

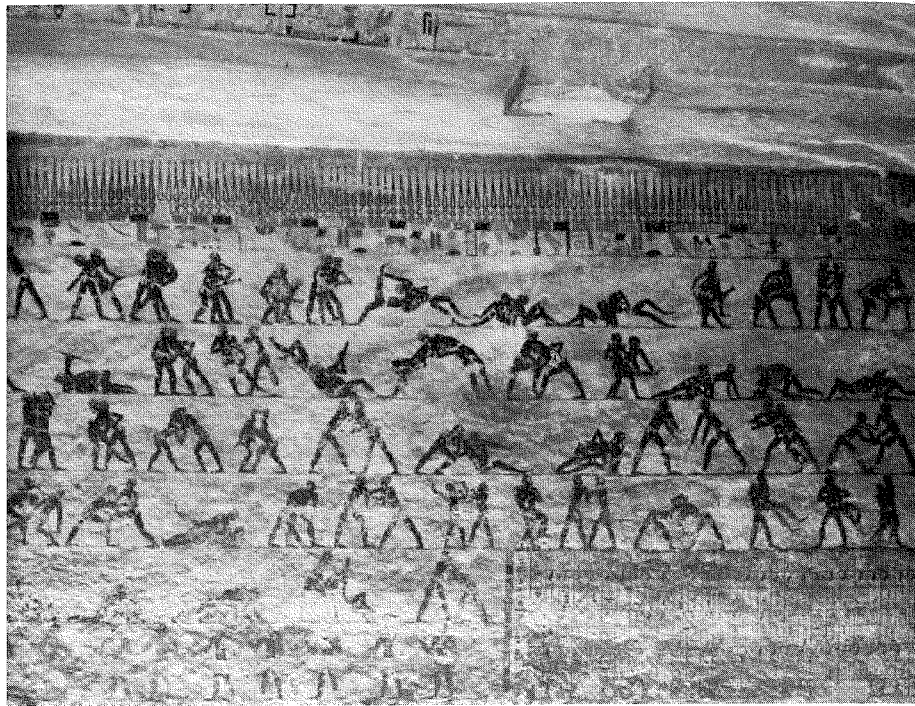
EDITED BY SUSAN BROWNELL

**FROM ATHENS TO BEIJING**  
**WEST MEETS EAST IN THE OLYMPIC GAMES**

Volume I: Sport, the Body, and Humanism in Ancient Greece and China

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Detail of wrestlers from the wall mural in Beni Hasan tomb 15, Egyptian Middle Kingdom period (21st to 19th centuries BCE).

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### Comparative Reflections on Embodied Virtue: Performance and Competition in China and Greece

Lisa Raphals

THERE is an apparent incommensurability between Greek and Chinese sport.<sup>1</sup> Greek sport was centralized, democratic, competitive, external, and aesthetic (in some contexts, erotic). Chinese sport was local, hierarchical, noncompetitive, internal, and in some contexts imitative of the whole body movements of animals.<sup>2</sup> Needless to say, very different social structures and institutions underlie these differences. Both are linked to ritual and sacrifice, but in different ways. Although a definition of sport as the sacrifice of energy may apply to Chinese sport, it is not clear that it had the same purchase in China as in Greece.

In Greece, the connection between athletic contests, competition, and sacrifice (including the sacrifice of animals, libations, and feasts) is much older than the establishment of the Olympic Games in 776 BCE.<sup>3</sup> For example, the Homeric poems devote the better part of a book of the *Iliad* to the funeral games for Patroclus, and describe at length the ad hoc games held

1 Chinese words are transliterated in the Pinyin system except in the case of the name of an author who does not use it and in the case of terms that are best known in an alternative version, for example, Confucius. Most Greek terms are transliterated according to the third edition of the Oxford Classical Dictionary. In both cases, exceptions are made for terms that are better known otherwise. Unless otherwise indicated, references to the Chinese Thirteen Classics are to the *Shisanjing zhushu (Notes and Commentaries on the Thirteen Classics)* edition of Ruan Yuan (Taipei: Yiwen jushu, 1980); other early Chinese primary texts are cited from the *Sibu beiyao* (SBBY) editions; Chinese dynastic histories are from the *Zhonghua shuju* series (Beijing, 1959-); and concordance citations are from the Harvard-Yenching concordance series. Unless otherwise indicated, Greek texts are from Loeb Classical Library editions. Translations are my own unless otherwise indicated.

2 For the history of Chinese sport, see Ren Hai, *A Comparative Analysis of Ancient Greek and Chinese Sport* (doctoral dissertation, University of Alberta, 1988).

3 For an overview of the history of the relation between religion and Greek sport, see Thomas F. Scanlon, *Eros and Greek Athletics* (Oxford University Press, 2002), especially Chapter 1.

in honor of Odysseus at the court of King Alcinous.<sup>4</sup> The heroic ethos of competition became a part of such games: "always to be best and to surpass others."<sup>5</sup> Such excellence was encouraged by the perceived approbation, or even active participation, of a divine audience.

Although the earliest mention of an athletic festival explicitly performed in a god's honor is a seventh-century BCE reference in the *Homeric Hymn to Apollo*, according to at least some legends, funeral games of the kind described in *Iliad* 23 were the basis for the four great pan-Hellenic festivals (at the shrines of Zeus at Olympia, Apollo at Delphi, Poseidon at the Isthmus of Corinth, and Zeus at Nemea).<sup>6</sup> The pan-Hellenic festivals combined cult and athletic competition, and the latter became increasingly elaborate over time. The first thirteen Olympiads (776-728 BCE) consisted of a single footrace of 200 meters. They were expanded to include footraces, boxing, wrestling, the pentathlon, and equestrian competitions. In the sixth century BCE, other pan-Hellenic shrines at Delphi, Isthmia, and Nemea imitated the Olympian Games by incorporating sacred games into their own festivals. Male athletes from the entire Mediterranean participated.

Chinese athletic performances included court contests in archery and charioteering, but competition may not have been their primary purpose. The Confucian *Analects* or *Lunyu* refer to ritual archery contests of the nobility, but Confucius praises less the skill of archery than the character of the "gentleman," or *junzi*, expressed in noncompetitive behavior:

Kongzi said: The *junzi* has nothing over which he contends. If [there is a situation where they are unavoidable,] this is archery, is it not? But he behaves with ritual courtesy [to competitors] and ascends; he descends, and drinks [the penalty cup, or causes it to be drunk]. In his contentions, he remains a *junzi*.<sup>7</sup>

This view of archery as an expression of the *junzi*'s character belies the fact that bow and arrow were also military weapons with a long history of use in combat. At the private level, highly embodied self-cultivation practices included gymnastics, longevity practices, and the ancestors of today's martial arts (as well as cooking and medicine). In these practices, mind and body are a continuum. How do they square with conventional accounts of a Greek

4 For the funeral games, see *Iliad* 23.256-897. For the games for Odysseus, see *Odyssey* 8.97-384. There is also a spontaneous boxing match between Odysseus and the beggar Iros (*Odyssey* 18.66-897).

5. αἰὲν ἀριστεύειν καὶ ὑπείροχον ἔμμεναι ἄλλων, *Iliad* 6.208.

6 *Homeric Hymn to Apollo*, l. 146-150; see Scanlon, 28.

7 孔子曰：「君子無所爭。必也射乎！揖讓而升，下而飲。其爭也君子。」 *Analects* 3.7.

philosophical dichotomy that separates mind from body? Or have we already found ourselves floundering in a glen of incommensurables?

### Virtue and self-cultivation

I argue that the answer to that question is no. For different reasons, and in very different contexts, both Chinese and Greek sport were based on notions of virtue and self-cultivation. (I use these terms beyond the trivial point that athletic excellence, like any other, requires great effort and cultivates, at the very least, the physical self.) There are very different institutional contexts for the expression of virtue and self-cultivation in Chinese and Greek athletic performances, as there are for the relevant epistemologies and metaphysics. Further, viewing sport as an aspect of physical, mental, and spiritual self-cultivation adds to the three basic approaches taken by theorists of the origin of sport: the Marxist, ethological, and religio-ritual. Orthodox Marxists derive sport from the processes of labor and production; ethologists consider it a manifestation of instinctive behavior. Others have theorized that all sport is based on ritual, sacrifice, and religion.<sup>8</sup> All three have their problems. The Marxist definition does not account for the pursuit of health or longevity. The ethological view is better suited to play (with its biological or evolutionary functions) than to sport. The religio-ritualist approach has suffered from methodological problems, but the prevalence of religious and ritual aspects of sport have been widely noted. For example, David Sansone has defined sport as "the ritual sacrifice of physical energy."<sup>9</sup>

Greek sport is based on notions of virtue and self-cultivation in several senses. The first derives from its ancient connections with sacrifice to the gods, in which the athlete is a willing sacrificial offering. As in other contexts, the sacrificial victim must be the best of its kind. An athlete achieves that eminence through successful competition. A second sense derives from the wholehearted effort and concentration of the athlete. As Hermann Fränkel has observed of Pindar and his contemporaries, they considered human virtue or *aretê* to be a unitary "whole." In this context, athletic victory is less specialized technical expertise than a demonstration of the virtue of the athlete, expressed as wholehearted effort, the sacrifice of time and money, the willingness to risk defeat and disgrace, and the discipline of athletic training itself.<sup>10</sup> A third notion of virtue derives from Greek ideals of health and well-

8 For a detailed discussion, see David Sansone, *Greek Athletics and the Genesis of Sport* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), 15-28.

9 Sansone, *Greek Athletics*, 37.

10 Hermann Fränkel, *Early Greek Poetry and Philosophy*, translated by Moses Hadas and James

being as a balance between two entirely separate modes of excellence: of the mind and of the body.

Chinese sport is also based on notions of virtue and self-cultivation, but in very different senses. Aristocratic competitions in archery, charioteering, and the like were judged not by victory but by quality of performance, and were linked to broadly "Confucian" notions of virtue. Techniques that first appear in the Warring States, but were extensively developed during later periods, might appear to be athletic activities, but were highly embodied techniques for self-cultivation. Examples include gymnastics or martial arts (*wushu* 武術), medical and other longevity practices, quasi-Daoist self-cultivation techniques, and martial arts.

### The example of archery

The example of archery highlights both Chinese and Greek attitudes toward physical "self-cultivation" as an embodiment of virtue. It could be objected that, in the Greek case, archery was restricted to the aristocratic competitions of the Homeric poems, and was an object of considerable ambivalence in later thinking. Although it was not an element in Olympic competition, archery, as well as archery contests and archery metaphors, appears in both Greek and Chinese sources. In very different institutional contexts, archery was described as a skilled performance, a means of victory in battle (or the ritual hunt), and a metaphor for various aspects of virtue.

In the archery contest at the funeral games for Patroclus, the prize was offered for hitting a pigeon tied to the mast of a ship. Alcinous' games do not feature archery, but the *Odyssey* leaves no doubt as to this skill's importance. Odysseus wins his homecoming (*nostos*, the *Odyssey*'s epic theme) through an archery contest. His archery defeats the suitors for the hand of his wife Penelope, and helps secure his status as the hero of the *Odyssey*.<sup>11</sup>

But archery is problematic for several reasons. First, there is a "dark side" to the virtues of archery in its connection with *mêtis*, or "cunning intelligence" (discussed below). But Greek ambivalence about archery does not reduce to Greek ambivalence about *mêtis*. After the shift toward *hoplite* warfare in the fifth century, the *hoplite* phalanx eclipsed the prestige of older modes of combat. This ambivalence is dramatized in Euripides' *Heracles*, in a debate on the merits of archery and *hoplite* warfare (ll. 151-204). The tyrant

Willis (New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1975), 487-488.

11 For these aspects of the *Odyssey*, see Gregory Nagy, *The Best of the Achaeans* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980).

Lycus disparages the hero Heracles as a coward who prefers the bow to the spear, and:

who never took the shield in his hands or came near the spear, but bearing a bow, the weapon of a coward, was always poised for flight. The bow is no proof for a man of high soul, who remains in his ranks steadfast against swift wounds ploughed by the spear's furrow. (*Heracles*, ll. 159-165)

The noble general Amphitryon defends Heracles and attacks Lycus for maligning "the wise invention" of bow and arrow (l. 190). He counters that a *hoplite* is a slave to his weapons; that his life depends on the courage of his comrades; and that a spear provides one inflexible means of defense. By contrast, the archer's lone weapon can let fly countless arrows and offers other means of self-defense: the protection of distance and the opportunity to strike from under cover without exposure to a foe. "This is the far wisest course in battle: to harm the enemy and keep safe oneself, independent of chance" (ll. 190-205). While the rhetoric of the play thus favors Heracles and Amphitryon, Euripides nonetheless portrays archery as an inferior mode of fighting.

Archery appears indirectly in Chinese ritual and historical texts through ritual hunts. The emperor and his officials personally shot game and sacrificed the meat at imperial tombs.<sup>12</sup> But archery as a manifestation of the virtue of the athlete first appears in the *Analects*. In addition to suggesting a moral component to its practice, Confucius also remarks that going through the leather (hitting the target) is not the important point in archery because people's strength is not equal.<sup>13</sup>

A chapter of the *Liji*, the "Zhongyong" or "Unwavering Pivot," a text that became one of the *Four Books* of Confucianism, also ascribes to Confucius the view that archery revealed moral superiority:

The Master said, "In archery we have something like [the way of] the superior man. When the archer misses the centre of the target, he turns round and seeks for the cause of his failure in himself."<sup>14</sup>

The *Liji* also contains a chapter devoted to archery, which describes the con-

<sup>12</sup>These sacrifices are described in the *Zuozhuan* (*The commentary of Zuo*) and systematized in the *Zhouli* (*Rites of Zhou*). See Mark Edward Lewis, *Sanctioned Violence in Early China* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1990), 145-151.

<sup>13</sup> *Analects* 3.16; cf. *Analects* 3.7, discussed above.

<sup>14</sup>子曰：「射有似乎君子失諸正鵠反求諸其身。」 *Liji* (*Book of Rites*) 31, "Zhong yong," ("Way of the Mean"), 884, translated by James Legge, volume 2, book 28, 307.

duct and meaning of ceremonial archery contests. This text explicitly links archery style to character:

The archers, in advancing, retiring, and all their movements, were required to observe the rules. With minds correct, and straight carriage of the body, they were to hold their bows and arrows skillfully and firmly; and when they did so, they might be expected to hit the mark. In this way [from their archery] their characters could be seen.<sup>15</sup>

This text makes an explicit link between archery and benevolence:

Archery suggests to us the way of benevolence. [The archer] seeks to be correct in himself, and then discharges his arrow. If it miss the mark, he is not angry with the one who has surpassed himself, but turns round and seeks [for the cause of failure] in himself.<sup>16</sup>

But is there a problem in the idealized picture presented by these explicitly Confucian texts? Do we really believe the archer was not trying to win? Are there other ways of using archery to describe virtue?

### The metaphor of the skilled archer

Another approach to this question comes from the use of archery as a metaphor for virtue, or rather for a considerable range of virtues. The archer's behavior becomes a significant metaphor in both Chinese and Greek rhetoric, in a range of analogies. Metaphors from archery typically illustrate some aspect of technical or moral excellence in a particular domain of expertise or moral distinction.

Consider, for example, Plato's use of archery metaphors in various dialogues. In the *Laws*, he compares archery to a good law that aims solely at its proper target and hits nothing else. Similarly, he likens the accuracy of a good archer to judges and lawgivers who accurately mete out punishment in correct amount.<sup>17</sup> A very different use is provided by the descriptions of *hamartia* in epistemological dialogues such as the *Theaetetus*. Here, *hamartia* is a metaphor from archery. Plato compares the origin of false opinion to

15 故射者，進退周還必中禮內志正外體直然後持弓矢審固持弓矢審固然後可以言中此可以觀德行矣。Liji 46, "She yi," 1014-1015, translated by James Legge, volume 2, book 43, 446.

16 射者仁之道也。射求正諸己，己正而後發。發而不中則不怨勝己者，反求諸己而已矣。Liji 46, "She yi," 1020, translated by James Legge, volume 2, book 43, 452.

17 See Plato, *Laws* 705E and *Laws* 934B, respectively.

the bad archer who misses the mark because he lacks accurate perception.<sup>18</sup>

This usage has counterparts in the plays of Aeschylus and Sophocles. In the *Agamemnon* of Aeschylus, Cassandra uses the archer hitting the mark as a metaphor for accurate prophecy. Sophocles uses arrows as metaphors for the false divination of greedy prophets, and for grief to come accurately foretold. In the *Antigone*, Creon accuses Teiresias of shooting prophetic "arrows" at him, like archers at their mark. Teiresias responds "archer-like in anger" to this provocation by launching "arrows for [his] heart," which "fly true," and from which Creon cannot run.<sup>19</sup>

But returning to the range of his metaphors on the subject, Plato also associates archery with love and desire, described as resourceful and predatory. In the *Symposium*, he describes Apollo's invention of archery, medicine, and divination under the guidance of Desire and Love. Love is the son of Poverty (*pênia*) and Plenty (*poros*). Like his mother, he is always poor, but, like his father, he is always scheming for what is good. He is a famous hunter, wise, always weaving stratagems, and a master of juggling, witchcraft, and artful speech.<sup>20</sup> In these metaphors, Plato uses archery to illustrate a variety of virtues, with little apparent interest in the qualities of archery itself. By contrast, a range of Chinese narratives focus on moral aspects of (and problems with) the details of the practice of archery. These texts praise archers for a range of virtues, and not necessarily the ones ascribed to the Confucian *junzi*.

One is the conspicuously value-neutral virtue of concentration and accuracy, particularly associated with the legendary Archer Yi.<sup>21</sup> On the one hand, he is portrayed as a savior of humankind, for using his skill to shoot down the suns that threaten the world.<sup>22</sup> Other stories also praise his archery skills in moral terms. Some compare his archery to the work of a skilled craftsman or a good ruler. The *Guanzi* compares his archery to the craftsman's intuitive grasp of axe and adze to cut along a mark. He hits the mark by careful adjustment of his bow and arrows, and by accurate judgment of

18 Plato, *Theaetetus* 193E.

19 See Aeschylus, *Agamemnon* 1195, and Sophocles, *Antigone* 1033 and 1085, respectively.

20 Plato, *Symposium*, 197A and 203CD.

21 Archer Yi 羿 is also described as Houyi 后羿, Yiyi 夷羿, or Pingyi 平羿.

22 Accounts of Yi saving the world by shooting the ten suns appear at *Shanhaijing jiaozhu* (*The Classic of Mountains and Seas: Collected Commentaries*) (SBBY), 18:7b, and *Huainanzi* (*Huainan Annals*) (Xin bian zhuzi jicheng, 1974), 8:118-119 and 13:233. Accounts of his misdeeds appear in the *Zuozhuan* (Xiang 4) and "Tianwen" section of the *Chuci* (*Elegies of Chu*) (Sibu congkan), 3:15b. Archer Yi and Peng Meng are described as the best archers in the world in the *Huainanzi* (17:292) and *Xunzi* (*Xunzi yinde* [*Concordance to Xunzi*]), Shanghai: Guji chubanshe, 1986, 8/80 and 11/69).

the height of his target.<sup>23</sup>

Mencius selects a different set of skills when he compares the skilled archer to a master carpenter. In this analogy, his students imitate his “natural” drawing of the bow as a master carpenter’s students imitate his “natural” use of compasses and square. Here, the archer’s virtue is naturalness (*ziran*). Ever practical, Xunzi compares Archer Yi’s expertise at training archers to an enlightened official who is expert in “training” men.<sup>24</sup>

Other archery comparisons in Mencius are more morally focused. He also compares archery to benevolence. According to one injunction, the archer should check his stance before shooting. As in the *Analects* and *Liji*, if he misses the mark, he should seek the cause of the error within himself, rather than begrudge the victor.<sup>25</sup>

In a more complex analogy, Mencius compares wisdom to skill and sagacity to strength. Strength/sagacity brings the arrow to the target, but skill/wisdom hits it:

Wisdom may be likened to skill and sagacity to strength. Coming from being shot from over a hundred paces away, [an arrow’s] reaching [the target] is a matter of your strength, but [its] hitting the center is not a matter of your strength.<sup>26</sup>

But there is a problem with this passage, as Mark Csikszentmihalyi observes, because wisdom, rather than the prime virtue of sagacity, makes it possible to hit the target, with the very un-Confucian implication that wisdom is more important than sagacity. Commentators have tried to argue that success required both the innate quality of sagacity and the learnable quality of wisdom. But particularly in the light of discussions of the transforming effects of a sage in recently excavated texts such as the *Wuxing*, the above passage at Mencius 5B1 could be reinterpreted to mean: “hitting the center is not a matter of *your strength* [emphasis added]: but rather a matter of the strength of the transformative influence of a sage.” Understood this way, Mencius, too, uses archery as a metaphor for the pervasive morality of the Confucian sage.

23 The *Guanzi* (*Master Guan*) (1:5a and 20:5, SBBY) also compares Archer Yi hitting the mark to the government of an enlightened ruler. Here, the analogy is that each is a master of his respective way.

24 See Mencius 6A20 and Xunzi 11/69-70.

25 Mencius 2A7.

26 智譬則巧也聖譬則力也由射於百步之外也其至爾力也其中非爾力也。 Mencius 5B1. translation modified from Mark Csikszentmihalyi, *Material Virtue Ethics and the Body in Early China* (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 183-184.

But moralizing analogies of this kind are not unique to explicitly Confucian texts. A similar idea appears in a passage from the *Huainanzi*:

Now the means by which an arrow can penetrate the rigidity of a distant target is the extension of strength, but the reason that it can split a hair is human minds. What rewards good and punishes evil is governance and edicts. The means by which these may be applied is essential sincerity. Therefore, even if one’s strength is great one cannot hit the target alone, and although edicts are clear they cannot be applied alone. It is necessary to put the Way into effect using what essence and *qi* has bestowed.<sup>27</sup>

These Chinese narratives share a detailed comparison of the skill of the archer with a range of virtues. The metaphorical accounts of archery are more sophisticated than the broad moralizing treatment of the *Analects*, in that they focus on different aspects of the archer’s skill, for different rhetorical purposes.

### The ethics of instruction

Other Chinese narratives use archery to illustrate a very different virtue: the moral responsibility of a teacher. I am unaware of a Greek counterpart to these. The issue in these stories is the master archer’s choice of a student to whom to teach his skills. Unlike the archery metaphors, these stories vary considerably in the fates of the archers.

Mencius recounts the tale of how Archer Yi’s student Peng Meng learned everything his master could teach, and then killed him. The interesting point here is that Mencius considers Yi partially to blame for his own end.<sup>28</sup> Mencius specifically contrasts Yi’s lack of responsibility with the choices of other archers who are more careful in their selection of students. Mencius’s counterexample is Zizhuo Ruzi of Zheng. Pursued by an archer from Wei, debilitated by illness, and unable to hold a bow, he anticipates death until he learns that the Wei archer is his own student’s student. He then reasons that his student, an upright man, would only instruct an upright man. (The implication is, of course, that Zizhuo himself is an upright man.) The pursuer resolves the conflict between his obligations to his teacher’s teacher and to

27 夫矢之所以射遠貫牢者，弩力也；其所以中的剖微者，人心也；賞善罰暴者，政令也；其所以能行者，精誠也。故弩雖強，不能獨中；令雖明，不能獨獨行；必自精氣所以與之施道。 *Huainanzi jiaoshi* (*Critical edition of the Masters of Huainan*) 20.2045, translated by Mark Csikszentmihalyi, 2004, 189-190.

28 Mencius 4B24. Here, he follows the *Analects* (14.5), in which Confucius contrasts Archer Yi’s violent death with the agricultural successes of Yu and Hou Ji.

his own state of Wei by shooting arrows harmlessly in the air.<sup>29</sup>

These stories use the example of archery to demonstrate two kinds of error in acquiring a skill. One kind of problem occurs when a skill is not gained completely. The other is the full acquisition of a trivial skill because of a wrongheaded focus on “small knowledge.” This theme occurs throughout the *Zhuangzi*, which uses Archer Yi as an example of “trivial” skill. He can hit the smallest target, but cannot avoid praise. (By contrast, the sage is skilled in affairs of Heaven rather than in human affairs.) Archer Yi can hit a sparrow but is “caged” by Tang.<sup>30</sup> Another *Zhuangzi* narrative, the story of the archer Lie Yukou, presents a case of incomplete skill. Lie can stand still as a statue and shoot rapidly, but when invited to do the same thing on a mountain ledge, he loses all equanimity.<sup>31</sup>

Other political persuasions use archery as an example of the dire consequences of misdirected or incomplete skill. One *Guanzi* passage compares government without understanding standards for measurement or patterns of behavior to turning one’s back on the target and being confident of hitting the mark.<sup>32</sup> Another analogizes skill in archery to military training and preparation:

Having archers who cannot hit the target is the same thing as having no arrows. Their hitting the target but not piercing it is the same thing as having no arrowheads. Being a general over untrained men is the same thing as having no armor. Using short weapons against long-distance arrows is the same thing as sitting down to wait for death.<sup>33</sup>

29 Mencius 4B24. A somewhat different account of an astute teacher appears in the *Liezi* story of the master Gan Ying, his student Fei Wei, and Fei Wei’s student, Ji Chang. When Fei Wei tried to kill Gan Ying, he caught the arrow in his teeth. When Ji Chang tried to kill Fei Wei, their arrows met in mid-air. Fei Wei blocked Ji Chang’s last arrow with a thorn, whereupon both wept, threw down their bows, became as father and son, and vowed to instruct no one else. See *Liezi (Master Lie)* (Xin bian zhuzi jicheng edition), 5:61-62. Another *Liezi* narrative (5:58-59) describes balancing give and pull as the ultimate principle in dealing with the world, exemplified by the skill of a fisherman at equalizing the push and pull on his line, based on the model of archery.

30 *Zhuangzi* (Master Zhuang), (*Zhuangzi jishi* (Collected Explanations of the Master Zhuang), edited by Guo Qingfan (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1961), 23:813-814.

31 *Zhuangzi* 21:724.. Similarly, the story in the *Lienüzhuan* (*Lives of Virtuous Women*) (story 6.3) of the wife of the bowmaker of Jin correlates the Duke of Jin’s ineptness in archery to his deficiency in moral judgment (in condemning her husband for making a bow the duke cannot shoot). She remedies both with an argument that combines instruction in ethics and instruction in archery. For a detailed analysis, see Lisa Raphals, “Arguments by Women in Early Chinese Texts,” *Nan Nü* 3.2 (2001): 157-195.

32 *Guanzi* 2:2b.

33 *Guanzi* 10:9a.

In these examples, for the ruler to act without essential political knowledge is like performing archery without the requisite skills or matériel and unrealistically expecting a satisfactory outcome. Elsewhere in the *Guanzi*, archery is a distraction from proper rule since archery and hunting can cause rulers to neglect the empire.<sup>34</sup>

Finally, archery is also recommended in the very different context of household management. Eastern Han handbooks of household management recommend the practice of archery as an immediate deterrent to thieves. One example is a monthly guide for daily activities, which gives some indication of the practical activities of the farming estates of mid-level Eastern Han officials, ca. 25-220 CE.<sup>35</sup> Its instructions for the second month include practicing archery in accordance with the *yang* forces in order to prepare for the unexpected movements of bandits.<sup>36</sup> Similarly, the instructions for the ninth month include: “Repair the five weapons, and practice fighting and archery, in order to be ready for the [people who become] bandits due to cold and poverty.”<sup>37</sup>

In summary, the example of archery demonstrates how one kind of ritual, practical, and athletic skill was linked to moral excellence, in quite different social and institutional contexts, in early China and Greece. Yet, again in quite different ways, ethics may incorporate notions of strategy, deception, and cunning in both Greek and Chinese athletics.

### Virtue and deception

I conclude with a look at what we might call the “dark side” of the virtues of archery. In their seminal study of “practical and cunning intelligence,” Marcel Detienne and Jean-Pierre Vernant argued for the importance of *mêtis*, or “cunning intelligence,” in many spheres of Greek culture and society.<sup>38</sup> Indi-

34 Thus, “Queries” (“Wen”) asks how many young people take the lead in working the fields and how many lead others away to hunt with bow and arrow (*Guanzi* 9:13a). In “Admonitions” (“Jie”), Guan Zhong admonishes Duke Huan for shooting arrows, neglecting the empire, and oppressing the people (*Guanzi* 10:3a-b). Positive views of archery stress its ceremonial aspects in archery competitions at banquets; e.g., *Shi jing* (*Book of Poetry*), Mao version, 220, and *Lunyu* (*Analects*) 3.7.

35 Cui Shi 崔寔 (c. +110-170), *Simin yueling jiaozhu* (*Monthly Instructions for the Four Classes of People*) (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1965).

36 *Simin yueling jiaozhu*, 19-20, translated by Patricia Ebrey, “Estate and Family Management in the Later Han as Seen in the Monthly Instructions for the Four Classes of People,” in *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 17(2) (1974), 181.

37 缮五兵，习战射弛竹木弓弧以备寒冻穷厄之寇。 *Simin yueling jiaozhu*, 65, translated by Patricia Ebrey, “Estate and Family Management,” 190.

38 Marcel Detienne and Jean-Pierre Vernant, *Cunning Intelligence in Greek Culture and Soci-*



viduals within Greek society who relied on *mêtis* included the hunter, fisherman, *rhetor*, *strategus*, and athlete. Nestor advises his son, Antilochus, to use *mêtis* in the chariot race in *Iliad* 23 because Antilochus is disadvantaged by slow horses that will mar his chances of victory:

The horses of these men are faster, but they themselves do not understand this art any more than you.  
But come my dear son, fill up your spirit with every kind of *mêtis* so that the prize may not elude you.  
The woodman does more by *mêtis* than by force;  
by *mêtis* the helmsman holds his swift ship on course,  
though torn by winds, over the wine-dark sea,  
and so by *mêtis* one charioteer can outpace another.<sup>39</sup>

Nestor proceeds to instruct his son on how to make a tight turn at the post (potentially cutting off another driver). He describes the turning-post, a dead stump six feet tall, at the fork of the road, with two white stones, one on each side. He tells Antilochus to hug the stump, lean left, rein in the left-hand horse, grazing the post with his wheel but avoiding the stone. If Antilochus can use this strategy to round the stone first, then he has a clear shot, even with slower horses. But when the moment comes, Antilochus swerves in front of Menelaus himself. He wins the race but Menelaus contests it. Antilochus, however, placates Menelaus, whose anger softens, but who warns him against playing tricks on his elders.

This sort of behavior would be inimical to the archer-*junzi* of the *Analects*, but it does have its Chinese counterpart in the ethics of strategy and martiality.<sup>40</sup> The ability to understand, and thereby deceive, an opponent is at the heart of the martial strategy of the *Sunzi* and other military strategy manuals.<sup>41</sup> A detailed consideration is beyond the scope of the present discussion, but I would suggest that such “deceptive” strategies reappear in later

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*ety*, translated by Janet Lloyd (Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press, 1978). They describe *mêtis* as a way of knowing, with complex but coherent mental attitudes and characteristic intellectual behavior, which were typically applied to shifting, ambiguous situations not amenable to rigorous logic or calculation.

<sup>39</sup> *Iliad* 23.311-318.

<sup>40</sup> I discuss this point at length in *Knowing Words: Wisdom and Cunning in the Classical Traditions of China and Greece* (Cornell University Press, 1992), in which I argue that, as in Greece, metic intelligence tacitly informed many aspects of early Chinese society, including both personal and social morality, military strategy, and statecraft.

<sup>41</sup> For detailed discussion of strategy manuals or *bingfa* 兵法, see Mark Edward Lewis, *Sanctioned Violence in Early China* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1990), and Lisa Raphals, *Knowing Words*.

manuals for *taijiquan*. For example, Pushing Hands employs strategies that use stillness to defeat motion and softness to defeat hardness. In the Pushing Hands version of using stillness to defeat motion, the goal is to detect an opponent's intention in time to counteract it without in turn signaling one's own intentions. Similarly, in using softness to defeat hardness, the goal is to divert an opponent's attack by turning his own force against him. These principles are familiar from the *Daodejing*, and also from other Warring States texts excavated from tombs.<sup>42</sup>

So, to conclude, the “deceptions” of the *Sunzi* general or the wily Odysseus are a far cry from the “virtues” advocated by Confucius or Plato. But all are models of sagacity, very differently understood. Interestingly, each case has its counterpart in sport, and in the use of metaphors that compare sport to wisdom or moral excellence. These accounts show very different moralities of competition, and complex relations between virtue, victory, performance, and entertainment.

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<sup>42</sup> The development of Pushing Hands (*tuishou* 推手) is ascribed to the semi-mythical Daoist priest Zhang Sanfeng or to Chen Wangting (1600-1680), the founder of Chen style *taijiquan* 太極拳.