



Summary

Schole. Leisure in Classical Sparta

The aim of this monograph is to answer three key questions: (1) how should the term *schole* be defined in the context of classical Sparta?, (2) how much leisure time were Spartan men and women able to spend at subsequent stages of their lives?, (3) in what ways did Spartan men and women spend their leisure time?

The work is divided into three parts. In the first part, I attempt to prove that the terms *schole* (“leisure”) and *ascholia* (“work”) should be defined differently for Sparta than for other Greek communities. This is due to the fact that as owners of profitable land estates (*kleroi*), Spartan citizens had no need to undertake paid work. The Spartans who were forced to undertake paid work, and thus to give up the specific Spartan lifestyle (*diaita*), were those who had lost their rights as citizens. According to Greek “standards”, the Spartans therefore had every right to lead an aristocratic way of life, the essence of which was to enjoy their *schole*; however, only to a certain extent. Every Spartan citizen was obliged to fulfill certain duties (*ponoi*) for the community. These *ponoi* were twofold: some were primarily related to warfare, whereas other duties were related to public service (*to demosion*) other than of a military nature. On this basis, beginning with Aristotle’s assertions regarding the Spartans’ *ascholia* and *schole*, I proposed the following definition of the term “work” for Sparta: *ascholia* consisted of activities that involved preparations for warfare and other public activities

that served the community. This definition covers the entire lifetimes of the Spartans, but it should be remembered that at subsequent stages of their lives Spartans “worked” in different ways. This manifested itself on two levels: firstly, at various stages of their lives, Spartans generally undertook other activities within *ascholia*; secondly, the emphasis on military matters or other public affairs was distributed differently depending on age. Since the Greeks regarded leisure as the opposite of work, I believe, within the context of the Spartan lifestyle, *schole* should be understood as activities directed towards relaxation during peace and private activities that served the individual. However, at the same time, this opposition between leisure and work does not mean that specific activities which on the basis of the proposed definitions should be assigned to *ascholia*, could not belong to *schole* in another context. This is mostly due to the interpenetration of the encompassing spheres of *schole* and *ascholia*, although not in every case. In practice, when the specific activity referred more to warfare and state affairs, one should speak about *ascholia*, and where activities that were not necessarily related to warfare and more personal needs prevailed, one should most likely use the term *schole*.

In the case of Spartan women, the situation was similar, as they also were not required to work for a living, although they were required by the state to fulfill certain obligations. However, according to various sources, these obligations were limited only to matters related to childbirth (*tekno-poiia*) and rearing children. The state did not require Spartan women to undertake any other daily activities. Thus, *schole* included activities (not necessarily all) that were not related to these aspects of women’s lives.

The aim of the second part of the monograph is to estimate how time-consuming specific activities within *ascholia* were, to determine how much time was left to undertake activities within *schole*. All *ponoi* were distributed unevenly, depending on the individual’s stage of life (as well as other variables, which are too complex to be included in general descriptions). In the case of men, the period of the most intense activity was during their period of state education (*paideia*): *paides* (boys 7–14 years old) were only required to fulfill the least amount of “work”; *paidiskoi* (youths 14–20 years old) were subjected to fulfilling the most duties because of their upcoming military service and participation in public life; *hebontes* (young men 20–30 years old) were also required to do much “work”. However, past the age of 30, the Spartan men’s lifestyle changed

qualitatively, also on the basis of *schole*. While the lives of *paides*, *paidiskoi* and *hebontes* leaned more towards the side of *ascholia*, the lives of average *andres* (men 30–60 years old) were characterized by an abundance of leisure time. Due to the small amount of *ponoi* that the state imposed on all men, and for the reason that in the case of *andres* there are references to specific activities, and not general statements which were characteristic descriptions of young people's *diaita*, it was possible to make some assessments regarding this group. My calculations show that for activities within *ascholia*, the *andres* spent circa 30–35% of their time, and for *schole* related activities 65–70% of their time between sunrise and sunset (these values changed depending on the season of the year). In the case of *gerontes* (men over 60) the amount of leisure time was even greater, and the proportions were ca. 20 to 80%, respectively.

Because of the sparse amount of source material available, it is difficult to draw more definite conclusions regarding women. Nevertheless, based on mentions about the disordered (*ataktos*) way of life of Spartan women and their alleged lack of discipline (*anesis*), it can be concluded that Spartan women not only had much leisure time but had far more of it than Spartan men.

I believe that these findings alone are enough to bring into question two widespread views on Sparta: first, about the particular way of militarization of Spartan society, and second, about the great primacy of the state in the lives of all citizens. I believe such claims are only applicable to the period in which the Spartans underwent their state education. In contrast, *andres* and *gerontes* had much free time to spend on their own, private affairs. The analysis of leisure time activities in the third part of the book provides more evidence to support the thesis of a much more diverse Spartan lifestyle than is generally assumed.

The third section consists of seven chapters. In chapter one, I question the view of the small importance placed on family life in Sparta; in chapter two, I describe the circumstances in which two conflicting views regarding Spartan extramarital life arose: specifically about the lack of adultery (*moicheia*) in Sparta and about the alleged promiscuity (*akolasia*) of Spartan women; the third chapter explains the reasons for the popularity of love of boys (*eros paidikos*) among *homoioi* (“peers”); in chapter four, I argue that, contrary to the perception regarding the austerity of Spartan public meals (*sysstitia*) the Spartans had every opportunity and means to

enjoy entertainment during *sysitia*; chapters five and six raise the subject of sports (primarily): first in regards to the gym competitions, and then hippic activities, with an attempt to explain why the Spartans spent much time and resources on them (especially in the case of racehorse breeding) despite the ambivalent and sometimes hostile attitude of the state; finally, in chapter seven, I explain why the Spartans acquired fame as being great hunters, and their Laconian dogs were considered some of the best hounds in Greece.

These activities prove that in many respects, Sparta was similar to other Greek communities. In general, the way in which Spartans spent their leisure time differed little from so-called Greek “standards”. In other words, *diaita* on the grounds of *schole* placed the Spartans in line with other Greeks. What made Spartan men’s lifestyle special was therefore *ascholia*. However, there was a difference in regard to Spartan women. What was unique for Spartan women as far as normal Greek are concerned standards was not only the custom that they were required to do physical exercise as part of *ascholia*, but also the way in which some women spent their *schole*, at times going beyond the limits set for both men and women.