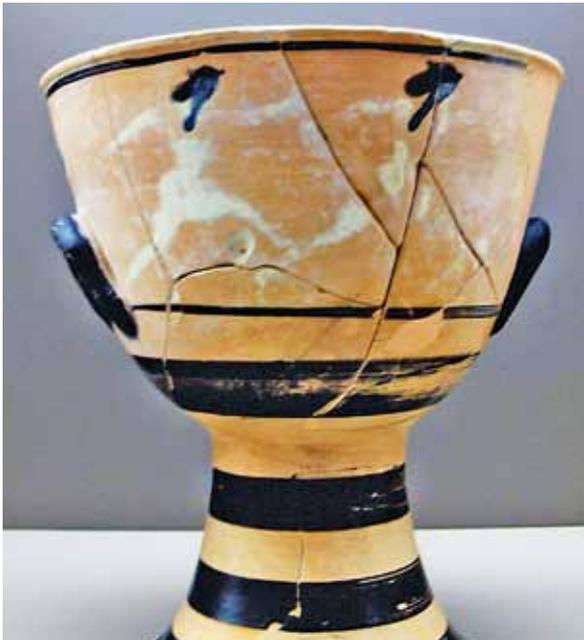


Women in Ancient Greece – Did They Take Part in Sport? *

By Christian Wacker



Young girls running (krateriskos I / Fig. 1). Far left: Young girls running one after another (Fig. 2).

Photos: Brauron. © Kahil 1977, Pl. 18; Brauron. © Christian Wacker

Looking objectively at ancient sources, today's scholars have never asked the question as to whether women were regarded as sportive in ancient Greece: and, naturally, this question was not posed in ancient times when it was a given that a woman's sole function was to bear children and stay at home. Which is to say, women were responsible for the household and family, while men conducted business and politics in the greater public space. Furthermore, women had virtually no legal rights and no access to public institutions like gymnasia and palaistra.¹ The very few examples of women and girls competing or being involved in physical activity have to be analysed against this background.²

Nevertheless, the topic of women and sport in antiquity has been frequently – polemically and in depth – discussed and was a popular subject among sports sociologists and sports historians. But the results indicate a lack of philological knowledge and a misinterpretation of ancient sources.³ Additionally, authors typically tend to interpret dancing, bathing and all other such forms of physical activity using the same criteria by which they define today's sports in their studies.⁴ This kind of anachronistic view distorts the interpretation of ancient sources and has consequently

led to the suggestion to ban expressions like 'Heraian games' or 'Women's ancient athletics' from the vocabulary when speaking of antiquity.⁵ An analogy between modern women's sport and the physical activity – which was mostly in ritual contexts – of females in antiquity simply cannot be drawn.⁶ In line with this, it will be demonstrated that interpretations of female dancing in antiquity, as a specific example, can only be understood in a ritual context.

Part 1: Females and Physical Activity in Ancient Greece

The role of women in Greek society

A great deal of discussion has been concerned with the origin of sports in antiquity.⁷ It can obviously be stated that funeral games played an important role in their society as referred to by Hom. Iliad 23.256ff. The funeral games in honour of the murdered Patroklos are described by Homer in great detail and it is worth mentioning that prizes were given not only to the winners in the various disciplines, but also to the losers. Those prizes consisted of tripods and cauldrons, gold talents – and also women. A woman 'faultless in her

Two dancers with overlapping movements (Fig. 5).

Photo: Brauron. © Christian Wacker



work' had been handed over together with a tripod as the first place prize in the equestrian competition. Another woman 'skilled in the work of her hands' had to serve as the prize for the loser in the wrestling competition. Homer even indicates that the value of this woman was four oxen and compared to winner's tripod, which was valued at twelve oxen.⁸

The development of athletics in antiquity has also been related to military exercises and training, which had been a purely male domain.⁹ Women did not participate in wars nor even in hunting.¹⁰ The ancient Greeks did not consider women as members with civil rights and excluded them from public life in general.

Women did not go to the gymnasium in classical times, not for training nor public disputes nor philosophical discourses. Starting in the 3rd century BCE, some women had access to certain gymnasia, but this does not mean that they engaged in physical activities.¹¹

Following the clearly defined role of women in Greek society, females took responsibility for the home and family, which included raising and educating children. Following Xen. Oec. 10.9, the daily work women were expected to accomplish covered exercises required for them to stay healthy and fertile.¹² Girls in ancient Spartan society seem to have been educated differently than in other Greek *poleis*. Since the reforms of Lykurgos in the 6th century BCE, girls and boys had been educated

equally.¹³ Girls performed in choruses like boys, and had the same physical training as their male counterparts in a *dromos* at the shores of the Erotas near the sanctuary of Artemis Ortheia.¹⁴

Females and competitions in Greek antiquity

The games in ancient Olympia had always been reserved for men. Women were not allowed to participate and, after marriage, were even excluded from watching them. Paus. 6.20.8f. was the one who reported this rather conservative approach for Olympia. Even for the times, this was controversial, because we know that other competitions, such as those conducted in a sanctuary in Kyrene for example or the ones in Delos, accepted women as spectators.¹⁵

The most famous exception to the ban on females in the sporting arena was that of Kyniska, the sister of the Spartan King Agesilaos. A fragmented circular statue base found in Olympia has upon it an inscription referring to Kyniska as victor of a chariot race.¹⁶ The event probably took place in 396 BCE and Sparta obviously promoted its famous daughter – as owner of the chariot and not as charioteer – for the sake of the Spartan kings and as the only woman in Greece ever to win the crown.¹⁷

Running also seems to have been a skill depicted for females back in Archaic times, with references being made to the 'fleet-footed maiden' in Sappho. Unfortunately, the context of this quotation is not clear and is connected more to the beauty of women, as known from the beauty contests held at the Panathenaia, than to their competitive skill.¹⁸ Ancient sources about female runners are extremely rare and mostly connected with the virgin huntress Atalanta, who grew up in wilderness running and wrestling against men, many of whom wanted to marry her. Those mythological races, however, do not offer further information to study female competitions in Greek antiquity and therefore will be excluded from further studies.¹⁹ All other sources referring to running females to be discussed within this paper are tales or metaphors like the famous narrative by Plat. Leg. 8.833cd about the ideal Cretan *polis*, which saw girls running naked in the stadium.

Women and 'rites de passage'

Artemis had been popular throughout ancient Greece as the goddess of nature, both environmental and human, responsible for fertility and growth. Worship of her stretches from rituals connected to childbirth up to marriage and encompasses all stages or 'rites de passage' of female nature. In Artemis sanctuaries like Brauron, Amarysia, Sparta and – most famous of all Ephesus – rituals for her were related to dance and



Choral dance with men and women (Fig. 6).

Photos: © Tübingen, University, Inv. No. 2657.

choral ceremonies, preparing girls and young women for marriage. The aforementioned festivals had been used in Greek society as occasions to find brides and nubile young women, who performed dances, chorales and mental and physical rituals. Unlike Hera, whose duties were confined to marriage itself and married women, Artemis took care of adolescents and their important 'rites de passage' from *menarche* to *parthenos* and *gyne*.²⁰

Some examples exist which might showcase the specifics of rituals honouring Artemis. In Olympia, Artemis herself is recorded as having been part of a ritual choral, dancing with the nymphs, when the personification of the river Alpheios fell in love with her and later raped her. This myth is related to a cultic site near Letrini, between Elis and Olympia, where a statue of Artemis Alpheionia had been worshipped.²¹ The well-documented rituals for Artemis in Ephesus were connected to girls wearing loose hair, dancing and music-making around the goddess's statue. During the festival and on the quest to find themselves a bride, young men were believed to carry presents, horses and torches, whereas young girls solely presented themselves.²² Young girls also performed in choral dances at the quadrennial festival for Artemis Leukophryne in Magnesia on the Maeander, which appears to have followed the example of the Pythian rituals, in the performance of music and athletic competitions.²³

The extra-urban sanctuary of Brauron is located in the south-eastern part of Attica. Whilst it is well excavated and documented, there are still many unanswered questions regarding its role in Athenian society. Scholars are in general agreement that the rituals in honour of Artemis practiced there are connected to rites of passage for girls approaching marriageable age. The most complete record relating to the liturgy goes back to a Scholion for Aristoph. *Lysistrata* 645, where a bear is reported to have entered the sanctuary of Brauron. A girl approached the bear, trying to play with him, but instead angered the beast, which became wild and attacked her, blinding her. The girl's brother then killed the bear. As a consequence, Artemis ordered all girls to be like bears and using a saffron robe.²⁴

The Arkteia as 'rite de passage': The festival of the *Arkteia* took place every fifth year. The bears, or *arktoi*, had been chosen from the tribes or *phylai*. Young men had to pass the *ephebeia*, which constituted part of their military training, for them to be regarded as suitable citizens for the polis.²⁵ The young girls participated in the *Arkteia* in order to fulfil their ritual duty as a woman, *gyne*; to serve society as child-bearers and respected heads of the household. The *ephebeia*, as well as the rites of passage for young women, were part of the official duties in Athenian society. Playing the bear before marriage had been part of the rituals in Brauron. A closer inspection of the vase paintings from both sites and others in private ownership might help shed further light on these rituals.²⁶ On one vase, naked girls are depicted running one after the other with their arms outstretched and palms open (Fig. 1, 2).

Only elderly girls are shown to be naked and the situations depicted reflect the pre-marital period.²⁷ Others are dressed in light *chitons*, but again in lines. The girls appear to be either running away from a bear, as shown in at least one example, where the animal is positioned below a palm tree, or towards an altar (Fig. 1).²⁸ These scenes are obviously connected to the rituals as described in Aristoph. *Lysistrata* 645. Indications to running competitions do not exist; the depictions are contrary to the representation of the girls in a very specific shape, which contradicts the possible theory of a running *agon*. Additionally, a few of these vase paintings depict dressed women dancing beside an altar. Those women might already have passed their 'rites de passage' and be of marriageable age (Fig. 5).²⁹

One of the duties of Artemis was to tame the feral young girls and prepare them for marriage. Playing the bear in this regard has to be seen as a metaphor for the untamed life of the unmarried, and often naked, virgins, while properly-dressed women represent a status after the rite of passage: and thus it could mean that girls ran and women danced.³⁰

Bronze figurine
(application to vessel;
origin unknown/
Fig. 4).

Photo: London. © British
Museum Br. 208



Choroi

"In Archaic Greek poetry, music is the pleasure of the gods!"³¹ and one of the most popular expressions of music was that of the *choros*, a group of singers moving and dancing.³² Depictions of these *choroi* go back to Archaic and even Iron Age times: e.g. Tübingen Univ. 2657 shows nine boys and 16 girls (Fig. 6) all performing naked, or Louvre CA1333 which shows 15 clothed girls (Fig. 7).³³ Choral dances accompanied wedding celebrations or banquets, but were also common in ritual contexts. They are reported from various sanctuaries and related to goddesses like Artemis (e.g. Brauron), Demeter (e.g. Eleusis), Hera (e.g. Argos) or Physkoa (e.g. Elis).³⁴ *Choroi* were used to create social orders and some scholars point to the physical element of the dance as being a variation of sport.³⁵

Part 2: Races for females in Roman times

Heraia in Olympia

The most famous girls' race was that of the competition in honour of Hera in Olympia. However, this race has been mentioned only once, by Paus. 5.16.2–7 in the 2nd century CE, even though many scholars assume this race to have originated in archaic times.³⁶ Most scholars dealing with ancient sporting history have variously written about the Heraia as being "not a serious athletic contest" (Bernardini, A.: *Aspects ludiques, rituels et sportifs de la course féminine dans la Grèce antique*, in: *Stadion* 12–13, 1986–87, 17–26) or "equivalent to men's Olympic" (Pomeroy, S. B.: *Spartan Women* [New York 2002]). These writings have recently been collected into a singular work.³⁷

In order to analyse the text in detail and recall the important passages for interpretation, the piece should be examined in full:

*"Every four years at Olympia the Sixteen Women weave a peplos for Hera, and they also sponsor the Heraia competition. This contest is a footrace for virgins who are of different ages. They run in three categories: the youngest first, the slightly older ones next, and then the oldest virgins are the last to run. They run as follows: their hair hang down on them, a chiton reaches to a little above the knee, and the right shoulder is bared as far as the breast. They also use the Olympic stadium, but the track is shortened by one-sixth. The winners receive a crown of olive and a portion of the cow sacrificed to Hera, and they have the right to dedicate statues with their names inscribed upon them. Those who serve the Sixteen Women are, like the sponsors of these games, women. They trace the competition of the virgins also back to antiquity. They say that Hippodameia, out of gratitude to Hera for her marriage to Pelops, collected Sixteen Women and, with them, sponsored the first Heraia. [...] The Sixteen Women also arrange two choral dances; they call one that of Physkoa, the other that of Hippodameia. [...] The Eleans are now divided into eight tribes, and from each they choose two women."*³⁸

Pausanias describes a contemporary footrace for virgins at Olympia and embeds his report in mythical stories and things he might have heard or read in Olympia or elsewhere. As usual, Pausanias does not distinguish between personal observation, anecdote, and his own fiction. Running competitions for females had been common during the Roman Empire and seemed to have also been organised at Olympia.

It cannot be the aim of this paper to present another review of the source but, rather, to dedicate the following analysis to one main question. During the lifetime of Pausanias, it had never been doubted that the girls' races were organised in Olympia in the 2nd century CE. But exactly how old is the tradition of girls' racing in Olympia, and can it be traced back to Classical or even Archaic times?³⁹

"[...] Sixteen Women weave a peplos for Hera."

It had been part of rituals in different sanctuaries to weave a *peplos* for goddesses, or for coats to be presented to the gods. Usually, a special group of women or girls had been chosen for this duty, such as the very special girls from the aristocracy in Athens (Hesych. s.v. Ergastinai) or the daughters of Leukippos for the ritual of Apollo in Amyklai. In Lokri, a *peplos* was weaved for Persephone as part of probably a prenuptial cult.⁴⁰

"[...] a footrace for virgins who are of different ages."

Here, the report of Pausanias gets very detailed, as if the Roman traveller personally observed one of these competitions or, at least, could rely on trustworthy sources. Specifically, he notes that the virgins were running in three age groups. The youngest group to participate at the Heraia in Olympia were simply called 'girl-children'; the oldest were those who had started to become *parthenoi* and had already begun to menstruate. Between them there was a third group, which we would call in modern terms those in puberty. In ancient Greece, they had been described as *menarche*, girls who were clearly are not children any more, as demonstrated by certain signs like growing breasts, but who had not yet reached the stage of menstruation. Those three stages are significant for the development of girls into women and cannot be related to specific ages. The description of Pausanias is unique and no other mention of girls' competitions with these three age groups has survived from Greek antiquity.

"[...] their hair hang down on them, a chiton reaches to a little above the knee, and the right shoulder is bared as far as the breast."

Pausanias offers a detailed description of the female runners with long, loose hair, a short *chiton* and most significantly, their right shoulder bare. Following the ancient text, it is not clear if the breast was bare, or only the shoulder. Two small statuettes survived from archaic times depicting girls or young women, each in a *chiton* on what was originally used as an application for a tripod or a similar object. Both bronze statuettes show movement, with one foot thrust forwards. These females have been identified as "Heraian runners" and were described approximately 700 years later by Pausanias.⁴¹ Despite the fact that bronze sculptures technically need two points to

be fixed for stability, iconographic arguments contradict such a theory. The first statuette, British Museum Br. 208 (Fig. 4), has an unknown provenance and depicts a girl or young women taking a huge step with the heel of her right leg lifted nearly horizontally and the tip of her left foot elegantly touching the ground. Following the biomechanics of running, whereby one's heel always touches the ground first, this cannot be interpreted as a running gesture. Furthermore, she turns her upper body 90 degrees away from the movement, lifting her right hand slightly for balance and clutching the lower part of the *chiton* with the left. The head of the statuette, with the hair carefully arranged in locks, is turned completely backwards. The iconography of Br. 208 resembles not a runner but rather a dancer, with a ballerina-like posture, and probably should be seen in the context of a ritual dance, as previously described.⁴²

The second statuette (National Museum Athens, Collection Karapanos 24) originated in Dodone and must also be seen in a similar context (Fig. 8). Even taking into account that the quality of this piece is worse than Br. 208, one may recognise the key iconographic elements: the huge step, the lifted *chiton*, the right arm for balance and the elegantly-draped hairstyle. This statuette wears a *chiton* covering both shoulders, along with a belt, and turns its upper body (including the head) away from the position of its legs. Runners could never position themselves thus while competing. Furthermore, no runner has ever been depicted in such a figurine, to the best of our knowledge, from either sources portraying male runners or the few known examples of female runners, most of which displaying ritual contexts of the Arkteia at Brauron.⁴³

In addition, another late archaic statuette from Palermo, Museo Nazionale 8265 (Fig. 9), with an

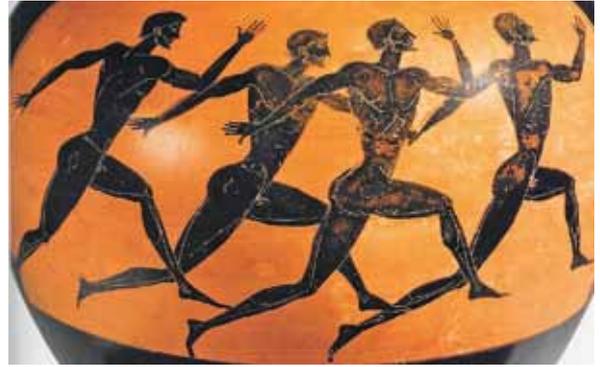


Bronze figurine from Palermo (application to vessel / Fig. 9).
Far left: Bronze figurine from Dodone (application to vessel / Fig. 8).

Photos: © Palermo, Museo Nazionale, Inv. No.: 8265; © National Museum Athens, Collection Karapanos, Inv. No. 24

Dancing women
(Fig.10). Far right:
male runners (Fig.11).

Photos: © Vatican Museum
Rome, Inv. No.: 7623b;
Badisches Landesmuseum
Karlsruhe, Inv. No.: 146



unknown provenance, further underlines our belief that the interpretation of this artifice must be that of dance. On the Palermo statuette, the girl or young woman is wearing a long dress lifted with her right hand while moving her left hand up. The head is turned to the right and the right knee nearly touches the ground. The iconography describes an ecstatic dance rather than a run. With these dancers in mind, the interpretation of a vase painting from the Vatican Museum should also be rethought. The women depicted are close to the Palermo figurine (wide lunge, knee close to the ground, left hand lifted to the head), although the heads are not turned back (Fig. 10). A comparison to male runners makes it obvious that the women depicted on the vase at the Vatican Museum cannot be taken as runners (Fig. 11). These figurines and some others had been previously used to justify an old, presumably archaic, date of the races at the Heraia.⁴⁴ But, the iconographic analysis shows that the statuettes cannot be identified in a context of running and therefore cannot be used as arguments for an early date of the girls' races in Olympia.⁴⁵

The life-size marble statue of a so-called girl runner from the Vatican Museum No. 2784 (Fig. 12) had also been used as further justification for the reasoning of Pausanias's text about the Heraia in Olympia. The statue was created in the 2nd or 1st century BCE during a time when copying or interpreting ancient Greek – mainly bronze – sculptures had been popular throughout the Roman Empire.⁴⁶ The small pillar beside the left leg of the girl might indicate a copy of a Greek bronze statue, given that a marble statue would have been unstable without this pillar. But, naturally there is also no confirmation of the accuracy of this copy.⁴⁷ The statue might also simply be an interpretation of a bronze original or an eclectic invention in a time reflecting the classical Greek sculpture.⁴⁸ In any case, the figure does not explicitly copy any original Greek winner's statue.⁴⁹ Turning to the subject of the artefact, the girl was presented with an elegant, well-groomed hairstyle, with locks falling to the neck. Furthermore, she wore an extremely short *chiton*, which hardly covered the upper part of her legs and a broad belt, which left one breast free to the air. Her movement follows her elegant appearance with

a slight left step forward and her arms softly lifted. She appears to have been depicted as quietly moving around the pillar, perhaps surprised by something she has seen on starting a dance. It seems to be clear that Pausanias' description does not correspond to the statue Vatican Museum No. 2784 (no hair hanging down, no *chiton* slightly above the knees and, most importantly, no runner's motive).

Female runners

Races in Sparta: The daughters of Leukippos or Leukippides were responsible for weaving a coat for Apollo at Amyklai. Could it be possible that the same girls were involved in the rituals and girls' races for Dionysos Kolonatas?⁵⁰ Pausanias 3.13.6ff. mentioned within his report the so-called eleven daughters of Dionysos or Dionysiades, who participated in races at the very least during the time of the Roman Empire.⁵¹ The age of these races is not known, but one might conceive them as part of the idealised revival of Spartan history in Roman times, whereby they are related to Livia in some inscriptions.⁵² "There is no evidence that any of these races were held before Roman era, [...]" as stated by Christensen 2012, who also lists the Spartan races and related primary sources.⁵³

The daughters of Hermesianax: An inscription from 47 CE referring to the daughters of Hermesianax from Delphi is exceptional and describes all his daughters as winners in different contests. Hermesianax had no sons and perhaps he sponsored contests only to enable his daughters to participate in them.⁵⁴ The daughters were believed to have won competitions in six different sanctuaries, although not at Olympia itself.⁵⁵ In any case, we do not currently know of any existing comparable inscription from antiquity and have to regard this document as unique.

Capitolian Games: In 86 CE, the emperor Domitian established the new Capitolian Games, the grounding for which goes back to the Roman *Iudi Capitolini* in the 4th century BCE. The games became extremely popular and imitated the Olympic Games. However, during the Roman times, girls too were allowed to participate in running competitions, as this followed the taste of the

Roman emperors.⁵⁶ Interestingly, this tradition seems to have continued up until at least Septimius Severus.⁵⁷

Various competitions: Girls' races are also documented for the Sebastae in Naples⁵⁸ and they have been recorded to have been organised in Antioch, at least during the time of the Roman Emperor Commodus.⁵⁹ Patras also mentioned a female winner named Nikegora in his reports.⁶⁰ In addition, Damodika from Kyme was honoured in a burial inscription for her athletic success, a girl named Seia Spes won a girls' race in Pithicussa in 154 CE, and a man called Nikophelos donated money for an inscription dedicated to the victory of his sister in Greece.⁶¹

Summary

Agones had been an essential part of ancient Greek society. These athletic and artistic competitions were organised as part of religious festivals held not only at big panhellenic sanctuaries like Olympia or Delphi, but also at regional contests and *poleis*. Competitions as a means of politics and diplomacy, for identification and as life philosophy, *kalokagatheia* cannot be separated from Greek antiquity. This world was accessible to all Greeks with civil rights, i.e. male society. Women never participated in *agones* before the Roman era and not one single source survives stating the opposite. The few indications for women practicing physical activities are related to contexts beyond competitions. In Ancient Greece, women are known to have been stable owners and horse breeders, who even went on to win competitions in Olympia, runners and dancers in chorals and at religious festivals, and to have played certain ball games and practised acrobatics in private spheres.⁶² Running and dancing, when referring to female participation, never had a competitive character but were embedded in rituals, which were mostly prenuptial, like the example of Brauron might illustrate. Women did not take part in sport⁶³ in Greek antiquity, but were physically active beyond the daily work in the household described in Xen. Oec. 10.9.

Since the late Hellenistic times in the 1st century BCE, women started to visit public baths frequently, they went to gymnasia and the circus and got more involved in public life due to the Roman influence and changes taking place in their societies.⁶⁴ "Indeed, it seems that the inclusion of girls in games in the first/second century CE Graeco-Roman world is a Roman trend."⁶⁵ Dispersed inscriptions and literary sources indicate that females participated especially in running *agones* but the mere 10–15 mentions of girls in competitions during a period of about 400 years at the time of the Roman Empire does not really prove that females competed equally in races. Sport for women also stayed as a peripheral activity in Roman antiquity, despite the Livian games in Sparta and perhaps the Heraia in Olympia. ■



A Statue of a girl (life-size) was chosen as the symbol of the International Women's Sport Federation (FSFI), founded in 1921 by the Frenchwoman Alice Milliat (Fig. 12).

Photo: © Vatican Museum
Galleria deiCandellabri,
XXXIV, 36.1, Inv. No.: 2784;
Volker Kluge Archive

- 1 Lämmer, M.: *Women and Sport in Ancient Greece. A Plea for a Critical and Objective Approach*, in: Borms, J./Hebbelinck, M./Venerando, A. (Eds.): *Women and Sports in Historical, Biological, Physiological and Sports Medical Approach* (New York 1981), 17f. Scanlon, Th. F.: *Eros and Greek Athletics* (Oxford 2002), 20f. Wacker, Ch.: *Das Gymnasium in Olympia. Geschichte und Funktion*, in: *Würzburger Forschungen zur Altertumskunde* 2, 1996. Regarding the role of women in politics and society see also Blondell, S.: *Women in Ancient Greece*, Vol. 2 (Cambridge, Mass. 1995).
- 2 For a detailed analysis of the topic see: Wacker, Ch.: *Women do not sport in Greek Antiquity*, in: Wilant, N./Wacker, Ch./Wassong, S. (Ed.): *Olympic & Paralympic Discourses* (Kassel 2017), 35–71.
- 3 Reese, A. C./Rickerson I. V.: *Ancient Greek Women Athletes* (Athens 2000) and Reese, A. C./Rickerson I. V.: *Athletries: The Untold History of Ancient Greek Women Athletes* (Oklahoma City 2003) demonstrate a complete lack of understanding of antiquity. In addition, their writings follow an ideological approach. Unfortunately, their books are widespread all over the Greek tourist market and find thankful buyers.
- 4 Lämmer 1981, 17.
- 5 Langenfeld, H.: *Olympia – Zentrum des Frauensports in der Antike? Die Mädchen-Wettläufe beim Hera-Fest in Olympia*, in: Nikephoros 19, 2006, 183 summarises that sport for women in a modern sense did not exist in Greek antiquity: „Wir haben keinerlei Veranlassung [...] auf die Existenz eines Frauensports im modernen Sinne zu schließen.“
- 6 Langenfeld 2006, 157.
- 7 Until today the contribution from Ulf, Ch./Weiler, I.: *Der Ursprung der antiken Olympischen Spiele in der Forschung*, in: *Stadion* 6, 1980, 1–38 is the most detailed paper for this topic. See also Kyle 2007.1, 23ff.

Choral dance with women (Fig. 7).

Photo: Paris. © Louvre, Inv. No.: CA1333



- 8 See also Lämmer 1981, 18.
- 9 Mann, Ch.: *Athlet und Polis im archaischen und frühklassischen Griechenland*, in: Hypomnemata 138, 2001.
- 10 Scanlon 2002, 23.
- 11 Mantas, K.: *Woman and Athletics in the Roman East*, in: Nikephoros 8, 1995, 129. Regarding the function of the gymnasium see also Wacker 1996, 131ff. For some exceptions see Lämmer 1981, 19.
- 12 Kyle, D.G.: *Greek Female Sport*, in: Christensen, P./Kyle, D.G. (Eds.): *A Companion to Sport and Spectacle in Greek and Roman Antiquity* (Malden, Mass. 2014), 258.
- 13 Scanlon 2002, 122ff.
- 14 Scanlon 2002, 132f.
- 15 Scanlon 2002, 23, FN 77 (for Kyrene). Competitions also had been organised in Delos as part of the Ionian identification process. Already Hom. Hymn to Delian Apollo 146ff. cited this festival with boxing, dancing and music celebrations. Later, a ritual procession was added and the islands around Delos were invited to take part (Thuk. 3.104.3f.). Calame, C.: *Choruses of Young Women in Ancient Greece* (Lanham, Md. 2001), 104f. (for Delos).
- 16 IvO 160.
- 17 Kyniska must have been the first, but definitively not the only woman to win. Mantas 1995, 129 lists all women who won in competitions as owners of horses. The examples come from Olympia, Attica, Thessaloniki and the Aegean islands.
- 18 Sappho fr. 1. Scanlon 2002, 123. Serwint, N.: *The Female Athletic Costume at the Heraia and Prenuptial Initiation Rites*, in: AJA 97, 1993, 419.
- 19 Aigner, Th./Mauritsch-Breiner, B./Petermandl, W.: *Laufen*, in: Weiler, I. (Ed.): *Quellendokumentation zur Gymnastik und Agonistik im Altertum* 7, 2002, 424ff.
- 20 Calame 2001, 93 and 113f.
- 21 Paus. 5.14.6. and 6.22.9. Calame 2001, 92.
- 22 Xen. Eph. 1.2.2ff. Ael. NA 12.9. Calame 2001, 93ff.
- 23 Calame 2001, 97.
- 24 See also Scanlon 2002, 156.
- 25 Sourvinou-Inwood, C.: *Studies in Girls' Transitions: Aspects of the Arkteia and Age Representations in Attic Iconography* (Athens 1988), 112.
- 26 The most important vase paintings are collected in Scanlon 2002, 141ff. (Fig. 6-1 to 6-8).
- 27 Sourvinou-Inwood 1988, 29 and 65ff.
- 28 Sourvinou-Inwood 1988, 63 (krateriskos II).
- 29 Calame 2001, 99. Scanlon 2002, 157.
- 30 Scanlon 2002, 164. Regarding the role of girls and women in ancient Greek society see also Calame 2001, 259.
- 31 Calame 2001, 90.
- 32 Suda s.v. choroi.
- 33 The vase paintings lead to the impression that choroï usually were performed in a row or like a procession, which might be for iconographic reasons. Dances in a circle as known from terracotta statuettes were simply not easy to be transferred into a two-dimensional depiction. Regarding early *choroï* see also Tölle 1964 and Calame 2001, 38. Dances in a circle had been known back in Minoan times.
- 34 Calame 2001, 91, 119, 136ff.
- 35 Christensen, P.: *Athletics and Social Order in Sparta in the Classical Period*, in: *Classical Antiquity* 31.2, 2012, 198 states, that "... choral dance is an important form of regimented physical activity."
- 36 Golden, M.: *Sport and Society in Ancient Greece* (Cambridge 1998), 129. Kyle, D. G.: *Fabulous Females and Ancient Olympia*, in: Schaus, G. P./Wenn, S. R. (Eds.): *Onward to the Olympics. Historical Perspectives on the Olympic Games* (Waterloo, Ont. 2007), 134. Scanlon, Th. F.: *The Heraia at Olympia Revisited*, in: Nikephoros 21, 2008, 181 and 194 even suggests that the putative archaic Heraia must have been the blueprint for the races for females during the Roman Empire. To his opinion the Heraian races could have been a Panhellenic festival used as some sort of marriage market. See also Lämmer 1981, 19 against this argumentation.
- 37 Kyle 2014, 264.
- 38 Paus. 5.16.2-7 after Miller, St. G.: *Arete. Greek Sports from Ancient Sources* (Berkeley/Los Angeles/London 2004), No. 158.
- 39 Scanlon 2002, 109ff is convinced that the girls' races at the Heraia date from early Archaic times.
- 40 Scanlon 2002, 99f.
- 41 Scanlon 2002, 101.
- 42 See also Kyle 2014, 265. Kyle 2007, 134. Langenfeld 2006, 165ff.
- 43 See the vase paintings Fig. 1-3.
- 44 Scanlon 2008, 166ff compares the statuettes with two male tripod applications from the earlier 6th century BCE with similar iconographic style. This, indeed, justifies an archaic date of the female statuettes described above, but does not indicate any contextual connection.
- 45 Scanlon 2002, 102ff is convinced that the statuettes reflect runners at the Heraia.
- 46 Anguissola, A.: *Greek Originals and Roman Copies* (Oxford 2014).
- 47 Therefore it is not possible to assume the date of a potential bronze original with ca. 460 BCE as indicated in Scanlon 2002, 102 and 2008, 175f. The author also uses the depiction of a palm leave on the side pillar as justification for the interpretation of the girl as a victorious runner in a race.
- 48 Serwint 1993, 409f.
- 49 Kyle 2014, 265 supports the idea that the statue cannot be regarded as a copy of a winner's bronze figure, but he suggests to identify the first female runner in Olympia, Chloris. See also Arrigoni, G.: *Donne e sport nel mondo greco*, in: Arrigoni, G. et al. (Eds.): *Le donne in Grecia* (Roma/Bari 1985), 120ff. Langenfeld 2006, 169ff.
- 50 Scanlon 2002, 100.
- 51 See also SEG 11.610. Hesych. s.v. Dionysides. All ancient sources referring to the girls' races derive from Roman times and reflect specific ritual races not comparable to races at other parts of the ancient world. See also Calame 2001, 186f. Golden 1998, 129.
- 52 Christensen 2012, 204, FN 38. Kyle 2014, 270. Mantas 1995, 134. Scanlon 2002, 122, 134.
- 53 Christensen 2012, 206. An inscription dated 25 CE names an official who organised a contest for females in ancient Sparta. See also Kyle 2014, 270. Lee, H.: *SIG 802: Did Women compete against Men in Greek Athletic Festivals?*, in: Nikephoros 1, 1988, 104 No. 7.
- 54 Lämmer 1981, 20.
- 55 Kyle 2014, 271. Mantas 1995, 132f. Assumes that the daughters must have been professional athletes. Tryphosa won the running competition in Delphi and Isthmia, Hedeia the running in Isthmia and in a discipline called 'armoured chariot' in Isthmia too, as well as the running in Nemea and Sikyon and for playing the lyre in Athens. Another daughter called Dionysia won in a discipline at a location no longer readable!
- 56 Dio Cass. 67.8.1. Suet. Dom. 4.4. Kyle 2007.2, 139. Kyle 2014, 271.
- 57 Dio Cass. 75.16.1. Kyle 2014, 271.
- 58 Kyle 2014, 270. Lämmer 1981, 19.
- 59 One source refers to races for females for 181 CE. See also John. Malalas 12.10.288f. Kyle 2014, 271. Lämmer 1981, 19. Mantas 1995, 133.
- 60 Lämmer 1981, 19. Mantas 1995, 132. Moretti 1953, 168. Roman literature very often relates girls' races to erotic fantasies.
- 61 Mantas 1995, 132f. In the lists of the winners of the Isthmian Games there is one record of a woman having won the poets' competition in 2 BCE.
- 62 André, J.-M.: *Les Loisirs en Grèce et à Rome* (Paris 1984).
- 63 The term 'sport' is used in a common sense as an activity involving physical exertion in which an individual or team competes against another.
- 64 Kyle 2007, 139. Kyle 2014, 270.
- 65 Mantas 1995, 134.