

Kalokagathia: to a Question on Formation of an Image of the Ideal Person in Antiquity and During Modern Time

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Abstract. *This paper is devoted to the analysis of the phenomenon of kalokagathia, developed by the Greek writers and philosophers in 5th–4th centuries BC. The term kalokagathia combines two adjectives, with kalos designating outward, and agathos – inward perfection. The resulting neologism—a word-combination—denotes a predicate of perfection, with no existing synonyms to express the notion of virtue in the Greek lexicon at that time. For the upbringing of the ideal person, leisure (scholē) was necessary, which in this slaveholding society was available to all free citizens. The author of the paper emphasises that during the Archaic period kalos kagathos was the self-determination of aristocracy, while during the Classical period the term acquired more generalized semantic value and was applied to worthy citizens of all strata of society. The specificity of the term kalokagathia was most fully developed in the writings of Thucydides and Xenophon. Thus, in Sparta kalos kagathos designated the ideal soldier, whereas in Athens – the ideal person and the citizen. The author of paper considers it difficult to give an adequate translation of the terms kalokagathia and kalos kagathos; therefore, it would be more rational to transliterate both of them. In the modern-day society, the concept of the ideal person appears to be in demand again, mainly within the framework for developing therapeutic sports and education system for the younger generations.*

Rezumat. *Această lucrare este dedicată analizei fenomenului kalokagathiei, dezvoltat de scriitorii și filozofii greci în secolele V–IV a.Chr. Termenul kalokagathia combină două adjective, kalos desemnând perfecțiune exterioară, și agathos – perfecțiune interioară. Pentru creșterea persoanei ideale, a fost necesar un timp liber (forță), care în această societate a sclavilor era disponibil pentru toți cetățenii liberi. Autoarea lucrării subliniază că, în perioada arhaică, kalos kagathos a reprezentat autodeterminarea aristocrației, în timp ce în perioada clasică termenul a dobândit o valoare semantică mai generalizată și a fost aplicat cetățenilor tuturor straturilor societății. Specificitatea termenului kalokagathia a fost dezvoltată cel mai mult în scrierile lui Tucidide și Xenofon. Astfel, în Sparta, kalos kagathos a desemnat soldatul ideal, în timp ce în Atena – persoana ideală și cetățeanul. Autoarea lucrării consideră că este dificil să se dea o traducere adecvată a termenilor kalokagathia și kalos kagathos; prin urmare, ar fi mai adecvat să le transliterăm pe amândouă.*

Keywords: ancient Greece, ideal person, kalokagathia, kalos kagathos, Thucydides, Xenophon, sport, Kalokagathia-marathon in St. Petersburg.

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Sometimes it seems to us, the people of the 21st century—a century of super-power computers and nanotechnologies—, that antiquity has completely sunk into oblivion. Yet, at times, we are amazed to realize that many questions that were of great importance for the ancient Greeks more than two millennia back, are still relevant in the modern-day society. These questions include a problem of the individual as a full-fledged member of society. For this reason, the phenomenon of ancient *kalokagathia* continues to evoke the interest of researchers in different fields — history, philosophy, sociology, psychology, ethics, aesthetics, and medicine. At each stage of the development of any human society, not only the corresponding system of values is developed, but also social, ethical and aesthetic assessment criteria are defined. The structure of moral values of the ancient Greeks differed considerably from ours and in many important aspects². Thus, for example, modern societies lack conscious aspiration for the development of a universal ideal; and there is only perception of necessity of a set of moral and physical qualities that distinguish a person, essential for the maintaining viability of human community as a whole. And yet, despite some cardinal distinctions between ancient and modern societies, it is the development of the notion of an ideal type of a human being by the Greeks that we may rightly consider the greatest contribution of the ancient civilization to the development of the European humanist culture of the modern period.

During classical antiquity ‘the ideal person’ should have possessed, above all, political valour, which was usually designated by the term *arete*. It was such a person who was regarded as a worthy citizen of the city-state. The economy based on slave-owning provided plenty of free time (*schole*) to the wealthy members of the civil society. Besides, in the democratic states there was a system of considerable financial and social support to the middle and lower strata, who were also provided with leisure (*schole*). Thus, leisure time free from physical work (*schole*) was a basis and a prerequisite for acquiring the qualities of the ideal person and citizen. The meaning of the *arete* changed in accordance with the stages of development of the Greek society: heroic *arete* was characteristic of the Homeric period followed by aristocratic *arete* — featured in the archaic period, while the notion of political *arete* appeared as late as in the classical period. However, despite its different characteristics, in essence, *arete* denoted development of a more or less elevated aristocratic ethical ideal. Even in the democratic states *arete* had aristocratic characteristics as it reflected the elitism of the civil collective as opposed to other members of society — slaves, metics, foreigners. Remarkably, a particular aesthetic ideal was developed not only in literature, but also in fine arts. Thus, in sculpture of the high classical period a type of the ideal human body portraying gods and heroes was prevalent, with even Olympic winners’ portraits often complying to the ideal. In architecture, the golden ratio rule, which was to form the basis of classical

² CREED 1973, 213.

architecture, was developed. In town planning, the grid of parallel and perpendicular streets of the Hippodamian Plan gained currency.

In the 5th century BC, in addition to the concept of *arete* associated with human perfection, another term—*kalos kai agathos* (καλὸς καὶ ἀγαθός) and its compound form *kalos kagathos* (καλὸς κάγαθος)—gradually obtained the currency³. When exactly the fixed combination of the adjectives *kalos* and *agathos* to express the idea of the ideal person became a set expression it is difficult to say. According to some researchers, it was unlikely to happen until after 500 BC⁴. In the works of the ancient authors we may find more than ten different variants of these two adjectives in various combinations, both in singular and in plural⁵. Additionally, a compound noun — *kalokagathia* (καλοκάγαθία)⁶ was formed, first found in the text of ‘The History’ by Herodotus (I, 30)⁷. As it stands, it was possible to reach *kalokagathia* only by means of good education, this idea was expressed by the term *paideia*, while having *scholē* was a key prerequisite.

The adjectives combined in this term are very different. Thus, the adjective *agathos* has a complex, polysemantic content; yet, it had already acquired then political, social, ethical connotations. The other adjective—*kalos*—is a household word used not only to describe an attractive person’s appearance, but also to talk about the beauty of various objects and natural phenomena. In combining these two adjectives a new word combination was created, designating a predicate of perfection, with no existing synonyms to encompass the notion of virtue in the Greek vocabulary. Such a neologism intended for expression of human value is unique. It could only appear as a result of realisation of the need to express new or, at least, very differed from existed prior concepts employed for the purposes of understanding of the human being⁸. The concept of *kaloi kagathoi*, by analogy with similar ancient terms, such as *aristoi*, *beltistoi*, etc., very soon came to mean not just the ideal or perfect individuals, but aristocrats, representatives of social elite. Interestingly, this complex concept proved to be predisposed to further semantic shifts and enrichment in accordance with the development of political literature and political language of the ancient Greeks. Initially it was a fixed phrase used by representatives of aristocratic families to refer to itself, but soon its semantic content widened, acquired generalized meaning and began to be applied to worthy citizens of any class. The assumption that *kalos kagathos* remained a narrow-social aristocratic term for a long time is not confirmed by ancient sources⁹.

³ DONLAN 1973, 365–374; LOSEV 1960, 411–475.

⁴ DONLAN 1973, 368.

⁵ WANKEL 1961, 148–156.

⁶ BERLAGE 1932, 20; BOURRIOT 1995, *passim*.

⁷ DONLAN 1973, 374; GOMME 1953, 66; BERLAGE 1932, 22–23.

⁸ DONLAN 1973, 366.

⁹ DONLAN 1973, 373–374.

Nonetheless, *kalos kagathos* was the favourite self-denomination of the upper classes during the 5th century BC, which most likely implied rather than designated personal qualities with the unconditional priority of birth and education. This epithet was not an honorific, applied to name people individually, it was not hereditary, although mere belonging to the upper classes could have guaranteed the necessary education, therefore granting *kalokagathia*. It was used by the Athenians to convey the meaning of perfection in almost every respect — the beauty of a human body combined with valour of spirit, insight with wit, nobleness with generosity. For the Spartans, *kalokagathia* had a narrower semantic value, with prevailing qualities being military valour, bravery, courage and patriotism¹⁰. Yet, by default, the outward was important for the Spartans too; it was not about physical beauty per se though, it was fitness that was emphasized, as it was impossible for the unfit to excel in combat. On the other hand, intellectual sphere must have been also appreciated, even if not prioritized; otherwise, there would not have been so much evidence of the Spartan wit bursting with humour and understanding of human psychology. In the 4th Century BC, the semantic content of this term shifted — there was a lesser degree of sociopolitical connotation in it as it gradually acquired the meaning of ethical perfection.

In the modern research literature there are different points of view on the word combination *kalos kagathos* including indication of its vague meaning and explanations of the usage of the two adjectives separately. Thus, in translation, either a literal translation of both adjectives ‘noble and good’ is used, or a noun ‘gentleman’ as English equivalents, there can even be found a variant ‘gentleman farmer’. The latter emphasises the notion of a lifestyle — it is a nobly born man who skilfully manages his big landed property, which highlights his aristocratism, as well as intellectual and moral excellence. In fact, such definition of *kalos kagathos* conforms to the image of the nobility of the Archaic period. Members of aristocratic families then owned land and horses, they were warriors-horsemen, they cultivated the beauty and strength of their bodies, participated sport competitions and indulged in feasts where poets glorified the feats and *arete* of Homeric heroes¹¹. More often, however, *kalos kagathos* is translated into English as ‘perfect gentleman’. In the Francophone sources we typically find the literal translation of the two adjectives — ‘beaux et bons’ (beautiful and good), as well as ‘honnête homme’, ‘comme il faut’, or ‘gentilhomme’ (a nobly born, well-bred person, whose wealth supports his elegant lifestyle)¹². In German translations we find either a word combination ‘schön und gut’ (beautiful and good) or a noun ‘Landjunker’ (with the meaning similar to the English coinage ‘gentleman farmer’). In German sources, there are also two common transliterations — *kalokagathia* or *kalokagathie*¹³. In Russian, the term is

¹⁰ BOURRIOT 1996, 129–140.

¹¹ ADKINS 1960, 337 ff.

¹² BOURRIOT 1996, 129; See also fuller selection of possible variants: DONLAN 1980, 3 ff.

¹³ WANKEL 1974, 250 ff.

translated by means of various adjectives describing best human qualities: 'fine in every respect', 'noble', 'the person of the high moral principles', 'kind and honest', 'good', 'beautiful and kind', 'the perfect person'. Nevertheless, all these translations into English, French, German and Russian should be considered provisional as they fail to convey the meaning of the Greek *kalokagathia* adequately, being rather a rendering / liberal interpretation of a particular passage from the text of an ancient author. Therefore, as there has not been found adequate equivalents for these specific Greek terms so far, I believe, it would be advisable that we use transliterations (*kalokagathia*, *kalos kagathos*) for that purpose. Moreover, the fact that we use plenty of other transliterated terms of Greek origin in our speech, often without giving it a single thought (e.g. philosophy, rhetoric, etc.), also counts in favour of this suggestion.

The main reason why it is impossible to offer a unified translation of the term *kalokagathia* lies in its complex semantic connotations that we find in works of the Greek authors of the Archaic and Classical periods. To begin with, it should be noted that Homer used neither the compound *kalokagathia*, nor the set expression *kalos kai agathos*. To express the notion of personal excellence of an individual and his valour *arete* was used, which formed the basis for military feats¹⁴. As for the adjective *kalos*, Homer does use it in his writings, but referring to the appearance only — mainly, physical beauty¹⁵. The adjective *agathos* is typically used by Homer to describe a deity or a hero¹⁶. Theognis of Megara, one of the best representatives of the Archaic period, vividly depicted in his poems the aristocratic ideal of a person who follows the code of honour based on the Homeric *arete*. In Theognis the adjective *agathos* (translated as 'kind, noble') had already acquired the clear semantic connotation of ethical quality typical of a certain social group. Additionally, although Theognis never uses *agathos* and *kalos* together, separately they are frequent enough. During the Archaic period, physical beauty is more and more often linked to the aristocratic *arete*. It is quite natural for aristocrats with their life free from hard labour, devoted mainly to sports, feasts, and self-care. Yet, even for the nobility, physical beauty and *arete* do not always go hand in hand. It is given only to the elite, best of the best, as Theognis puts it 'happy is the man who has both of them' (933–934).

Another author of the 6th century BC, Solon of Athens, advised his fellow-citizens: 'Keep your moral *kalokagathia* stronger than your oath' (Diels⁴, 73 a 3). Despite the lack of indicative context for this phrase, most likely, there is no antithesis of internal and external qualities and *kalokagathia* conveys only moral and ethical values. Bias of Priene recommended: 'You should look into a mirror: if you look fine, do fine things; if you look ugly, correct by means of *kalokagathia* the defect of your nature' (Diels⁴, 45 d 5). In this fragment, outward and

¹⁴ ADKINS 1960, *passim*; ADKINS 1971, 1–14; LONG 1970, 123, cf. 137.

¹⁵ DONLAN 1973, 370.

¹⁶ BERLAGE 1932, 22.

inner perfection demand achieving harmony by means of proper behaviour. In case of outward, i.e. physical, defects, it is necessary to counteract the nature and compensate for the external deficiencies by inward virtues. Thus, reflections on harmony and disharmony of external and internal, physical and ethical, were characteristic of the Greek mentality since the early times. Initially, the identification of a person as *kalos kai agathos* was used as self-designation only by some representatives of the aristocracy. Later on, however, with the diminishing importance of aristocracy in the public and political life of the Greek cities this term began to acquire a more generalized meaning, soon to be applied to worthy citizens of any class.

The ancient poetry—Homer and lyrical poets—became main sources for the writers of the Classical period, where they draw inspiration, ideas and images. Thus, Thucydides in his 'History' uses *kaloi kagathoi* twice. The situations described by Thucydides are different, but in both cases this term has a political connotation¹⁷. In the first fragment this definition is used to refer to the Spartans (IV, 40). Existence of the concept of *kalokagathia* in Sparta is testified by other authors as well. For instance, Xenophon writes that the Spartans ascribed the imposing of *kalokagathia* to Lycurgus (Xen. Lac. Pol., 10, 4). According to Aristotle, in Sparta, it is from *kaloi kagathoi* that the supreme state city councillors (*gerontes* and *ephors*), as well as tutors of the youth (*paidonomes*) were elected (Pol., 1270 b 24, cf. 1306 a 18–19; Plut. Lyc., 17, 2)¹⁸. As it is known, Sparta had a specific form of government; therefore, *kalokagathia* was acquired by the Spartans only in battle and denoted, above all, military skills¹⁹. In Sparta—in all periods of its history—*kalokagathia* had sociopolitical connotation and was considered the main characteristic of the Spartan aristocracy²⁰. In the second fragment Thucydides uses *kaloi kagathoi* to describe the supporters of the Athenian coup of 411 BC. Not only does Thucydides define them as people influential, the oligarchs, but also as the 'so-called fine and noble' (VIII, 48, 6). The connection of this concept with the nobly born and wealthy elite, i.e. with the aristocracy, is obvious here. By the 5th century BC, the term *kalokagathia* had already become a fixed expression with clear sociopolitical connotations. The use of the expression 'so-called' by Thucydides demonstrates his negative attitude towards the leaders of oligarchic revolution of 411 BC on account of their foul ambition and egoism. Therefore, he could not have referred to them as *kaloi kagathoi* without necessary excuses to the reader implying that the Athenian oligarchs arrogated the right to use this epithet as it describes the high moral qualities that they lacked.

¹⁷ GOMME 1953, 66.

¹⁸ RAHE 1980, 386–387.

¹⁹ BOURRIOT 1996, 135.

²⁰ GOMME 1953, 65–68.

Some essential corrections in the usage and semantic value of the term *kalokagathia* were brought in the 4th century BC. Thus, Aristophanes, the author of the Attic comedies, uses *kalos kagathos* repeatedly in a wider sense —‘excellent’, ‘worthy’ (Equ., 735; Nub., 101, 794, etc.), ‘beautiful’ (Nub., 102–105), ‘the honest man’ (Equ., 180–185, 227–230). But more importantly, in one of his late comedies—‘Frogs’ (405 BC)—Aristophanes uses this expression to name a particular social category — people of a noble birth and high moral qualities, citizens of the old school, as opposed to the new foul political upstarts like Cleon (718–732). Hence, it appears obvious from this fragment that the term *kalos kagathos* gradually acquires qualities of a set expression, a kind of a social cliché.

In the 4th century BC, amid the deepening social and political crisis, philosophy played extremely important role in the development of the concept *kalokagathia*. Many ancient authors include a theme of the ideal person in the system of more general reasonings — in the doctrine of the perfect society and state, which, in their opinion, ought to cultivate and reproduce the ideal citizen by means of adequate upbringing and education system. Socrates and his followers—Xenophon, Plato, Isocrates, and later Aristotle—developed the theory of the perfect society cantered around a perfect person—both the citizen, and the governor—based on the existing system of *polis*.²¹ In their doctrine about such a desirable society, everything appeared interconnected in one unbreakable circuit: the ideal state, the ideal person, the ideal system of upbringing and education. The perfect state was built upon the community of perfect people carefully selected for this purpose, while these people were creations of a well-planned and meticulously developed education and upbringing system, which was thereafter implemented across the entire state. Indeed, the first link in this closed chain of ideas was of utmost importance — without its specification the whole system would lose its sense and become a utopia. However, each philosophical school and each thinker defined this first link in a different way, some—by proceeding from their understanding of the fundamental role of the state (Platon, Aristotle), the others—by reducing the decision of the problem to the formation of the perfect person (Socrates and his followers).

Let’s consider in more detail works of Xenophon, an outstanding writer and the follower of Socrates, who played a significant role in specification of the concept of *kalokagathia*.²² In his works, Xenophon depicts the ideal person from different perspective: firstly, as an abstract individual whose main characteristic is *kalokagathia*²³; secondly, he gives a series of concrete examples of historical or pseudo-historical figures who were portrayed as the embodiment of his ideal. In his small treatise ‘Oeconomicus,’ Xenophon shows an abstract ideal person²⁴. The content of this dialogue is derived from a conversation of Socrates with

²¹ The literature on these authors is huge, see, for example: KENNY 2002, 9–13.

²² WEIL 1902, 118–121; DELEBECQUE 1957; WOOD 1964, 33–66; ROSCALLA 2004, 115– 124; DE SOUSA 2013, 231–245.

²³ DANZIG 2016, 132–151.

²⁴ HOB DEN 2016, 152–173.

one of his listeners, Critobulus, about a most preferable vocation for a nobleman. Xenophon, however, does not provide a land management manual, but a sort of lifestyle management guide for aristocrats²⁵. The story line of one of the characters—Ischomachus—gives Xenophon the opportunity to explore the concept of *kalos kagathos* repeatedly and from different perspectives (6, 12). Xenophon formulates four main principles of behaviour of the ideal owner and person: 1) shy away from false decorum, acting to please to crowd; 2) learn to supervise other members of the household; 3) have *scholē*; 4) be obedient and tidy. In these reasonings the availability of leisure (*scholē*) is associated with mental, physical and psychological traits of a person. In another Xenophon's writing—'Cyropaedia'—we read about the ideal education system developed by the Persians, which was *de jure* opened to all children, but *de facto* it is accessible only to those whose fathers could allow their offspring not to work (I, 2.15). Thus, leisure (*scholē*) is not a time for idleness or even for literary studies, but the time for self-improvement and service for the good of the state²⁶.

Relating the story of Ischomachus Xenophon meticulously explores the concept of *kalos kagathos*: he is a nobleman of independent means, a large land owner and an active, influential citizen of the state, i.e. *aner politikos*, as opposed to a person who only demonstrates personal excellence of body and spirit. Indeed, *kalos kagathos* is not a honorific, nor is it an inherent characteristic of a social stratum, it rather ascertains the fact of awareness of the merits and achievements of a particular person, regardless of his social status and background. The ideal owner Ischomachus displays the corresponding moral values, including diligence, honesty, decency, trustworthiness, moderation, and generosity (2, 5, 7). Not only is Ischomachus an excellent athlete and, certainly, a soldier, but he is also a person possessing a highly-developed intellect and moral values, as well as a brilliant manager, capable of maintaining the perfect order both in his family and the household. Elitism of the term *kalos kagathos*, revealed in 'Oeconomicus', was stressed by Xenophon in his other works; for example, in 'Hiero' (10), where the powerful ruler is recommended to show concern for the interests of the nobly born (*kaloι kagathoi*) — large land owners and slaveholders. In 'The Greek history' (II, 3), the Athenian elite who fell victim to the terrorist government of the Thirty, is also referred to as the noble (*kaloι kagathoi*). Nonetheless, from the reasonings in 'Oeconomicus' we see how deeply Xenophon perceived the social nature of *kalokagathia*. When he explores the conceptual terms in depth, or when he at times notes that 'good' (*agathos*) characterises the perfection of the spirit, while 'fine' (*kalos*) — the perfection of the body (see, for example, Xen. Mem., II, 6, 30), he may remember that the double perfection is based on the prerequisites of gentility and wealth. Thus, according to Xenophon, the concept of personal perfection—*kalokagathia*—designates a synthesis of physical and moral perfection.

²⁵ JOHNSTONE 1994, 229.

²⁶ JOHNSTONE 1994, 240.

Xenophon employs characters of governors in his works ‘Hiero’ and ‘Cyropaedia’ as examples of pseudo-historical ideal figures. In ‘Hiero,’ in a story narrated by the poet Simonides of Ceos portrayed there as a character, we find an image of the ideal ruler as opposed to the usual tyrant. Here high value is placed on the mutual agreement between the monarch and his aristocratic environment. According to Xenophon, the monarch’s mission is to protect the interests of the noble and wealthy, who are figuratively named *kaloi kagathoi*. In return, they are to support and protect such an exemplary governor. In ‘Cyropaedia,’ the protagonist is Cyrus the Great, the founder of the first Persian Empire²⁷. The title—‘Cyropaedia’—is rightly translated as ‘The Instruction of Cyrus’ since this work tells in great detail about the ideal education system required for the creation—by means of careful step-by-step selection—of the aristocratic elite, with the first place saved for the ruler-conqueror and the founder of the new state. Cyrus the Great, as well as other noble Persians, is presented as a brilliant, physically flawless and highly-skilled soldier. Thus, in ‘Cyropaedia’ we find the synthesis of the most significant ideas that inspired the Greek elite in the 4th century BC, with Xenophon himself being their spokesman. Here we can also detect a theme of the ideal state, called to serve the interests of the aforementioned elite, a theme of the ideal politician — the ruler capable of creating and preserving such a state, and, lastly, a theme of the proper upbringing, necessary to raise the ideal person — both the governor and the citizen.

It is also necessary that we note the originality of Xenophon’s interpretation of the concept of the ideal person *kalos kagathos* in his writings is a bizarre synthesis of the time-honoured aristocratic values with moral and intellectual requirements to the human being introduced in the philosophy of Socrates, as well as Xenophon’s orientation towards vigorous sociopolitical activity. Xenophon’s position, indeed, has something in common with the sophists’ orientation of a strong personality towards success. Yet, the sophists’ promoted success mostly for the sake of success, with its rationale being purely technical (knowledge of politics and rhetoric), without support of any high idea. Whereas Socrates, above all, promoted spiritual perfection without any practical application of success. Only in Xenophon’s works we observe an apposite combination of the technical practicality of the sophists, the refinement of Socrates’ philosophy and the main sociopolitical concepts introduced by the elite of the Greek city state in the 4th century BC. Hence typical for Xenophon merge of the traditional aristocratic values and super modern political ideas including *kalokagathia*.

Many ideas of the Greek authors were later on borrowed and developed by the thinkers of the Renaissance, thus contributing to the formation of the humanistic ideal in the European culture. In our difficult times, when the modern civilization has hit a dead-end with regard to

²⁷ TAMIOLAKI 2016, 174–194.

many ethical and moral dilemmas, there appears to be a need to return to its sources and, above all, to the Greek culture²⁸. Under conditions of ubiquitous globalisation the relationship between public and personal interests and, consequently, the qualities of an individual gain in importance. It is exactly for this reason that culture in general and education in particular play significant role at each stage of historical development with regard to establishing a system of individual and collective values. The culture has ampler opportunities and can express values and ideas which are not necessarily compatible to the establishment — this phenomenon is often observed in the works of modern literature, fine arts and theatre. The prevailing social paradigm, unlike culture, at least in its key parameters, should be compatible to the existing establishment. Any discoordination in this respect may lead to social instability²⁹. Development of such a social paradigm represents a big problem, which the East and the West attempt to solve differently by establishing the national education systems. However, developing the right education system when the young people are preoccupied with the Internet and social networks appears to be extremely difficult. It is when *paideia* in its classical, i.e. ancient understanding—as a combination of upbringing and education—may prove to be invaluable.

Attempts to apply the principles of upbringing and education, developed by the ancient Greeks have been regularly made, though not always successfully³⁰. Sometimes a paradoxical situation may occur when the term *kalokagathia* is used just as a beautiful word regardless of its internal value. Consequently, a certain modern myth has been created³¹ followed by the emergence of personal blogs in the Internet³², collections of apparel and clothing³³, cosmetic and relaxation programs by the name of *Kalokagathia*³⁴. Unfortunately, even with a more serious attitude to the phenomenon of the Greek *kalokagathia* its basis — a harmonious combination of inward and outward perfection is not infrequently overlooked. In different times and in different social strata, only one of the two constituents of the concept of *kalokagathia* tend to prevail. For example, in the Russian culture of the 18th–19th centuries, the achievement of personal *kalokagathia* was regarded as a prerequisite of the correct spiritual development and self-improvement. Poet Vasilij Zhukovskiy in his ballads formulates the notion of an ideal person, the embodiment of good and moral perfection, and thence ‘spiritual knighthood’ becomes a constant theme of the Russian literature and philosophy for

²⁸ BARROTTA 2015, passim; LIMONE 2018, 7–67.

²⁹ FOTOPOULOS 2012, 82.

³⁰ Some time in Croatia even the specialized magazine on pedagogics with the heading «Kalokagathia — Journal for Social and Education Issues» (URL: hrcak.srce.hr/kalokagathia) was published.

³¹ KYSUČAN 2008, 30.

³² E.g., <http://fermicomeniusbilaterale.blogspot.com/2008/12/our-own-kalokagathia-rules-by-sara.html>.

³³ E.g., http://www.schick-in.de/Schick_und_In/Angela_Toennies_Exposee_Design_Concept_screen.

³⁴ E.g., <https://www.hotelgolfi.cz/en/weekend-packages/kalokagathia-weekend>.

many decades to follow³⁵. There were also other adherents of the Greek *kalokagathia* who understood it exclusively as the achievement of the outward perfection. Most vividly such attitude can be observed in sports. For example, the modern Czech philosopher of sport Irena Martínková defines the term in such a way that its dichotomy is completely absent. Martínková defines *kalokagathia* merely as ‘beautiful and good movement’ or even uses little a rather strange word combination ‘movement of the truth’³⁶.

Much deeper understanding of the concept of the ancient *kalokagathia* and its significance for human development was demonstrated in the 19th century by Pierre de Coubertin, who formulated the principles of the modern Olympic movement (1894)³⁷. Moreover, the idea of the revival of the notion of human perfection in the context of a new, ‘spiritual’ orientation of recreational sports appears to be gaining currency in some circles of the modern society. Hence, not only ideas and reasonings of the ancient Greeks, but also the term *kalokagathia* prove to be in demand³⁸. Scientific discoveries and advancements of the late 20th century, particularly, in fundamental physics and biology bear evidence of the utmost importance of both physical and moral education for the modern-day individual. This formed the basis for an initiative of the international group of scientists who decided to revive the idea of the ancient *kalokagathia*. In Russia the supporters of this movement selected St. Petersburg as a venue for their actions³⁹. In 1997, a special Greek delegation led by the mayor of Akharne, Anastasis Mystakatos, visited St. Petersburg to discuss this particular question⁴⁰. The delegation included representatives of the main political parties of Greece, mayors of important Greek cities, including the mayor of the legendary Marathon. In 2000, in Athens, the Council of the governors of East Attica, the International Club of scientists and the International Federation of Shaping reached the final agreement; thus, officially launching the revival of *kalokagathia* and the start-up of joint Russian-Greek events promoting the initiative. St. Petersburg—where the restoration initiative began—was chosen as the capital of the revived *kalokagathia*.

In accordance with the reached agreements, annual *Kalokagathia*-marathons were held since 1997 for more than 10 years. The symbols of *Kalokagathia*-marathons include: wheat grains — they symbolise thoughts implanted in human minds by the thinkers-humanists of the past; green branches — symbolising the younger generations, since it is for the good young people that this marathon is held. Thirdly, the young men run dressed in Greek national costume to convey the idea that the seeds planted by the ancient Greeks have

³⁵ YANUSHKEVICH 2015, 189.

³⁶ MARTÍNKOVÁ 2008, 53–62.

³⁷ LOLAND 1995, 49–78; LENK 2007, 39–47.

³⁸ DOMBROWSKI 2009.

³⁹ See <http://www.shaping.ru/kalokagathia>, <http://www.kalokagathia.ru>.

⁴⁰ Akharne is an area of Athenes where during ancient times the well-known Platon's Academy was situated.

produced new growth. Participants in the marathon start from the square in front of the Alexandro-Nevskaya Lavra and finish in the stadium 'Petrovsky'. By the moment of their arrival at the stadium the festivities celebrating beauty and health will have begun. Hymns to shaping, bodybuilding, Tae Kwon Do, acrobatic rock-and-roll are performed. The audience could see demonstrations of aerobics, Tae Kwon Do and shaping. The main idea of a marathon is to produce, so to speak, 'good fruits' — i.e. to make a healthy lifestyle the ideology of youth. The main goal of the marathon is to find a way for improvement of physical and spiritual health of the young people. The urgency of taking actions in this direction is based on the fact that youth health issues have reached critical levels, beyond which birth defects in the following generations are more than probable.

Apart from *Kalokagathia*-marathon, there are other events organised. Thus, since 1999 a special contest 'Miss *Kalokagathia*' has been held as a part of the beauty pageant 'Miss St. Petersburg'. In October 2000, the first 'Modern *kalokagathia* week' was held in St. Petersburg, with its motto being 'The New millennium — the new physics — new technologies — healthy and beautiful person — a happy society.' The same year within the framework of the 'Modern *kalokagathia* weeks' an Internet forum 'Moral values. Modern perceptions' took place. At this forum, representatives of various confessions, scholars and researchers answered the questions of the Internet users about a healthy lifestyle. In April 2003, in the Greek Olympia, the special Russian-Greek commission made a decision to organise an International *Kalokagathia* Committee under the patronage of the Ministry of culture and sports of Greece with the participation of representatives of Russia. According to a Committee member, 'this decision summarised the discussions about a possible role the ancient Greek *kalokagathia* can play in the modern civilization — the idea that the perfect person is the one who unites both beauty and goodness.'

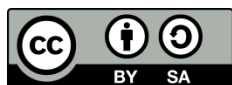
As it stands, in spite of the enormous interest demonstrated by the modern science and society in the phenomenon of the ancient *kalokagathia*, there is no denying that torn from its roots *kalokagathia* cannot be fully realised. At the same time, the concept of education of a perfect person developed by the ancient Greeks has a huge potential, and even if implemented only partially, it will be extremely advantageous to the future generations.

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