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The Olympic Games and Ritual Archery: A Comparative Study of
Sport between Ancient Greece and Early China (—200 BC)

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Abstract

This research conducts a comparison between the Olympic Games in ancient Greece and ritual archery in early China before 200 BC, illustrating the similarities and differences between the two institutionalized cultural activities in terms of their trans-cultural comparison in regard to their origin, development, competitors, administration, process and function.

Cross cultural comparison is a research method to comprehend heterogeneous culture through systematic comparisons of cultural factors across as wide domain. The ritual archery in early China and the Olympic Games in ancient Greece were both long-lived, institutionalized physical competitive activities integrating competition, rituals and music with communication in the ancient period. To compare the two programs can make us better understand the isolated civilizations in that period. In examining the cultural factors from the two programs, I find that both were originally connected with religion and legendary heroes in myths and experienced a process of secularization; both were closely intertwined with politics in antiquity, connected physical competitions with moral education, bore significant educational functions and played an important role in respective society. The administrators of the two cultural programs had reputable social rank and were professional at managing programs with systematic administrative knowledge and procedures. In addition, I also explore that there existed different concepts of the body and competition opinions between ancient Greeks and Chinese, which mainly resulted from the respective society's geographical, political, social and educational differences.

This thesis is divided into six parts. The first three parts introduce the purpose and reasons of conducting this research and present a literature review of related research achievements, as well as the research approach. The fourth part respectively presents overviews of ancient Greece and the Olympic Games before 200 BC, and early China

and ritual archery before 200 BC. The fifth part is focused on the comparison of different cultural factors between the two cultural programs. This research arrives at the conclusions in the sixth part with an in-depth analysis and discussion. The sources for this research include the ancient classical works, books of classical studies on both China and Greece, papers from academic journals and some press and internet articles and papers.

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1. Introduction

Comparison is an important method that helps to identify questions and to clarify single cases. It also is indispensable for causal explanations and their criticism (Jurgenk 2003, 39). The International Society for Physical Education and Sport (ISCPES) defines comparative study as “an investigation into and comparison of two or more units (countries, cultures, ideologies, regions, states, systems, institutions, populations) mostly occurring in different geographical settings” (Hardman 2001). Cross-cultural comparison, in one aspect, helps to explore the universality of human cultures by interpreting the uniformity of the cultural phenomena from different cultural backgrounds; in the other, it promotes the discovery of individuality of the human cultures through understanding the differences of cultural phenomena in different culture contexts.

Before 200 BC the relatively isolated early Chinese and ancient Greeks both created brilliant civilizations and passed on enormous excellent legacies for human society. Simultaneously, within their respective culture systems, they also developed varied sport cultures, which accordingly influenced their sports’ paths of development afterwards. The Olympic Games were a typical contest phenomenon in ancient Greece; correspondingly, ritual archery in early China was an essentially competitive phenomenon. Both of them are institutionalized physical competitive activities which, according to certain rules and regulations, display the body's skills/techniques and capability. Through comparing the two competitive cultures in that period, this research aims to firstly clarify their similarities and differences, and secondly to analyze the causal mechanism behind them so as to explore what results in such kinds of similarities and differences.

1.1. Purpose

This research is targeted to explore the similarities and differences between the Olympic

Games in ancient Greece and the ritual archery in early China before 200 BC, and further to analyze what leads to these similarities and differences. Though this research, it is expected that a deep insight about sports and societies in the two remote civilizations can be obtained.

1.2. Justification

The period from 800 to 200 BC is a special one when the Greek world left the Dark Age and began its advanced civilization until it was merged into the Rome Empire. The ancient contests at Olympia are assumed to have started around 800 BC, when in ancient China the ritual archery was primarily formulated during the Eastern Zhou Dynasty, which was established from the ruins of Western Zhou with the decline of the Zhou king's feudal sovereign power. Both societies in this period experienced great social changes and culture prosperity. Karl Jaspers viewed the period 800 to 200 BC as the Axial Age. He explored the similarities in these areas as well as the thought of the Age's figures, and concluded that in this period "the spiritual foundations of humanity were laid simultaneously and independently in China, Greece and other areas, without any obvious direct transmission of ideas from one region to the other. And these are the foundations upon which humanity still subsists today" (Jaspers 2003, 98). Nowadays, with the rise of Sino-Hellenic Studies (Jeremy 2009), the cross-cultural comparison between ancient Greece and early China has gradually become a new research area for classicists since systematic and deep exploration on culture origins strongly contributes to understanding early civilizations.

It is not irrelevant to compare the ancient Olympic Games to the Ritual Archery in Early China. The Olympic Games in Ancient Greece and the Ritual Archery in Early China both were long-lasting institutionalized cultural activities in the public sphere, which closely integrated competitions with rituals and played an important role in their respective societies. In the same period there was no other well-organized systematic

sports event in in ancient China, beside the ritual archery, which was as closely connected with politics, religion, social status, communication and education, as the Olympic Games in ancient Greece. To compare and analyze them will not only promote comprehending the sport and the two societies in ancient period, but also helps to further strengthen Sino-Hellenic Studies.

Archery was widely used in hunting and warfare throughout ancient world. It was thoroughly embedded in Chinese culture and history for thousands of years, permeating abundant legends, rituals and military practices. Ancient Chinese were really in favor of archery and used it as an examination of political systems and education institutions. Many people composed books for Chinese archery, trying to summarize and spread the culture. There are more than one hundred kinds of different Chinese archery books still remaining today, which as valuable literature and reference have produced an unprecedented impact upon the peripheral countries' archery traditions, especially Japan, Korea, and Vietnam.¹ The ritual archery, as an archery-oriented contest with related etiquettes, was fairly prevalent in early China from 1146 BC to 221 BC.

Conversely, in ancient Greece there existed only a few record of archery practice, though some were very impressive. For example, in the Homer's *Iliad* Achilles at the funeral games held for his dead friend *Patroclus* also organized an archery contest to see who could hit a pigeon tied to the top of a ship's mast erected on the beach. The first contestant's arrow cut the cord that held the pigeon, but the winner hit the bird high overhead in mid-flight (Homer, 23). In Homer's *Odyssey*, after 10 years' wandering abroad Odysseus returned home but found suitors were attempting to take his lands and house. His loyal wife Penelope was convinced that Odysseus had been dead abroad, so she claimed that any man who could string her husband's bow and shoot an arrow through "every socket hollow" of twelve iron axe heads could take her away.(Homer,

¹ Ma Lianzhen. An Introduction to Chinese Archery. <http://www.isdy.net/pdf/eng/2.pdf>

572-579). Nobody could even bend the stout bow enough to hook the bowstring. But Odysseus, disguised as a poor vagabond, stepped up, strung the bow, and plucked an arrow and shot it through the axe heads. He then drew other arrows and slaughtered the men who had invaded his house and tried to steal his wife and property (David 2004, 13). In spite of such detailed narratives, no other systematic record about archery existed in ancient Greece. Moreover, in the warfare of ancient Greece archery only served as a weapon for the besieged city, its offensive function merely glimpsed in the Battle of *Sphacteria* fought in 425 BC between Athens and Sparta². In short, Greek archery in the warfare, entertainment and education was much less recorded in comparison with the abundant practice and record of archery in ancient China. Recreational archery was practiced, along with military, among the ancient Chinese, Egyptians and Greeks. Nevertheless, only ancient Chinese developed the systematic, massive and competitive archery complex, namely, the ritual archery. The symbolic power of the bow and arrow is nowhere as pronounced as in the Chinese culture (Ying 2005, 505).

In academic databases there are only two essays³ conducting a comparative study on the ancient Olympic Games and the Ritual Archery of early China. Although the comparative study on sport cultures between the West and the East has been an important research field in China, rather than focusing on specific, concrete comparative study, most of them have taken the established comparative cultural theories as a guide to launch their research. The culture theory argues that Chinese favor inertia while Westerners favor activity, Chinese admire virtuous men while Westerners prefer capable men, Chinese value righteousness above material gains while Westerners value material gains above righteousness, Chinese stress the collectivity while Westerners stress individuality, Chinese emphasize concurrent body and mind cultivation while

² Thomas Nelson Winter. The Place of Archery in Greek Warfare. University of Nebraska-Lincoln, <http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/classicsfacpub/9>

³ The two essays will be detailed referred in the literature review.

Westerners segregate the cultivation, etc. Putting these cultural theories aside, which I I do not think are fully convincing, my comparative study will take the Olympic Games and the Ritual Archery as two striking cases from the two civilizations and focus on comparing their origins, processes, structures and functions so as to acquire a new insight.

1.3. Definition of key words

There are challenges confronted when comparing the Olympic Games with the Ritual Archery between the two remote civilizations. The translation from ancient languages into English might result in some words losing their original meaning. So it is essential to define the key words in this research.

The Olympic Games here is defined as the contests happened during the quadrennial Olympia festivals in honor of Zeus in the period from BC 800 to BC200.

Archery is a sporting event involving shooting arrows with a bow, either at an inanimate target or in hunting. In early dynastic China, archery held an important place in warfare and imperial ritual and was a compulsory subject in schools that trained the Chinese nobility (see Charles/Mary 2007, 11). The Ritual Archery, also translated as the Rite of Archery or *Sheli*, is defined as the symbolic rite of shooting arrows held according to certain rigid regulations by kings, vassal lords, officials or other aristocrats in early China. The typical arrangement involved pairs of archers shooting at targets in a pavilion, accompanied by ceremonial music and wine, which symbolized and reinforced the order within the aristocratic hierarchy. The participants of Ritual Archery should strictly follow the rules and rituals according to their rank so as to show respect for the elderly and the senior. In the whole, the ritual archery could be classified into *Dashe* (grand archery), *Binshe* (guest archery), *Yanshe* (Banquet archery) and *Xiangshe* (Shires archery) according to their ranks of the participants and holding location (Cui 2008, 86).

Firstly, *Dashe*, “Grand Archery”, was a ritual performed before a sacrificial ceremony. The Son of Heaven (the Zhou’s king) or feudal lords led his ministers and warriors to shoot arrows so as to select someone to attend the coming sacrificial ceremony. If a minister or a warrior hit a target many times elegantly, he would be permitted to attend the sacrificial ceremony or even promoted to a better position. If a minister or a warrior missed a target many times, he couldn’t attend the sacrificial ceremony. Secondly, *Bingshe*, “Guest archery”, was a ritual activity held in honor of visiting dignitaries. When feudal lords visited the son of Heaven or other monarchs, they would perform this kind of ritual archery. Common people had right to perform this too. When a man visited his friend, or several friends met, they would perform this kind of ritual archery and showed their respects to others. Thirdly, *Yanshe*, “Banquet archery”, was a kind of shooting rituals performed in a banquet for entertainment. In the “Banquet Shooting”, participants would shoot, drink, sing poems and enjoy music and conversation. Fourthly, *Xiangshe*, “Shire archery”, was a ceremonial athletic sport. Every year, local prefects would invite venerable elders to preside over the regularly held ceremony. The ceremony took place in local schools to select talented people and educate young people.

In this research, China and Greece are understood not as nations but as civilizations. Ancient China chiefly refers to the territory between the Yellow River and Yangtze River from time of the collapse of Western Zhou to the time of the establishment of the Qin Empire. Ancient Greece mainly includes the Greek mainland, the Peloponnese Peninsula, Crete and the colonies in Minor Asia and around the Mediterranean Sea.

2. Literature Review

A search using the key words in English and Chinese databases such as CNKI, Google academic, EBSCO, JSTOR, Project MUSE, ProQuest, showed that there are only two specific essays comparing of the Olympic Games in ancient Greece with the ritual archery in early China. Peng Lin (Peng 2004) claims that the ritual archery of Shires was in a firm sense a sport competition. It had a target range with exact distances, standardized targets of different sizes, a shooting manager (who acted as a coach), a score-reporter, a scoring officer and other officials to ensure fairness and order. To count the arrow must penetrate the target through, if there was no penetration there was no score. He argues that the ancient Olympics expressed the Greek sporting spirit: emphasizing competition of speed, power and skills, robust physique and body beauty. However, the ritual archery of Shires reflected a sporting spirit that emphasized the harmonious development of the physique and mind and sought rectitude in losing rather than complaining about rivals.⁴ Zhang Yan (Zhang 1997) regards the ritual archery as one of the important social institutions of ancient society of China which existed in complicated relations with other social institutions such as ritual ceremony, hunting ritual and military ritual. There exist some common characteristics that can be compared between the ritual archery in ancient China and the athletic competitions in ancient Greece. He argues that both originally were hieron competitions, which shared the same origins, but both had different developing paths. In addition, there is other literature on the comparative study of sport between ancient Greece and early China, which is conducive to this research. In order to systematically analyze the status of such research, I hereby separate them into 3 dimensions: (1) review of their differences; (2) review of their similarities; (3) review of the reasons for their similarities and differences.

2.1. Review of differences

⁴ Peng Lin (2004) viewing the Sporting Spirit of Ancient China from "Etiquette: Ritual Archery of Shires". Guangming Daily. http://blog.sina.com.cn/s/blog_484ced2b010171si.html

Many scholars in their research have discovered the differences between ancient Greek sport and ancient Chinese sport. Firstly, in the dimension of sports ideas, the ancient Chinese emphasized introspection and the concurrent cultivation of body and mind, the supremacy of ethics in sport, as well as pursuing health and long life, so they preferred etiquette and life-preserving to competitiveness (Chen 2009; Cai 2009; Yang 2008; Chenqi 2004; Ren 1989). By contrast, ancient Greeks venerated fitness and strong competitive consciousness, emphasized physical education in combination with intellectual and moral education (Chen 2009; Chenqi 2004; Wang 2008). Secondly, in the dimension of sport pattern, early Chinese sporting events bore universality, and advocated harmonious, moderate and well-rounded practice approaches; in contrast, ancient Greek sporting events emphasized scientific training according to the nature of the muscles (Chen 2009; Chenqi 2004). Thirdly, in the dimension of sportive operating mode, ancient Chinese sports, as the civilian sport, had strong mass character but lacked material support and were subservient to politics; whereas ancient Greek sports were elite sport sponsored by the states, and had material and institutional assurance (Chen 2009; Chenqi 2004). Fourthly, seen from the dimension of aesthetics, the ancient Chinese emphasized the bionic beauty of sport, while ancient Greeks underlined the body beauty (Cai 2009). Fifthly, in terms of the origin of sport, ancient Greek sports originated from religious activities, whereas ancient Chinese sport originated from the struggle for survival (Yang 2008). Sixthly, as to the sport ethics, ancient Greeks preferred the ability and essence in sport, while ancient Chinese stressed etiquette and form in sport (Yang 2008; Chenqi 2004). Seventhly, Cai Yi (Cai 2012) argues that in regard to the value orientation, Greek sport had the inclination of valuing righteousness over material gains while Chinese sport valued material gains over righteousness.

Paik Wooyeal and Daniel A. Bell (Wooyeal/Bell 2004) investigate that ancient Greek poleis placed far more emphasis on physical education compared to their counterparts in ancient China and argue that the political differences between ancient Greece and ancient China help to explain the different outcomes regarding state-sponsored physical

education.

Susan Brownell (Brownell 2013) argues that both ancient Greeks and early Chinese shared an interest in cultivation of the body and self, praised moderation and denounced excess, highly valued virtue, and connected athletic contests with wisdom and morality. Early Chinese anchored their principles of health in naturalism and invented popular animal-imitation exercises that emphasized integration with the natural world, while the Greek tradition emphasized struggle with the naturalism. In both societies, driving horse-drawn chariots and archery were practiced by the elite and were used to display high status. On the matter of health and fitness, often there was as much difference between the great Greek thinkers, or between the great Chinese thinkers, as there was between the Greek and Chinese thinkers as a whole. The differences between Greek and Chinese sporting practices in service of the pursuit of individual health and virtue were small, but the political functions served by sport show a greater difference. She hypothesizes the accounts that “political differences divide us, but our shared biology and humanity united us”.⁵

Ren Hai (Ren 2000) argues that the differences between ancient Greek sport and ancient Chinese sport lie in the following aspects: (a) in an organizational dimension, ancient Greek sports were more centralized and more standardized in their forms; ancient Chinese sports were mainly decentralized with less standardization. (b) With respect to the nature of sport, ancient Greek sports were strongly competitive; ancient Chinese sports were more non-competitive. (c) In terms of a focus on physical exercises, the ancient Greeks paid much more attention to the external muscular development, while the ancient Chinese regarded the internal body functions as more important. (d) With regard to the pattern of physical movements, ancient Chinese sport demonstrated a strong animal-imitating character, while its Greek counterpart did not do so.

⁵ Susan Brownell, *From Athens to Beijing: West Meets East in the Olympic Games* (New York: Greekworks, 2013), pp. 13-14

2.2. Review of similarities

Compared to so many arguments about the differences between ancient Greek sport and ancient Chinese sport, there seem to be less research expounding their similarities. It is argued that sport both in Greece and China occupied important social status in the Axis Period and shaped the origins of sport culture; one is the origin of Chinese traditional sport culture, another is the origin of Western sport culture (Chen 2009; Cai 2009; Chenqi 2004). In addition, Yang Dong (Yang 2008) argues that both ancient Chinese and Greeks believed that sport had both a basic function for military use and a similar function of entertainment.

2.3. Review accounts of similarities and differences

There is some limited research analyzing the reason for such similarities and differences. Most of the research cited above reasons that ancient Chinese sport and Greek sport, in the same period, were so distinctive due to their different natural geographical environment, political and economic system, and social-cultural contexts. Actually, such accounts are also applicable to other social phenomena since they are very abstract and seem reasonable.

A book entitled "*A Comparative Study of Sport Culture between the West and the East*" (Yang/Jiang 2008) has the following explanation for the accounts. The sport culture of ancient Greece and that of ancient China in the Eastern Zhou are quite distinctive because of the difference in natural environment, political and economic systems and sociocultural contexts. Firstly, the relatively enclosed geographical environment, agricultural lifestyle and other factors in early China determined that ancient Chinese sport was an introverted, ethics-oriented and life-preservation-oriented agricultural sport culture. The natural environment and open surroundings in ancient Greece gave direction to the pioneering, venturesome, competitive, self-reliant,

strength-adoring, and hero-oriented Greek character, which inspired ancient Greeks to compete bravely to accomplish their purpose. Secondly, the strong bond of kinship and the patriarchal clan system in ancient China made the sport activities to be constrained by complicated rituals and a lack of fairness. While ancient Greece's polis system, independent social structure, slavery, and flourishing commercial and shipping business determined that Greek sports activities have the character of competitiveness and fairness. Thirdly, ancient traditional agricultural society in early China shaped the abstemious and harmony-oriented character of Chinese culture, which created the introverted characteristics of ancient Chinese sport. It was unsuitable for the development of aggressive competition-oriented sport activities in ancient Chinese society, and therefore, ancient Chinese sport usually combined with pragmatic medical, healthcare and life-preservation activities, with cultivating the body and mind as its mission. The high level of openness of typical maritime culture in ancient Greece produced strong competitiveness in the ancient Greek sport culture.

The ancient Olympic Games, as an indispensable part of Classical studies, have aroused intensive attention and research. Scholars from one generation to another have conducted profound and cross-over studies from different angles, such as history, culture, sport, religion, aesthetics, arts, warfare, politics, economy, archaeology etc., and have produced many fruitful research achievements published as papers, books and treatises, which will greatly facilitate this cross-cultural comparison.

There also has been plenty of research on the ritual archery in ancient China. Zhao Honghong (Zhao 2009) in her master's thesis presents detailed research on the rite of shooting before the Qin Dynasty, which presents the outline of the shooting rite and explains its origination, development, procedure and characteristics. Yuan Junjie (Yuan 2010), in his doctoral dissertation systematically studies the rite of archery from the Shang Dynasty to the Warring States Period. By collecting and analyzing all the related

documents and materials, he a) expounds the origin and developmental process of the ritual archery before the Qin Dynasty, b) explains the historical accounts and social context of the development of the rite of archery in this period, c) analyzes the hierarchical structure of society and the changes of social institutions that reflected by rite of archery, and d) gives an accounts of the historical functions of rite of archery and its influence to the past. Jiang Nan (Jiang 2004) investigates the origin, changes and cultural contents of the shooting art in ancient China and concludes that the ritual archery derives from ancient hunting activities in the primitive society, gradually replacing its pragmatic value with an aesthetic value so that it evolved into an art tradition. After the age of Confucius, shooting changed into an internal moral practice, namely the ritual archery. Dai Guobin (Dai 2009) explores the ritual archery in hunting and reveals that shooting was raised up as a vital affairs of states, a politicalized process transforming the social life of the emperor, feudal princes and aristocrats into a reproduction of the social order.

2.4. A brief summary of the literature review

There is merely one concrete comparison between the Olympic Games of ancient Greece and the ritual archery of early China. There have been many scholars who have contributed to the research in the Olympic Games of ancient Greece and the ritual archery of early China. Many historic fragments have been pieced together for us to see the basic skeleton frame and image of the Olympic Games and the Ritual Archery in both civilizations; many deep insights about them have been presented by those research outcomes as well. Therefore, all the related research above will provide a good foundation for my research. Nevertheless, from the literature review above, it is concluded that in term of the comparative study on sport between ancient Greece and early China, there is much less research on the similarities compared with fruitful research on the differences. As to this research on the differences, it seems that Chinese scholars have shared a lot of same opinions, among which the consensus is that the

sport's character between ancient China and ancient Greece is absolutely different. I doubt these conclusions because I doubt that humankind's activities in the same period of early civilization before 200 BC has such completely opposite characteristics. Conducting the comparison between ritual archery of early China and the Olympic Games of ancient Greece may, to a certain extent, provide verification or falsification for the arguments above.

3. Research Approach

This research mainly depends on the methods of document research and historical comparison. Through comparing the origins, procedures, structures, and functions of the Olympic Games of ancient Greece and the ritual archery of early China, this research attempts to elucidate their similarities and the differences. In term of the accounts for such differences or similarities, I will use the theories of sociology, culture and politics to analyze the causal mechanisms behind the two competitive cultural phenomena.

4. Results

This part provides the basic interpretation to the Olympic Games and its Greece context before 200 BC, ritual archery and its China context before 200 BC. Through collecting the information from book, papers, and articles related to the topics, here I present the research results in terms of four dimensions, which include the overview of ancient Greece before 200 BC, the overview of the Olympic Games before 200 BC, the overview of early China before 200 BC and the overview of ritual archery before 200 BC.

4.1. An Overview of Ancient Greece before 200 BC

4.1.1. Geography

Ancient Greece is often known as the birthplace of Western civilization. It was not a country, but a geographical and cultural concept describing Mediterranean areas where ancient Greeks lived. They lived not only on mainland Greece and the Greek islands, but also in what is now Turkey, and in colonies scattered around the Mediterranean sea coast, such as region now in Italy, Sicily, North Africa and as far west as France and north as Black Sea coast. Generally, the territory of Greece is mountainous with small fertile plains divided and sub-divided by steep hills, high mountains and rivers. As a result, ancient Greece consisted of many smaller regions each with its own dialect, cultural peculiarities, and identity.⁶ They mainly lived in relatively independent regions, or self-governing communities, organized by kinship groups and later into *poleis*, which dominated a certain area around them. Nevertheless, they shared the same religion, same basic culture, and same language and therefore regarded themselves as a people, which formed several hundred tiny *poleis* across Greece and its colonies.

41.2 History

About 3000 BC, Minoans lived on the island of Crete who were rich because of trade and built fine Knossos palaces there. The Minoan civilization ended about 1450 BC, followed by the Mycenaean. The brilliant Mycenaean civilization collapsed around 1100 BC with the Dorian immigration and invasion, after which Greece entered into a “Dark Ages”, without any writing materials in this period to record. This lasted until 800 BC when the Greeks set off by sea to explore and set up colonies. The archaic period in Greece came with the ending of Dark Ages. *Homer* is usually assumed to have lived in the 8th or 7th century BC, and his lifetime is often taken as marking the beginning of the archaic period. This period saw an increasing population, rise of the *polis* and colonies, as well as the first inklings of classical philosophy, plays, written poetry, sculptures and panhellenic games. The Archaic period gives way to the Classical period around 500 BC, which was a 200 year period in Greek culture lasting from the

⁶ Regions of ancient Greece. Wikipedia. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Regions_of_ancient_Greece

5th through 4th century BC. In spite of large-scale warfare like the Greco-Persian Wars, Peloponnesian Wars, Corinthian Wars, and the Conquest of Alexander the Great, the Classical Period produced remarkable political, cultural and scientific achievements to the following generations. Much of modern Western politics, artistic thought, such as architecture, scientific thought, literature, and philosophy were derived from this period of Greek history.⁷ After the death of Alexander the Great in 323 BC, the Hellenistic period replaced the Classic Period with Greeks culture widely spread to a greater territory in Asia and Africa.

4.1.3 Politics

Politically, ancient Greece was not a united nation, but an assortment of small governmental units (Deobold/Elmer 1953, 40). Due to relatively segregated regions and scarce resources, like arable land, regional conflicts among *poleis* were prominent in ancient time. In the Dark Ages, people lived in quietly separated clans and ruled by chieftains who acted like a king of feudal society. By end of the Dark Ages, the chieftains fought each other for land and power. This is the lawless world of rival clans that Homer described in his poems. In the 7th century, stability returned to most parts of Greece, and with it prosperity. A new class acquired wealth, and military strength - through providing the hoplites who were the mainstay of any Greek army. This new class, impatient with the old aristocracy, was ready for power.⁸ Some members of this class seized control of *poleis* in 7th and 6th centuries BC and became tyrants. The tyrants of many Greek *poleis* improved economics and the methods of government but failed to establish dynasties. Through the progress of ages, *poleis* according to geo-political factors used to consolidate into some leagues under some powerful *poleis*. Of all these, Athens, Sparta and Thebes are usually emphasized as the most powerful and influential *poleis* of the Hellenic world. Ancient Greeks had a strong awareness of defending the independence of their own *poleis*; cities built in overseas colonies were

⁷ Map of Classic Greece. <http://www.biblechef.com/MapsTimelines/ClassicGreece.html>

⁸ History of Greece. <http://www.historyworld.net/wrldhis/PlainTextHistories.asp?ParagraphID=ceo>

independent of the mother poleis. Though there were constant struggles among poleis and smaller poleis might be dominated by larger neighbors, unlike ancient China city-states, in Greek society to conquer or directly rule another polis appeared rare, except Sparta's occupying of Messenia in the latter half of the 8th century BC. Unification was something rarely contemplated by the ancient Greeks, even Philip II of Macedon did not attempt to annex the territory, or unify Greek poleis into a new kingdom, but simply compelled most of the poleis to join his own Corinthian League.⁹

4.1.4. Society

Inside these independent poleis, Greek society was mainly dominated by the aristocratic systems and later the democratic systems. Every polis could be roughly stratified into two camps according to citizenships. Men who were free, land-owning or native-born had the citizenship and governed the states; foreigners (*metics*), freemen and slaves who were non-citizens staying in poleis had few political rights. Citizenship came with birth and proper education. But people could change classes if they made more money.¹⁰ Wealthy Greek citizens used to get slaves to perform their manual labor and were relieved from the burden of farming, handcrafting and economical trading so they were also symbolized as the leisure class. They possessed the greatest power and topmost position in the society. They were not only responsible for representing the family outside the home and engaging in some sort of economic role, but also participating actively in administrating the government and serving in the military. They usually gathered at the symposium, gymnasium or agora to discuss public affairs such as politics, philosophy, literature, plays and festivals etc. Being in the upper class was a symbol of good artistic taste, being civilized and socialized.¹¹ Most poleis contained between 4,000 and 5,000 people, and there were few cities which were larger than 40,000. So, the political unit was small enough to permit very intimate contact with its

⁹ Political Structure in Ancient Greece. Wikipedia. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ancient_Greece

¹⁰ Social Structure in Ancient Greece. Wikipedia. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ancient_Greece

¹¹ Ancient Greece Hierarchy: <http://www.hierarchystructure.com/ancient-greece-hierarchy/>

operation. The largest of the poleis, Athens, had a combined urban and rural population of 310,000 at its peak. Of those, approximately 15%--the free adult-males directed the actions of the polis. The other 85% of the population, namely, women, children, slaves, and foreigners, had no voice in the *polis*' government.¹²

4.1.5. Economics

The main sources of economics for each polis were the resources from land or business. Though conditions varied in different regions of Greece, farming, like corn, wheat, grapes, olive oils, animal husbandry, and handcraft industries such as weaving, metalworking and potting, making wine, mining and trade dominated social productivity. The populations of the plains fronting the sea had boat-borne access to the wider world; otherwise travelers had to traverse difficult upland paths to reach neighboring communities. The mountainous nature of the landscape encouraged coastal Greek states to look out to sea. A growing population in 8th century BC and shortage of land also prompted people to constantly emigrate outside. Sailing the sea to trade and find new land, Greeks took their way of life to many places and spread Greek culture. Most of the new colonies engaged in trade with each other and with their mother poleis and a healthy exchange of goods and services occurred in Greek world. This trade led to the creation of a monetary system, which facilitated the growth in commerce and manufacturing in Greek poleis and further prompted the economic and political changes inside polis. There was a large improvement in the living standards of the population. Some studies estimate that the average size of the Greek household, in the period from 800 BC to 300 BC, increased five times, which indicates a large increase in the average income of the population.¹³

4.1.6. Culture and Education

¹² The Greek Polis. <http://wps.prenhall.com/wps/media/objects/202/207415/CH03.im.pdf>

¹³ Ancient Greece. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ancient_Greecehttp://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ancient_Greece

By end of the Dark Ages, the Greek society acquired its self-awareness through mass sanctuaries and cult rituals organized in increasingly open way. The reformed religious cult integrated dispersed individuals and colonies as a new more consolidated and active community polis (Polignac 1995, 150-154). From then on, Greeks sacrificed to their gods, harnessed resources, established their poleis and colonies and developed their brilliant cultures. Their poleis were marked by constructed shrines, agora, gymnasiums and theaters according to *Pausinias* (see *Pausinias* 10.4.1.). As poleis developed and stabilized, organized athletics also developed with religious festivals, drama, philosophical debates, speeches and discussion. Through integrating competitions into the religious festival, the increasingly famed quadrennial Olympic festival in honor of *Zeus* not only set a great example for other religious games, but also strengthened the Greeks' athletic traditions and deeply influenced their identity, arts, politics, and education.

Education significantly represented a Greek's identity and social class in ancient Greek society. Greek education was mainly for the Greeks with citizenship but unavailable to slaves, manual laborers, or women. Generally, the specific purposes of Greek education differed from polis to polis. "In Athens, their physical education had a utilitarian purpose of preparing soldiers for war and also exemplified the Greek ideals of beauty and harmony," (Deobold/Elmer 1953, 55). Athenians sought harmony of both mind and body, which were developed by the gymnasium and *palaestra*. Physical education and sports in the public sphere served as education through the physical, meaning that through physical education important virtues of citizenship, loyalty, and courage could be acquired. "Physical education occupied a prominent place in their education program since they believed that if a person displayed an out-of-shape, flabby body, it was a sign of poor education and personal disgrace" (Robert 2010, 64-66). Greeks from other *poleis* educated their children much like Athens did. But Sparta's approach to physical training and gymnastics was different. In Sparta, boys were given rigorous physical and military training from ages seven to twenty so as to prepare them for service in the army.

Girls also were required to train physically. It was strict education of physical, meaning that the training of the body aimed to tough, physical fit and fearless Spartans for military purposes to serve the polis.

Athletics were important part of Greek education in ancient period. Every city would have a public gymnasium where “*gymnotribai*” (coaches) taught athletic skills, and a *palaestra* for combat sports. For Greeks citizens, athletics were an everyday part of their life; they would spend time at their local gymnasium training and competing or just discussing religion, philosophy, politics. Physical disciplines wove themselves into the very fabric of society, leaving no area untouched. For example, in *Plato’s The Republic*, *Socrates* explicitly emphasized the important role of the gymnastics in the proper education of a perfectly just city. Besides, *Plato* himself also emphasized the two crucial elements in a fine education, namely the “*musike*” (the rough equivalent of our “fine arts”) and the “*gymnastike*” (the rough equivalent of our physical education) (Plato, *Republic*. 2.376e, quotation from Drew. A H. 1990, 97). They believed that the cultivation of the body and the mind were linked. In the *gymnasiums* or *palaestra*, “young athletes were taught not only the competing competency, but also competition ethics, which relied on Justice, Courage and Wisdom”.¹⁴ The main aim of this education was to beat selfishness and fight fear and to develop a self-disciplined, devout, virtuous and lusty citizen to serve their poleis. An athletic victory was considered a credit to both the athlete's physical and moral virtues. Physical training was valued for its role in the development of such qualities as endurance and patience.¹⁵

4.2. An overview of the Olympic Games before 200 BC

4.2.1. The Origin of the Olympic Games

The Games in ancient Olympia, the oldest of Greek festivals, was held in honor of the

¹⁴ The Olympic Spirit in Ancient Greece <http://suite101.com/article/the-olympic-spirit-in-ancient-greece-a410352>

¹⁵ Olympic Athletic Ideal http://www.pe04.com/olympic/olympia/ideal_o.php

God *Zeus*, the supreme god of Greek mythology (Swaddling 2008, 7). It is assumed that the first Olympic Games were held in 776 BC, which is also widely regarded as the threshold of Classical chronology. But David Young (Yong 2004, 12) says that archaeological evidence reminds us that competitions appear to have been held on an unofficial basis long before this. There are few details of the festival's origin or how the competitions actually began. Some Greek myths and legends about the origin of the Olympic Games are widely spread, such as the story of *Pelops* and *Oinomaos*, the Fight of *Zeus* and his father *Kronos*, the story of *Herakles* with 12 labors purging King *Augeas*' stables, the story of Cretan *Hercules*, Elis' king *Iphitos*' reinstated initiative, etc..

“Scholars like F.M.Cornford(1912), Jane Harrison(1912), John Mouratidis(1984), tried to find the clues contained in such myths about the original ritualistic structure for the Games. The patterns that emerge from these myths are that the Greeks believed the games had their roots in religion, that athletic competition was tied to worship of the gods, and the revival of the ancient games was intended to bring peace, harmony and a return to the origins of Greek life.” (Kyle 1999, 102–104)

However, “myths can end in terrible tangled roots, but are nonetheless explanatory of historical development and ritual practices” (Spivey 2004, 206). To arrive at a more convincing conclusion, it would be a sensible approach to examine these myths exemplifying the origin of the Games and relate them with any archaeological discovery in the Olympia.

“Modern researchers vary in their opinions on the origin of the Olympic Games. Some date it to the ninth century BC on the evidence of tripods and figurines of charioteers discovered at Olympia that they believe were prizes. Others propose that the Olympic Games began about 700 BC, noting an increase in the number of wells for drinking water at that time. Yet others suggest the date was

about 600 BC, as there is an absence of inscriptions concerning the Olympic Games before that date.” (Crowther 2007, 46)

The earliest archaeological finds, votive dedications, in Olympia are dated to around 1000 BC, which suggest that Olympia, at its earliest phase as a sanctuary, was no more than an occasional meeting-place frequented by local inhabitants, people from early Iron-Age settlements in proto-Elean territory bounded by the *Alpheios* and the *Kladeos* rivers (Spivey 2004, 233). This made a religious setting for the competition as one of the activities during the festival of Zeus. The festival for ancient Greeks, as Hugh M. Lee (Hugh M. Lee 1998, 74) argues, functioned like the Sabbath by providing opportunity for worship and respite from daily toils—a combination of holy day and holiday. Since a festival was social in nature, performance of songs, dances and sports ought to be expectable. Some of the celebrants would participate and others would enjoy being spectators (Guttmann 1978a 74).

In many preindustrial societies, physical activities were a part of cults and rituals; people aimed to please their gods through ceremonies, dancing and athletic activities. Originally, “athletic competitions were fundamentally religious enterprises, meant to show special talent to the gods, express thanks to them, or implore them to take certain beneficent actions such as assuring the earth’s fertility” (Guttmann 1978a 18). Dutch cultural scientist Huizinga (J. Huizinga 1949, 65) claimed that “virtue, honor, nobility, and glory” result from competition. “The nobleman demonstrates his ‘virtue’ by feats of strength, skill, courage, wit, wisdom, wealth or liberality. For want of these he may yet excel in a contest of words, that is to say, he may either himself praise the virtues in which he wishes to excel his rivals, or have them praised for him by a poet or a herald”. Besides, “the Greeks were a competitive people”, argued by Mark Golden (Golden 1998, 26), they have various competition in athletics, tragedies, sculptors, potters, instruments, dance and even medicine. Therefore, with the development of festivals, competition of

speed and physical prowess were gradually incorporated into a periodic celebration of *Zeus* at Olympia sanctuary. Stage by stage, the athletic competitions quickly acquired a religious, social and even political significance.

From the introduction noted above, it is explicit that the Olympic Games, namely, the competitions of the festival in honor of *Zeus*, originated from ancient Greeks' religious and agonistic tradition.

4.2.2. The development of the Olympic Games

According to the archaeological finds, by the mid-eighth century BC, Olympia was a site already sacrosanct to local people over many decades (Spivey 2004, 230). Plenty of votive figurines and tripods excavated at Olympia imply that there was a striking increase in the numbers of pilgrims for this site (Mogan 1990, 27). *Hippias'* record about the victors and ancient tradition tells that there was only one event, the *stade* at the beginning (*Hippias*, Luc. Hip. 1). Thus we can speculate that people around Olympia at that time would not come to the sanctuary mainly to observe the couple seconds' running. From *Pausanias'* guidebook (*Paus. 1.29*) it is noted that the Olympic Games were gradually developed with more sporting events added, namely, the involvement of *diaulos* in 724 BC, and the *dolichos* in 720, wrestling and the pentathlon in 708, boxing in 688 and chariot race in 680.

The victors list from *Hippias* and the *Pausanias'* guidebook tell us that the competitors in the festival at its beginning only came from the nearby region of Olympia. Gradually the athletes, probably the spectators also, spread to the whole Peloponnese. About 200 wells discovered by archaeologists in near the old stadium suggest that since around 700 BC there were a larger number of spectators and thus a rapidly growing interest in the Games. Even in the second hundred years of the Olympic Games, Peloponnesian contestants still comprised a majority (Hugh M. Lee 1998, 72). But in the early sixth

century BC, contestants began to come from all over the Greek world. With more visiting pilgrims, more infrastructures added to the sanctuary and more events involved, the Olympic festival was extended gradually from one day to five days, though there exists discrepancy on when the festival lasted 5 days between what *Pindar*'s record and *Pausanias*' account.

The Olympic Games were institutionalized later in the sixth century BC at Olympia, paradigmatic of honor to Zeus at large, and a meeting point for Greeks and Greek city-states across the Mediterranean (Spivey 2004, 237). Mark Golden (Golden 2004) points out that the festivals' development in the sixth century BC closely related to Greeks' colonial expansion in the Mediterranean area. In almost 2 centuries, the institution of the athletic festival itself, fueled by Olympia's increasing success, enjoyed widespread popularity. There were no other panhellenic athletic festivals which drew contestants at a pre-arranged time from all parts of the Greek world (Young 2004, 21). Before the sixth century BC, the Olympic Games realized a booming development as an attracting religious festival and competitive program. It might be inspired by the prosperous look of the Olympia festival visited by Greeks from far reaching area that other shrines in the early sixth century BC also took the athletic contests into their festivals and gradually developed into panhellenic Games, such as the Pythian Games sacred to Apollo in 582 BC at Delphi, Isthmian Games to Poseidon in 581 BC at Corinth, and Nemea Games to Zeus in 573 BC. These games and the Olympic Games in the ancient society comprised of the "Crown Circuit" for the Greek world. But *Pindar* told us that Olympic Games were reigning supreme among the Big Four.

In the 6th and 5th century BC, more people flocked to Olympia as pilgrims for the festival. More competitors came, and the athletes of this period are among the best and best known in Greek history (Young 2004, 58). More poets, orators, philosophers and other notable figures visited the Olympic festival. Many politicians also attended the

festivals, some of them came with their chariots or racing horses; some would just view the games or had political communications with other rulers. More valuable donations came to sanctuary from those people. More infrastructures such as extended stadium, Hera's temple, Zeus' temple, treasuries, bouleuterion¹⁶ and others were added or renewed over the centuries; the administrative system for processing the festival was also strengthened by the Elis polis so as to cater for the flocked visitors.

The Olympic Games in ancient Greece were probably a very conservative culture because from the 6th century BC to the end of the Games in the early 4th century AD they seemed to keep a regular schedule and lack change, even in the political turmoil of Greek society resulting from the Peloponnese War. Even in the war, the games still continued, Olympiad for Olympiad, attracting citizens from all parts of a strongly divided Greece. There seems no indication that contestants or spectators acted in ways that reflected the deep hostilities among the Greek states (Young 2004, 123). As the Macedonian gradually predominated over the Greece society, there were a number of buildings established for the sanctuary, such as the *Philippeion*, *Leonideon*, and *Colonnade*, *palaestra*, and a *gymnasium*. With the famous altar and Zeus' statue, splendid structures, thrilled competitors in the sanctuary and its aura of a powerful tradition, the site had always excited an extraordinary awe in those who visited it. As a holy place for ancient Greeks, the Games were popular in the Hellenistic period, when so many Iso-Olympics flourished. In a short conclusion, before the 2nd century BC, the Olympic Games maintained their attraction for Greeks and still in their golden age.

4.2.3. The structure of the Olympic Games

The renowned Olympic Games before the 2nd century BC were mainly con-structured of 6 parts, the administrators, the athletes, the attendants, the sport events, the infrastructures and facilities, the processing of the festival. In the next section I will

¹⁶ An ancient and venerable conglomeration of buildings established in around 550BC acted as Council House.

introduce them in detail one by one.

4.2.3.1. The Administrators

Since the sanctuary of Olympia was located in the territory of Elis polis, the administration of the sanctuary was fundamentally undertaken by the Eleans; although there were several Olympiad controlled by Pisa, which was a *polis* neighboring with Elis and much closer to Olympia than Elis. The *Iamide* and *Klytiades*, two reputable priestly tribes in Elis, appointed their priests alternately to be responsible for administrating the sanctuary (Photinos 1989, 12).

The Council of Eleans organized the Olympic Games and took the *Bouleuterion* at the sanctuary as its office. The Council was highest institution and controlled by the *Hellanodikai*, originally, the title was “*agonothetai*” (game organizers), but soon became “*Hellanodikai*” literally, “the judges of the Greeks”, who were the principal organizers as well as the chief judges of the Olympic Games. In the early years, there were only two *Hellanodikai*, later the number was expanded to a board of 10 due to more added events, who divided among themselves responsibility for producing the various specific events of the Games (Young 2004, 55).

For 10 months before each Olympic Games they resided in a special building in Elis called the “*Hellanodikaion*” to learn from the “*nomophylakes*” (guardians of the law) about the regulations and provisions of the Games. Three months before the Games, the heralds were sent out to announce specific information of the Olympic festival and the truce. One month before the games, they conducted the training period for athletes in Elis, where they selected those who were well trained, rejecting those who were not performing at a satisfactory level. In the Olympic festival, they wore purple robes and were in three groups: three of them supervised the pentathlon, three the equestrian events and three organized the remainder of the competitions; the senior *Hellanodikos*

acted as the overall supervisor.¹⁷ They were entirely responsible for the enforcement of rules and regulations and acted as both judges and umpires of the competitions, such as keeping the fair play of the competitions, fining those who infringed on the rules, and even flogging competitors who committed fouls, a punishment that the Greeks usually reserved for slaves. Besides being judges and umpires, the *Hellanodikai* also were the general organizers, and were present at every ceremony and event that took place, having the honor of presenting the crowns and palm branches to the winners. They were also expected to police the games. These judges also penalized those who committed bribery at the Olympic Games (Crowther 2007, 52). The *Hellanodikai* throughout the ages the Olympic judges were renowned for their impartiality.

4.2.3.2. Athletes

The ancient Olympics had stringent regulations regarding competitors' eligibility. *Philostratus*¹⁸ stated that Olympic athletes had to be not only male, belong to a Greek city-state and tribe, but also be of free birth, legitimate parents, and not guilty of homicide. The Olympics, therefore, were national in concept and, at least in theory, rigorously excluded non-Greeks, though in its last phrase in the Roman Empire those regulations were loosened. In term of the athletes' background, theoretically, members of all Greek classes were eligible to participate in the ancient Olympic Games, whether they were from *poleis* on mainland Greece, or Greek colonies around the Mediterranean and of the Black Sea. However, it is doubtful that the poorer members of society had the same opportunities as the more affluent, who certainly dominated the expensive equestrian contests. The athletes had to be healthy and able to train. They did not engage themselves in activities which would damage their physique, therefore preparing for the Olympic Games (or indeed all panhellenic Games) was incompatible with labor-workers, who, anyway, could not afford to actually get there and train for those competitions, abandoning their work for so long. So, although only the non-Greeks

¹⁷ Ancient Judges (Hellanodikai). http://www.pe04.com/olympic/olympia/judges_o.php

¹⁸ Philostratos, *Gymnastics* 25

were excluded from the Games, the elite were actually only able to participate and win.¹⁹ With the development of the games and more specialized trend in competition, especially after the Big Four took shape in the 6th century BC, athletes came mainly from wealthy Greek families who could afford enough time and money to get professional training so as to be candidates for the circuit and to make a worthwhile career of sport.

Athletic and quadrennial entries also needed the Olympic officials' approval. Before arriving at Elis, athletes should have trained for 10 months. Some historians state that thirty days training at Elis was rigidly required of all prospective Olympic athletes before they could be authorized to compete in the actual festival. David Young thinks that would be not true since this was only recorded in the last phrase of the Roman period. But it is believed that the Olympia officials employed some pre-tournament methods to select better athletics to ensure the excellent competitions in the festival. So, prospective athletes must arrive at the *Hellanodikaion* in Elis to get examined before participating in the Games.

Athletes competed in the nude in the Olympic Games. In the equestrian events, the owners of racing chariots or horses did not need to compete themselves, but just sent their horses/chariots and charioteers to represent them on the court. For athletes participating in Olympic Games, there was a minimum age, and they were divided into two groups, boys and men, according to their age class. Although the evidence is not entirely certain (because size may also have been a criteria), it seems that boys as young as 12 could compete; those 18 years and older were obliged to enter the men's category. In the absence of birth certificates or identification cards, one wonders how the adjudicators could accurately tell the age of competitors. Yet there were no records of serious disputes. Judges would generally accept the athletes' word, if they spoke good

¹⁹ Agiatis Benardou. Ancient Greek Sport Festivals and Greek Poleis.
<http://www.anistor.gr/english/enback/v012.htm> Error! No bookmark name given.

Greek and swore the oath to Zeus that they would not sin against the Olympic Games.²⁰ In any event, only one contestant would be awarded the title of victor and others would regard themselves as losers. The Olympic victor received his first awards immediately after the competition. Following the announcement of the winner's name by the herald, a *Hellanodikis* would present an olive wreath for the victor as official victory prizes with flowers contributed by spectators. Nevertheless, Greek athletes in every *polis* aspired to have the opportunity to compete in the Olympic Games; but Greek *poleis* did not preselect athletes and took comparatively little interest in the participants until they were victorious.²¹ The winner of an Olympic event received much honor throughout Greece, especially in his home town, where he was often granted large sums of money and prizes by his *polis*. Sculptors would create statues of Olympic victors and poets would sing odes in their praise for money.

4.2.3.3. Spectators

At the beginning, Olympia attracted local Greeks because it was the place where some deities' sanctuaries were located such as the sacred grove of Demeter, the goddess of fertility, and the sanctuary of Zeus' temple. With more events added into the Zeus' festival, more wonderful constructions were built in the sanctuary, and the quadrennial festival gradually got more reputable for the grand ritualized sacrifice and thrilling contests. Local inhabitants would be greatly attracted by the wonderful festival and therefore acted as pilgrims for the sacrificing ritual for Zeus and spectators of the contests. Meanwhile, great politicians, ambassadors from various *poleis*, famous generals, previous Olympic winners, philosophers, poets, orators and other notable people from the Greek world visited the Olympic Games to pay tribute to the gods.

Every four years, heralds from Elis would announce that the Olympic festival would

²⁰ Nigel B. Crowther. (2007) *Sport in Ancient Times*. Praeger Publishers.47

²¹ Nigel B. Crowther. (2007) *Sport in Ancient Times*. Praeger Publishers.47

begin at the time of the second full moon after the summer solstice. They would also announce a truce of one to three months so that Greeks might travel to Olympia without being stopped by conflicts on the way. During the Games' most brilliant period, there would be up to 40,000 people attending the greatest festival in the Greek world. The panhellenic gathering gave them not only opportunities to communicate with other Greeks, but also the opportunity to honor and admire great works of Greeks. Athletic competitions were not the only events taking place at the festival. Apart from the religious sacrifice, athletic and equestrian events, there were also intellectual events, including poetry and musical performances. Many famous orations were delivered to the crowds at Olympia. Though not all intellectuals presented their professional works there, undoubtedly, the Olympic Games were the best place in ancient Greece to see and to be seen, to be heard and to hear.²² The Olympic festival was not only religious, athletic, social, and intellectual, but also commercial. Many vendors and merchants also went to Olympia to promote their business with the pilgrims, spectators and tourists during the Olympic festivals. With both opening and closing ceremonies, the atmosphere surrounding the Olympic Games was a spectacle. Vendors sold food; businessmen arranged "deals", even those that came from hostile *poleis*; delegations from various *poleis* discussed political matters; and fortune tellers, souvenir sellers, musicians, and dancers, along with pimps and prostitutes, did a brisk business.²³

Among all the attendees of the Olympic Games, women were forbidden to compete and watch the Games. Though Pausanias²⁴ stated that "virgins were not refused admission", it was rarely recorded that virgin attended the Olympic Games, except the Games held for Hera in different a time. For married woman, only a few special examples were recorded, such as the priestess of Demeter Chamyne, a goddess of fertility, who was required to witness the Games, the daughter of Diagoras. But women and virgins were

²² David C. Young (2004). A Brief History of the Olympic Games. Blackwell Publishing Ltd. 62.

²³ Robert A. Mechikoff(2010). A History and Philosophy of Sport and Physical Education, From Ancient Civilizations to the Modern World. Mc Graw Hill Higher Education. 73.

²⁴ Pausanias 6.20.9

rarely attended the quadrennial Olympics.

4.2.3.4. Events

The ancient Olympic Games were initially a one-day event until 684 BC, when they were extended to three days. In the 5th century B.C., it was extended again to cover five days when more events were added. The events can be categorized as athletic contests which were held in the stadium, and the equestrian contests which were conducted in the Hippodrome. The foot-races comprise of *stade*, *diaulos*, *dolichos* and the hoplite racing. Boxing and wrestling were both added in 708 BC. Boxing became increasingly brutal over the centuries. The Pentathlon became an Olympic sport with the addition of wrestling in 708 B.C., which was consisting of Discus Throw, Long Jumping, Javelin Throw, Running and Wrestling. The equestrian events consisted of chariot racing, horse-racing, mule-cart racing only in the 14th Olympiads, as well as race for colts and another for mares. They were the province of the elite—only wealthy aristocrats could afford to equip and maintain a chariot and horses, not to mention the cost of trainers and the charioteer or jockey.²⁵ It was the owner of the chariot and team who was considered to be the competitor, not the actual rider. Thus, it was possible for one owner to win more than one of the top spots, or to “buy” a victory and a place. The races were quite dangerous and sometimes fatal. They were greatly hailed by the spectators in the games.

4.2.3.5. The Procedure of the Olympic Games

After training for a period in Elis, the *Hellanodikai* led the selected athletes and their trainers, horse and chariots, together with their owners, jockeys and charioteers, to leave Elis for Olympia two days before the festival began. On the first day of the festival, the athletes were registered in the *Bouleuterion*. There, in front of the statue of *Zeus Orkios*, the athletes would swear that they had trained for ten months and that they would

²⁵ Ancient Olympic Events. http://www.pe04.com/olympic/olympia/events_o.php

compete fairly, bidding by the rules. So did their trainers and family members. Then the *Hellandikai* would take their oaths to judge the Games with impartiality. After the oaths, the contests of the heralds and trumpeters would take place near the stadium entrance, followed by boy's running, wrestling and boxing contests. After that, there was a public and private prayers and sacrifices in the Altis; or consultation of oracles. In the afternoon there would be orations by well-known philosophers and recitals by poets and historians, perhaps also as part of competitions.

On the second day, the chariots-and horses-races took place in the Hippodrome, and afterwards, the Pentathlon: discus, javelin, jumping, running and wrestling in the stadium. In the evening there were funeral rites in honor of the hero Pelops, parade of victors round the Altis, communal singing of victory hymns and feasting and revelry.

On the third day, the priests of the sanctuary, the *Hellandikai*, the contestants and trainers, the lords of Elis and the delegates from Greek states formed a splendid procession at the sanctuary and sacrificed animals to Gods in the morning. When these acts of worship finished, there were foot-races (*Stade, Diaulos, Dolichors* races) in the afternoon. At night there followed a public banquet in the *Prytaneion* with the meat from the 100 sacrificed oxen. On the fourth day, the tough competitions took place, namely, the wrestling in the morning, the boxing and the *pankration* in the middle day, and the hoplite race-race in armor in the evening.

On the fifth day, there was a procession of victors to the temple of Zeus. In the entrance of the temple, the herald would announce the name of the Olympic winner, his father's name, and his homeland in a loud voice. Then, they were awarded with a wreath of wild olive by the *Hellandikai* and cheered by attendants with flowers and leaves. After the crowning ceremony, the Eleans would arrange the feasting in honor of the winners, to which were invited the officials, the delegates from Greek states, and all the

distinguished people visiting the sanctuary. Meanwhile, the friends, relatives and fellow citizens of the winners celebrated the victories in the place of close to the sanctuary until the following day when they would return home. The wealthy would also organize the biggest parties to show off their wealth. Here what is needed to be pointed out is that the Olympic Games were not only religious and competitive, but also social and intellectual. Many famous orations were delivered to the crowds at Olympia.

4.3. An overview of early China before BC200

4.3.1. Geography

Roughly 5000 years ago Chinese civilization emerged in eastern Asia, followed shortly by the Xia, Shang, and Zhou dynasties (Xingpei/Wenming et al., 2006, 40). Geographically, China's territory can be pictured as a flight of stairs ascending from the mountainous west to the fertile east. With broad arable plains and multiple climates, it turns its back on central Asia and faces the Pacific Ocean. China is also geographically surrounded by natural barriers that make communication with the outside difficult. West of China is the Pamirs mountain range. Northeast of Pamirs is a whole range of mountainous obstacles, such as THE Tianshan Range, Altay Mountains, the Gobi Desert, Greater and Lesser Xing'an Ranges. Southwest of Pamirs are Himalayas, the Hengduan ranges and others connected with the mountains of Indo-China Peninsula. To China's east and southeast are the vast oceans (Xingpei/Wenming et al., 2006, 44). So In early China, people mainly lived in the major river basins and the plains that rivers shaped, and they had almost no close contact with other cultures out of China. The Yellow river in northern China, called the "mother river of Chinese" always brought the loess soils of the northwest Loess Plateau into the Northern China Plain and deposited fertile lands for agriculture. While in the central China, with the wet sub-tropical monsoon climate, the Yangtze River, the longest river in China, bearing 20 times as much water as the Yellow River, provided thousands of lakes, sub-rivers for the region with rich aquatic resources and favorable lands for cultivating crops. Before 200 BC, ancient Chinese

mainly lived in the north and central China, the tribe or states' leaders continually waged territorial wars and repelled "barbarians", meaning anyone who was no Chinese, to expand Chinese domain, and they created brilliant agricultural civilization.

4.3.2. History

It is argued that the Xia were established in the lower and middle reaches of the Yellow River in 2070 BC, which replaced the tradition of clan society with a slavery machine. About 1600 BC, one of its dependent states named the Shang toppled the deteriorated Xia and became a dominant power in the region. Shang expended its territory, assimilated other tribes and flourished for several hundred years. One of its affiliated states, called Zhou, overthrew the decayed Shang regime in 1046 BC and built the powerful Zhou which governed more city-states and tribes in expanded regions. Zhou's power gradually decreased with the rise of its city-states. In 771 BC, Zhou's royal government was seriously assaulted by mountain tribes and had to move to another area in the east. The Zhou regime from 1046 to 771 BC is called the West Zhou, the regime from 771 to the 221BC, the East Zhou, which can be divided into two periods-- the Period of Spring and Autumn (771-403BC) and the Warring States' Period (403-221BC). In the Period of Spring and Autumn, the patriarchal clan system began to falter sharply and the political order fell into disarray. While the rising states struggled with each other and many small city-states were merged into powerful city-states, some ministers subordinated to the vassel lords of city states began to usurp the power of their masters. From 403 BC to 221 BC, many city-states were controlled by ministers. They claimed them as kings and tried to keep their regime or expand their domain through political and internal economic reform and external wars or negotiations. Eventually, a city-state named Qin annexed all the city-states in 221 BC. In short, during the 5 hundred years from 800 to 200 BC, China was in a significant transformation period; the society and its systems underwent striking change. The feudal laird system was gradually taken over by the system of prefectures and counties under the strong

centralized imperial power. The state ownership of land was replaced by the private ownership of land. The culture flourished with hundreds of schools thoughts and their books.

4.3.3. Politics

It is claimed that helotism was widely implemented in the Xia and the following Shang Dynasties, whereas the feudal laird system basically replaced the helotism when Zhou Dynasty smashed the Shang Dynasty in 1046 (Chuanxi Z. et al., 2005, 55). So in the period from the Zhou dynasty to 221 BC, when Qin Shihuang united the city-states, China was dominated by the feudal laird system. In this system, all the land and people in China were subject to the king, who was the son of Heaven; the throne was passed through hereditary succession mainly to the King's son by his principal wife. The basic political system of the Zhou was that state authority rested with the Kings while in the vassal states nobles were invested with hereditary titles, territories, and slaves. This system had evolved from the tribal leagues of the later stage of primitive society, with a powerful tribe playing a leading role among all the tribes that had joined the league. With the passage of time, the leader of the tribal league continued to strengthen the political and military ties within the league, and the independence or autonomy of the tribes weakened; eventually, the leader become the king or the son of Heaven, who ruled the realm with absolute authority(Xingpei/Wenming et al., 2006, 219). Complicated and systematic institutions called *Zhouli* (Rites of Zhou) guided the relations among the king and his subordinates. However, the authority of king of Zhou got decreased at the beginning of 800 BC with the uprising power of his vassal lords (*Zhuhou*), who developed quickly in their respective domains. Certain vassal lords one after the other successfully challenged the authority of the King of Zhou in the period of Spring and Autumn (771-403 BC) and expanded their own city-states. In the period of Warring states (403-221 BC), whereas the king of Zhou almost completely lost his authority, some ministers under the vassal lords quickly overturned control of vassal

lords and established their own city-states. While wars, political conflicts and cooperation took place among city-states, a city-state named Qin emerged in western China and gradually united all city-states with its mighty army, and eventually established the Qin Empire in 221 BC.

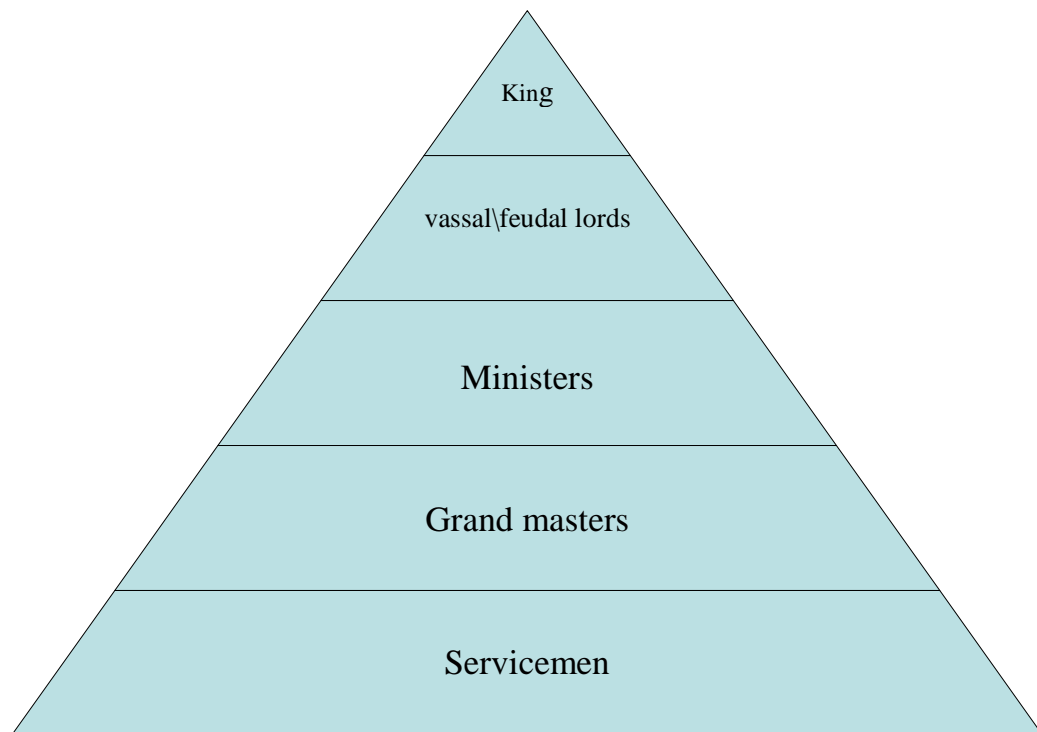
4.3.4. Society

“Under broad heaven, there is nothing but the king’s land. To the very end of the entire realm, all are the king’s vassals”.²⁶ The king divided his realm into two administrative units: the royal domain, which belonged to the royal court and some court officials, and the vast area beyond royal domain, which were the territories granted to the vassal lords as their hereditary possessions. Outside of the royal domain, the vassal lords had the obligation to protect the Zhou’s land from invasion, take an active part in state affairs, pay homage and tribute to the king, and visit the royal court to report on the duties they performed. They had no ownership of the lands but the right of use. Within his domain, a vassal lord exercised his own use while giving away the rest to his ministers (*qing*) and grand masters (*dafu*), who kept some of it for themselves but gave away the rest to servicemen (*shi*). The servicemen gave the land to commoners/farmers for cultivation. Women did not bear any political influence in the exclusive male-dominated society. Aristocratic women were educated at home in skills supporting silk and textile production and the preparations for sacrifices. Only male clan members could partake in the sacrifices and thus sing and dance to the hymns.

The commoners/peasants and slaves cultivated lands for the upper class. Peasants and commoners were organized as soldiers in time of war and conflicts. So they needed to be trained in idle season of agriculture. Slaves only served all other classes and cultivated lands. These different strata of the society formed a pyramid, with the king sitting at the very top. All the official posts were filled by nobles, resulting in the close

²⁶ *Confucius*. The classic of songs. Shijing. 18. Beishan.

integration of the patriarchal clan system with the political hierarchy (Xingpei/Wenming et al., 2006, 57). So the class hierarchy in the governing class could be classified as follows:



But this ruling class was routed with the development of economic and political change. From the beginning of the 8th century BC, the patriarchal clan system and *Zhouli* were increasingly impaired by the innovation of technology and reform of land system which transformed king's ownership into private ownership. In the late Spring and Autumn Period, the aristocratic system collapsed. State power was transferred downward from the king to the feudal lords, from lords to ministers and from ministers to grand masters. There existed various conflicts, wars and negotiation among city-states.

The essential hallmark of the pre-Qin society is that the kinship inside a clan was expanded into the political system. The natural pecking order that decided the relations

between father and offerings inside a family became the model that classified the social hierarchy. Besides, the social hierarchy system was tightly integrated with the agricultural economy. This collaboration, in one aspect, strikingly restricted the development of the social economy, in another, secured the stability of the social hierarchy structure of the Pre-Qin society (Zhiyi G. 2003).

4.3.5. Economics

The economics in early China mainly centered on the territories of Yellow River basin and Yangtze River basin. Agriculture was the foremost resource to support the changing society. Due to the political reforms of different city-states, lands transactions were legalized in the Spring and Autumn period, so ordinary people had the rights to own their private lands. The highly developed bronze industry, which was inherited from the Shang periods, still distinctively produced brilliant items. Simultaneously, metal working was quickly improved with the innovative technology of iron, so iron farming tools and ploughing techniques with animal labor were also widely used in agriculture. This greatly stimulated the expansion of arable lands and promoted economic development. Frequent wars among city-states also stimulated vassal lords to improve their population and arable lands and other monetary resources. Farming, the irrigation system, metal working, clothing, salt working and craftsmanship also got boomed. Cities got expanded and the businesses among city-states flourished with the widely used currencies (Chuanxi Z. et al., 2005, 67).

4.3.6. Culture and Education

Ancient Chinese shaped their mature written language in the Shang Dynasty, which was subsequently succeeded by Zhou dynasty and its city-states. People in this period still firmly believed in the high God and Heaven, who were considered to take charge of every important matter in the human realm. Ancestors, who were considered to have close connection with High God and Heaven, also occupied an essential position in the

religious and sacrificial systems. These deities were worshiped through diverse rites and sacrificial activities. Many famous intellectuals sprang up in “the Golden Age” like *Confucius, Laozi, Mozi, Mencius, Sunzi, Zhuangzi, Xunzi, Yangzhu* etc. They established hundreds of schools of thoughts that explored, discussed and practiced their diverse claims, which were related with states’ governance, social order, agriculture, warfare, ethics, philosophy, education and so on. The Confucian School was founded at a time of social reform, when old ideas were replaced by new ways of thinking.

The history of education in China began with the birth of Chinese civilization. The nobles often set up the educational establishments for their offspring and took education as a tool to strengthen their domination. The schools teaching the aristocratic youth were divided into “lower” (*Xiaxiang*) and upper (*Shangxiang*). The government of Western Zhou founded national schools to educate junior nobles with six practical disciplines called the Six Arts (*liù yì* in Chinese): rituals, music, archery, chariot driving, calligraphy and mathematics. According to the *Book of Rituals*, at age twelve, boys learned arts related to ritual and when older, archery and chariot driving. Girls learned ritual, correct deportment, silk production and weaving. Schools dominated by the Zhou royal court and its city-states were eclipsed in the Spring and Autumn Period, but private schools flourished. The tradition of “learning in the government” gave way to “learning among the common people”. *Confucius* followed this trend and is considered to be the forerunner of private education. Many intellectual figures organized their schools into political entities to enroll the students with different social status, spread their teaching and gain social influence. *Confucius*, the great founder of education for the masses, was devoted to the private school system and instructed students in Confucianism: a philosophy embracing benevolence in living, diligence in learning, and so on. He was also a zealous advocate of the ritual archery and included archery in his education system. Besides, other schools such as Taoism and Mohism were also taught widely. In the following Warring States Period, a hundred schools of thought were brilliantly developed (Chuanxi Z. et al., 2005, 78).

Rituals and archery were heavily emphasized in nobles' schools. Rituals were to establish rank in the hierarchical structure of Chinese feudal society, while archery was to establish both power and submission of the individual's power to feudal authority (Selby 2000, 52). Through practicing archery and its related etiquettes, those nobles not only gained the proficiency in the war skills, more importantly, they were also supposed to cultivate their minds and learn how to behave as nobles.²⁷ The curriculum of archery included the Five Forms of archery that students should master: “*Jing Yi*”, “*Xiang Chi*”, “*Baishi*”, “*Yanzhu*” and “*Canlian*”.

Jinyi: accurately hits 4 targets in a 井pattern

Xiangchi: keep one shaku (0.3m) from each other

Yanzhu: accurately fires arrows as soon as it is nocked

Canlian: fire one arrow, then fire another 3 smoothly before the 1st arrow hits the ground

Baishi, arrow penetrates the target.

4.4. An overview of ritual archery in China before 200 BC

4.4.1. The origin of ritual archery

As a significant productive activity to acquire food and clothing, hunting was heavily emphasized by ancient people. With great passion in hunting and increasing knowledge about nature, ancient people invented archery. It is certified by archaeologists that before 28000 years ago the bow and arrow were invented. The bows were quite effective against the enemies that were far from the archer. During the pre-Qin period, bow and arrows were widely used, and the teaching and training of archery were important educational activities. According to the remaining inscriptions on bones or tortoise shells of the Shang Dynasty, the ritual archery was shaped in the Shang Dynasty (Honghong Z., 2009, 6). However, it was a long process of formatting the ritual archery

²⁷ Ma Lianzhen. An Introduction to Chinese Archery. <http://www.isdy.net/pdf/eng/2.pdf>

since it bore complicated relations with rite of sacrificing to gods, rite of witchcrafts, rites of hunting and the military.

Necromancers were significant figures in ancient society who interpreted the oracles from Heaven and the ancestors. They could also hurt others by curses or spells. Ancient rulers believed the magic power of such curses and hoped to listen to Heaven's mandates. From the extant addresses for the ritual archery we can conclude that shooting the target with an animals' image originated from the curses of necromancers (Nan 2004). Furthermore, curses of alliance, shooting the Heaven, shooting the target with a human image or idol were all due to such back magic (Junjie Y., 2010, 34).

There was a story recorded in the *Six Secret Strategies of Tai Gong*

When King Wu (of Zhou) attacked Shang Dynasty, Duke Ding did not lend support. So Tai Gong drew a picture of Duke Ding on a bamboo cylinder and fired three arrows into it. Ding fell ill and sought help from soothsayer, who interpreted the Image of Changes. The Images said that "Your Excellency should face Zhou and quake: accordingly you should put your estates at his disposal." So Duke Ding followed the interpretation. Then Tai Gong pulled the arrow from behind the head of the picture of Ding in the first day, pulled the arrow from the behind the mouth on the second day, pulled the arrow from the stomach on the fourth day. Then Ding's illness was gradually cured. The tribes around heard of this and they all came forward to pay tribute. ²⁸

In addition, Japanese Professor KOMINAMI Ichiro claims that ritual archery originated from certain religious factors. He argues that the arrow hitting the target in the ritual archery not only depended on the archer's technique, but also determined by whether the god would accept him. Thus, to sound out the intention of god through examining if the arrow hit the target should be the essential purpose of the ritual archery (KOMINAMI Ichiro 2006, quotation from Zhuliang/Zhenhao et al., 2006, 184). The

²⁸ Tai Gong, Liu Tao: Liu Tao Yi Wen: Tai Ping Yu Lan 737.

offering of sacrifices to gods or ancestors bore great significance in ancient China. In the strict social hierarchy of West Zhou, the opportunity and the position of participating in the sacrificial ceremony with the higher authorities means a lot for the participants. In the ancient “*Book of Songs*” there were six poems related to ritual archery, which explained that ritual archery had the fundamental function of confirming the social order, position and right of participating in sacrificial ceremony with a higher authority (Yan 1997, 54).

Based on their analysis and interpretation, we know that the ritual archery originated from certain religious rituals of the era of tribal alliances in early China. Some ritual archery was associated with sorcery. Due to the strength of sorcery, the ritualized archery became an effective approach for chiefs of tribal alliance or kings to inspect, penalize or manage their subordinate officials and tribal leaders or conduct military training. Simultaneously, by resorting to the sorcerous power of the ritualized archery, the early rulers tested which subordinates/officials could be presented in the sacrifice to gods or ancestors. The ritual archery was preliminarily shaped in the early Shang Dynasty. Then, its varieties increased in following generations. For example, not only the shooting the heaven with sorcerous attribution grew, but also shooting sacrifices with religious attribution strengthened, and the shooting competitions boomed as well (Junjie 2010, 1).

Zhichong Xiong (Zhichong 1985, 3) recounts the reasons why archery was so close combination with rituals and shaped the ritual archery: a) the vital role that archery played in the society, which significantly emphasized warfare and sacrifice to the ancestors and gods, is the prerequisite for the combination of archery and rituals; b) the popularity of archery in society is the background for shaping the ritual archery; c) the ritual archery bore much more educational fruits than other entertaining activities; d) the characteristic of archery is extremely suitable to conduct ritual education. Actually, the

mature ritual archery was the product of the ritual-respecting thoughts and ritual systems of the Western Zhou Dynasty, whose governance heavily emphasized rituals and morality.

4.4.2. The Development of ritual archery

The ritual archery originated in the Shang Dynasty and flourished in the Zhou Dynasty. After overthrowing the Shang Dynasty, King Wu of Zhou drew lessons from the defeated Shang and expressed his sovereignty with rituals and morality. With the Zhou people's strong martial awareness and deity concept, the ritual archery in the Western Zhou developed much more in both categories and scale. The early ritual archery of Zhou, as simple as that of Shang, mainly focused on contesting the shooting skills and the shooting results. After Zhou-Gong made the *Zhouli*, "*The Book of Rites*", the ritual archery followed rites more since the participants should strictly follow the rules and rituals. Nobles regularly held archery rituals which symbolized and reinforced social order within the aristocratic hierarchy. Therefore, as the archery had rigid rules on rituals and procedures, from then on, rather than stressing shooting skills, it emphasized more showcasing the participants' status, rituals and the movements, postures, steps and appearance in the process of ritual archery. The Zhou kings used to give awards to the champions and trainees after the competition.

From the scripts of oracle bones and vessels, it is known that some ritual archery was organized in set seasons and some were held casually. The ritual archery was mainly popularized among the aristocrats. Participants from lower classes rarely participated during the Western Zhou period. There were varieties of ritual archery and their purposes were also different. Some were organized to discipline subordinates through a magic ritual; some were for military training, others for selecting proper candidates, inspecting nobles' virtues and behaviors or renewing emotional attachment. The hallmarks of ritual archery during the Western Zhou period existed in their diverse

categories, high-specification, large-scale, more complex etiquettes. The competition of archery not only had certain technical norms, but also bore a set of strictly regulated systems regarding the carrying procedure and time. Ritual archery was already stylized and instituted with strong political purpose. Meanwhile, the entertainment factor improved, especially on the occasions of *Binshe* and *Yanshe*. Western Zhou is the period when ritual archery was most prevalent. Ritual archery became an indispensable ritual and skill that aristocrats needed to master in their social lives and military actions.

During the Spring and Autumn Period, the ritual archery developed into more categories, which could be classified as archery for practicing rites, archery for practicing military, archery for entertainment and archery for religion. The content of rites of the ritual archery in this period became more complicated than those in Western Zhou, but both their scales and specification declined. With the strikingly decreased authority of Zhou kings and frequent warfare among city-states, ritual archery changed to be more social and entertainment-oriented; the grand archery waned while the practical military archery significantly developed. Simultaneously, *Touhu* emerged, which was a reformed shooting competition with arrow sticks to be casted into a narrow-neck container following to certain rules adopted from ritual archery (Junjie 2010, 283). In the time of the Warring Period, the declining ritual archery was redeveloped in city-states with flourishing cultures and economies. The ritual archery was very popular. There existed loads of vessels with diversified images which recorded the ritual archery of diverse scales. Simultaneously, the ritual archery was completely secularized in a popular style among civil society, which deeply promoted the development of archery. The ritual archery was not a single strict ritual system, but changed into a custom and etiquette culture for social gatherings.

4.4.3. The Structure of ritual archery

The structure of the ritual archery can be analyzed from six aspects: the administrators,

the participants, the attendants, the infrastructures and facilities, and the processing of the ritual archery. Unlike the Olympic Games held in a specific season, there were not regular specific dates or a single location for the ritual archery to be held. Actually, there was diverse ritual archery held in different occasions at different time. It has been stated above that the ritual archery includes, *Dashe*, *Xiangshe*, *Yanshe* and *Binshe*. However, there are no manuscripts left which provide detailed recording the *Dashe*, *Yanshe*, and *Binshe* held by the kings. Only records of *Xiangshe* and *Dashe* organized by vassal lords were recorded by the “*Yili*” (The Book of Rituals)²⁹. Nevertheless, the activities and procedure in the *Xiangshe* and *Dashe* organized by vassal lords can represent the basic performance of the ritual archery (Honghong Z. 2009, 64).

4.4.3.1. The administrators of ritual archery

Wherever the ritual archery was held, there was the venue’s host who provided administration for this activity. For example, if the *Dashe* were held in the royal domain, the king must preside over or participate in the event. If held in a city-state, the vassal lord must preside over and participate in. If in a central benefice of a minister, then the minister should do it. If it was held in Prefectures or Shires, the local dignitaries would lead the ritual archery. So the political leader usually acted as the supervisor of ritual archery held in his domain.

The “*Dashe* Ritual” records that there were many specific servicepersons who helped the operation of *Dashe*. Following are the main positions that served the operation of ritual archery:

- 1) *Ziren*, people who were responsible of setting targets;
- 2) *Siqiu*, people who supplied the 3 kinds of target in the *Dashe*;
- 3) *Sheren*, people who supervised the shooting methods, rules and arranged the shooting

²⁹ Zhou Li.Yi Li. *The Book of Rituals*.

order;

- 4) *Sigongshi*, people who provided sufficient clamps used for archery;
- 5) *Dasima*, people who set the order for vassal lords participating in ritual archery;
- 6) *Chepu*, people who provided protection tools for people who reported the score;
- 7) *Dasiyue*, people who performed the music of “*Wangxia*” when the king arrived in the venue, and ordered the musicians to perform the music of ‘*Zouyu*’ when people were shooting;
- 8) *Dashi*, people who led the musicians to sing songs to aid the rhythm of ritual of shooting;
- 9) *Zhongshi*, people who were responsible for playing music;
- 10) *Sishe*, people who observed whether the arrows reached their respective targets;
- 11) *Dashi*, people who were responsible for keeping track of the score;
- 12) *Sichang*, people who provided the banners for the people who reported the score;
- 13) *Fubushi*, people who held up the banner after seeing the arrow hit the target.
- 14) *Sheniaoshi*, people who were responsible for collecting all the arrows from the targets.

Guided by the regulations in the Book of Rituals, these service people were responsible for the preparation and process of the ritual archery. There existed strict regulations on preparation and process of the ritual archery, which varied according to the participants’ social status. For example, only in the *Dashe* in which the king participated could the three kinds of targets be used, namely, the target with tiger skin only for the king, the target with bear skin for vassal lords, and the target with leopard skin for ministers or subordinators. When the *Dashe* was held by a vassal lord, two kinds of target were used, the targets with bear skin and targets with leopard skin. When *Dashe* was held by ministers, only one kind of target was used, namely, the target covered with leopard

skin or deer skin; the ministers and their subordinators shot at the targets (Lequan 2008, 86). The participants of ritual archery should strictly follow the rituals and the rhythm of the music. If someone had a poor performance, he would incur a penalty. The “*Sishe*” would use rods to beat participants who breached the rites (Yonggan, 2004).

4.4.4.2. The competitors of ritual archery

The bow and arrow were one of the essential weapons in the Pre-Qin period. According to Xue Pingzhong, “archery is a duty of males. The power of the bow and arrow, and its power over everything, has long been known. The early rulers, when performing rituals and religious service, used archery; when they entertained guests, they used archery; when they held banquets, they performed archery. The purpose of employing the bow and arrow in this way was so that officials and ministers, in their ritual or civil encounters, would not forget their military duties (Xue Ping Zhong, quotation from Selby 2000, 51). Boys from noble families not only studied archery seriously in schools, but also performed archery frequently in their social lives. In the stratified society of the Pre-Qin period in ancient China, only aristocrats bore the right to enter into schools and participate in ritual archery.

According to the research of Yuan Junjie people who participated in the ritual archery in Western Zhou, such as Zhou kings, vassal lords, chiefs of conquered states, youths of aristocrats and officials, all had high social status. Though there were some meritocrats from the lower classes who participated in ritual archery, by and large, the main body of ritual archers were aristocrats (Junjie 2010, 219). Ordinary civilians did not have qualifications to learn the ritual archery in school or participate in ritual archery. The victors in grand archery were selected to attend the sacrifices to gods or ancestors; for victors in happy archery or guest archery, they just showed their virtue and enjoyed the entertainment of the ritual archery; for victors in shires archery, they were identified as able candidates to be promoted in the government.

However, ordinary civilians in the Spring and Autumn Period could learn the ritual and techniques of ritual Archery. The ritual archery in this period declined; there were not too many people who mastered both rituals and archery. For example, according to the *Zuozhuan*, an earliest Chinese works of narrative history covering the period from 722 to 468 BC, when the vassal lord named Luxiang held ritual archery, there were fewer than 6 people in his court who qualified for the ritual archery. Furthermore, ritual archery became more formalized and ritualized, with heavy emphasis on its educational meaning and entertainment. Private schools were prevalent in this period, which recruited students with different backgrounds and taught them the rituals, music, archery, chariot-driving, literature and mathematics. Thus the knowledge of ritual archery was spread in folklore (*Qiuming*, quotation from Junjie 2010, 276). Due to the decline of the king's authority, his subordinators seldom paid formal visits to him, so the performance of ritual archery declined. The regulations on the *Binshe* (guest archery) and *Yanshe* (happy archery) were not strictly followed anymore; aristocrats took the *Yanshe* as pure entertainment, which made the ritual archery more amusement-oriented.

In the Warring States Period, the hierarchical society collapsed with the rise of city-states and the complete decline of authority of Zhou kings. The flourishing culture and economics liberated peoples' thought, the strict patriarchal clan hierarchy was breached and diverse rituals were adapted, people of all social standings did not have rigid requirement for staging the ritual archery. So the ritual archery in the Warring States Period had more varieties with diverse styles. The participants of ritual archery were not merely confined to aristocrats; more ordinary civilians could perform the ritual archery on different occasions (Junjie 2010, 322--323).

4.4.4.3. The spectators of ritual archery

The ritual archery could be held by aristocrats from different classes. Therefore, the

spectators would have different social status. In Western Zhou period, spectators of grand archery, entertainment archery and guest archery, were either invited or obliged to attend ritual archery by their social roles. This meant that they had certain respectable social status in the society. Just take shires archery as an example. Sheriffs in a Shire had duties to supervise the annual Shires archery and prestigious triennial Shires archery. It was recorded in the *Rites of Zhou* that “Sheriffs after leaving the royal domain used the ritual archery to select talents and consult the common people about the candidates. They used five criteria, namely, the five shooting lines: appearance, accuracy that was as much in technique as in actually hitting the target, musicality and performance of the choreography” (Selby 2000, 17).

With the gradual socialization of the ritual archery, more and more ordinary civilians had the opportunity to attend certain ritual archery events. Since *Dashe*, the grand archery, had decreased with the collapse of Zhou kings’ sovereign power, there were no big scale ritual archery contests. It was recorded that the *Xiangshe*, the Shires Archery, was held in an imposing hall with an expansive courtyard surrounded by a wall where local sociopolitical authorities selected talented candidates to enter into the government system from common people. Simultaneously, candidates could receive the opinions and comments of spectators on those candidates. When the Shires archery was held at the hall, which actually was a governmental school known as a *Xiang* or *Xu*, hundreds of local people would go to view the grand activity and give comments. So the spectators of Shires Archery not only were attracted by this activity, but it also provided opportunities for democratic discussions in a political sense. The local sociopolitical authorities would consider the performance of participants according to *The Book of Rituals* and the opinions of spectators, and then judge who could be promoted.

4.4.4.4 The infrastructure and facilities of ritual archery

According to Yuan Junjie’s research, there were a variety of locations or venues where

the kings and other aristocrats held their ritual archery (Junjie 2010, 221). The Zhou king mainly held the ritual archery in *Piyong*, a small island surrounded by water in the countryside, on which some buildings were used for education and ritual archery. The buildings were made of wood on tamped earth foundations with tile roofs. Vassal lords in their domain also used similar islands for education and ritual archery, but they just called them *Pangong*, which was less grand than *Piyong*.

The *Piyong* was the place in the countryside where aristocratic offspring were educated and learned archery, and the Zhou king held ritual archery, mainly the *Dashe*, to select those with talent. There was *Shegong*, the palace for archery located in the royal palace, where the Zhou king learned and practiced the archery, held the *Binshe* and *Yanshe*. Vassal lords or ministers also had their own *Shegongs* in their domain where they practiced the ritual archery according to their social status. Sometimes, the Zhou king also held the ritual archery in the temporary encampment outside of his royal domain, for example, in *Shegong* of vassal lords. *Yanshe* and *Binshe* were usually held in the spacious hall of aristocrats. The *Xiangshe* were regularly held in *Yang* or *Xu*, local schools located in the center of Prefectures or Shires. In addition to the prepared bows, arrows and targets, there were wines, instrumentals and other facilities, such as counting tools provided according to the standard of the ritual archery.

4.4.4.5. The Process of ritual archery

Under the ritual system of Zhou, the ritual archery in the pre-Qin period (Before BC 221) can be divided into four categories: *Dshe*, *Xiangshe*, *Yanshe* and *Binshe*. The typical arrangement of ritual archery involved certain pairs of archers shooting at targets in a pavilion, accompanied by ceremonial music and wine. All these practices were followed elaborate and formalized regulations and rules. According to Zhao Honghong's research, there existed a set of common procedures and rites suited to every

type of ritual archery (Honghong 2009, 14).³⁰ The basic procedure of ritual archery will be presented as follows according to chronological order.

(1) Preparation in prophase

Before convening the ritual archery, the host of the ritual archery would notify all the related people about the ritual archery. Nevertheless, there existed different notification rituals among various type of ritual archery. In terms of the Zhou king's *Dashe*, before the grand sacrifice, the chief of officials would report to the king about staging the ritual archery. Then, the king would decree his order to stage the archery. After accepting the order, the chief would pass the information to important officials. *Sheren*, the people responsible for supervising the ritual archery, would pass the information to the relevant vassal lords, ministers and grand masters; the *Sishi*, a serviceman in the ritual archery, would notify all other participants and servicepersons. As to the important participants and invited guests, their list would be decided on the day holding the rituals. In terms of *Xiangshe*, the Shires' ritual archery, the chief of shires or prefecture who presided over the ritual archery would personally go to the guest's place to notify related issues about the ritual archery. Both the chief of shire and guests in the notice process should strictly follow certain elaborate rituals.

After the notice was passed to relevant people, the venue and equipment for ritual archery were well prepared three days before the event. These included cleaning the venue, washing all the utensils, preparing targets, bows, arrows and other shooting apparatus, and measuring the shooting range according the level and standard of the ritual archery to be held.

One day before the ritual archery, the musical instrumentals would be prepared on the

³⁰ Honghong Z. Xianqin Sheli Yanjiu (Research on the Ritual Archery Pre-Qin) Zhejiang University. Graduate thesis for Master programme of Chinese Classics. 14.

venue. The category, number and placement of the instruments varied according the standard of the ritual archery. The ritual archery of Shires only had one instrumental due its low level. But as noted above, in the period of Warring States, people did not strictly follow the regulations anymore; even the low level ritual archery at that time would play several kinds of instruments. In the early morning of the day of conducting ritual archery, the seats, tables, feasting utensils and various foods would be carefully prepared according to the standards of this ritual archery.

(2) Feasting before formal competition

In regard to ritual archery of Shires, the master of the ritual archery following rigid rituals where he went to the guests' lodges to invite them. When the guests arrived, the host would greet the guests at the entrance of his hall and lead them to sit in the venue and wait for competition. In terms of the *Dashe*, the grand ritual archery, the king did not need to personally go to the guests' residence to invite them. After the invited people seated, there would be a feast with music, which had a very complicated and ritualized procedure. After the feasting, the shooting competition began (Xiaozheng, 1984).

(3) Shooting competition

The essential component of the ritual archery is the shooting competition, which included the first round shooting performance, and another two rounds of shooting competitions. According to the research of Zhao Honghong, there existed no substantial difference between *Xiangshe* and *Dashe*, of which the procedure and ritual were recorded in detail. Their minor differences in rites resulted from the rituals' standards and scale and the participants' social status (Yongyi/Hongniu 2013).

Before formal shooting, there were still two rituals for the host to appoint one official as

the supervisor, who would supervise the whole process of ritual archery, and appoint one official as manager of the shooting, who would manage the shooting issues. The shooting manager would execute the ritual of starting the shooting. After that, he would ask servicepersons to move the instrumentals away and establish the targets; then, he would select six people to form three showcasing teams and seriously emphasize on the requirements for shooting and the procedure to all competitors.

The first round of shooting comprised of the shooting manager's performance and the three selected teams' performances. At first, the shooting manager led the 3 teams standing on the court, all with their bows and arrows. Then, the manager would firstly shoot four arrows according to certain rituals so as to show all participants and spectators the proper norms and shooting procedure.

After the shooting manager's performance, the supervisor, acting as a venue manager, would order the serviceperson to prepare for the shooting of the 3 selected teams. Then, the shooting managers ordered the 3 teams to shoot their arrows according to certain rituals. Two competitors comprised a team; one competitor shot after his teammate's shooting. After each competitor shot 4 arrows, the second team shot the target according to same procedure. Each time the arrow hit the target, the reporter would use his banner to signify the result, but the achievement did not count towards the grade. So, the three teams' shooting actually was the performance of the six competitors who were regarded as being virtuous and good at shooting. Through the performance of the shooting manager and the six competitors, other competitors and spectators would be educated on the ritual archery.

After finishing the performance and collecting the 28 shot arrows, the second round would begin. The master of the ritual archery, guests and the former 3 teams' members, and other competitor would all take part in. It was a truly competition. Firstly, the

shooting manger would formally ask for the start of shooting again with diverse greetings. With the approval from guests, he would declare the rules; if the ritual archery was *Dashe*, in which the king participated, he would announce the privilege of the king in the shooting; then he would group all the competitors to make two competitors comprise a team according their social status and shooting skills. Secondly, the former 3 teams would shoot again with the same rules, but this time their scores would be recorded by the servicepersons. Then the teams consisting of the master of the ritual archery and guests would shoot; one team member shot after the other; when the two competitors finished shooting eight arrows, another team would follow. Then, the teams composed of vassal lords, ministers, grand masters and other officials would shoot according to the same procedure.

After this round, the serviceperson would collect the shot arrows and count the scores according the reporters' record, and then they would report the final scores to the competitors. In the ritual archery, there would be many teams competing in the archery, but a team comprised simply of two people, who would be divided as the first archer and the last archer. Though it would look like there were competitions between many teams, actually there was not. There were only two groups participating in competition. Group one consisted of all first archers from each team; group two comprised all of last archer in every team. When the servicepersons counted the final grade, which was overseen by the shooting manager, all the scores of the first archers would be counted as the final grade of group one. All the scores of the last archers would be counted as the final grade of group two. The winners and losers would be announced. Then the supervisor would ask servicepersons to arrange tables for drinking, and the shooting manager would guide the losers to drink as a forfeit according to certain complicated rituals due to their different social status.

After finishing the ritualized drinking, the second round of shooting would begin. All

former competitors would participate in the same way as the first round, and their final grade would also be calculated in the same way. In this round, every competitor would take their shooting in accordance to the music, which was different among different types of ritual archery. After all competitors completed their shooting, servicemen would add their score together according to which group they belonged to. Here one important point needed to be illustrated. The arrow hitting the target would be counted as a point only if the shooting that followed the musical rhythm. If an arrow hit the target but the shooting did not conform to the rhythm of the music, it would not be counted. Furthermore, this rule only applied to the vassal lords, ministers, grand masters, officials and other subordinators. It did not apply to the king. The king had the privilege that, whether in the first round or the second round, his shooting would be counted as long as his arrow touched any part of his target, regardless of whether the arrow shot through the target, fell down, or did not conform to the music.

When all the shooting was completed, the supervisor would order servicepersons to collect the shot arrows according to a certain ritual, and some servicepersons would begin to count the grade. This process was also monitored by the shooting manager. After announcing the counted results, group that lost would be asked to drink wine according to certain procedures and rituals. Then, all of the competitors would carry out the rituals of returning the shooting equipment (Yongyi/Hongniu 2013).

(4) Final Feasting

After returning the equipment, a feast would start with the proposal of diverse toasts and complicated rituals according to the rules. During the feast, sometimes, an informal shooting would be presented with participants who wanted to show their archery skills by shooting only one arrow. On other occasions there was not the informal shooting. It depended on the participants' intention. The feast would continue with different conversation, music, toasts and diverse rituals. Participants would fully enjoy the feast

until they were drunk. In the evening, they would return to their residence from the venue with the leave-taking rituals, in which some music was also played. On the second day, guests would go to the house of the master of ritual archery to express their thanks and the master would stand at the entrance of his house to accept their greetings (Honghong 2009, 17).

Although there existed diverse type of ritual archery with different purposes in the pre-Qin period, it can be concluded that the ritual archery would be well prepared in advance and would last a whole day with feasting and shooting alternated under the guidance of complicated rituals.

5. Analysis & Discussion

It is easy to conclude that the ancient Olympics contained many sporting events and lasted 5 days maximum and were held quadrennially at an eternal place-Olympia, while the ritual archery in ancient China only incorporated one sporting event with rites, and lasted only one day at diverse places with diverse levels. This research does not aim to conduct such a superficial comparison. It is believed that both the Olympic Games and ritual archery were institutionalized cultural activities which integrated sport with rituals and played a substantial role in their respective societies for very long period of time. Thus, this comparative study of the Olympic Games in ancient Greece and the ritual archery in early China is not merely to present the interpretation of the two sociocultural activities in the two civilizations, but also to examine their similarities and differences and further present persuasive analytical and explanatory accounts for these similarities and differences. Based on the research noted above, the following sections will focus on discovering and revealing the similarities and distinctions with regard to origins, processes, structures and functions, and further through rigorous analyses to establish causes and connections.

5.1. Comparison of their origins

Origin is a very important issue that provides clues about where the sport came from and how did it came to be. Although there are many Greek myths and legends about the origin of the Olympic Games in ancient Greece, as illustrated above, modern researchers vary in their opinions on the origin of the Olympic Games. Indeed, there is little certainty about the details of the Olympic festival's origin, nor do we exactly know how the competitions actually began in the festival. However, based on the historical interpretation and scholars' research, we can realistically conclude that the Olympic festival was originally a local sacrifice in honor of Zeus held at the sanctuary of Olympia with pilgrims from the surrounding area. In this festival, the worship ceremony of offering up sacrifices to the god experienced a gradual process from simple to complex, with more rituals, music, songs, dances or feast performed. Dorian Greeks were a competitive people with a strong agonistic tradition, so it would seem reasonable that they gradually incorporated their popular social activity, namely, the competition of speed and physical prowess, into this sacrificing ceremony. However, we do not know the exact beginning time of the sacrifice ceremony and when the competition was added. All competitions of the games were religious in character. The patron god, Zeus was believed to select his favored athletes with highest virtue and physical prowess as winners.

As to the origin of ritual archery in early China, diverse arguments also exist. Archery in ancient time was not only a valuable productive tool to acquire food and clothing from hunting, but was also effective in fighting against enemies and became extremely important in warfare throughout ancient world. In the pre-Qin period of early China, when the great affairs of the state lay in sacrifices and wars, bow and arrows were regarded as powerful and sorcerous. According to the remaining inscriptions on oracle bones and tortoise shells, there were ritualized archeries with feast in Shang dynasty, by which the Shang king managed, warned or penalized his officials or subordinate rulers

on the strength of sorcery. Some records say that the ritualized archery was used by kings to test who could be present with the king in the coming sacrifice to gods or ancestors. During the time of the Western Zhou, which heavily emphasized rituals and morality in its governance, the archery was more ritualized at the sacrifice and was gradually applied to many other occasions.

5.1.1. Similarities in their Origins

(1) Both were originally connected with religion.

Both the ancient Olympic Games and ritual archery were based on the ancient people's religious beliefs. The ancient Greek competitions were incorporated into the sacrifice to the god Zeus; while archery was included in the rites to supervise the rulers' subordinates or select proper subordinates to participate in the upcoming sacrifice for gods or ancestors. The Olympic Games were held to worship the god Zeus, who was the chief of the god family in the ancient Greeks' belief. They used oblations and physical prowess to amuse gods so as to express their piety or acquire blessings and protection from the gods. Here physical prowess of the competitors is offered in another way (like sacrifice and dedicatory offerings in temples) to offer the gods what is excellent. The ritualized archery in early China also had its origin in religion. Archery was thought powerful and sorcerous. The ancient Chinese rulers would resort to the sorcerous power of the ritualized archery to warn, penalize or manage their subordinated officials and tribal leaders, or to test which subordinates/officials could be presented in the sacrifice to gods or ancestors.

Ancient Greeks thought people's prowess could amuse gods and the winners were favorite by the gods, while the ancient Chinese thought the power of archery could be magic and also connect to the god's will. Though their gods were quite different, the idea of sacrifice to the gods through ritualized competitions to show their piety and explore the gods' will was the same in regard to the religious beliefs of ancient Chinese

and Greeks.

Religion is culturally and universally defined in many ways. The famous sociologist Durkheim defined religion as “a unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things, uniting into a single moral community all those who adhere to those beliefs and practices” (Durkheim 1982, 129; quotation from Nixon/Frey 1996 62). In the primitive period, religion came into being because ancient peoples lacked understanding of how the environment came to be and of why and how a variety of natural phenomena – both favorable [e.g. reproduction and growth] and unfavorable [e.g. storms, floods, and other disasters] – occurred. The people felt an urgent need to try to control or favorably affect those phenomena.³¹ The clans’ leaders or tribes’ rulers gradually invented, imagined, and created a systematic belief to explain or “control” those natural phenomena. Early religion was a practice of ceremonies and sacrifices to gain some connection with Gods, or to control over the environment and events. Religious belief progressively evolved into an effective tool of the priests’ and rulers’ power and control over the people. Ancient Greek religion was essentially a matter of acts and rituals such as processions, sacrifices, feasts and not of creeds or dogmas. Athletic and equestrian competition, allied with festival celebration, was intrinsically religious (Golden 1998, 15). Ancient Chinese in the Shang dynasty not only believed in the sacred Heaven, but also greatly worshiped their past ancestors. The rulers resorted to the popular faith in the sorcery of archery to facilitate their control over subordinates. In ancient Olympia, the festival to Zeus developed quickly not only because of the religious attraction of the sacred sanctuary to Greeks, but also because of the sacrifice, which integrated rites with thrilling competitions, deeply catered to various demands of ancient Greeks. Now we know that Religion has multiple functions in society and serves the needs of individuals and contributes to their sense of well-being in a number of ways. It helps believers deal with the uncertainties of life, their sense of powerlessness, and their fears and

³¹ Why “the origin and its meaning” Is Important. <http://www.the-origin.org/Important.pdf>

frustrations with the finite nature of life on earth by directing their attention to the enduring certainties of supernatural realm to an omnipotent God and to the hope of an eternal life (Nixon/Frey 1996, 62).

(2) Both were originally connected with legendary heroes from myths.

There were many myths which account for the origin of the Olympic Games. One of them recorded by *Pindar* is that the *Herakles* with 12 labors pegged out the Altis of Zeus at Olympia, consecrated the site and formulated the contests to celebrate victory in the task of purging the Augean stables (Spivey 2004, 227). *Herakles* was *Zeus*' son who was advised by the oracle of Delphi serve the King *Eurystheus* at Tyrins for twelve years so as to atone for his former wrong actions. He was ordered to accomplish 12 labors, which all seemed impossibly to complete. But he managed to complete all of them with help from the gods.³² There was also a legendary hero named *Yi*, the Archer, who accomplished 9 tasks for the welfare of the people in the myth of the ancient China.

At dawn, in the days of the leader of tribe alliance named *Yao*, the mortal world was visited by marauding monsters that wrought destruction and brought misery to the people of China. The first of these disasters affected Ten Suns. Ten Suns was the son of the Heavenly Emperor Jun and his consort, Xihe. Ten Suns resided in the great Fusang Tree, in a valley of Hot Springs in the far east. The Fusang Tree had nine side branches and one branch at the top; one head of Ten Suns lived in each branch.³³ Each day, his mother Xihe rode out in a chariot drawn by six dragons across the heavens, carrying on of the heads of Ten Suns to bring light to the world.³⁴ But one day, the suns became infected with nine ravens that nested in each of them. Thereupon, the ten heads of Ten

³² Labours of Hercules. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Labours_of_Hercules#Fifth_Labour:_Augean_stables

³³ Shan Hai Jing. Hai wai Dong Jing. 山海经.海外东经

³⁴ Huai Nanzi. Tian Wai Pian. 淮南子.天外篇

Suns all came out and shone side by side at the same time. Such was their threat that plants withered and died, and the world was afflicted by drought (Selby 2000, 17). The second disaster was Zouchi, who was a man-monster armed with enormous, chiseled teeth, who could fight with weapons like a man.³⁵ The third was Jiuying, a spirit of fire and water with nine mouths who was a scourge to mankind. The fourth was the Great Wind Spirit who destroyed peoples' houses. The fifth was Yayu, a monster with a dragon's head and snake's body. The sixth was Xiushe, the giant python who could eat an elephant and would regurgitate its bones after three years.³⁶ The seventh was Fengxi, the Giant Boar, which was a brute glutton and devoured all in its path. The Heavenly Emperor had pity on mankind, and so gave his servant, the Archer Yi, a cinnabar-red bow and wooden fowling arrows with the power to defeat monsters. So it was that Yi concerned himself for the first time with mortal affairs. He descended to earth and did battles with monsters defeating Zouchi, cutting off the head of Xiushe, binding up the Great Wind with a tethered arrow, and killing Jiuying in combat, slaying Yayu and the Great Boar. After this hard combats, he put on his strongest thumb-ring and pointed his great bow with arrows of carved jade tips to the heaven and shot at nine of the heads of Ten Suns, the son of the Emperor of Heaven, so that the ravens shed their wings and their black feathers fell to the ground. After that nine of the sun-heads never appeared again, and a single sun remained to light the heavens.³⁷ This myth was quite popular in the pre-Qin dynasty and established the base for the faith in archery's sorcerous power ((Selby 2000, 17).

It is interesting to see that both *Herakles* and *Yi* as heroes share striking similarities in their tasks and both are respectively connected with the origins of the ancient Olympic Games and ritual archery. Actually, myths, as the products of primitive culture, are specific accounts of gods or superhuman beings involved in extraordinary events or

³⁵ Gaoyou's interpretation: Huai Nan Zi, Ben Jing Xun.

³⁶ Shan Hai Jing, Hai Nei Nan Jing.

³⁷ Stephen Selby. (2000) Chinese Archery. Hong Kong University Press. 18.

circumstances in an unspecified time which are understood as existing apart from ordinary human experience. Ritual often has its roots in myth and religion, tying itself to ancient practices between the divine and humans.³⁸ The Olympic Games mixed sport competitions with rituals; in the same way, ritual archery incorporated archery competitions with rituals. Both *Herakles* and *Yi* were fictitious or imaginary heroes who were visualized by ancient Greeks and ancient Chinese, from whom people wished to get protection because their right behaviors of killing diverse monsters. Both vividly reflected ancient people's awareness of getting rid of the negative sides of the nature and environment.

5.1.2. Differences in their origins

(1) The original establishment of the ancient Olympic Games had little connection with secular rulers, while ritual archery in ancient China was originally established and promoted by secular rulers.

In addition to the Altis for the god *Zeus*, modern archaeologists have already discovered the antiquity of the site and revealed 70 altars of other gods in the area (including *Artemis*, *Aphrodite*, *Demeter*, and *Gaia* who probably had a harvest festival there), which shows evidence of cult activity as early as the Bronze Age (Crowther 2007, 45). This means that ancient Olympia, located by the border of Elis, was a major place of sanctuary for local pilgrims from different tribes or polis to visit. The priests at Olympia would play an essential role in the process of incorporating competition into the ceremony for the *Zeus*. Though we learn from *Pausanias* that the king of Elis, *Iphitos* who instructed by Delphi oracle, restored the Olympics with thirty days Olympic truce, after all, it was a revival rather than the original establishment (Young 2004, 13).

The ritual archery in the Shang dynasty was originally organized by the secular rulers

³⁸ Cultural Anthropology/Ritual and Religion. Wikibooks.
http://en.wikibooks.org/wiki/Cultural_Anthropology/Ritual_and_Religion

with the help from priests or necromancers. At that time, there was no systematic ritual archery like that in the *Rituals of Zhou*. By resorting to the popular faith in the sorcery of archery, ancient Chinese rulers used to hold the ritual archery so as to facilitate their control over their subordinates and select appropriate candidates to participate in sacrifice.

Because of the greatly divided geographical features in Greece, ancient Greeks lived in relatively independent regions, or self-governing communities organized by clan\ tribes and later poleis. There existed no powerful leader of tribes' alliance or kings of all poleis. The steep hills, high mountains and rivers, as well as conflicts between poleis, deterred the communications among Greeks of different poleis. However, as a people shared same religion, language and basic culture, ancient Greek still needed social, commercial, political and spiritual communication. The regularly held religious festivals in ancient period provided such places for Greeks to meet and communicate. So did the Olympic festival for Zeus at ancient Olympia. The quadrennial sacrifice ceremony, which integrated sacrifice with processions, feasts and competitions, grew up into a grand festival celebration and greatly attracted Greeks to voluntarily go for.

In early China, there existed a powerful leader of tribe alliance who finally became the king, or the son of Heaven, and ruled the realm of whole tribe alliance with great authority. The kings also continuously fought with surrounding tribes to strengthen their power and expand their realm. To secure the social hierarchy and control over tribe leaders, subordinators or officials, the king who assisted by priests or necromancers, organized the ritualized archery to call for them to participate in. In early China it was the secular rulers, the leader of tribe alliance or the king played a key role in the establishment of the ritual archery.

5.2. Comparison of their developments

5.2.1. Both closely interacted with respective society and experienced ups and downs.

There was only one sprint event in the first 13 Olympics. More sporting events were added around 700 BC with a growing number of contestants and spectators from the Peloponnese. In the sixth century BC, the ancient Olympic Games benefited greatly from the colonial expansion. Many adventurers being rich through colonization went to Olympia to sacrifice the Zeus with expensive tributes and donations, which made the sanctuary and the quadrennial games more reputable and more attractive. By the end of the sixth century BC, the Olympic festival began to attract Contestants from all over the Greek world with more events, pilgrims and infrastructures at the sanctuary. The institutionalized and popularized Olympic festival became the model of other panhellenic games. In the fifth century BC, Greeks *poleis* through the Persian Wars became more united and enjoyed smooth business around the Mediterranean Sea. The Olympic Games flourished in this period with increasing awareness of Greeks. More contestants, notable figures and pilgrims visited the festival. More infrastructures and administrative services were added. From the later fifth century BC, political turmoil among *poleis* due to the Peloponnese and Corinthian wars greatly decreased the Olympic spectators and contestants. In the fourth century BC, shepherded by Macedonian power, more buildings were added for the sanctuary, and the Games at this holy place were still popular as a pilgrimage and tourist site for Greeks.

The ritual archery originated in the Shang Dynasty and quickly flourished in the Western Zhou Dynasty (1064-771 BC), when Zhou Kings governed their sovereignty with rituals and morality. After Zhou-Gong made the *Zhouli*, *The Book of Rituals*, ritual archery expanded and became more ritualized. Some ritual archery was organized in set seasons, and some held casually. The ritual archery was mainly popularized among the aristocrats, which was the imperative rituals and skills that aristocrats needed to master. The most flourishing period for the ritual archery was from the tenth century BC to the

eighth century BC. With the strikingly decreased authority of the Zhou king and frequent warfare among city-states between the eighth century BC and the fifth century BC, the grand archery waned and large-scale ritual archery with high standards diminished. However, the ritual archery changed to be more socially entertainment-oriented and developed into more categories, popular among the upper and middle class. From the fourth century BC to the middle of the third century BC, the declining ritual archery developed among city-states because of flourishing cultures and economics. The ritual archery was completely secularized in a popular style and became a custom and etiquette culture.

From their respective development processes it is concluded that both ritual archery and the Olympic Games before 200 BC closely interacted with their respective societies and experienced ups and downs. During the flourishing period of economies and cultures in their respective societies, the Olympic Games and the ritual archery experienced booming development, while in the period of long-lasting wars and social turmoil both were inflicted with greatly decreased participants and scales.

5.2.2. Both experienced a secularized process.

The entire Olympic festival lasted 5 days at maximum during its flourishing period, of which about two and a half days were used for competition. This means that competitions gradually acquired independence from the sacrifice ceremony. The exciting competitions almost became a synonym for the Olympic festival; the fame of ancient Olympia more and more rested upon the greatest national competitions. Zhang Yan (1997) argues that there was also a transformation happening between the sacrificial ceremony and the competitions after the 8th BC in Olympic festival, like a guest usurps the host's role in a fest; namely, the importance of the sacrifice ceremony was impaired as the competitions gradually became predominant (Yan 1997).

The winners of the Games would be granted substantial prizes after they carried the wreaths from Olympia back home. For example, in the early sixth century BC Athens awarded 500 drachmas to any of its citizens who won at Olympia, which would amount to what a skilled worker fifteen years' earning at that time (Young 2004, 98). The reward is marvelous. Simultaneously, they gradually acquired great fame in Greek world. The *arête*, a word used by ancient Greeks to convey the sense of skill, excellence, and honor in their sports, was closely connected with the Olympic Games. Athletes endeavored to win at the panhellenic games so as to acquire the *arête*. The Olympic competitions became much more fiercely competitive and attractive. For contestants at the Olympic arena, their desire of participating in the Olympic contests and winning the glory would be much more significant than their spiritual and religious appeal to worshipping Zeus; though, the naked athletic competitions were regarded as a kind of specific sacrifice to amuse the Gods.

With more political powers involved in the competitions since the Olympia festival included all of elite Greek athletes, the contests gradually became a public sphere for political leaders and wealthy Greeks to showcase themselves through participating in the competitions or attending the festivals, especially the equestrian events, which nearly grew into the conspicuous consumption for the wealthy or powerful Greeks.

During the period from 800 BC to 200 BC, ancient Greek society moved from a religion-dominated society to a rationality-dominated society with the contribution of great thinkers, philosophers and scientists who "challenged the religious authorities of their day, condemning hypocrisy and superstition" (Cobb 2010, 29). In this process, the competitions' religious color in the Olympic festival gradually decreased and was secularized with an extreme emphasis on winning. Spectators' attention transferred from paying homage to the gods to the enjoyment of viewing competitions. Simultaneously, the competitions in the festival moved from religious ritual practice to honor Zeus into

institutionalized popular competitive events which aimed to show the physical qualities and evolution of the performances accomplished by young Greeks. In this period, the Olympic competitions appeared an inclination to less religious meaning and more secular glory and entertainment. This implies that the games were secularized to certain extent, though the competitions remained an indispensable component of the festival for Zeus.

With the institutionalization of rites in *the Book of Rituals*, the ritual archery in the Western Zhou (1046-771BC) developed more rapidly than that in the Shang Dynasty (1600-1046BC). It became stylized and institutionalized with different categories in different occasions and purposes. The ritual archery was mainly popularizing among the aristocrats because it was an indispensable ritual and skills to conduct social lives. Meanwhile, the ritual archery gradually lost its religious meaning but strengthened its entertainment and popularity, especially in the occasions of *Binshe* and *Yanshe*. During the Spring and Autumn Period (771-406BC), when the authority of Zhou king was toppled and the ritualized system began to collapse, people questioned the mandates of the Heaven, and the ritual archery became less grand in scale and more social entertainment-oriented with diverse varieties. In the time of the Warring States (406-221BC), the ritual archery was redeveloped among city-states; and simultaneously and completely secularized in a popular style among civilians. The ritual archery was fundamentally used for social gathering and representing participants' social order, its original mysterious religion function was abandoned.

5.2.3. Different driving force behind respective development histories

There existed a different driving force behind the development of the Olympic Games and ritual archery. As the most prestigious panhellenic festival in the Greek world, the Olympics attracted famed athletic and equestrian participants, spectators, famous figures and businessmen to flock to Olympia every four years. It developed with the

competent administration from Elis, but the main impetus for its development lay in Greeks' spiritual attraction to the religious festival. For one thing, it was the sacred sanctuary of Zeus and the great sacrifice ceremony catered to the spiritual beliefs of Greeks. People who went to this quadrennial festival might have other purpose, such as to view the competitions, meet other famed figures and communicate with other Greeks, but to pay homage to Zeus and participate the sacrificial ceremony would mostly highlighted. For another, the festival presented Greeks a peaceful period for civil communications with peoples of other *poleis* at Olympia. This facilitated the exchange of ideas and the negotiation of issues among *poleis*. Therefore, the fundamental impetus for the development of the Games rested in the ancient Greeks' religious appeal and their need for communication with people from other *poleis*.

The ritual archery, which originated from certain religious rituals of the era of tribal alliances in the early Shang Dynasty, became an effective approach for chiefs of tribal alliances or kings to coordinate, amuse, warn or penalize their subordinated officials and tribal leaders or conduct military trainings. After being fully institutionalized in the Western Zhou Dynasty, ritual archery, under the guidance of *Zhouli*, *The Book of Rituals*, developed into many categories which could be classified as *Dashe* (grand archery), *Binshe* (guest archery), *Yanshe* (happy archery) and *Xiangshe* (Shires archery) according to their ranks and occasions. Thereupon, the ritual archery, as a tradition among aristocrats, was not just used to manage or select subordinated lords and official candidates, but to embody their social status and order, or to educate youngsters and entertain themselves. The ritual archery was secularized since the Spring and Autumn Period. The major driving force for the development of ritual archery did not rest in the sorcerous power of ritualized archery any more, but mainly in political authority figures aiming to educate, entertain, select or manage the participants by organizing the ritual archery. To hold or participate in a ritual archery helped to highlight or clarify sociopolitical order among participants.

5.3. Comparison of their participants

5.3.1. Qualifications of entries

Olympic athletes had to be male, free born of legitimate parents belonging to a Greek polis or tribe, and not guilty of homicide. This stringent regulations basically excluded non-Greeks' from participation. For the equestrian events, since the owner's horses and chariot did not need to compete personally on arena but were still regarded as competitors, there were historic records that some equestrian competitors were women. Athletic entries also needed the Olympic officials' examination. They would be examined in Elis before participating in the Games. Unqualified athletes would be dispelled. There were certain heats or pre-tournament methods regulated by Elis officials to select the better athletes to ensure the excellence of future competitions. Athletes in every polis aspired to have the opportunity compete in the Games and volunteered to go for it, since Greek *poleis* did not select athletes to represent their *poleis* to compete at Olympia. Greek boys as young as 12 could compete; those 18 years and older were obliged to enter the men's category.

Acquiring athletic victory at the festival required extraordinary effort and expense. Athletes had to swear on the highest deity that they had been training for at least 10 months. With the Olympic competition growing fierce, potential youngsters hoping to win really needed to employ a coach to guide them. Though there were record that some poleis would sponsor potential young athletes of their *poleis*, it is reasonable to conclude that athletes originated from upper or middle class would dominate the Games, while poor Greeks had less chance to become Olympic athletes.

In ancient China before the Qin Dynasty, practicing archery was a duty of males; simultaneously, mastering the skill of ritual archery was also necessary for males of upper class, later the middle class, to conduct social communications. Females did not

bear the responsibility of military training and participation in ritual archery. Unlike the Greek athletes who voluntarily participated in the ancient Olympics, participants in ritual archery were all invited or recommended by certain sociopolitical authorities. Archery was an important curriculum in private schools in ancient China. Therefore, teaching ritual archery in school was important so as to make students participate in ritual archery on certain occasions when they grew up, namely, more than 20 years old. With the decline in authority of the Zhou king, the social hierarchy in China was sharply changed. From BC 800 to BC 200, ritual archery grew secularized towards education and entertainment and away from sorcerous practice and political management, with more middle class and elites from lower classes participating in ritual archery. Participants in the ritual archery were all males over 20 years old. Since there was a great chance for participants to communicate with and be identified or even rewarded by higher rulers, they thought highly of the ritual archery.

It is concluded that the competitors in both ancient Olympic Games and ritual archery were male mainly from wealthy families. With the secularization of the ancient Olympics and ritual archery, there were more people from the middle class, and even lower classes, who could compete in the two programs. Competitors, whether in the ancient Olympic Games or early Chinese ritual archery, all needed to participate in certain training programs. For Greeks athletes, there was training in public gymnasiums, *plaestra* or private schools being guided by coaches. The competitors in ritual archery should have already learned and mastered archery and rituals in governmental or private schools. Before 200 BC both ancient Greek and China were male-dominated societies, in which female and the lower class bore few rights participating in public sociopolitical activities, while the upper class and later the middle class played the leading role in politics and social lives. This accounts for why the competitors were all male.

5.3.2. Competitors in the processes of the Olympic Games and the ritual archery

Before entering the arena of the ancient Olympics, the contestants took an oath and swore to Zeus that they would play fair. On the arena they competed mainly naked with olive oil anointed on their bodies. “Jockeys in equestrian events were generally nude, could also wear a short-sleeved tunic” (Golden 1998, 65). In the long jump, competitors had serviceperson playing flute to give rhythm for jumping. Regardless of social status, Greek athletes competed equally on arena according to the rules stipulated by the judge, Hellanodikai, who took charge of the fairness of competitions. Both athletes and their trainers could be publicly flogged by the *mastigophorai* (whip bearers) if their failure to play by the rules was especially sinister (Swaddling 2008, 43). Some athletes breaking the rules or exhibiting other unsportsmanlike conduct would be assessed fines, which were used to fund very expensive bronze statues honoring Zeus. In any event, only one contestant would be awarded title of winner and others would regard themselves as losers. The Olympic victors received their awards immediately after the competition. Victors were crowned with a beautiful wreath of olive branches. The Olympic victors received much honor throughout Greece, especially in their hometown, where they were often granted money and prizes by their poleis. Gratefully, the victors used to offer their statues to the gods and placed them near the altar at Olympia.

Unlike Greek athletes who competed naked in the Olympic Games, competitors of ritual archery in ancient China wore formal clothes, which had certain requirements according to the competitor’s social status. It is recorded when Grand Master and Servicemen participated in the Shire archery, they should wear a kind of formal clothing in light red. When practicing archery, they needed to take off the left sleeve of the upper part of the clothing and cover a small leather bracer to prohibit the clothing from scratching the bowstring. When the king participated in the grand archery, he would wear formal upper clothing in the color of magenta.³⁹ Furthermore, competitors with different social status in the ritual archery also had different seats, sites, bows and shooting order

³⁹ Book of Rituals, Yi Li: Shires Archery. Yili, Xiang She Li. 《仪礼·乡射礼》

according to their status in the hierarchy. For example, there is a record saying that “a bow made for imperial use has a circumference of nine, standard draw-length factors; a bow made for the lords has a circumference of seven; a bow for a sheriff has a circumference of five and a bow for a qualified serviceman has a circumference of three. A bow of six feet six inches, ancient Chinese measures rather the modern one, is called a ‘first-class product’ and is used for higher qualified servicemen; a bow of six feet three inches is known as a ‘second-class product’ and is used for middle-ranking servicemen; and a bow of six feet is known as a ‘third-class product’, and is used for junior servicemen” (*Book of Rituals*, quotation from Selby 2000, 98). In addition, competitors in the ritual archery were asked to perform their archery according to the rhythm of the music played by musicians. This is similar with one of the tradition of the Olympic Games which asked athletes in the long jump to compete to the accompaniment of flute music because the Greeks believed that the rhythm and grace were of vital importance in athletics.

It can be concluded that the ancient Olympic competitors were mainly nude, and used the same sports equipment in competition regardless of their social status. While the competitors in ritual archery should wear formal clothing and use the stipulated equipment according to their respective social status. The victors of the Olympic Games were only awarded with a wreath knitted with olive branches and would be rewarded with material gain or some privilege by their own poleis when they returned home. The victors of ritual archery would gain wide respect in the process of ritual archery and the opportunity of being promoted or socio-politically acknowledged.

As to the reason of nudity in the Games, Pausanias referred that the athlete *Orsippus* of Megara, who let his loincloth slip off and won the Olympic *stadion* race in BC 720, made the pioneer of nudity in the Olympics (*Pausanias* 1.44.1, quotation from Miller 2004, 3). There also were other accounts. According to John Arieti, nakedness enabled

the athletes to show the complete control they exerted over their bodies in close quarters with other fit and attractive young men; *barbaroi*, in contrast, had to cover them to avoid arousing others and betraying their own lack of self-control. Mouratidis regards athletic nudity as apotropaic, a protection against harm and a declaration of power and energy (Mouratidis 1984, 4; quotation from Golden 1998, 67). Larissa Bonfante thinks that nudity was a costume of early Greek athletic male that set them apart from the barbarians, as well as from their own past. Male nudity as a costume in Greece originated in eighth-century BC ritual and gradually transformed from initiation rites to the "civic" nudity of the Classical period (Bonfante 1989). David Young argues that Greeks called "athletics" as "gymnastics" literally "things done nude" in "gymnasium", a place to do things naked. It is this ancient tradition of male contestants naked in gymnasium, which did not cause shame in Greek society, provides a practical account for why Greek athletes competed in the nude. Meanwhile, being naked on arena or gymnasium would greatly facilitate applying oil before training and cleaning and massaging after training (Young 2004, 109-110).

5.3.3. Two kinds of body concepts

If we further check the processes of the two ancient cultural activities, we may find two kinds of body opinions or aesthetics. Ancient Greeks, as a competitive people believing the Olympian Gods, not only emphasized the meaning of life pursuing *arête*, a state of most superior wealth, fame, virtue and pride, but also greatly admired the beauty of the masculine body with athletic prowess. They pictured their gods as perfect physical specimens, sought to resemble them through the attainment and cultivation of physical beauty, exercised and competed naked in gymnasium and in the religious games to obtain supreme virtue, honor, nobility, and glory (Mechikoff. 2010, 64). From the first ancient Olympic Games, the physical body of a citizen, and especially the body of an athlete, was strongly marked by an ethnical opinion. The body was a kind of transparent,

legible and clear social form of identification for the majority of one's fellow citizens (Tomasz 2011, 386). Competing in nudity became Greeks' tradition. The athletic body was advanced as the embodiment of perfect physical beauty which was extremely adored in the classic period. *Aristotle* regarded pentathletes as the upholding example of a beautiful athlete. "Youth's beauty lies in the possession of a body capable of enduring all kinds of contests, whether of the racecourse or of bodily strength, while the young man is himself a pleasant delight to behold. Pent-athletes are the most beautiful; they are naturally adapted both for exertion of the body and swiftness of foot" (Aristotle, Rhetoric 1361b ca. 330 BC; quotation from Miller 2004, 48).

In addition, the ancient Greeks believed that the development of the mind, spirit and body was inter-linked, and an athletic victory was considered a credit to both the athlete's physical and moral virtues.⁴⁰ Thus, we can understand why the victorious athletes used to ask a mason to carve his marble so as to make him to be remembered. Great athletes were made into beautiful statues with symmetrical, stylized, and a balanced physique with an idea of aesthetics and philosophical perception of the perfect body. Someone claims that "this is due to the Greeks' tendency of commonly linking the physical beauty and moral beauty together, which the idealized statues of athletes both conformed to and sustained".⁴¹

It is well known that shooting really depends on the archer's prowess and power. However, in ritual archery the competitors' physical beauty and prowess were not very relevant to their final score. *Confucius* once said, "Archery suggests to us the way of benevolence. (The archer) seeks to be correct in himself, and then discharges his arrow. If it misses the target, he is not angry with the one who has surpassed himself, but turns round and seeks (for the cause of failure) in himself."⁴² In ritual archery competitors

⁴⁰ Olympic Athletic Ideal. http://www.pe04.com/olympic/olympia/ideal_o.php

⁴¹ The ancient Olympics. http://www.ucl.ac.uk/classics/engagement/the_ancient_olympics

⁴² Book of Rituals. Meaning of the Ceremony of Archery. Liji. Sheyi 《礼记.射义》

were all well dressed with nice clothes that implying their social rank. What was important was whether the competitors dressed and behaved according to the regulations and their social rank and competed graceful under rules. Whether they were physical strong or not did not affect the competition results. Therefore, comparing with the ancient Olympic Games, the ritual archery placed much less emphasis on bodily prowess and power. This is supposed to refer to different body concepts of ancient Greeks and Chinese.

According to Gong Pengcheng's argument, the literature of Early China seldom noted the human body, but greatly emphasized "Heart", which represented the person's inner/mental self, including mind, spirit, feeling and morality. In terms of adoration of the body, the ancient Chinese were much less concerned than the ancient Greeks and ancient Indian; in terms of negation of body, they were less than the Hebrews or Buddhists. *Confucius* once argued that "from the king down to the common people, all must regard the cultivation of the self as the most essential thing"⁴³. Here the "self" could be simply interpreted as body and mind. In ancient Chinese culture, the "Heart" is not only an indispensable and essential part of the body, but also represents the mind and inner/mental self. The body and mind, consisting the "self", were not conflicted or presented in a dualistic opposition, but showed a kind of the principal and subordinate relationship.

Furthermore, early Chinese neither thought highly of body beauty, nor adored the body and appearance. In their opinion, the virtue and the body were detached; beauty unnecessarily referred to the good appearance, but often pointed to favorable virtue. Rather than taking the body as an aesthetic object, they put heavy emphasis on the cultural significance and aesthetic value of the dresses (Pengcheng 2006, 10). For early Chinese, being civilized meant that the uncovered body was beautified by the artificial clothing. The bare body shown in public would be regarded as being uncultivated. For

⁴³ Confucius. Daxue. 孔子 《大學》，自天子以至庶人，一是皆以修身為本。

example, there is a very famous story saying that in the period of Warring States a general named Lianpo of Zhao city-state bared his upper body willingly to go for a minister named Li Xiangru for punishment. Here the half-naked body expressed the person's abashment. Unlike ancient Greeks' ethical opinion that the body was a kind of transparent, legible and clear social form of identification for the majority of one's fellow citizens, early Chinese took clothing as an hierarchical identification of the feudal society. The administration of dress was incorporated into the *Rites of Zhou* to guide people of all social standings to dress themselves according to their respective social status and specific occasions. On some important occasions, the regulations for participants' ceremonial dress were fairly strict. The decorations, style and textiles of the dresses for participants in important occasions varied according to the dressers' identity, social status and the level of the occasion.

In addition to the different body opinions discussed above, there is still an interesting point to be clarified between the two civilizations, which is partly related to the Olympic Game and the ritual archery. In ancient Olympic Games, the best athletes were crowned with wreaths of olive branches from a special wild olive tree named "kotinos kallistephanos" growing in the Altis. This represented the idea of Agathon (the combination of all virtues), that enlighten the soul. It was the idea of Hercules, who wished to promote moral virtue instead of the lust for gold or money.⁴⁴ The olive tree, called kotinos, had great significance to ancient Greeks. When the Athenians announced the birth of a boy, they would hang an olive wreath on the front door, to publicize both the family's present good fortune and its hopes for the future (Kauffmann-Samaras 1988, 294; quotation from Golden 1998, 35). Similarly, bow and arrows bore great significance for the ancient Chinese. They not only applied archery with rituals to select and manage subordinates in sociopolitical domains but also gave it great educational meaning, like *Confucius'* opinion on archery education. Similarly to the Greek's

⁴⁴ The Olympic Spirit in Ancient Greece <http://suite101.com/article/the-olympic-spirit-in-ancient-greece-a410352>

tradition, when the boy was born in early China, whether in an aristocratic or a peasant family, a small bow made of mulberry branches and six arrows made of reeds would be hung on the left of the front door. This meant when grown up the boy would resort to the power of archery to expend his career in the world.⁴⁵ Up to now, in the rural area of China, a small bow made of a branch and six arrows made of short stalks have always been hung with a piece of purple cloth on the front gate when a family has a baby body.

However, if we assume that olive branches symbolize peace while the archery represents war and conclude that ancient Greeks loved peace and early Chinese loved war, we are totally wrong. Similarly, we could not deduce that ancient Greeks loved conflicts and early Chinese loved harmony from the phenomena that Greek society was full of mega competition events in the ancient period, which rarely existed in early China at the same period. The only attributable conclusion would be that the olive in ancient Greeks' social life is as significant as the archery in early Chinese social life.

5.3.4. Two kinds of competition concepts

Actually, here we may also discern two different opinions on competition in ancient civilizations. In ancient Greece, one Greek athlete struggling in the arena might not merely pursue the material gains or privilege from his polis, but also the *arête*. As T. Martin underlines, excellence (*arête*) was a competitive value for male Greek aristocrats - as well as for all Greek citizens - that was vividly displayed in the Games. "The emphasis on physical prowess and fitness, competition and public recognition by other men corresponded to the idea of Greek masculine identity as it developed in this period".⁴⁶ The status gained by success in athletic competition was really high. However, only to continuously defeat other opponents in competitions, especially the Olympic Games, could an athlete be regarded as the best and acquire the *arête*. As

⁴⁵ The Book of Rituals, Interpretation of Shooting. Liji Sheyi. 禮記.射義.

⁴⁶ Thomas R. Martin, An Overview of Classical Greek History from Mycenae to Alexander.
<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.04.0009%3Achapter%3D4>

previously stated, there was only one winner in an event and the other competitors regarded themselves as losers. There were no rewards in losing but shame. Thus, the glory was the key pursuit; winning under the rules was the only goal and almost meant everything for athletes. For spectators, attending the Olympic festival would be a process-oriented experience. However, for ancient Greek athletes, competing in the Olympic Games would be an outcome-oriented experience since they cherished the strong aspiration to win and willingness to compete heartily and play by the rules.

For competitors in the ritual archery of early China, to behave properly in a refined and civil manner according to specific rituals was almost as important as shooting the best score in ritual archery. Their goals were to properly perform the rituals and archery so as to show that they were modest, self-disciplined and well-educated gentlemen, and compete for certain positions. According to *the Book of Rituals*, a Confucian classic:

*“In ancient times, the nobles were required to perform the Ritual of Yan before they performed their Archery Ritual. The feudal lords, sheriffs and qualified officers were required to perform the Wine Drinking Ritual of the Shires before they performed their Archery Ritual. This was because the Ritual of Yan served to throw light upon an official’s righteousness; and the Wine Drinking Ritual of the Shires served to throw light on seniority. Thus, archers were required to meet the requirements of the rituals on entering, leaving or making turning movements in any direction. When their minds were composed and their posture straight they grasped the bow and arrow and concentrated. Only when the archer had grasped the bow and arrow and concentrated, was it possible to talk of meeting the requirements of the rituals. This was a means of assessing their virtuous conduct”.*⁴⁷

Confucius said,

“A refined person has no use for competitiveness. Yet if he cannot avoid it, then let him compete through archery! For one entering the archery range he will salute and

⁴⁷ Book of Rituals, Meaning of the Ceremony of Archery. 《礼记·射义》

*show consideration for other competitors, and on leaving the range he will share ceremonial wine with them, and thus even in competition he will be acting according to the principles of refined conduct”.*⁴⁸

Again he explained,

*“How difficult it is to shoot! How does the archer combine his shooting with listening to the ceremonial hymns? To shoot exactly in harmony with the note (given) by the music, and to shoot without missing the bull's-eye on the target - it is only the archer of superior virtue who can do this! How shall a man of inferior character be able to hit the mark?”*⁴⁹

He continued to point out that

*“Archery suggests to us the way of benevolence. (The archer) seeks to be correct in himself, and then discharges his arrow. If it misses the target, he is not angry with the one who has surpassed himself, but turns round and seeks (for the cause of failure) in himself.”*⁵⁰

For educators like *Confucius*, to learn and practice ritual archery would be an excellent method to internalize the socially accepted morals and virtues. Practicing the ritualized archery was an approach to train and improve one’s virtues, which were exhibited in the process of performing ritual archery, rather than the winning or losing of the shooting. The competitors of the ritual archery in early China were much more concentrated on the process of performing the ritual archery, and put less emphasis on the shooting results, just like *Confucius* once said, “Archery is not principally concerned with hitting through the target because participants are not matched in their strength”⁵¹. Practicing the ritual archery, from an educational perspective, would be a process of self-perfection.

⁴⁸ Book of Rituals, Meaning of the Ceremony of Archery. Liji. Sheyi 《礼记.射义》

⁴⁹ Book of Rituals, Meaning of the Ceremony of Archery. Liji. Sheyi 《礼记.射义》

⁵⁰ Book of Rituals, Meaning of the Ceremony of Archery. Liji. Sheyi 《礼记.射义》

⁵¹ The Analects: Ba Yi. 《论语.八佾》孔子：“射不主皮、力不同科”。

This is to say that one participant should focus on his mental and behavioral preparation and harmony in the shooting process, performed him gracefully, meet the rhythm of music and show respect to the elder and higher officials, rather than just eagerly desired to defeat his rivalry.

Moreover, the ritual archery also did not highlight the competitor who extremely excellent in shooting. Even not to win in the shooting competition, if they performed the ritual as expected and behaved properly according to their social status, they would not feel shameful. So the essence of participating in the ritual archery was not just to win, but also to perform the process elegantly and modestly.

In addition, according to the description in the *Book of Songs*,⁵² the ritual archers under the guidance of “*Sheren*”, were indeed presented in a harmonious state--competitors competed by rituals, drank wine with greetings and enjoyed the music and communication. In the process of the ritual archery there was no announcement of best or worst participants, competitors manifested themselves in a mannerly way. By contrast, the competitors of the Olympic Games concentrated more on the final result of the Olympic Games since there was only one winner in an event. So, ancient Greeks would never accept the modern idea that in sport “participation is much more important than winning”. This reflects two different opinions on competition. For ancient Chinese, a great deal could be learned and achieved about virtue, respect, obedience, communication, social order, harmony in the process of properly performing ritual archery and striving to win in the shooting. For ancient Greeks, only winning could make athletes achieve the *arête*. Therefore the result of the competition was most important.

5.4. Comparisons of their administration

⁵² Guests’ First Feast, Book of Songs. 《诗经·宾之初筵》

The administration of the ancient Olympics was supervised by the *Hellandikai*, judges of the Greeks, who originally were inherited this position but eventually were elected from the ruling families of Elis. Their post only lasted for one Olympiad, and elections took place for each of the subsequent games. 10 months before the games they were elected and learned the regulations and provisions of the festival in Elis. About 3 months before, Elean heralds were sent off traveling throughout Greek world to pass the information of the coming Olympic festival. One month before the beginning of the festival, they conducted harsh training period at Elis for athletes. They did this according to an evaluation of their physical condition, behavior, parentage, character and the morality of the athletes. Two days before the beginning of the festival, they led the selected athletes, trainers and others to leave Elis for Olympia. The *Hellandikai* presided over the five days' festival, responsible for the enforcement of rules and regulations and acted as both judges and umpires of the various events. They also policed the festivals and meted out punishment for any infringements of the regulations. Since there would have as many as 40,000 people assembling at Olympia in time of the festival, hundreds of organized servicepersons might exist and be led by these *Hellandikai* to provide service and order there.

The administration of the ritual archery was conducted by officials who knew well the procedure of the ritual archery from the Ritual of Zhou, which acted as the guidebook with strict regulations and a systematic governing procedure. All the participants of ritual archery, regardless of their social status, were familiar with the regulations, rules and procedures for ritual archery. There were important roles in the ritual archery played by governmental officials who were specifically good at certain skills of the ritual. For example, the governmental officials entitled "*Sheren*", who acted as the role of shooting managers, were the most important administrators in the ritual archery. Form the Rites of Zhou we know that,

"Sheren take charge of ministers' seating positions for the formal visit the king. Sheren

also teach or help these high officials how to execute proper rituals. If the king holds the sacrifice, Sheren would be responsible for disciplining the feudal lords and inform them how to properly participate in the coming sacrifice. Sheren would administer and convey the reports and memorials to the king from the feudal lords. He performed the shooting rituals according to the king's ritual archery. Sheren were responsible for the norms of ritual archery according to the host's rank. In time of the grand archery, Sheren would not only take charge of the specific issues such as measuring the shooting range, settling the 3 kinds of targets etc., but would also correct the king's incorrect shooting so as to help him improve his shooting skill..”⁵³.

From the citation above we can determine that the host ordered the “*Sheren*” to be responsible for managing the ritual archery. They took charge of the whole procedure according to the certain rules. The sociopolitical authority guaranteed the smooth operation of the ritual archery and exalted its position in the governmental system.

5.4.1 Similarities in their administration

Firstly, both the administrators in ancient Olympic Games and the ritual archery in early China were nobles in the upper class and had great prestige to maintain the smooth operation of the events. The *Hellanodikai* were elected from aristocratic families and the officials entitled “*Sheren*” were high level officials in the king's royal court. Secondly, both had systematic administrating procedures to stage the events. In ancient Greece, there existed the tradition of engaging sports events to sacrifice to the gods and the “Greek laws” (*nomoi*), an unwritten customs assumed to be universal in ancient Greek society. In early China, the systematic regulations and procedures of ritual archery were clearly regulated in the Book of Rituals of Zhou. Thirdly, both were professional at managing the events. *Hellanodikai* were elected periodically and received ten months training. *Sheren* were specific position in the government

⁵³ Yi Li, Da Sheyi. The Ritual of Behavior, Behavior of Grand Archery. 仪礼. 大射仪。

responsible for conducting shooting issues and sacrificial rituals.

5.4.2 Differences in their administration

Firstly, the Olympic *Hellandikai* were elected from the leading families of Elis. They were trained for 10 months to act as the judges of the Olympic Games. Therefore, they acted like officials in the no-governmental organization. In contrast, in early China the officials in position of “Sheren” were appointed by the king. They not only were responsible for archery issues, but also handled other governmental tasks. Secondly, they have different attitudes towards justice. Competitors in the Olympic Games were all equal in front of the rules regardless of their wealth or prestige, namely, the *Hellandikai* kept the spirit of Fair Play in the Games. To the contrary, the early China king had great privilege in the shooting competition of the ritual archery. Thirdly, the administration of ancient Olympic Games gave competitors the right of appeal if they were unsatisfied to the action of the *Hellandikai*. The Olympic council at Elis was the supreme supervising body and functioned as a court of justice deciding everything concerning the Olympia sanctuary. If the competitors’ appeal against decisions of the *Hellandikai* were agreed upon by the Council, the related *Hellandikai* could be punished.⁵⁴ In the ritual archery, the competitors did not have the right to appeal against the decision from the administration.

Lastly, the Olympic administration in ancient Greece and the administration of ritual archery in early China had different ideas as to the type of competition. As we know, sporting events can be simply divided into individual events and team events. From the events in the Olympics, we can confirm that the administration of ancient Olympics was preferred the individual events. Actually, in ancient Greece the team sports were popular as well. Like Anastasia Brousou records, “ancient Greeks preferred sports played with balls (*sphairai*), made by strings or leather. The more popular ball games,

⁵⁴ Ancient Judges (Hellandikai). http://www.pe04.com/olympic/olympia/judges_o.php

which have many similarities with modern games with balls, were “*phaininda*”, which resembles the handball, “*episkyros*”, the ancient rugby, “*keritizein*”, the ancient Greek field hockey and “*aporraxis*”, which was the forerunner of modern basketball”.⁵⁵ There was also a very popular event in the Panathenaia Festival that was a torch race, in which the winning team had to cover the 2500-meter distance first and also keep its torch lit. Nevertheless, there were neither team sports at the Olympic Games, nor at the other games of the *periodos*.

The archery competition is an individual event in which personal competency will be fully presented. However, in the ritual archery of early China, the administration made the shooting competition a team event through complicated rules. By contrast, ancient Greek society had popular team games and competitions but the Olympia administration did not put them into the Games. How can this be explained?

Here we may neither arrive at the plausible argument that ancient Greeks preferred individual competition so they were individual-oriented, nor reach the take-for-granted conclusion that early Chinese liked team competition so there were team-oriented. Such statements are not precise and are easily misleading. We must further analyze why they had different tastes to the type of competition.

As noted above, *arête* was the highest state and value that every Greek wanted to achieve. To outdo all the others and be the best was always the educational creed that ancient Greeks accepted. The only channel to acquire the state of most superior excellence, wealth, glory, virtue and pride, was to participate in competitions. These not only included sport, but also music, drama, poems, philosophy, pottery and even between doctors. Ancient Greeks greatly revered competitive individual events and

⁵⁵ Anastasia Brousou(2011). Ancient Greek Team Sports are Forerunners of Modern Sports. January 8, 2011. <http://greece.greekreporter.com/2011/01/08/ancient-greek-team-sports-are-forerunners-of-modern-sports/>

victorious athletes. The core of Greek athletics was an individual's physical endeavor to overtake other opponents. The most important event of the ancient Olympics was the foot race, where speed and power reflected the Greek spirit of the *agon* and the *arête*. The winner of this event used to be honored with the Olympiad named after him. In the Olympic arena, every event was done individually for the pure glory of winning, no team sports and no second prizes; the value of *arête* was vividly displayed in the Games.

In essence, archery is definitely an individual sporting event. As to the reason why the shooting in ritual archery was changed into a team event with less stress on the shooting result, I think it may be explained by the political system in early China. In the politics of early China, the king and thereafter the aristocratic rulers such as feudal lords or ministers had nearly absolute power over the subordinates in their domains. Unlike the ancient Greeks who recorded their calendar by using the Olympiad, which was named after the victory of the sprint in that Olympics, early Chinese recorded their calendar by means of the year after the king or feudal lords' titles. The Chinese aristocratic rulers emphasized the practical and sorcerous power of bow and arrows, so they ritualized archery to aggrandize their rule. They would not be willing to participate in competitions with unpredictable results which might hurt their honorable image if badly lost. Following their intention, the shooting competition in ritual archery was made into a group competition which put less stress on the personal score. Archers were expected to perform gracefully, to meet the rhythm of music and to show respect to the elders and those of higher rank. If their opponents happened to have higher titles, they might be expected to lose on purpose to save their rivals' face.

5.5. Comparisons of their functions

As mentioned previously, both ancient Olympics and early Chinese ritual archery were significant long-lived cultural activities which combined rituals with competitions and

were closely connected to respective religion, politics, education and culture in their respective societies. Function is the role of a social practice in the continued existence of the group. Both the Olympics and the ritual archery played important roles and exerted a great influence in their respective society. In this section, I will compare their functions in terms of identity, politics, economy and education so as to manifest their differences and similarities.

5.5.1. Comparisons of their functions in terms of identity

The ancient Olympic Festival was established for the god Zeus, the most powerful god in the Olympian religious system. Competitions were gradually integrated into the religious sacrifice ceremony and did make a success. The festival attracted more and more Greeks to pay homage to the sacred Olympia during the festival. Its success greatly exemplified other local religious festivals, such as the Pythian Games for Apollo in Delphi, the Nemean Games for Zeus in Nemea, and the Isthmian Games for Poseidon in Isthmia. These booming games on one hand increased the degree of institutionalization of Greek competitions, and on the other, promoted the Greeks' identity around the Mediterranean Sea.

The Olympic festival, developed from a local to regional and later a national level, contributed greatly to the awareness of Greek identity. Competitions integrated in the sacrifice to Zeus only allowed competitors with citizenship of Greek poleis to be eligible to participate. It was normal for a Greek citizen to participate in athletics and exercise in the *gymnasia*; slaves could not train naked, nor be rubbed with oil in *plaestra*. Thus, to engage in athletic activities and Olympic competitions was closely connected to a Greek's social identity. For example, King Alexander I of Macedonia competed in the Olympics to certify that he had a Greek identity, rather than barbarian. Therefore, the games also played an important political role in the recognition of Greek identity. Furthermore, winning brought not only personal individual prestige and honor,

but the glory to his family and polis. To acquire victory was an effective approach for a Greek to get his social identity exalted in Greek realm. In addition, the fact that victors were announced their poleis and parenthood by the judges and hailed by pilgrims also helped bring awareness of being Greek.

Before the Games, the heralds from Elis traveled to inform the Greek realm of the Olympic truce so as to ensure that the Elis would not be attacked and athletes and spectators could travel safely to the Games and peacefully return home. Though we already know the truce was just a tradition and did not stop war and enmity, it did bring worshipers from far and wide poleis together at Olympia. Sport evokes emotion and symbolizes ideology. It promotes not only identity-building but also national image making. The Games quadrennially brought Greeks, as many as 40,000 people from various geographical locations, together at sacred Olympia where they identified with each other as Greek, paid homage to their gods, celebrated the grand ceremony, speculated the marvelous competitions, enjoyed the ethnic superiority over other nations, and conducted convenient communication. The ethnic gathering periodically strengthened the affinity and cohesion among Greeks. Whereupon, the ancient Olympic Games became such a symbol of shared identity that Greeks began calculating their history by the Olympiads, a four-year period named after the winner of the stade race.⁵⁶ The Olympic Games, together with other panhellenic games greatly reinforced the Greeks identity and strengthened ethnic communication and bond among them. Therefore, the Olympic festival not only promoted Greeks' personal social identity, but also greatly exalted the Greek identity by the absolute prerequisite for participation in the Games. This created a very visible division between the Greeks and the rest of the world.

The ritual archery did not play a role of shaping early Chinese ethnical identity, which

⁵⁶ Susan Brownell. Two civilizations? P38.

was mainly shaped by religion, political power, armed colonization, migration, and affinity by marriage among tribes. However, it did help participants to build their social identity through competing in the ritual archery. The ritual archery before 200 BC had different categories and levels according to the host's social status and the holding occasions. It had complicated procedures and rigid regulations for the competitors' dress, behavior, etiquette and equipment. The competitors who did not behave correctly according to their social status would be seriously punished. So, in various types of ritual archery, participants were not only to complete the archery skills, but also to show proper etiquettes and ritual based on their own social statuses. In a sense, the ritual archery acted to re-affirm the competitors' social identity and their obedience to the political authorities. Furthermore, participating in the Shires' ritual archery had already meant that the competitors had certain social status and met the qualifications for competing in certain formal occasions. In addition, whether in grand archery or shires archery, competitors were all inspected and evaluated by their sociopolitical authorities. The excellent competitors would be promoted in the political system. Therefore, it can be concluded that ritual archery did play an important role in expressing or promoting one's social identity in early China. Comparatively, ancient Olympic Games not only expressed or promoted one's social identity, but also played a big role in shaping the Greeks' ethnic identity.

5.5.2. Comparison of their function in terms of politics

Over the centuries, the growth of the ancient Olympic Games was inseparable from the political structures of the time.⁵⁷ Politics had a huge role in the ancient Olympic Games. The Greek world in ancient period was composed of hundreds of *poleis* around the Mediterranean Sea and is frequently in conflicts and wars among themselves. Political conflicts among the *poleis* were sometimes reflected in this religious festival. For example, the struggle for controlling over the sanctuary at Olympia between Elis and

⁵⁷ Susan Brownell. Two civilizations? P38.

Pisa even caused some battles. Notwithstanding, the celebration of the Olympic Games brought the society temporary peace because the sacred truces announced by the Elis heralds. Every four years as many as 40,000 people converged at Olympia. This peaceful gathering also facilitated their communication at numerous levels (i.e., athletic, cultural, commercial, diplomatic, etc.). From the 6th century on-wards, official pilgrimages to the holy sanctuary sent by different poleis became a popular feature of the festival. Poleis sent official representatives, called *theoroi*, to attend the festivals and make sacrifices on behalf of their state.

These representatives also took the opportunity to make policy statements through public oration since they knew what they did would be widely publicized. During this period at Olympia, aristocrats and politicians representing different poleis conducted various activities, such as visiting the Zeus' oracle, attending or participating in the competitions, showing off their prestige or wealth by dedications, or aggrandizing their individual political influence by competitions. Simultaneously, they would take this chance to meet, conduct dialogue, exchange ideas, negotiate political issues, mediate military conflicts, celebrate common military victories or form political and military alliances among poleis. Some valuable political deeds were recorded at Olympia. For instance, an inscription on a victory statue honored Pantarces of Elis not only for winning in the Olympic horse-races, but also for making peace between the Achaeans and the Eleans, and negotiating the release of both sides' prisoners of war.⁵⁸ Finley reports that treaties and other state documents were often publicly displayed at the sanctuary, or inscribed on stone or bronze plaques. He also argues that "The deposition of this Decree in Olympia is an example of a common custom of solemnizing public documents by placing copies in the great panhellenic shrine of Zeus"(Finley/Pleket 2005, 76). Olympia during the Games became most important center for forging diplomatic relations, where Greek political discussions happened and agreements were struck. In a

⁵⁸ Greece Country Study Guide: Strategic Information and Developments. International Business Publications, USA 2012. 104

sense, the Olympics acted as a potential platform for politicians visiting the festival to engage in political communication or diplomatic activities at an individual or polis level.

In early China, the greatest affairs of state exist in sacrifices and wars.⁵⁹ To dedicate offerings and regularly sacrifice to their gods and ancestors had great significance to the early Chinese because they long believed that proper sacrifice would bring them good fortune and prosperity. The grand archery, *Dashe*, launched by the higher ruler was mainly to select or coordinate the candidates to participate in the coming sacrifice. The competitors' performance in the grand archery decided not only whether they were eligible for the sacrifice, but also their personal order and attending position in the coming grand sacrifice. Because the competitors in the grand archery initiated by the Zhou king were mainly representatives of city-states, proper behavior and scoring in the grand archery played a significant role to help establish a better position in future sacrifice, which bore important religious and political significance. The *Book of Rituals* records that,

“Archery was a duty of male heirs; therefore it was accompanied by ritual hymns. Thus, to carry this duty out and to perform the rituals and hymns to the fullest extent, and to do this repeatedly in order to establish their virtuous conduct, there was nothing to compare with archery. For this reason, the Sage Kings devoted their efforts to it. Therefore, in ancient times, when the king commanded the nobles to supply qualified officers in the annual tribute, he tested them in the Archery Hall. Their expression and posture were compared in the rites and their movements were compared in the musical accompaniment. Those who compared favorably would be admitted to the sacrifices. Those whose expressions and postures did not compare favorably in the rites and whose movements did not compare favorably in the musical accompaniment would not be admitted to the sacrifices. The lords of those who were

⁵⁹ Book of Zhuozhuan. Zuochuan. “國之大事、在祭与戎”

repeatedly admitted to the sacrifice were commended, while the lords of those who were not repeatedly admitted to the sacrifices were censured. Those who were repeatedly commended were rewarded with more feudal land, while those who were repeatedly censured suffered a reduction in their feudal land'.⁶⁰

From the literature above we may conclude that the ritual archery had important political functions in early China. First of all, participators' social status was reaffirmed in the process of the ritual archery since they should strictly follow the rules and rituals according their social status. Secondly, the ritual archery had the selective function for the grand sacrifice and avoided possible disputes among subordinate city-states over the eligibility and attending position in the grand sacrifice ceremony. Lastly, it had the important function of distributing power and interest in the Zhou dynasty. As mentioned above, the Shires' archery was actually a selection activity for governmental officials. As to other forms of ritual archery, such as Binshe (guest archery) and Yanshe (happy archery), both were archery matches with rigid rules, rituals and procedures launched by sociopolitical authorities so as to facilitate communication, coordinate relations and make the participants show their obedience, loyalty and respect to their authority and political hierarchy . Integrating the archery competition with rituals and feasts, the ritual archery played an important role in maintaining the sociopolitical order of the Western Zhou. In time of the Eastern Zhou, although the ritual archery lost the unified administration from the Zhou royal court, the ritual system still played the role of maintaining relations among city-states in many aspects.

It can be concluded that both the Olympic Games and the ritual archery were closely intertwined with politics in antiquity due to their common gathering attributes. But they were expressed in different forms. The Olympic Games in ancient Greece were

⁶⁰ The Book of Rituals. Meaning of the Ceremony of Archery. Liji. Sheyi 《礼记.射义》 = Stephen Selby: Chinese Archery. Hong Kong University Press, 2000. 73

promoted by Greek elites and acted as a potential platform for aristocrats and politicians visiting the festival to engage in political communication or diplomatic activities at an individual or *polis* level. The ritual archery in early China was substantially operated by sociopolitical leaders and had functions of selection of political candidates and maintaining the sociopolitical order.

5.5.3. Comparison of their function in terms of economics

Within 200 hundreds years from the 8th century BC to the 6th century BC, the ancient Olympic Games developed from a local religious festival into a regional and then a panhellenic festival (Young 2004, 21). Every 4 years, Greeks on foot, by ship, by cart, and on horseback came to visit the famed festival from different *poleis*. Some would come not only to attend the festival, but also had other purposes. For merchants or craftsmen who were not eligible to view the Games, they might just want to use the gathering to promote their business among the grand crowds. During the Games at Olympia many merchants appeared at the Olympia for a trade fair that was said to be founded by *Iphitos*. Also, an annual fair was connected with the Isthmian Games near Corinth where merchants and clients from Ionia, Sicily, Libya, all of Greece and from the Black Sea gathered (Borgers 2003, 7).

Thus, outside of the sacred sanctuary there existed not only various temporary tents or huts that visitors lived in, but also a flourishing trade market with businessmen, craftsmen and vendors arriving to sell their wares. Food vendors of all kinds made good business selling the basics: bread, olives, fruits or seeds. Craftsmen sold other important items: cups, plates, blankets and other housewares. Some businessmen sold goods with exotic styles shipped from other nations. Musicians and poets perform for anyone who wants to watch. Wealthy businessmen who acquired citizenship in Greek *poleis* through money or education would arrive at the festival to make big deals with other visiting

dignitaries. The booming trade around the Olympic Games, together with the trade happened in other panhellenic festivals, might partially promote the creation of the Greek monetary system, and enhanced the economic changes among poleis.

The ritual archery in early China was a complete one-day sociopolitical gathering incorporating the ritualized archery competition with drinks according to rigid rules. There was neither record in history nor the possibility in reality for the ritual archery to promote business or economic exchange. Thus, in contrast to the economic function of the ancient Olympic Games, the ritual archery in early China bore no function of generating economic influence.

5.5.4. Comparison of their function in terms of education

In a wide sense, education may refer to everything that a person learns from the time of birth, regardless of whether that experience is socially accepted or not. In a narrow sense, it only refers to what he/she learns at school, mainly socially accepted by the majority of the society. Here the education takes the wide sense. It is believed that both ancient Olympic Games in Greece and ritual archery in early China played a role in educating people, especially the middle and upper classes, about certain values and morals which were socially accepted by the majority of their respective societies.

5.5.4.1 Educational function of the Olympic Games

As we have discussed above, with the growing popularity of the Olympic Games from the 7th century BC, more and more people flocked to Olympia to spectate the quadrennial festival and pay homage to Zeus. This strengthened not only the Greek religious belief, but also their Greek identity. If we view this Olympic Games' influence

from the perspective of education, we can claim that the Games did educate the Greeks about the significance of the sacrifice to Zeus, the Greek identity and the athletics. In reality, the ancient Olympic Games promoted education through boosting the development of athletics in Greek society. As previously stated, the ancient Greeks' agnostic tradition and athletic favor initially promoted the Olympic Games. However, here one point should be stated is that the ancient Olympic Games also greatly promoted the athletics in Greeks' society, which were considered to be an indispensable part of Greek education. The splendid Olympic Games positively influenced other local and regional religious games' development and greatly inspired more young Greeks plunging into athletic training and competitions. The *gymnasium* and *palaestra*, which served as educational and social gathering places in every polis, was public sphere for citizens to conduct training, competition and communication. Thus, athletics played a significant role in the process of Greeks' socialization, which is a process of learning how to accept and conform to cultural and social constraints embedded in social norms and roles. The Olympic Games enhanced the popularity of the athletics in ancient Greek society, and therefore, strengthened young Greeks' socialization through athletics.

The values in sport are at least in part a reflection of the value of the society in which the sports take place (Hyland 1998, 3). This means that the values that sport exhibit are not inherently in sport as sport, but are reflection of values that originate in society. Furthermore, sports can and do teach those values to its participants. Ancient Greeks lived by a set of shared beliefs, values and morals, and significantly emphasized the athletics as well as religious festivals. The quadrennial Olympic festival made its superior prestige in athletic competitions and a big success for attracting Pilgrims. Every Greek athletes would aspire to be qualified to compete in the Games and finally to win the victory. The Olympic Games were a direct outgrowth of the prevailing values and beliefs of the Greek society. Moreover, it spread and taught the values and norms for Greeks. The Olympic Games spirits: Peace, *Hamilla* and *arête* were widely spread

to the Greek world by Elis heralds, Olympic athletes and spectators and pilgrims in ancient time. This did educate the Greeks generation by generation.

Firstly, the Olympic Games educated Greeks about the value of peace in ancient society. Frequent conflicts and wars among these hundreds poleis were an ordinary state in ancient Greek society. But communication was an urgent necessity of people from different poleis. The ancient Greeks created and developed the religious festivals, such as the Olympic Games at Olympia and other panhellenic games, to facilitate their communication. They restored to the religious power to make the relatively neutral religious centers as meeting places. They aspired for peace, but might also know the limitation of their advocate, so they just announced the truce to appeal that all Greek poleis to keep safety of the Elis and athletes and pilgrims, rather than call for stopping all the conflicts and wars. Anyway, the Olympic Games did bring short-term peace for Greeks to conduct diverse communication at Olympia. The Games were full of peaceful meaning and were highly respected by the citizens as a kind of divine command. Gradually the festival became a synonym of peace in ancient Greece. Therefore, peace became an important value of the Olympic Games in ancient world. It was widely spread in ancient Greek society and further strengthened the awareness of keeping peace among Greeks world in the period of Olympic festival.

Secondly, the Olympic Games reflected and disseminated the spirit of *hamilla*⁶¹, an ancient Greek word meaning noble competition, such as fair-play, abiding by rules, and grace in defeat and so on. The athletics were part of everyday Greek citizens' life, whether in mainland Greece or remote colonies. At Olympia they competed in the Games in front of tens of thousands of spectators and showcased their respectable

⁶¹Emm. Mikrogiannakis: The Ideal Constitution According to Pericles. Invited Presentation, AFGLC Forum, 2010 at the University of South Florida Campus, Tampa, Florida.
http://www.afglc.org/pages/foru/AFGLC_Forum_2010/Mikrogiannakis_The_Ideal_Constitution_According_to_Pericles_AFGLC_Forum_2010.pdf

nobility in competition. The *Hellanodikai* also strictly kept the rules of fair-play and justice in the competitions. Such Olympic competition every four years would educate visiting Greeks about the spirit of *hamilla*.

Thirdly, the Olympics also cultivated Greeks about the value of *arête*. According to the interpretation of Stephen G. Miller, *arête* is an ancient Greek word originated from athletic competition with the definition including virtue, skill, prowess, pride, excellence, valor, and nobility. It was the goal to be sought and reached for by every Greek in ancient period (Miller 2004, 212). Furthermore, ancient Greeks used *arête* to describe the ultimate purpose of both athletic competition and philosophical speculation. In the context of moral philosophy, *arête* is usually translated as “virtue”; in the context of athletics, it usually translated as “excellence”.⁶² Ancient Greek citizens were very agonistics-oriented with an enthusiastic passion for athletics. For a Greek athlete, only a life presented with honor could be the one worthy of living; the honor came with acquisition of the final victory in noble competitions. The Olympic Games were the largest and most prestigious religious and athletic festival. It only awarded the best athletes and presented them the glory of the sacred Olive wreath, which represented the idea of *agathon* (the combination of all virtues). To be awarded with the Olympic olive wreath meant that the athlete arrived at the greatest honor and virtue. Let’s take an example to clarify this significance. We all hear the story presented by *Homer* in the *Iliad* that Goddess Athena chose her favorite Odysseus as the winner of the foot race at Patroclus’ funeral games, rather than the more prevailing Ajax. This is because Odysseus had the virtue to acquire the victory so he was more loved by the Goddess. In the eyes of the ancient Greeks, athletic winning in noble competition were naturally connected with virtues and honors.

⁶² The Victor's Virtue: A Cultural History of Sport.
<http://edsitement.neh.gov/lesson-plan/victors-virtue-cultural-history-sport#sect-introduction>

5.5.4.2 Educational function of ritual archery

The establishment of ritual archery at its beginning in the Shang Dynasty was because ancient rulers hoped to restore to the mysterious power of the archery to govern their subordinates. Gradually ritual archery became a popular social activity with diverse categories to facilitate the sociopolitical authorities to communicate and select their potential candidates. In the governmental education system of the Western Zhou, noble boys were required to master six practical disciplines called the Six Arts so as to promote all-around development, among which archery and ritual were especially important since the ritual archery was regularly held on important social or religious occasions. The ritual archery had great educational meaning in the society of the West and Eastern Zhou. In the Spring and Autumn Period, Confucius confirmed and developed the educational meaning of the ritual archery and made it developed in a unique way.

For one thing, ritual archery educated participants of their social norms and therefore reinforced the hierarchical social order. Ritual archery was the product of the ritual-respecting thoughts and ritual systems of the Western Zhou Dynasty. Ritual in Chinese was *li* 禮, a word means ritual, rites, or ceremonies or rules of conduct. Confucius described *li* as all traditional forms that provided a standard of conduct, and thought that was beneficial to society because it forced people to recognize and fulfill their responsibilities toward others. Ritual archery included plenty of complicated rituals which symbolized the social identity in a hierarchical society. Young nobles learned ritual and archery in school and were also prepared for the future occasion of ritual archery by accepting the prevailing norms. In the ritual archery, participants followed the existing regulations and orders to express themselves which meant that they had conformed to the social ideology, which stressed the obedience, piety, control

and rank. It was also an educating process to strengthen the hierarchy and authority on the participants and spectators.

For another, ritual archery, in *Confucius'* opinion, was an educational process for participants to learn social etiquettes and moral standards. Confucius, as a zealous advocate of ritual archery, once said that “a refined person has no use for competitiveness. Yet if he cannot avoid it, then let him compete through archery! For one entering the archery range he will salute and show consideration for other competitors, and on leaving the range he will share ceremonial wine with them, and thus even in competition he will be acting according to the principles of refined conduct”.⁶³ It points out that archery is an acceptable form of competition because it decreases all elements of violence and under the guidance of elaborate and formalized rituals. Wine here would be a metaphor, meaning courtliness and respect. But according the classic explanation, the acceptance of wine from winners signifies that if you cannot compete successfully, you are therefore reliant on others for your living. This is perhaps an element which harks back to when the ritual arose within a tribal society in which hunting was the only way to gain subsistence. He who could no longer compete in the hunt had to rely on those more skillful than himself for his daily food (Selby 2000, 83).

Moreover, *Confucius* also combined the ritual archery and virtue together. He explained,

*“How difficult it is to shoot! How does the archer combine his shooting with listening to the ceremonial hymns? To shoot exactly in harmony with the note (given) by the music, and to shoot without missing the bull's-eye on the target - it is only the archer of superior virtue who can do this! How will a man with inferior character be able to hit the mark?”*⁶⁴.

“Archery suggests to us the way of benevolence. (The archer) seeks to be correct in

⁶³ The Book of Rituals. Meaning of the Ceremony of Archery. 《礼记·射义》

⁶⁴ The Book of Rituals. Meaning of the Ceremony of Archery. 《礼记·射义》

*himself, and then discharges his arrow. If it misses the target, he is not angry with the one who has surpassed himself, but turns round and seeks (for the cause of failure) in himself.”*⁶⁵

Thus, *Confucius* believed that “to watching one’s performance in ritual archery is a great way to examine the extent of a person’s virtue”.⁶⁶

From *Confucius*’ arguments we may know that the behaviors and performance of a competitor in ritual archery reflected his own virtue; besides, practicing the ritual archery may help competitors learn the morals and improve their virtue. *Confucius* hoped to use the external regulations, namely the rituals, to manage the shooting so as to educate the archer about order, obedience, respect and courtliness throughout practicing ritual archery. He also sought to use the instinct characteristic of the shooting to educate the archers about self-examination, harmony between skills and virtue. If we carefully examine the core values that *Confucius* hoped to educate, we may find that he emphasized such values: order, respect, courtliness, self-examination, harmony between skills and virtue. Here one point should be stated is that *Confucius* only appealed to the ritualized shooting to nurture the ideal personality of gentleman, rather than resorting to other competitive event. So we should not expand his teaching method to other sporting events.

5.5.4.3. Comparison of their educational functions

From the analysis above it can be certified that both ancient Olympic Games and the ritual archery bore significant educational functions in their respective societies. Furthermore, both contained certain norms, values and morals which were socially accepted by the dominant classes of their own societies. Both were popular cultural

⁶⁵ The Book of Rituals. Meaning of the Ceremony of Archery. 《礼记·射义》

⁶⁶ The Book of Rituals. Meaning of the Ceremony of Archery. 《礼记·射义》

activates that spread the prevailing social norms, values and morals, helped participants to reinforced their identities. Besides, both established connection between certain competition and virtue. Besides, both the two cultural activities associated the moral education with competitions in the same way.

The ancient Olympics spread values such as the peace, *hamilla* (discipline, justice, and fair play), and *arête* (excellence, virtue, glory/pride, prowess, and wealth) to the Greek world through its prestige and popularity in ancient time. Correspondingly, the ritual archery emphasized the values such as obedience, discipline, respect, self-examination, harmony between skills and virtue and promoted these values among the upper class in early China. However, it is interesting to know that the educational values shared by both the Olympic Games and the ritual archery are discipline and virtue.

The athletics in ancient Greece had specific rules in competition. The *gymnasia* were at the heart of Greek political and cultural life (Esole, 2008, 15). Greek boys were educated in the *gymnasium* or *palaestra* to be strong and self-disciplined citizens loyal to the state. In the Olympic contests there were *Hellanodikai* to ensure that the competitors strictly abide by the rules. In early China the ritual archery was guided by complicated rules, namely, the *Rites of Zhou*. Its target was to discipline the participants through elaborated regulations and to make them internalize the social norms and morals. This would be the reason why the two cultural activities both stressed the discipline in terms of their educational functions.

Both the ancient Olympic Games and the ritual archery emphasized virtue in their respective educational functions; but the virtue had different meanings. Ancient Greeks were agnostic people having strong will to victory through noble competitions. They believed that athletics could promote their physical development, virtue and competency. In athletic training and competitions, selfishness and fear were beaten,

endurance and patience were developed, simultaneously, the important virtues of citizenship, like loyalty, and justice, courage, wisdom could be progressively nurtured. In the *Socratic Dialogues*, Plato identified the particular virtues associated with *arête* to be piety, temperance, courage, and justice.⁶⁷ They believed that the *arête* could only be acquired through noble competitions, especially the panhellenic Games. According to Confucius argument, under the guidance of the rituals, archery was not just a military skill, but also a great approach to cultivate participants' mind and moral. The target in Confucius' consideration was more than a real spot hit by an arrow, but a virtual one represented the archer's virtue appeals, such as reverence, generosity, truthfulness, diligence and kindness. Only by overcoming the inner limits and behaving gracefully in ritual archery could a participant's arrow hit the target, which meant attaining the noble virtue. Here we may conclude that there exist different meaning in regard to the virtue of the educational appeals between the Olympic Games and the ritual archery.

There exist the same way of associating the moral education between the Olympic Games and ritual archery. The ancient Olympics resorted to aggressive competitions to manifest the best athletes. Though it was just a wild Olive wreath awarded, the Olympic victory was considered as the most prestigious award to a Greek athlete. This is because in the viewpoint of ancient Greeks, certain virtues would be inherently connected with the best athletes; the Olympic wreath represented the superior credit to both the best athlete's physical and moral virtues. The victory obtained in the Games not only stated the victor's superiority over all other competitors in noble rivalry, but also certified that he surpassed a certain status through struggling with the psychological and physical self and made a marvelous progress towards self-perfection. In another words, the Olympic victory represented that the victor was the best in specific event in the Greek world and his virtue was manifested in their excellent competitions and therefore appreciated by

⁶⁷ Heather L. Reid. Sport, Education, and the Meaning of Victory. *Philosophy of Sport*.
<http://www.bu.edu/wcp/Papers/Spor/SporReid.htm>

the gods.

According to *Confucius'* argument, the ritualized archery decreased the violence of competition, and kept its fundamental education functions. Under the guidance of the rituals, archery was not just a military skill, but also a great approach to cultivate participants' mind and moral. Practicing the ritual archery taught the participants to focus on his mental and behavioral factors and continuously improve himself. In the process of practicing ritual archery, one struggled with inner self limits and sought physical and spiritual harmony, proper coordination between the music rhythm and the self. From here we may clear that both the Olympic Games and the ritual archery related respective competition with perfection of inner self. Being continuously engaged in noble or graceful competitions could improve competitors' morality and virtue. Ancient Greeks regarded defeating all others in fierce and noble competitions could make an athlete achieve the virtues. Early Chinese like Confucius resorted to no-violent competition, the ritualized archery, to nurture the competitors' morality and virtues. They did not need to beat all other competitors, but to overcome the inner self limits through properly practicing the ritual archery.

6. Conclusion

This research takes the Olympic Games in ancient Greece and the ritual archery in early China as two cases and conducts a cross-cultural comparison in regard to their origin, development, competitors, administration, process and function. In this research the Olympic Games refers to the quadrennial festival in honor of Zeus held at the sanctuary of Zeus in Olympia in ancient Greece; while the ritual archery is defined as the symbolic rite of shooting arrows in early China held according to certain rigid regulations by kings, officials or other aristocrats. After exploring the similarities and

diversities of the two institutionalized cultural activities in the two isolated societies, it further analyzes what leads to these similarities and differences. The following conclusions are arrived at in this research,

Both the Olympic Games and ritual archery were originally connected with religion and legendary heroes in myths and both experienced a secularized process. The Olympic Games was originally a local sacrifice in honor of Zeus held at the sanctuary, which was legendarily established by the *Herakles* with 12 labors in Greek myth. Gradually, it involved more rituals, songs and competitions inside and became a marvelous religious festival. With more sporting events incorporated, the competitions dominated the festival and gradually diluted the religious color of the Olympic Games. The ritual archery was based on the belief in the sorcerous power of the ritualized archery that related to *Yi*, the archer who had magic archery in Chinese myth and killed the 8 monsters. With decline of the Zhou king's authority and the Rite of Zhou, the ritual archery gradually lost its religious meaning and become popular entertainment in social gathering among civilians.

The competitors in ancient Olympic Games were mainly male Greek citizens who voluntarily went for Olympic competitions and got through strict qualification examination. In contrast, the competitors of ritual archery were invited male with good social rank in ancient China. Before taking part in competition, competitors in both the two programs should get well trained. Moreover, it is known that there existed different concepts of the body and competition between ancient Greek and early Chinese. Firstly, it is revealed that ancient Greeks greatly admired the beauty of the masculine body with athletic prowess, whereas, ancient Chinese did not care as much about the physical beauty and prowess as ancient Greeks did. They were concerned much more about the clothing saying their social status and behaviors under regulations in ritual archery. Secondly, ancient Greeks emphasized more on the final result because the *arête* was

chiefly reflected by winning. For ancient Chinese, participating in the process of ritual archery and properly practicing ritual archery was most important.

The administrators of the Olympic Games in ancient Greece and ritual archery in early China all had reputable social rank and were professional at managing programs with systematic administrating procedures. The *Hellanodikai*, who were elected from the leading families of Elis, preferred individual events rather than team events and kept the spirit of noble competition in the Games. The administrators of ritual archery, who were appointed by the host, upheld the authority figures' majesty and preferred to the team competition rather than individual competition.

As significant long-lived cultural activities that combined rituals with competitions, both the Olympic Games and ritual archery played an important role and exerted a great influence in their respective society. The Olympic Game greatly promoted the awareness of Greek identity, while ritual archery did not help to shape early Chinese ethnical identity but promoted participants to build their social identity through competing. Both the Olympic Games and ritual archery were closely intertwined with politics in antiquity due to their common gathering attributes. The Olympic Games were promoted by Greek elites and acted as a platform for aristocrats and politicians visiting the festival to engage in political/social communication or diplomatic activities at an individual or polis level. The ritual archery in early China was substantially operated by authority figures and had functions of selection of political candidates and maintaining the sociopolitical order. The Olympic Games had great contribution to promote business and economic exchange, while the ritual archery in early China bore no function of economics. Both ancient Olympic Games and ritual archery bore significant educational functions in their respective societies. Both were popular cultural activities that spread the prevailing socially accepted norms, values and morals, and helped participants to reinforce their identities. Besides, both associated certain competitions with virtue and

discipline and both in the same way of associating itself with moral education. But the virtues had different meaning. For Greeks athletes, the virtues referred to loyalty, justice, courage and wisdom; while the virtue in ritual archery referred to reverence, generosity, truthfulness, diligence and kindness.

In total, ancient Greeks and early Chinese were different people living in quite different environmental and social contexts. They created marvelous cultural activities, like the Olympic Games and the ritual archery, which integrated physical competition, rituals, music and entertainment together. From the research it is found that the Olympic Games in ancient Greece and ritual archery in early China did not appear to be of completely quite opposite character. Instead, there were many similarities between the two programs. And the differences explored above mainly resulted from the geographical, political, social and educational diversity of the two isolated societies. Through this research, the stereotype about ancient Chinese sport and Greek sport was challenged, and some new insights such as the concepts of the body and competition in the two civilizations were acquired.

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