, according to Plutarch (*Sol.* 23.3), was the institution of a reward granted by the city to victors in the major Panhellenic contests, namely 100 drachmas for winners at the Isthmus and 500 drachmas for winners at Olympia. Diogenes Laertius (1.55) states that the rewards for the other contests were analogous, but that Solon had actually reduced the amount of the previous prizes because

it was in bad taste, he urged, to increase the rewards of these victors, and to ignore the exclusive claims of those who had fallen in battle, whose sons ought, moreover, to be maintained and educated by the State (*dēmosia*).

As Nick Fisher (2018: 208–209) points out, it is unlikely that the text of the law handed down by Plutarch and Diogenes Laertius is an exact reproduction of a Solonian provision. Firstly, the Pythian, Isthmian, and Nemean competitions were not reorganized until the 580s and 570s, at least a decade after Solon’s archonship. Secondly, monetary rewards cannot have been introduced at such an early date, or indeed at such high levels.

Admittedly, it is possible that the provision had a Solonian core, but if so, it must have been reworked later. And yet, monetary rewards are normally alien to the system of public honours bestowed by Greek cities on their benefactors, which range from a



wreath to the ‘highest honours’ (*megistai timai*, i.e., *proedria*, *sitēsis* or food at the Prytaneum, and an honorary statue, cf. Gauthier 1985). Of course, in addition to the *sitēsis* and the *proedria*, Xenophanes of Colophon (fr. 2 West) alludes to a ‘gift’ (*dōron*) offered by his city to the victorious athletes, while criticizing these honours and rewards. Similarly, an archaic dedication discovered in the sanctuary of Francavilla Maritima in the territory of Sybaris (Ebert 1972: 251–255; Kyle 1996: 115–116) mentions an Olympian offering to Athena the title of his prizes (*aethlōn dekatan*). On the model of the Solonian law and in connection with Xenophanes’ allusion, these prizes – which certainly did not emanate from Olympia – were usually regarded as civic rewards, although not without caution. Diogenes Laertius’ reference to war orphans might be more illuminating. It recalls above all the provisions of classical Athens, as evoked in particular in Pericles’ funeral oration (Thuc. 2.46.1).

What the Athenians called the ‘ancestral custom’ (*patrios nomos*), established in the second quarter of the fifth century (probably in 464) through the public funerals celebrated at the city ‘war memorial’ (*dēmosion sēma*), provided that the children of fallen warriors should be taken care of by the city until they came of age (Loraux 1986: 26–27). Diogenes Laertius’ reference must also be contrasted with the content of a decree of the Assembly – unfortunately rather mutilated – passed in the 430s (*IG I<sup>3</sup> 131*), probably at the proposal of Pericles, which lists the beneficiaries of the food in the Prytaneum (*sitēsis*): next to the priests of Eleusis, the exegetes of Apollo and the descendants of Harmodios and Aristogeiton, the winners of competitions at Olympia, Delphi, the Isthmus, and Nemea are also mentioned. It should be noted that this was a revised list, as the provisions for victorious athletes refer precisely to an earlier publicly posted text (*kata ta en tēi stēlēi gegrammena*). Unfortunately, it is impossible to retrace our steps further back and follow the constitution of Athenian public honours for victorious athletes. The Solonian origin of this provision, with the doubts that surround it, must therefore remain a hypothesis.

A second Solonian provision ‘forbade slaves’, according to Plutarch (*Sol.* 1.6), ‘to rub themselves with oil (*xēraloiphein*) and to practice pederastic love (*paidērastein*)’, therefore assimilating these behaviours to exclusive citizen performances. What Plutarch relates to Solon in the category of *epitēdeumata* (‘ways of living’) probably derives from Aeschines, who already cited an ancestral law – that is, related to the ‘founding father’ of the Athenian democracy – prohibiting slaves from ‘exercising (*gymnazesthai*) or rubbing themselves with oil (*xēraloiphein*) in the palaestra’ (*In Tim.* 138). The use of the rare word *xēraloiphein* probably alludes not only to an archaic behaviour (Fisher 2001: 283–284), but also to the importance of perfumes in the athletic way of life. Aryballoi, the small vases containing the precious perfumed oil, recurrently appear on the thousands of images depicting athletes, both on pots and in stone, that were produced in archaic and classical Athens.

In the semantic code of Athenian pottery, the aryballos is *par excellence* the vase of athletes: through it, the figure is qualified by his relationship to athletic exercises. In this context, it is worth quoting Socrates:

so far as perfume is concerned, when once a man has anointed himself with it, the scent instantly is all one whether he be slave or free; but the odours that result from the exercises of free men demand primarily noble pursuits engaged in for many years if they are to be sweet and suggestive of freedom.

(Xen. *Symp.* 2.4)



In other words, the Athenian citizen had a different smell from the slave, because only he was allowed to exercise naked in the gymnasium. In contrast to the Old Oligarch (*Ath. Pol.* 1.10), who assumed it impossible to distinguish between a slave and a citizen in the crowd, his fellow citizen Socrates noted that it was also the smell that distinguished the free man from the slave. Here we find again the principle of the Solonian law and Cretan legislation, both of which prohibited slaves from practising athletic exercises.

\* \* \*

How to recognize a citizen? How to know whether someone in the crowd was part of the citizen community or outside it? These questions are not only of interest to classicists today. They were already being asked by the Greeks themselves, and probably with very tangible implications in everyday life. The Greek conception of citizenship implied a recognition through behaviours and attitudes, through what constituted the citizens' own *schēma*. Behaviours, therefore, shed light on a particular conception of ancient Greek citizenship: they made it possible to construct an *entre-soi* in which people could recognize and identify themselves in the mirror of the other members of the group.

All the world's a stage? Shakespeare was no historian of ancient Greece, but he was a remarkable observer of the human comedy. And the Greeks are no exception. They lived their lives on a stage, and even the most specifically political aspects of their societies, citizenship, now considered a legacy to the modern world, involved performances. Acting through carefully selected behaviours and playing the role that was assigned by and expected from the citizen community allowed you to be accepted as a legitimate fellow citizen. In ancient Greece, lifestyles and behaviours formed a discourse about citizenship. If Thucydides offers the binary model of two allegedly successive Athenian ways of life, there were also many alternatives across the Greek world, as Plutarch pictorially alludes through the changing behaviour of the wandering Alcibiades:

He had, as they say, one power which transcended all others, and proved an implement of his chase for men: that of assimilating and adapting himself to the pursuits and lives of others (*tois epitēdeumasi kai tais diaitais*), thereby assuming more violent changes than the chameleon [...] In Sparta, he was all for bodily training (*gymnastikos*), simplicity of life, and severity of countenance; in Ionia, for luxurious ease and pleasure; in Thrace for drinking deep; in Thessaly, for riding hard; and when he was thrown with Tissaphernes the satrap, he outdid even Persian magnificence in his pomp and lavishness.

(Plut. *Alc.* 23.4–5, transl. B. Perrin)

In terms of citizen behaviour, a performative system only works if it is based on a code shared by all members of the community, who act alternately as actors and spectators but are always eventually judges of the conformity of attitudes to the socially valued model. There is no doubt that the Greeks complied with this rule.

## Note

- 1 The National Museum of American History in Washington, D.C. offers a very stimulating permanent exhibition on that question (*American democracy: a great leap of faith*), which finds echoes in France in the Musée national de l'histoire de l'immigration in Paris. I warmly thank Mariana Silva Porto for correcting my English grammar and phrasing.

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