**From ancient Olympia to Modern Times: The History of military sports**

***The Ephebeia as an institution for athletic and military ability in the Hellenic world during the Hellenistic and Roman Imperial times***

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The “Gymnasium” was an important institution and place for sports-physical training and intellectual education, but also of Greek education, since the Archaic era-the beginning of the institution dates back to the 6th century BC-up to the Imperial period (31 BC - 323 AD). Linked to the Gymnasium are the institutions of “Gymnasiarchia” and “Ephebeia”. Ephebeia, starting in the 4th century BC, (makes its appearance between 337 and 335 BC), was initially the "military service" of the time, while from the Hellenistic years onwards it seems that (its) military character recedes-but without being deemed obsolete-giving space to intellectual education and, according to some, sports education. Upon reaching the age of 18, the young people of the city, among others, in order to enter as equal members the social, political and religious life, had to first go through the process of Ephebeia. There, they received a military-type training with everything that entails: physical and athletic training, use of weapons, discipline-ethics, cultivation of a "patriotic" mindset. A notable example of that is the *Pledge of Allegiance* by the “Epheboi” in Athens. Ephebeia lasted -basically- two (2) years and took place in the facilities of the Gymnasium as well as outdoors (guarding the coast and borders of the city), with people in charge who were called “Kosmitis” and “Sofronistes” (in Athens). Outside Athens, the leaders of the Epheboi were often called “Gymnasiarchoi” or “Epheibarchoi”. The special trainers for the sports and military exercises - (physical training, weapon fighting, archery, javelin, catapult, horse riding) were the “Paidotrivai”, the “Gymnastes”, the “Oplomachoi”, the “Toxotai”, the “Akontistai”, the “Afetai”, the “Katapeltafetai” and the “Polodamastai”. By their side, in the context of the multidimensional education of the Gymnasiums and Ephebeia, were the literacy teachers for the intellectual education. It is worth noting that over the years Ephebeia has acquired rather (and) characteristic elements of spiritual/philosophical cultivation.

* *Aristotelis, Athineon Politeia (*Aristotle, *The Constitution of the Athenians)*
* *Searchable Greek Inscriptions. A Scholarly Tool in Progress*. The Packard Humanities Institute Project Centers. Cornell University. Ohio State University. Retrieved: 1-10-2021 <https://inscriptions.packhum.org/>
* Marrou Henri – Irénée, *I Istoria tis Ekpedefsis stin Archeotita (History of Education in Antiquity. The Greek World),* Athens, Daidalos-Zacharopoulos, 2009.