

is common to all the Muses. If someone passes the time from childhood until the age of adulthood and prudence hearing a moderate and orderly Muse, then every time he hears the opposite he will hate Her and proclaim Her to be lacking in freedom; but if he's brought up with the common and sweet Muse, he'll assert the opposite to this is cold and unpleasant. So, as was just now said, from the point of view of pleasure or lack of pleasure, at least, neither side gets more; the big difference lies in the fact that one makes those brought up with Her better while the other always makes them worse.

Kl. You've spoken beautifully.

Ath. In addition, it would presumably be necessary to distinguish, in an outline, the songs fitting for females from those fitting for males, and it's necessary to harmonize them with the harmoniae and rhythms. For it's terrible to sing something discordant with the harmonia as a whole, or to use a meter that's unsuitable to the rhythm, by failing to assign to the songs what is appropriate in each of these respects. So it's necessary to legislate at least the outlines of these matters. Now both kinds of song must be assigned certain necessary accompaniments; and since what belongs to females is determined by the very way they differ in nature, one must make use of this difference in order to make clear the difference in the songs. Magnificence, then, and whatever inclines to courage, ought to be declared to be masculine looking; whatever leans rather toward the orderly and the moderate should be proclaimed, in legal convention and in speech, as belonging more to the feminine. This will be the arrangement.

What needs to be discussed next after this is the teaching and handing down of these very things—in what way, to whom, and when each of the subjects should be practiced.

It's evident to me that what I'm doing here myself is much the same as what a shipwright does in beginning to build ships, when he sketches the shape of ships in outline by laying down the keels. I'm trying to distinguish the outline of ways of life as they accord with characteristics of souls, and thus really "laying down their keels"<sup>27</sup>—investigating, in the correct way, what device we should use and what characteristics we should at any time incorporate if we are going to be carried through this voyage of existence on the best way of life. Of course, the affairs of human beings are not worthy of

great seriousness; yet it is necessary to be serious about them. And this is not a fortunate thing. But since we're here, if somehow we would carry out the business in some appropriate way it would perhaps be a well-measured thing for us to do. But whatever am I saying? Someone would perhaps be correct to take me up in this very way.

Kl. Indeed!

Ath. I assert that what is serious should be treated seriously, and what is not serious should not, and that by nature god is worthy of a complete, blessed seriousness, but that what is human, as we said earlier, has been devised as a certain plaything of god, and that this is really the best thing about it. Every man and woman should spend life in this way, playing the noblest possible games, and thinking about them in a way that is the opposite of the way they're now thought about.

Kl. How's that?

Ath. Nowadays, presumably, they suppose the serious things are for the sake of the playful things: for it is held that the affairs pertaining to war, being serious matters, should be run well for the sake of peace. But the fact is that in war there is not and will not be by nature either play or, again, an education that is at any time worthy of our discussion; yet this is what we assert is for us, at least, the most serious thing. Each person should spend the greatest and best part of his life in peace. What then is the correct way? One should live out one's days playing at certain games—sacrificing, singing, and dancing—with the result that one can make the gods propitious to oneself and can defend oneself against enemies and be victorious over them in battle. The sort of things one should sing and dance in order to accomplish both these things have been described in outlines, and the trails, as it were, have been blazed along which one should go, expecting that the poet speaks well when he says:<sup>28</sup>

Telemachus, some things you yourself will think of in your own thoughts,

And some things a demon will suggest; for I do not think

That you were born and raised against the will of the gods.

This is the way our nurslings should consider things: they should believe that what's been said has been adequately spo-

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804b ken, but that the demon and god will suggest things to them regarding sacrifices and choral performances, thus indicating those whom they should offer games and propitiate, and when they should play each game for each, so as to live out their lives in accordance with the way of nature, being puppets, for the most part, but sharing in small portions of truth.

Meg. Stranger, you are belittling our human race in every respect!

Ath. Don't be amazed, Megillus, but forgive me! For I was looking away toward the god and speaking under the influence of that experience, when I said what I did just now. So let our race be something that is not lowly then, if that is what you cherish, but worthy of a certain seriousness.

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With regard to what follows these things, it has already been said that buildings for gymnastics and for common instruction should be located at three places in the center of the city, and that outside, at three places again around the city, there should be gymnasia and open spaces arranged for horses as well as for archery and the other long-range weapons, where the young can learn and practice. If these things weren't described adequately before, let them be described now, in speech and also in laws. In all these buildings there should dwell teachers of each subject, strangers persuaded by pay to teach those who attend all the things they should learn, with a view to war and with a view to music. And it will not be left up to the father's wish to decide who shall attend and whose education shall be neglected, but rather, as the saying goes, "every man and child insofar as he is able" must of necessity become educated, on the grounds that they belong more to the city than to those who generated them. Indeed, my law would say all the very same things about females that it says about males, including that females should be trained on an equal basis. I would speak without being at all afraid of the argument that horseback riding and gymnastics are fitting for men but not fitting for women. For I am persuaded by the ancient myths I've heard, and at this very moment, so to speak, I know there are countless myriads of women around the Black Sea—the women called Sarmatians<sup>29</sup>—who are enjoined to handle not only horses, but the bow and the other weapons as well, in equality with the men, and who practice them equally. Besides this, I make some such calculation as the following, in regard to these matters: I assert that if, in-

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deed, it is possible for these things to turn out this way, then the way they're now arranged in our lands—where it's not the case that all the men with their entire strength, and united in spirit, practice the same things as the women—is the most mindless of all. For this way, almost every city is just about half of what it might be, when with the same expenditures and efforts it could double itself. And this would be an amazing mistake on the part of the lawgiver.

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Kl. That's likely, anyway. Still, there are very many aspects of what we're now saying, stranger, that run counter to what is usual in political regimes.

But you spoke very reasonably when you said that the argument should be allowed to unfold, and that once it had unfolded well, one should then choose what one approved. As a matter of fact, what you said makes me rebuke myself now, for the things I just said. So say next after these things whatever you find pleasing.

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Ath. What would please me, at least, Kleinias, is the following (something I've said before): if the possibility of what we're discussing hadn't been sufficiently demonstrated by deeds, one might perhaps say something against the argument, but now, presumably, he who cannot in any way accept this law will have to seek some other way of opposing it. He won't extinguish our insistence that one should say that our female race must, as much as possible, have a common share in education and in the other things along with the race of males. For that's about the way one should think about these matters. Look, if women don't share their entire lives in common with men, won't it be necessary to have some different regimen for them?

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Kl. That will indeed be necessary.

Ath. So which of the regimens now in evidence would we set up, instead of this common regimen we are now establishing for them? Would it be that of the Thracians and many other tribes, who use their women to farm, tend cattle, herd sheep, and to serve no differently than slaves? Or our own practice and that of everyone in our area? For nowadays, among us, these things are done as follows: "bringing all our goods together in some one house," as the saying goes, we give to the women the responsibility of acting as stewards, setting them to rule over the shuttles and everything having to do

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