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HAROLD D. EVJEN

ANCIENT GREEK ATHLETICS

AN OVERVIEW



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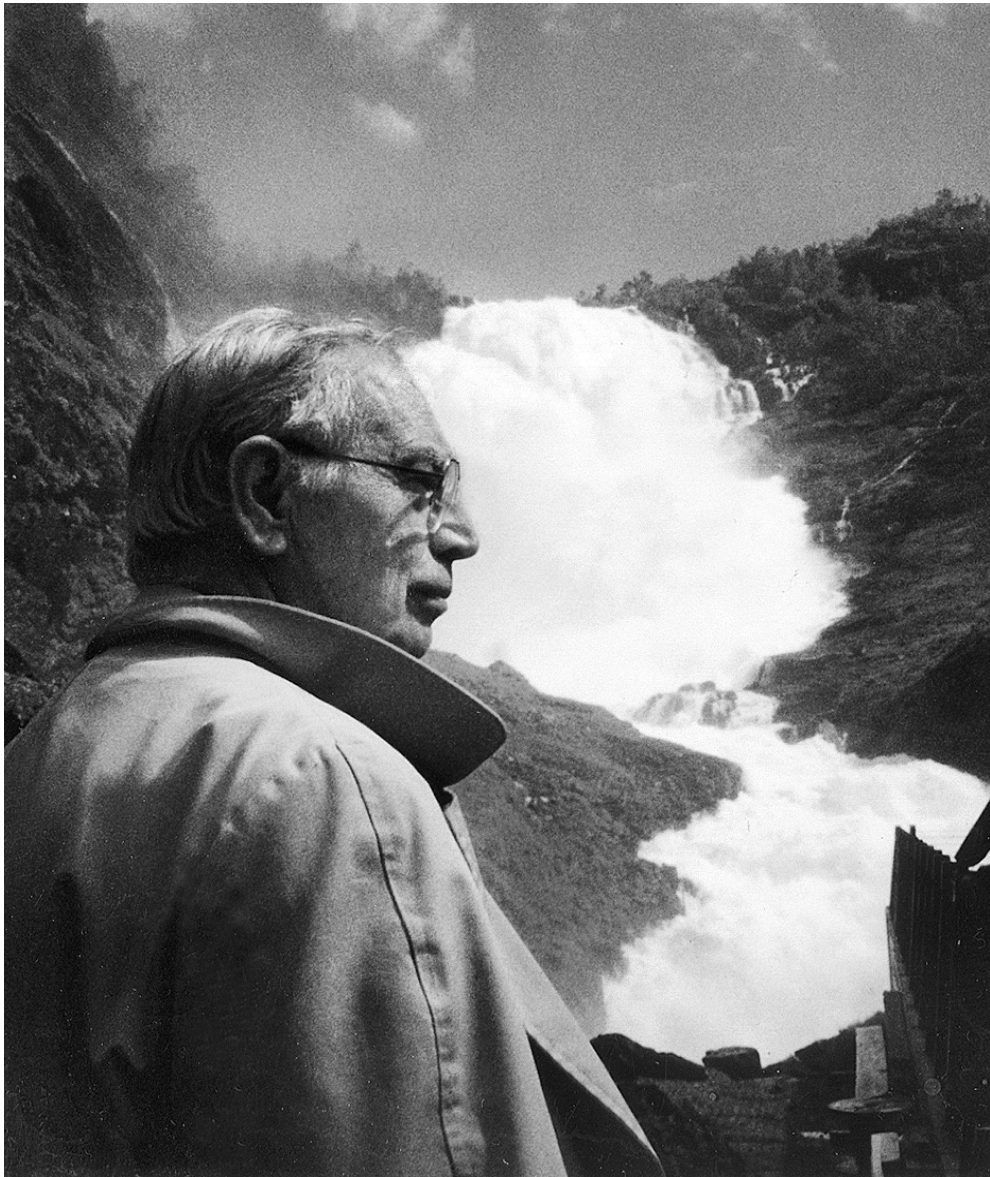
Panepistimiou 22, Athens 106 72

Fax 210 3644996 - tel. 210 3609689 - secre@archetai.gr - www.archetai.gr

Cover illustration: Discus-thrower by Constantine Dimitriadis (1881-1943), bronze

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Harold D. Evjen (1929-2016).

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PREFACE

Harold D. Evjen initiated and taught a course on Ancient Athletics at the University of Colorado, Boulder, at the Collage Year in Athens, Greece, and at the Hellenic Institute in Greece, a program he founded.

The book at hand came as a result of his teachings and also of his personal involvement in athletics being an athlete himself during his school and college years. It was written in 2002-2003 and is now published *post mortem*.

The fundamental connection between ancient athletics and religious festivals is argued, as it reflects his long standing interest in Greek Mythology, a subject he also taught. His presentation of the ancient athletic facilities is based not only on the archaeological record, but also on his own observations after more than fifty years of frequent visits at the sites.

For the athletic events, to better explain their mechanics, he consulted with his colleagues, scientists in Physics, and also organized experiments carried out by student athletes at the University of Colorado. The technical staff of the University of Colorado Museum of Natural History provided the athletes with replicas, in actual size and weight, of items needed such as discos and alteres. The participating student-runners were fitted accordingly to the specific task. In the same line of research, he interviewed contemporary Olympic athletes whose input gave an experienced perspective from “within”, and he consulted with oil producers in Greece, when he evaluated the prizes given to the victors of games in the form of olive oil: namely how the preservation of the oil in ceramic vessels could affect its quality and subsequently its use and value.

The study of athletics starts with a discussion of the theories of the origin of athletic events going back to Egypt and Phoenicia, and the Minoan and Mycenaean cultures. Evidence for the above arguments come from artistic presentations of skilled performers, but lack information of open competition on a recurring basis, or an indication if the events shown present athletes or warriors or participants in a religious practice. Thus the origins of competitive athletics remains speculative. Olympia, its mythology, monuments and literary sources take priority in the study. The athletic events are presented in chronological order of their establishment and also in the particulars of rules and technicalities necessary for the performances. Ethnic, diplomatic, social and economic aspects of the games are discussed. The same approach is followed for the Pythian, Isthmian and Nemea crown games. The athletic facilities of each site are treated with emphasis on their differences and special innovations. The importance of these events rests with the development of Panhellenism and also with the side benefits of truces as well as with the sharing of intellectual and artistic achievements. Panathenaia is the most important athletic event next to the crown games; a local affair elevated to Panhellenic status, as the wide-spread presence of the panathenaic amphorai indicates. Both Panathenaia and Theseia were supported by the politically strong Athenian personalities; Theseia, though, remained a popular local event. Eleusis held important enough games worth being mentioned by Pindar. Coaches and trainers, or paidotribes, who were

either former aristocratic athletes or paid professionals, were providing the training, including appropriate diet, for the young.

The biographies of the famous athletes are difficult to reconstruct free of legend: Milo of Kroton could carry a bull and then eat it in one day! Phayllos of Kroton was, possibly, the same one with the hero at the battle of Salamis, Theogenes of Thasos statue performed miracles, after his death! Enthyamos of Lokroi did not even die; he was taken away by the river-god Caesius claimed to be his father. Equally heroized by divine interference was Kleomedes of Astypalaia. Alcibiades of Athens was said to have an unmatched record in Olympic equestrian competition.

Literature is almost silent about women's athletics; Pausanias is the only source on the girls' race at Olympia. Statuettes and vase paintings are not easy to interpret. The Brauron and Mounichia examples may indicate ritual events rather than competitive ones.

Athletics are viewed as a very important multifaceted activity; athletic events are tied with religious practices, economics, social life, politics, including international diplomacy, military preparedness, and the arts, as they have inspired poets, painters and sculptors. Equally important was the role of athletics as a psychological release of aggression.

It is to wonder if the Olympic spirit was revived with the truce between North and South Korea during the Winter Olympics in Seoul, in 2018.

Harold Evjen's family wishes to thank Dr. Basileios Petrakos, Secretary General of the Archaeological Society of Athens and the Council of the Society for including this study in the series of the Society's publications.

T.H.T-E.

THE ORIGINS AND FUNCTIONS OF FORMAL ATHLETIC COMPETITION IN THE ANCIENT WORLD

The search for the origins of formal athletic competition and of sports generally has in a sense been underway for a century or more in the scholarly literature of Europe and more recently in North America. The search has intensified in recent decades, especially with the development of athletic and sports history as a recognized specialty with its own journals and scholarly meetings and, for athletics in Greece and Rome, a shared bibliographic category (*Navigation, chasse, Sports et Jeux divers*) in *l'Année Philologique*. This recent discipline has become quite complex because athletic history, in addition to literary and historical texts, increasingly involves the results of archaeological exploration, the latest theories and advances in religious studies, the comparative use of anthropological field data, iconographical analysis, military history, epigraphy, psychology and on occasion even vigorous cultural or racist partisanship. Needless to say, the search for origins has produced too many theories and too much material to be reviewed here and only a few will be examined either because they are widely held and/or because they illustrate the impact various disciplines have had on the development of the history of athletics as a field of study in its own right. Furthermore, as is true with any discipline closely tied to archaeology, the most carefully researched position based upon currently available data can be endangered or overturned by discoveries in the field or, belatedly, in the store rooms of museums. Significant progress has been made in the last several decades especially in eliminating, clarifying and identifying possibilities, if not in isolating probable origins. Further, scholars, especially in archaeology and anthropology, will continue to find evidence throughout the world for sports activity, either in their excavations or in their observations of contemporary primitive societies, simply because the instinct to play is apparently universal. Some sports may be identifiable as borrowed from other cultures while many undoubtedly are the product of local development. Because of this universality of play and games, many based upon vigorous physical activity, some criterion or set of criteria should be established to assist in the search for the origins of formal competitive athletics.

The definition of formal athletic competition used in this study is as follows: competition in contests involving vigorous physical activity which are conducted in accordance with widely agreed upon and enforced rules; these contests are recurring, held in public, and are open to more than a very narrow segment of the population; and the winning of any of these contests is not foreordained and is widely regarded as a significant achievement; and therefore those participating commit themselves to more than casual preparation. This definition needs modification for equestrian events, and also obviously excludes many aspects

of physical education, play, dance in many forms, hunting and recreation, which were widely practiced in antiquity. It focuses upon what is often regarded as a peculiarly Greek phenomenon, the great panhellenic athletic festivals dating at least to seventh century B.C. as well as the many regional and local festivals from the same or somewhat later period. It avoids the controversy which rose from assertions in the 19th century that agonism or competitive drive and its expression in physical contests was almost exclusively a characteristic of ancient Greek culture, a view which has been refuted. A better statement of the issue of agonism is: what is the range within a culture of the acceptable expression of competition and why? Open, public significant competition, including athletics, undoubtedly received a broad arena in ancient Greece, but the reasons for this are far from obvious. In the search for origins of athletic competition in Greece, two basic approaches have been used: one is to assert that the Greeks learned and borrowed competitive athletics from some Near or Middle Eastern society and then to attempt to identify that society and the necessary points of cultural contact; the other is to assert that competitive athletics were basically indigenous to the Greeks and not borrowed. Adopting this second approach leads to another question: at what point in time did the Greeks develop competitive athletics? As early as the Mycenaean period or were they the product of the later Geometric and Archaic Ages? If one chooses to pursue the first option, a number of eastern Mediterranean cultures were older than that of Greece and therefore become possible candidates to be the athletic tutors of Greece. Egypt, Phoenicia and Crete will be examined either because of the richness of the available evidence and of the probability of significant contact with Greece, or because of vigorous athletic claims in their behalf. Athletics in the ancient world presents a special challenge to the historian because the sources available are primarily artists. Interpreting an artistic depiction of physical activity, often unaccompanied by written explanatory commentary, can be extremely difficult: the artist's ability to portray the human body in vigorous physical action may fall short of the realism necessary to insure agreement in interpretation; and the physical activity depicted may have a purpose remote from athletic competition – i.e. it may be a cultic activity which lacks some of the essential components of athletics. These reservations must be kept in mind especially when examining evidence from pharaonic Egypt and Crete, even indeed from Mycenaean Greece.

Pharaonic Egypt, with wealth sufficient to provide leisure, often regarded as a necessary precondition to the development of more than very rudimentary competitive athletics, cannot be ignored, although it has on occasion been abruptly dismissed. E. Norman Gardiner, the distinguished early twentieth century British historian of ancient athletics, has presented an influential and negative appraisal:

“The Egyptians, like all orientals, loved shows of every sort it is clear that they had no claim to be an athletic people though there may have been plenty of athletic material among the lower classes. For thousands of years the upper classes lived a life of luxurious ease and security in the fertile Nile valley. They were not a military people, their army was

recruited chiefly from the warlike tribes of the Sudan. Among such a people athletics are not likely to flourish, and whatever else Greece owed to Egypt it is certain that she did not owe them the athletic impulse.”¹

Gardiner was aware of the ample evidence for wrestling, stick fighting, and various acrobatics from the tomb paintings of pharaonic Egypt but dismissed them as military training and amusements of the lower classes and found no evidence for organized competition in them. In the last twenty five years or so the extensive remains from Egypt, both written and artistic, have been more carefully reexamined for evidence of athletic activity by a number of scholars.² The results are an impressive array of literary and artistic sources demonstrating a centuries-long involvement in sports and physical activities including wrestling, stick fighting, acrobatics, boxing, archery, equestrian events, boating, and ball games. Clearly demonstrated is the importance of physical training for the pharaoh, including archery, afoot and from moving chariots, boating, equestrian activities, and especially running. He is often depicted running while carrying vases, oars, or birds, an activity often associated with either the pharaoh’s assumption of rule, the jubilee ceremony commemorating thirty years of rule, or the triennial celebrations following the jubilee. A common explanation, especially for the jubilee and subsequent festivals, is the necessity for the ruler to prove his continued physical prowess and therefore his continued ability to maintain the physical cosmos, plus the possible thought that by successfully completing the run, the pharaoh’s own power is magically renewed. The boast of the pharaoh to be “the fastest of the fast” may reflect an early tradition of selecting a ruler through physical trial, which indeed would have placed great emphasis upon athletic ability. But if in fact the physical prowess of the ruler was essential for a stable cosmos, the presentation in art of an athletic pharaoh was a critical aspect of rule and must have become part of the royal dogma. The boast of physical prowess by the pharaoh came to reflect ritual and not actual athletic supremacy, which diminishes its significance for competitive athletics. Therefore the search for activity which may fully qualify as athletic must be directed to other segments of Egyptian society.

Wrestling obviously takes pride of place simply because of the amount of extant evidence. Clearly identifiable scenes of wrestling begin in the fifth dynasty (ca. 2465-2325 B.C.) and continue throughout the second millennium. An especially rich site, Beni Hassan, from the eleventh dynasty (2134-1991 B.C.), contains a great variety of wrestling pairs. The paintings have distinguished the two wrestlers by lighter and darker colors, just as modern text books

1. Gardiner, AAW 4, 8.

2. One of the most productive is Wolfgang Decker who has written a number of seminal works: *Die physische Leistung Pharos* (1971); *Quellentexte zu Sport und Körperkultur im alten Ägypten* (1975), with translation and commentary on forty-four documents,

mostly hieroglyphic; *Annotierte Bibliographie zum Sport in alten Ägypten* (1978), with discussion of 701 titles; *Sports and Games of Ancient Egypt* (1992); *Bild Atlas zum Sport in alten Ägypten* (1994), in two volumes with Michael Herb.

on wrestling, so the viewer can tell more clearly what holds or defenses each wrestler is attempting. No rules for a formal wrestling match are preserved in spite of the obvious popularity of the sport, a situation which unfortunately also plagues the study of ancient Greek wrestling. Comments attached to the artistic depictions are more often challenges and insults – the ancient equivalent to “trash talking” which increasingly mars modern competition. The sophistication of the wrestling techniques illustrated at Beni Hassan (practically every hold and maneuver known to modern wrestling) point to a long tradition in wrestling (pl. I, fig. 1).

The other combat sport amply recorded in the New Kingdom (ca. 1552-1153 B.C.) is stick fighting by pairs. In this contest the opponents attack each other with sticks in much the same way as fencing. The sticks preserved in the grave of Tutankhamon are about a meter in length and occasionally have something like a handle. The combatants protected themselves either with guards attached to the left forearm with which were to fend off blows, or sticks in each hand to increase both offensive and defensive capabilities, or with some sort of strap protecting the chin and forehead. Again no rules are preserved. The losing fighter-fencer, as well as the losing wrestler, may be depicted as knocked or thrown to the ground.³

A carved relief in the Mortuary Temple of Ramesses III at Medinet Habu (pl. I, fig. 2), dating to the 12th century B.C., depicts wrestling, second and third pairs from the left, and stick-fighting, first pair from the left, between Egyptians and foreigners, probably Nubians. The apparent interference in one of the wrestling matches (second pair from the left) by a possible official may even point towards competition controlled by firm and enforced rules. The presence of an audience, not depicted, in fig. 2, possibly including the pharaoh and foreign envoys, provides one of the essential trappings of major athletic competition. The probable military context should not necessarily disqualify this as evidence of a tradition of competition on a large scale as Greek athletics also owed much to military connections. Even a cultic context does automatically disqualify the activity as athletic.⁴ Major Greek athletic festivals were part of cultic activity. But this scene may also represent merely a ritual contest, especially since only Egyptians seem to be winning and suspicions of possible sham fights have been raised.⁵ The artists, probably Egyptians and certainly working under the supervision of court officials, may be more responsible for the outcome of the competitions than the contestants themselves. The actions of the apparent victors, both in wrestling and

3. See Decker, *Sports* 70-87.

4. A scene from the 19th dynasty (Ramesses II, ca. 1290-1224 B.C.) depicts stick fighters and wrestlers competing next to the cult image of Thutmosis III (1490-1436 B.C.). The art work is at least a century and a half later than Thutmosis III. If there is any sig-

nificance in the juxtaposition of these contests and the cult image, then Decker, *Sports* 82, correctly raises the issue of commemorative game for a deified ruler and draws a parallel with the funeral games and hero cult games of the Greeks.

5. Poliakoff, *Combat Sports* 108.

stick fighting, are fairly uniform: they rush off with arms upraised, leaving their opponents on the ground. This type of exultation is still very much a part of the athletic scene today where similar behavior by the athlete who has scored a goal or touchdown has become a commonplace in games. If, however, this scene does depict a court ritual of some sort with preordained results, its significance as an athletic document is reduced. Open, vigorous contest, an essential criterion of the type of competitive athletics defined above, may not have been easily tolerated in the upper levels of the hieratic, hierarchical structure of the Egypt of the pharaohs, but there is no compelling reason to deny it to the masses, even if largely confined to the military, both Egyptians and foreigners serving in the Egyptian military.

The eighteenth dynasty (1402-1347 B.C.) provides the only apparent depiction of boxing: it seems to present pairs of boxers with fists clenched in a very awkward way with the thumbs jutting straight forward rather than tucked beneath the knuckles. The arm positions are also awkward. Either the artist was quite unfamiliar with the sport and therefore unable accurately to portray boxing, or the sport was seldom indulged in so that neither the artist nor the participants fully understood what they were about.

To sum up combat sports: wrestling and stick fighting were obviously popular over many centuries and a high degree of skill was acquired by the participants. The depictions of these sports are frequently part of official celebrations and probably involved mainly soldiers. Certainly serious competition was possible even though some of the occasions may have had cultic overtones. The question of boxing is perplexing. Boxing can be traced back to the third millennium in Syria, but it is possible that the Egyptians did not develop sufficient interest in it to gain minimal expertise. The reason could not be that they abhorred violent sport because stick fighting and boat jousting (crews of river boats fighting one another with the long poles normally used to guide the boats) could easily become bloody and damaging contests.

There are also a number of depictions of gymnastics and acrobatic dancing by both males and females which indicate a fairly high degree of development in skills of agility and movement, abilities critical for most types of athletics. Unfortunately, the setting for these displays are not clear and one assumption has them as entertainment for the nobility, possibly in a banquet setting.⁶

One more recurring theme in Egyptian art deserves mention. These are depictions of bull hunting and capture using ropes (lassoes), clubs, and some type of dart. The constant presence of the bull in Egyptian art is not expected. The bull was commonly part of Near and Middle Eastern religious beliefs and cults, as is to be anticipated in early cultures which were attuned to natural symbols of fertility, virility, and power. Hunting and capturing such a powerful creature, whether wild or domesticated but not tamed, would be a fruitful activity within the royal dogma. A wooden box from the eighteenth dynasty (1552-1306 B.C.)

6. See Decker, *Sports* 136-146.

displays a scene that might possibly involve bull leaping, an activity (sport?) rather common in Minoan Cretan and Mycenaean art.

Although recent sports-oriented research has elevated the role of athletics in Egypt of the second millennium B.C., it still falls short of establishing a diversified program of open competition on a recurring basis with fairly broad participation. Competition may have been limited to the basic elements of military training and even to members of the military. The participants may have been cloaked in the anonymity of group performance at court ceremonies and the audience may have been limited to court functionaries. This, however, did not diminish the joy of victory, even if in a ritual contest, as is shown by the apparently victorious wrestler exulting in triumph (fourth pair from the left in pl. I, fig. 2). Whatever interpretation is given to the evidence from pharaonic Egypt of the second millennium B.C., evidence for the continuation of these activities into the first millennium is minimal. Similar events either did not exist in Egypt of the fifth century B.C. or were so sporadic as to draw no comment from Herodotos, who stresses the reverse: the Egyptians were lacking in the athletic festivals so common in Greece except at Chemmis whose games in honor of Perseus-Horus appeared to have a distinctly Greek flavor. It has been suggested that the presence of a Greek settlement nearby at Neapolis ultimately led to this Hellenized celebration. It is possible that the Egyptians in earlier times, i.e. 700 to 1500 years before Herodotos' visit, enjoyed major recurring athletic festivals which met the definition of competitive athletics offered above in several significant ways; it is also possible that these became known either directly to the Mycenaean Greeks or indirectly through the Minoans, that the Mycenaeans imitated this agonism, and that this was then passed on to the Greeks of the Geometric and Archaic periods and to Olympia. Unfortunately the assumptions necessary to support this thesis are many and the evidence still too scanty. Although recently enhanced as a candidate for founder of formal athletic competition in the Mediterranean, Egypt must still contend with the claims of others.

Ancient Phoenicia has recently received vigorous, but poorly grounded advocacy as founder of the Greek agonistic spirit. Labib Boutros has argued not only that the Phoenicians were actively pursuing competitive athletics in a sacred context by 1500 B.C., but also that Phoenician colonists introduced athletics into Greece and even founded the Olympic games.⁷ He uses as evidence the prominent role of Kadmos, reputedly a Phoenician, in Greek myth, especially in the founding legends of Thebes. Mythological dates and occurrences can be slippery supports, especially when lacking any other evidence, and the interaction between mythologies of two different cultures is a complex phenomenon which often transcends chronological constraints. Boutros presents other strained arguments based, *inter alia*, on linguistics, i.e. he derives Elis, the name of the district in which Olympia is located, from

7. Boutros, *Phoenician Sport*. Evjen, "Semitic Origin" 271-278 and "Competitive Athletics" 51-56.

the Phoenician God El, and on a drastic re-dating to the mid-second millennium B.C. of a Greco-Roman stadium found in ancient Phoenicia. At the moment, persuasive evidence both for significant public athletic competition in ancient Phoenicia and for sufficiently early Phoenician contact with Greece is lacking for Boutros' thesis; nevertheless, it remains possible that archaeology may salvage some aspects of it, and the rather ubiquitous Phoenicians may yet play some role in the early phases of Mediterranean athletic history.

Minoan Crete, including the island Thera or Santorini, presents some promising features but of far more limited scope: evidence for boxing is present both among adults and children; there is one firm and other possible depictions of running; there is a possible depiction of wrestling; and several artistic media present examples of bull-leaping. The many representations of bull leaping or jumping, if taken at face value, represent such breath-taking athletic ability on the part of the participant and amiability on the part of the bull as to defy belief. J. G. Younger has analyzed fifty-four Minoan and Mycenaean bull-leaping scenes and has identified forty-six of them as representing three different jumping techniques.⁸ His Schema I (seven examples), the technique first described by Sir Arthur Evans, the initial excavator of the palace at Knossos on Crete,⁹ is the most improbable and presumes that the participant seized from the front the horns of a galloping bull, flipped over the head of the bull landing feet-first onto its back, and then flipped again over the rear of the bull onto the ground (pl. II, fig. 1). This interpretation was largely based upon a small bronze statuette found near Rethymnon (pl. II, fig. 2). Schema II (22 examples), the technique identified by Younger, has the participant diving over the head of a charging bull, preferably from an elevated position, landing on his hands on the back of the bull, and then flipping backwards and landing on his feet behind the bull (pl. III, fig. 1). Schema III (17 mostly late examples), first identified by A. Sakellariou,¹⁰ depicts the leaper in a single pose above the back of the bull after apparently having approached from the side and using the head or neck of the bull as support for a leap sideways over the back of the bull (pl. III, fig. 2). Younger regards this last technique, called the "floating leaper," as primarily the creation of the aesthetic demands of the tondo form of lentoid seals because thirteen of the seventeen illustrations are found on such seals; he therefore dismisses them as a late, non-realistic attempt to depict the sport of bull-leaping. Five of the remaining eight examples depict an alighting jumper which could fit either Schema I or Schema II, while three cannot be placed into any category. The famous bull fresco from Knossos does not fit any of these three categories but seems to be a combination of Schemas I and II (pl. IV, fig. 1). Few of the many attempts to explain bull jumping are fully persuasive except those which challenge the evidence, such as that by John Chadwick:¹¹

8. J. G. Younger, "Bronze Age Representations of Aegean Bull-Leaping", *AJA* 80 (1976), 125-137.

9. *Palace of Minos* III 203-232.

10. A. Sakellariou, *Les cachets minoens* (1958) 85-89.

11. J. Chadwick, *The Mycenaean World* (1976) 4-6.

“It is physically impossible for even the most highly trained athlete to perform a somersault over the back of a charging bull, even less to be caught by another performer stationed behind the bull. The apparent positions are due to the artist’s failure to show perspective. The sport must have been for the performer to excite the bull to charge him, and then at the critical moment to leap high in the air, allowing the bull to pass harmlessly underneath, and tucking his legs up so that no contact took place, for contact with an object moving at fifty km per hour is likely to be disastrous.”

Chadwick’s analysis, based upon a somewhat similar modern activity in the south of France, approaches Younger’s Type II, the schema of the “Diving Leaper,” although without touching the back of the bull. Younger’s suggestion that the leaper in Type II begins from a platform or podium or from the shoulders of a front assistant seems rather untenable unless the bull is fairly stationary or the object is to dive over the bull as it charges the platform. In this case the bull would either crash into the platform or suddenly stop or turn. In either case the athletic feat is greatly diminished. But doing a diving flip over a bull approaching at a full gallop would still defy the abilities of the best gymnast. The timing of the leap would be possible only if the bull were charging from close quarters and therefore not able to gain full speed.¹² Whatever the object of bull leaping, if performed in any way approximating the ancient depictions, it demanded great athletic skill and agility for the survival of the human participants. Ritual interpretations of bull-leaping are numerous, e.g., M. Cameron suggests that the inevitable shedding of blood was part of a fertility cult,¹³ while N. Marinatos proposes a ceremonial initiation of aristocratic male youths, thus rejecting the frequent interpretation of the white-painted participants as females (pl. IV, fig. 1).¹⁴ Bull leaping as depicted by Minoan artists is an unbelievable athletic/gymnastic feat. It may have been beyond the skills of the Minoan artist to indicate clearly the complexity of the event. The galloping bull may have been merely an artistic motif from bull hunting scenes or form the repertoire of depicting animals at full run. If this event, whether purely athletic or not, took place in a limited space, where the bull could not gain full speed, and where the gymnast had time to vault against the shorter, more twisting moves of a bull in pursuit as the athlete moves about, then the feat is quite possible for a well-trained gymnast. If this activity developed out of the bull hunt and capture, where several approach the bull with ropes and nets and are functioning at close range, then this analysis of the bull leaping

12. Discussions with Marta Wachter, former Hungarian Olympic gymnast and later an intercollegiate champion at the University of Colorado in Boulder, confirm this. A good example of doing flips over the head of a bull is provided by rodeo clowns in the USA who place a hand on the head of a bull, which is charging and twisting and turning at close range after having thrown its rider, and flips over the bull. The

clowns’ job is to distract the bull until the thrown or dismounted rider gets to safety. In this instance, the bull and the clowns are at fairly close range and the bull is not moving at anything approaching full speed.

13. Hägg, Marinatos (eds), *The Functions* 325.

14. “The Bull as Adversary: Some Observations on Bull-Hunting and Bull-Leaping”, in *Festschrift for S. Alexiou* (Rethymnon 1989). Thompson, “The Location” 5-13.

scenes would be easily tied to the hunting/capture scenes. It is possible that the bull leaping may be somewhat related either to the later Greek rather demanding ritual where some participants in the sacrifice of a bull had to subdue and place it on the altar or to the even late Thessallian Greek bull fighters who contended bare-handedly with bulls in the Roman amphitheatre.

Boxing, along with bull-leaping, is prominently depicted on the Boxer Rhyton from Agia Triada dated to ca. 1500 B.C. (pl. IV, fig. 2). The vase presents four zones of relief carving, with the third and fourth registers presenting a series of remarkably similar pairs of boxers with the one on the left having knocked his opponent off his feet. There is one startling difference between the upper and lower pairs of boxers: the upper pairs wear (not military) helmets. One explanation is that these boxers have some sort of hard gear over their right fists which would both protect the hand and increase the damaging effect of the blow. The artist may have tried to capture a good left punch in which the offensive boxer brings added force to the blow by stepping into it with his left foot. The opponent is, however, already on the ground. Because the extended left arm of the offensive boxer is not really in the best position to have delivered a strong blow, the artist may be depicting a traditional pose by the winning boxer after knocking his opponent down. The helmets may have been worn to protect the head from blows, especially if each boxer wore something on his right hand to increase the damaging effect of a right handed punch. The bottom register presents a very similar scene: one boxer, always the one on the left, standing over a fallen opponent. There are no helmets, however. The victorious boxer strikes a pose almost exactly the same as the helmeted victors. His fallen opponent, has gone down in for more dramatic fashion, literally knocked off his feet. One common explanation for the differences between the two registers is that of age, older boxers in the higher register and younger in the lower. I fail to see any difference in body size or maturity between the two. The difference may simply be different styles of boxing – with and without a type of glove. Some have argued for two more different types of events: boxing and the pankration, the latter a type of free-for-all fighting popular in Greece. The striking similarity in the postures of the combatants in both registers argues for the same event, boxing, conducted in two different styles.

The top register of this rhyton is the most puzzling. To the left of the pillar are two figures confronting each other – possibly a wrestling pair because neither figure has a pose similar to the obvious boxing scenes in the third and fourth registers. To the right of the column are two figures leaning forward (to the right) but there is not enough preserved to determine clearly what they are doing. To their right, one figure is down on one knee. The standing figures could be running but both arms are extended forward, an awkward posture for running. They may be leaning forward as eager spectators watching the activity in front of them, a type of combat sport which could place a contestant down on one knee. Here again, because of the iconographical difference with the third and fourth registers, possibly they watch a wrestling match. Whatever overall interpretation is placed on these and similar

scenes, i.e. cultic combat, rites of passage or *agoge* for Minoan youth, etc., one or two forms of boxing were practiced on Minoan Crete. The boxing children fresco from Thera (pl. IV, fig. 3) further indicates that this activity was not limited to young males of military age and scenes of the very young up to mature young men competing in boxing may also indicate the achievement of a fair degree of sophistication. There are sufficient fragments of the fresco to indicate clearly that these are children and that they apparently wear a glove-like article on their right hands but not on their left hands, a practice which may also be reflected on the helmeted boxers on the Hagia Triada rhyton. This has been called one-handed boxing with the left hand used primarily defensively while the right hand is used to deliver the major blows.

Evidence for running is more limited. In addition to the partially preserved figures to the left of the fighting pair on the top zone of the Hagia Triada rhyton, which are occasionally interpreted as runners, there are other fragments of vases which present impressions of runners. Eva Rystedt has collected a number of examples from both Minoan and Mycenaean art, some more persuasive than others.¹⁵ A fragment of a steatite vase from Knossos has been interpreted as depicting running, possibly even a race since there are two figures involved (pl. V, fig. 1). The figure on the left, more fully preserved, could be a fair depiction of a person running, but the second figure raises a problem: the knee seems too high up and too close to the arm for an effective running style. The presence of an altar with the horns of consecration, plus the tree of life, also raise the issue of a religious rite. But as already noted, this should not be used to rule out athletic competition. Witness the much later events at Olympia where the religious setting does not diminish the seriousness of the competition. The second figure does cause concern about either the artist's ability or the possibility that this is a dancing motif. A Theran fresco from room five of the West House provides a very clear depiction of runners. One runner could be explained as a messenger reporting something, but there are here four runners ascending the hill to the upper left, with one apparently looking back at the trailing runner. There is also a runner moving toward the center where a cluster of four people may await him. Explanations can only be speculative. One good possibility is a race, although then the position of the runner toward the center becomes a problem. Is he this far ahead or behind? The fresco does affirm one thing: the Theran artist could clearly portray the human form running, a feat which their colleagues on mainland Greece, the Mycenaean artists, found beyond them.

The major problem with this fairly rich body of Minoan artistic evidence is the total absence of any elucidation and we are left almost totally to analysis of usually fragmentary paintings or relief carvings – never a comfortable basis for deriving secure information. This is unfortunate especially because there are extensive cultural contacts between the Minoans and Mycenaeans, and Minoan frescoes depict what can be interpreted as large crowds of

15. Rystedt, "The Foot-Race" 103-116.

spectators, a desirable component of formal public athletic competition. Furthermore the Minoan palaces had large central courtyards, often believed to provide the spectral areas, but if these courtyards were paved with gypsum or other stone, then their easy use as athletic arenas (especially for the bull games) must be questioned. Discussions of the frescoes and possible arenas for the bull and other games are many, e.g.: A. Evans,¹⁶ A. Cameron,¹⁷ G. Safland,¹⁸ J. W. Graham,¹⁹ and N. Marinatos.²⁰

In sum, Minoan Crete presents an intriguing picture of highly developed athletic skills in some areas, especially boxing and acrobatics, and hints at the possibility of interest in running. It also may include spectatorism, a hallmark of the developed Greek athletic festival, but only very tentative assumptions can be drawn from the present evidence.

This modest survey of early Mediterranean cultures provides no clearly defensible argument for the development of formal, large scale, public athletic competition earlier than the appearance of Greek-speaking peoples in the Eastern Aegean. Indeed a number of scholars argue for an indigenous Greek origin for formal competitive athletics, and of these, some look to the Mycenaean period to support an assumption of a long-standing tradition. This thesis suffers the same basic weakness as that favoring a Minoan origin, i.e. it is an interpretation based on scattered, often fragmentary art work. An attempt to surmount this limitation is occasionally made by arguing that Homeric descriptions of the funeral games for Patroklos in Book 23 of the *Iliad* and of the after-dinner athletics among the Phaeacians in Book 8 of the *Odyssey* reflect late Mycenaean practices. This has been challenged by some textual scholars who tend to date these scenes to the later phases of the poems' development (i.e. to ca. 700 B.C. or later) and by those who have perceived an absence of all forms of athletics in Mycenaean art except boxing, the iconography of which is widely agreed upon (pl. V, fig. 2). Recently, however, this debate has taken a fairly dramatic turn because of an archaeological excavation at Tanagra and the careful reexamination of vases and sherd from various Mycenaean sites, the publications of which have greatly enhanced claims that at least with respect to funeral games and chariot racing the descriptions in the Homeric poems may be rather close to Mycenaean practices. In 1970 Th. Spyropoulos reported the discovery at Tanagra of a painted late Mycenaean larnax with at least five different scenes, two of which are clearly funerary: the corpse in a larnax on one narrow side and a row of mourning women on the upper register of one of the long sides. In the center of the register below the mourning women two men confront each other possibly in some form of combat, perhaps a sword fight, with two chariots, one on each side, facing toward them. There are

16. *Palace of Minos* III 46-48.

17. See n. 13.

18. Hägg, Marinatos, *The Functions* 232-233: the so-called spectator frescoes do not present spectators but a group marriage ceremony at the conclusion of

the Minoan *agoge*.

19. J. W. Graham, *The Palaces of Crete* (1962) 73-83.

20. Marinatos, *Sacrificial Ritual* 51-72.

two or three men in each chariot (pl. VI, fig. 1).²¹ The upper register of the other long side presents wild animals, probably goats, in two units facing toward the center where a man pints a sword at one of the two much larger animals which flank him. The lower register of this side depicts a bull-leaping scene with three bulls, three leapers (probably the Floating Leaper style), and a fourth man standing between two of the bulls (pl. VI, fig. 2). An accepted canon of iconographic interpretation suggests that all the scenes should be related; therefore, all scenes on the Tanagra larnax may reflect funerary activity. Spyropoulos proposed that the scene with combat involved funeral games, an interpretation concurred in by Ahlberg²² and Crouwel,²³ and all three accept an hereditary agreement between late Mycenaean and Geometric funeral customs, i.e. a similar celebration of funerals in the 17th and 9th centuries B.C. In an extensive discussion of this larnax W. Decker compares the sword fight on the larnax with the duel between Aias and Diomedes in *Iliad* 23 and characterizes the duel as the last remnant of an older practice of human sacrifice at funerals in which mere wounding was intended so that some blood would flow; thus the absence of armor was intended to achieve quickly this end.²⁴ The presence of bull games in a funerary context invites further speculation about a subject already beset by major problems of interpretation. E. Vermeule and V. Karageorghis also support the existence of funeral games during the Mycenaean period by suggesting that a vase with a sphinx on one side and two archers and two boxers (?) on the other may depict the “sphinx-guardian and devourer of the dead” along with those who participate in the funeral games.²⁵

Chariot racing, which occupies pride of place in the Homeric games for Patroklos, is not depicted on the Tanagra larnax and a number of scholars have doubted its existence in Mycenaean times because the depictions known to them of horses and chariots on Mycenaean stelai and pottery, the latter mostly fragmentary and from the Cyprus, had failed to produce a convincing racing scene. However, patient reexaminations by K. Killian of material from Tiryns has brought forward provocative evidence in the joining of two sherds of a late Mycenaean amphora (pl. VII, fig. 1).²⁶ The result is a lively presentation of galloping horses drawing a chariot occupied by a single, unarmed driver; thus military or processional trappings are absent. The smaller of the two joined sherds displays a seated female or enthroned goddess holding a kylix. If it is a goddess, the whole scene has a religious or

21. Th. Spyropoulos, *AAA* (1970), 195-197.

22. Ahlberg, *Prothesis and Ekphora in Greek Geometric Art* (1971) 303-304.

23. Crouwel, *Chariots and other Means of Land Transport in Bronze Age Greece* (1981) 138. Michael Gagarin, “Antilochus’ Strategy: The Chariot Race in *Iliad* 23”, *CPh* 78 (1983), 35-39.

24. W. Decker, “Die mykenische Herkunft der griechischen Totenagons”, *Stadion* 8/9 (1982/1983), 6-13.

25. Vermeule, Karageorghis 44 with illustrations 28A and 28B.

26. K. Kilian, “Zur Darstellung eines Wagenrenners aus spätmykenischen Zeit”, *MDAI(A)* 95 (1980), 21-31.

cultic setting and, as Decker argues,²⁷ may well be chariot racing as part of a ceremony honoring the dead. Furthermore, several other sherds have also been identified as possible depictions of Mycenaean racing chariot,²⁸ although none are as persuasive as the Tiryns fragments.

In addition to boxing, both funeral games, with hoplomachy or armed combat, and chariot racing now have improved claims to a Mycenaean ancestry. Recent efforts to identify iconographies for other sports within the rather primitive or limited range of Mycenaean artists have produced claims for runners and athletic spear-throwers. The presumed stylized presentation of a runner, which suggests minimal movement (pl. VII, fig. 2), is supported at least occasionally by the proximity of the generally accepted iconography of boxers and has gained some acceptance.²⁹ The spear-carrying figure is more dubious as an athletic spear or javelin thrower, although one rather battered example from Ugarit might possibly depict the action of non-military spear-throwing.³⁰ The absence of any form of armor is the only indication favoring athletes rather than warriors or guards.

Decker³¹ contributes one further intriguing argument attempting to tie the Homeric funeral games to the Mycenaean era through the non-Greek evidence. A Phoenician merchant ship found off the southern coast of Turkey and excavated by a team headed by George Bass yielded a number of copper and bronze ingots, both the well-known “ox-hide” type and another which Bass called “bun” ingots.³² The latter were like a “round cake, i.e. flat or slightly concave on one side and convex on the other,” a shape produced when the smelted ore was put into rounded, somewhat hollowed out clay molds. The bun ingots are of bronze and average ca. 20 centimeters in diameter and three to four centimeters in thickness. There is wide variation in weight, from one kilo to more than five, probably due to differing states of preservation. The basic shape, size and weight call to mind a number of diskoi from classical Greece. Decker suggests that the “bun” ingot was in fact the origin of the Homeric *solos*, a chunk of iron taken as a battle prize by Achilles from a Cilician and later used as both the weight thrown and the prize given at the funeral games of Patroklos. The switch from bronze to iron is incidental according to Decker, merely representing the increased use of iron after the Mycenaean period. This is a very imaginative leap from a presumed chance occurrence at a Mycenaean funeral in the late thirteenth century B.C. to the Homeric poems and then to the diskos of the Olympic games, but it addresses the unlikely shape of the diskos and suggests a possible further contest for the growing Mycenaean inventory.

27. See n. 24, p. 14-15.

28. Vermeule, Karageorghis 126 and pl. XI 19; and Å. Åkerström, *Φίλια Ἔπη εἰς Γεώργιον Ε. Μυλωνᾶν* A (1986) 144-147.

29. Rystedt, “The Foot-Race” 103-116 with figs 9-10 (boxers and footracers on the same vase); and Laser,

Sport und Spiel 33, fig. 5.

30. Rystedt, “The Foot Race” figs 20-23.

31. See n. 24, p. 15-16.

32. Georg Bass, *Cape Gelidonya: A Bronze Age Shipwreck* (1967) 78.

As scholars become more attuned to athletic activity and its significance, further examples of possible prehistoric agonistic activity may be identified from the present body of material. The one major danger is the temptation to see athletic motifs where none may exist. Although Homer's credentials as a legitimate source for Mycenaean athletics have been enhanced, the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* remain a blend of differing layers of historical background. The rich athletic lore in the legends of Herakles, Perseus, Theseus, *et al.*, hovers constantly on the Mycenaean horizon but here again caution must be exercised especially in view of the ability of writers and artists of much later periods to change and even create legend to meet current needs. W. R. Connor's analysis of the development of the Theseus legend during the 6th and 5th centuries B.C. is especially instructive in this matter.³³

The period from ca. 1100-900 B.C., the so-called Dark Ages of Greece, presents little evidence for athletics and have been thought to lack the stability of fairly continuous habitation of semi-urban centers which would have provided the level of economic security necessary for significant athletic activity. The growing sense that strongly entrenched and conservative funerary customs somehow preserved athletic contests through this period merits a careful study of the still scanty archaeological record for traces of this phenomenon.

The 9th century witnessed increasing development of population centers with resources sufficient to support the beginnings of or renewed activity at major sanctuaries. Once into the 8th century B.C. and later, the existence of competitive athletics becomes increasingly certain as the evidence becomes more profuse and unmistakable and the Homeric poems and other major legends become reasonable sources. There is good evidence from the Geometric and Archaic periods for boxing, including apparently one-handed boxing (pl. VII, fig. 3), wrestling (pl. VII, fig. 4), and possibly chariot Racing.³⁴

The major role of athletics at the funeral of Patroklos, the appearance of athletics at the sanctuary at Olympia early in the 8th century, and the evidence from the end of the 8th and beginning of the 7th centuries for competitive athletics at funerals continue to stress a religious or cultic association and have led to the common argument that athletics in its earliest historical phases were bound closely to cult and religion in some form. The connection with funerals, continuing into the fifth century, notably with the *agon epitaphios* in Athens, received an attractive explanation in van Gennep's seminal study of the rites of passage:³⁵ athletic competition would fulfill several of the needs addressed by funerary practices, i.e. activities which stress the separation between the living and the dead, assuage the anger of the recently deceased by the performance of activity pleasing to them, and/or reintegrate the community of the living after the loss of one of its members. L. Roller has provided a

33. A. G. Ward (ed.), *The Quest for Theseus* (1970) 143-174.

34. Laser, *Sport and Spiel* figs 11, 15, and 33.

35. Van Gennep, *Rites of Passage* (1960) 1-13, 146-165.

convenient survey of the extant references to athletic competition at funerals in ancient Greece.³⁶

Funeral games are also used to explain athletic competition as part of hero cults, here thought to be commemorative celebrations of the death of the hero. Classical sources do not stress this relationship and one must turn to rather late sources which even claim that the four crown games were initially funeral games: Pelops at Olympia, Melekertes at the Isthmia, Opheltes or Archemoros at Nemea, and the serpent Python at Delphi. Competitive athletics as part of hero cults have received other explanations. K. Adshead, a proponent of psychohistory, has argued that hero-cults grew out of the universal longing for some form of immortality, a longing heightened by the anxiety and uncertainty caused by the extensive disruptions which accompanied the development of new social structures during the Archaic age. Competitive athletics became the means of emulating the toil and triumph of the hero and thereby of sharing in his immortality. This puts the great crown games into the category of ecstatic religious experience, and, in Adshead's view, explains the continued emphasis upon cult activity, the unusual conservatism of the athletic program, the brutality of the combat sports, and Pindar's emphasis upon fame, glory, and the undying reputation of the victor but minimal interest in athletics. The victor is elevated above the ordinary human condition by his triumph and therefore gains some form of immortality. Adshead has been greatly impressed by Nilsson's description of the 7th and 6th centuries when "Maenads in their ecstasy raged in the woods and fields... the land was full of prophets, wandering seers, collectors of oracles.... Contagious".³⁷ One might easily question placing the origin of competitive athletics in an arena teeming with ecstatic, hysterical women, prophets, and oracle mongers. One might also easily challenge this characterization of the Archaic period which witnessed impressive advances in law, literature, art, and architecture. However, the hero as athlete did provide a continuing paradigm for the development of biographies of athletes into the fifth century B.C. and the influence of heroic legend on athletics deserves further study.³⁸

Gardiner raises an objection to theories which propose to offer some innate connection between funerals and athletics or cult activity and athletics: in the rough and tumble environment of the heroic age, with unsettled conditions, frequent warfare, intense rivalries among aristocratic clans, etc., competitive athletics were indulged in not as an essential part of some religious celebration but merely because whatever religious ceremony was involved provided a brief moment of truce which permitted otherwise unfriendly or at least distrustful groups to compete in athletic games.³⁹ Cult and religion then provided an opportunity but did not explain why the participants chose athletic competition.

36. Roller, "Funeral Games" 1-18.

37. Adshead, *Politics of the Archaic Peloponnese. The Transition from Archaic to Classical Politics* (1987) 46-66, 50.

38. See Fontenrose, "The Hero". Evjen, "The Origins" 95-104.

39. Gardiner, *Olympia* 67-68.

Other proposed cultic origins, which may place the origins of athletics well before even the Egyptian material discussed above, do offer some rationale for athletics in a religious setting, specifically in fertility and hunting rituals. In fertility and renewal cults a frequent assumption is that the change of seasons, especially from winter to spring, is accompanied by violence or conflict on the divine or cosmic level, a violence often associated with the necessity to replace a fading male fertility power with a younger, more vigorous one; but the old may not always gracefully yield to the new, and hence the need for strife or combat. This divine or cosmic conflict must then be imitated on the human level as part of a ritual to ensure the success of the new; thus arises cultic combat and thus the beginnings of some forms of competitive athletics in ritual. A ritual struggle may even call for the shedding of blood such as the *lithobolia* at Eleusis or, in the extreme, even the taking of human life. Or the ritual may be that of the *hieros gamos*, or sacred marriage, which may call for the selection of a new consort for Earth by some trial of strength, such as a foot race. In the early twentieth century members of the so-called Cambridge School at Cambridge University were active proponents of such ritual origins. One of its distinguished members, F. Cornford, has argued at length that the origin of the Olympic games was to be found in ritual contest, in this instance a footrace, to select a physically superior human ritual counterpart for the new divine consort for Earth. The cult celebration culminated in a sacred marriage ritual involving two human representatives of divine beings: the male sprint champion from the cult of Zeus, the Olympic games, and the female sprint champion from the cult of Hera, the Heraian games.⁴⁰ This approach at least offers some explanation for the puzzle of why athletics in ritual and for the presumed single event (a sprint race) in early Olympic games, but the arguments are primarily hypothetical and their strength is in their own internal logic. Unfortunately, Cornford relies heavily upon untenable assumptions: his use of the eight-year cycle to reconcile solar and lunar time (here Zeus is the sun and Hera the moon) and to support a complex system of four-year cycles for the Olympic games is generally rejected by astronomers on the grounds that the eight-year cycle was not developed until 600 B.C. at the earliest and therefore could have had nothing to do with the origin of the Olympic games;⁴¹ and his union in a *hieros gamos* of the sprint champion from the Olympic

40. Cornford, "Origin" 212-259.

41. See D. R. Dicks, *Early Greek Astronomy to Aristotle* (1970) 212-259. The ancient Greeks were aware of solar equinoxes and solstices but their basic time measure was a lunar month. Any attempt to reconcile solar years with lunar months poses a major difficulty: the solar year is 365 $\frac{1}{4}$ days long while the lunar month is 29 $\frac{1}{2}$ days long. The eight solar year cycle provides 2,922 days which equates to 99 lunar months plus 15

days. Cornford embraced this eight solar year cycle because it provided one segment of 50 lunar months and an a second segment of 49 lunar months; this he argued accounts for the apparent fluctuation in the time of the games between August and September in alternate four-year cycles. It does not account for the extra 15 days needed to match 99 lunar months with 8 solar years. See the discussion below in the chapters concerned with the Olympic Games.

and Heraian games is supported only by the general occurrence elsewhere of cultic sacred marriages but lacks any evidence from Olympia and its games.

Walter Burkert, in several recent studies, has brought Ethology and Paleolithic hunting rituals within the purview of classical scholars.⁴² David Sansone, influenced by Burkert and Karl Meuli,⁴³ argues that athletics ultimately are derived from early hunting rituals:⁴⁴ paleolithic man prepared for the hunt by avoiding certain foods, by bathing and by rubbing himself with or exposing himself to certain materials, all designed to reduce or mask his body odor; he used pieces of available vegetation as camouflage in order to draw nearer his quarry; he abstained from sexual activity before the hunt on the assumption that this would increase strength by preserving essential fluids (i.e. semen); and he celebrated a successful hunt by, among other activities, dressing in the skins of the animals which had been killed and by sacrificing and feasting using cooking vessels such as cauldrons. These patterns of behavior, designed to insure and to celebrate a successful hunt, were maintained for 100,000 years or more, became ritualized, and were not easily abandoned even after hunting had long ceased to be the primary means of obtaining food. Sansone believes that they were turned to other purposes, especially to winning the good will of the gods. The physically vigorous male continued many aspects of these most ancient rituals which finally became a sacrifice of his physical energy, i.e. the energy originally expended in the hunt. In some areas of the world this energy was offered through non-competitive games, but in Greece competition was fostered in order to identify the one most worthy of the sacrifice. The athlete, both sacrifice of his energy and victim, continued the ritual practices of dietary restraint, of bathing and the use of unguents (e.g. olive oil), and of sexual continence, including infibulation. According to Sansone, the last remnants of the camouflage used in the hunt were the vegetation crowns awarded at many of the festivals, while the fillets of victory symbolized not only the sacrifice and the sacrifices but also hearkened back to the paleolithic practice of dressing in the hide of the victim. Traditional prizes such as cauldrons and tripods descended from the cooking vessels of the earlier sacrifices. The extent and complexity of Sansone's arguments cannot be fully reproduced here and his equating many aspects of modern athletic ritual including names (e.g. the Chicago Bears) to a reconstruction of very early hunting rituals is unfortunately not provable and athletic practices are susceptible to other interpretations. However, the possible origin in ritual of competitive athletics has much to commend it to the historian of athletics and should engage the attention of scholars from a variety of disciplines. Difficulty of proof, will undoubtedly trouble this avenue of research.

42. Burkert, *Structure; Homo Necans and Religion*.

44. David Sansone, *Greek Athletics and the Genesis*

43. "Die Ursprung" 881-906 and "Griechische Opferbräuche" 907-1018. *of Sport* (1988).

Another thesis addressing the connection between the four major panhellenic sanctuaries and competitive athletics offers a sensible explanation for this association but limits itself to defining a function of athletics without solving the issue of origins. Three crown games, the Pythian, Isthmian, and Nemean, were established early in the sixth century, within a decade or so, and this is thought by some to reflect the development of a sense of national unity through the creation of a number of shared shrines, gods and activities.⁴⁵ The elements stressed were common gods, common language, and a common passion for competitive athletics, all brought together at these major sanctuaries. This accords well with the later assertion by Greek writers that great athletic festivals were somehow a peculiarly Greek phenomenon, but it does not explain why athletics were selected as a hallmark of Hellenism. Here one might resort to the much discussed agonistic psychology of the ancient Greeks. For whatever reason, the Greeks were driven by a passion for competition, turning many activities into vigorously pursued contests, whether it was poetry, politics, music, etc. Such a people might naturally turn universal play instincts into serious competition and hence competitive athletics. It is clear that some cultures are more competitive than others and that competitive drives can be channeled in different ways, but the reasons for this are not at all clear. The ancient Romans were certainly agonistic, sufficiently so to embark on unparalleled conquest and empire. Yet this competitive drive in Rome basically rejected participation in public competitive athletics as beneath the dignity of the ruling class. There was something in the ancient Greek character which permitted the risk of public defeat and ridicule for the sake of possible athletic victory. But what was it? Studies in cultural anthropology suggest that competitive societies may choose (consciously or otherwise) competitive sports as a means of channeling socially harmful competition. G. W. Azoy has argued that *buzkashi*, the wild and violent Afghani national game played by large teams on horseback, possibly functions as a metaphor or substitute for clan violence.⁴⁶ This provides an intriguing analytic tool for ancient Greek athletics, especially against the background of the dual tradition of aristocratic conflict and competition and the apparent widespread aristocratic involvement in athletics at the highest level. Michael Poliakoff has effectively employed this thesis in his discussion of aristocratic participation in combat sports: "Not the least of combat sport's functions was to service the potentially volatile heirs of the warrior elite".⁴⁷ More could be done with this approach.

Another association which has not proved to be uniformly popular, i.e. athletics and the military, should be addressed not to argue for origin but to provide possible insight into why competitive athletics were so intensely practiced in ancient Greece. The Homeric hero faced the ongoing prospect of hand-to hand combat for which good physical conditioning was imperative. Running, throwing, strength, and general agility were essential aspects of

45. See M. F. McGregor, "Cleisthenes of Sicyon and the Panhellenic Festivals", *TAPA* 72 (1941), 286.

46. *Buzkashi* 15.

47. Poliakoff, *Combat Sports* 115.

this conditioning and the Homeric hero arguably indulged in athletics at least partially as a means to this end. This was done voluntarily as a matter of self-pride and survival and not as a community-sanctioned and operated activity. Later, with the introduction of hoplite warfare by the 7th century, physical conditioning was more broadly needed because the middle class male, a hoplite equipped with fifty to seventy-five pounds of bronze armor and shield, became the dominant military figure. Indeed, the physical demands of hoplite warfare were high as was demonstrated by an experiment at Pennsylvania State University: physical education majors were given less weight to carry than the ancient hoplite and yet, in an attempt to determine the level of physical conditioning necessary to duplicate the charge at Marathon, only a trained athlete, a middle distance runner from the university's track team, completed a 400 meter advance at military double-time and was still able to undertake any further physical activity.⁴⁸ A hoplite battle could last for some time, with protracted individual combat following the initial clash of the opposing phalanxes and the ultimate breaking of the lines. Rather surprisingly, the physical conditioning and training for this continued to be a matter of individual responsibility. Xenophon clearly states that in his time the state offered neither military training nor required physical conditioning for the hoplite forces and that it was up to the individual both to learn the basic skills and to stay in reasonable physical condition.⁴⁹ The individual Athenian, at least to the beginning of the fourth century, may have had to employ a teacher to learn the military essentials and then hopefully stayed in reasonable condition. Ancient Greek comment connects athletics with military preparation and it can be reasonably argued that the palaistra and the gymnasium served to maintain some minimal level of physical conditioning without which the Athenian hoplite forces would have been ineffective. Handling the heavy, metal-clad shield may have been the most difficult part of the hoplite's routine in battle, and this skill apparently was taught in the palaistra and even in the form of the pyrrhic dance.⁵⁰ Further, the dance rhythms used certainly would have contributed to cadence and marching which were also indispensable aspects of hoplite warfare. *IG II² 2311*, the Panathenaic inscription from the first half of the fourth century B.C., illustrates military aspects especially in competitions limited to Athenians, such as pyrrhic dances, trireme races, and the contests in manliness. Although

48. W. Dolan and J. Thompson, "The Charge at Marathon: Herodotos 6.112", *CJ* 71 (1975-76), 339-343. The battle at Marathon took place in 490 B.C. when, according to Herodotos, Athenian hoplites charged on the run for ca. one mile before engaging the Persian invaders. The Athenians, though greatly outnumbered, won a spectacular victory. The Pennsylvania State University experiment rejected Herodotus' one mile run in heavy armor as physically impossible and

selected 400 meters as the probable distance. The range of the ancient bow was estimated at 400 meters maximum and a major reason for a running charge was to clear as quickly as possible the area within reach of the Persian archers. See the discussion below of the hoplitodromos race.

49. *Memorabilia* 3.12.5.

50. E. K. Borthwick, "P. Oxy. 2738: Athene and the Pyrrhic Dance", *Hermes* 98 (1970), 320, n. 2.

a significant military connection with athletics has been rejected by some, the evidence for such a connection cannot be lightly dismissed.

In conclusion, various contexts which provided reasonable opportunities for the performance of competitive athletics in ancient Greece are capable of definition and analysis; but the reasons for the broad public enthusiasm for and acceptance of competitive athletics as an expression of agonistic drives are more elusive. Patriotism, funerary practices, and hero cults provided vehicle for formal competition without necessarily explaining why athletics were selected. Conflict and contest in ritual are also suggestive of certain forms of athletics. Furthermore, athletics, short of exclusive devotion to a particular event, was a natural form of conditioning for the rugged physical demands of hoplite warfare. But as to the origin of competitive athletics in ancient Greece or elsewhere in the eastern Mediterranean, the answer remains speculative. The search, however, has not been unproductive and will continue to enhance our understanding of Greek and other ancient cultures.

One further suggestion should be offered: the sanctuary at Olympia chose, for whatever reason, an expanding schedule of athletic competitions to be part of the cult of Zeus, and the increasing importance of this shrine and the popularity of its games became a compelling paradigm for other major festivals. If Olympia had chosen some other form of cultic or ritual activity, it is possible that the athletic history of Greece might have been different.

OLYMPIA: LEGENDS AND HISTORY

The sanctuary at Olympia is located in the northwest quadrant of the Peloponnesos about ten miles from the coast of the Ionian Sea. It is in a fairly broad valley along a range known as the Olympic mountains and set against the Hill of Kronos to the north and bounded on the west by the Kladeos river and the south by the Alpheios river. The name Olympos is possibly pre-Greek and perhaps associated with the meaning “mountain.” The area is well watered, the soil is fertile, and the archaeological evidence not surprisingly reveals continuous human habitation from the Early Helladic period (late third millennium B.C.) to the end of the Mycenaean period (1600-1150 B.C.). There was possibly a modest hiatus after 1150 B.C., as evidenced by a fairly sterile layer of sand, but by about 900 B.C. human presence and possibly cultic activity are indicated by an increasing number of small bronze and clay figurines. During the Archaic period this site became one of the two most important religious centers in the Greek world – the other being Delphi – and could soon boast of legends and heroes who antedated the Trojan war, even though there is no reference to Olympia in the Homeric poems. Furthermore, the rather meagre Mycenaean remains found near the historical sanctuary, including two female figurines found at the outer reaches of the area, suggest at best limited significance for this area during the age of the great citadels and palaces whose inhabitants purportedly bequeathed to their successors much of the material for constructing their legendary prehistory. Very recent excavations within the sanctuary have, however, brought to light more evidence of Mycenaean habitation within the sanctuary itself and analysis of these new finds may significantly enhance the Mycenaean presence at Olympia. Ultimately, this area, which by the sixth century housed the most important sanctuary of Zeus and the most prestigious Hellenic athletic festival, was provided with a series of legends to account both for Zeus’ presence and for the quadrennial Olympic games. Unfortunately the stories preserved by authors from the early fifth century and later do not provide a coherent account of the origins of the sanctuary or of the games; further, their inconsistencies and contradictions are such that one can only conclude that the Greeks themselves did not have a secure historical tradition for Olympia.⁵¹

51. For the possible meaning of “Olympos”, see Chantraine, *Dictionnaire étymologique de la langue grecque: histoire des mots* (Paris 1968) s.v. *Olympos*. For brief accounts of the evidence for human habita-

tion at Olympia, see: Coldstream, *GG* 330-331; Holmberg, *Delphi* 67-117; and Yalouris, *Olympia* (ed.) 646-650.

Two major legends, which are associated with the founding of the sanctuary and the games and attested as early as the fifth century B.C., feature the great heroes Pelops and Herakles. The fantastic careers of both are uniformly placed before the Achaeans' invasion of Troy, thus giving Olympia an appropriate antiquity. Pindar is our earliest source for both stories. Tantalos, Pelops' father, enjoyed the friendship of the gods and even dined with them. On one occasion he allegedly invited the gods to his home for dinner, cooked his son Pelops in a stew, and then challenged the gods to identify the ingredients of their meal. Before the awful truth was discovered, the goddess Demeter had eaten part of Pelops' shoulder. The gods, however, restored Pelops to life, replacing the part eaten by Demeter with ivory, and severely punished Tantalos. Pindar rejects this cannibalism among the gods and, borrowing from the Ganymede story, asserts that Poseidon, enamored of the youthful Pelops, seized and took him to Olympus to serve as cupbearer to the gods; when no one could find Pelops, envious neighbors then started the rumor of the gruesome feast. Tantalos was punished according to Pindar, not because of culinary transgressions but because of stealing nectar and ambrosia, the food of the gods, the eating of which made humans immortal. Pelops' main adventure as a young man ostensibly brings him from Asia Minor to southern Greece and the Peloponnesos, which means "Pelops' island." He came to contend for the land of Hippodameia, daughter of Oinomaos, king of Pisa, a quest which had proved fatal to thirteen previous suitors. Oinomaos wished to prevent the marriage of his daughter because he had been warned by an oracle that his son-in-law would kill him. He had disposed of the first thirteen in the following manner: each was to take Hippodameia into his chariot and depart as fast as possible; Oinomaos then pursued and if he caught up with them he killed the suitor by spearing him in the back. Because he owned a special team of horses given him by Ares, often regarded as his father, Oinomaos had with little difficulty defeated all previous would-be bridegrooms in this chariot chase. Pelops, using his special relationship with Poseidon, obtained a golden chariot and a team of winged horses, and in Pindar's straightforward version, won the race and the maiden, who bore him six sons. He was ultimately buried at Olympia near the altar of Zeus where he received blood offerings. Other writers cloud, at least for the modern reader, Pelops' heroism by having him bribe Myrtilos, the king's charioteer, to tamper with the king's chariot so that it would crash when at full speed. Pelops thus won the race and became king of Pisa either because Oinomaos was killed in the crash or because Pelops personally murdered him. To conceal his crime, he also killed Myrtilos. Pindar does not directly connect this story to the founding of the sanctuary and the games, but he does refer to the "dromoi of Pelops where there are contests in swiftness of feet and in bold deeds of strength." It is only much later writers who link the festival specifically to funeral games for Pelops. However, the story of the chariot race is featured on the east pediment of the great classical temple of Zeus and there was a temenos or tumulus (some argue for the presence of a tomb) for Pelops within the sanctuary called the Pelopeion where he was accorded annual sacrifices of the blood of a black ram, a common offering to

heroes of cultic status. There was thus a major role for Pelops in the traditions of the sanctuary and of the games at Olympia even though the legends do not clearly identify it.⁵²

Pindar does connect the establishment of the sanctuary and the games with Herakles and his twelve labors but with minimal detail. One of his tasks was to clean in one day the stables of Augeas, king of Pisa, a challenging feat because Augeas possessed immense herds and the stables had never been cleaned. Herakles, with Athena's omnipresent aid, managed to complete the task within the time limit by diverting the Menios river so that it ran through the stables, thus flushing them out quickly. He then redirected the river back into its proper channel. Pindar begins his account with Augeas refusing to pay Herakles. The hero, seldom one to forget or forgive a slight to his honor, later invaded Augeas' territory with a sizeable force, but his plan for revenge was temporarily stymied by Kteatos and Eurystos, the nephews of Augeas. This set of twins, also called the Moliones, were sons either of Aktor or Poseidon, and had managed to route Herakles' troops, but Pindar does not refer to this humiliating defeat and merely has Herakles slaying the Moliones. With these formidable opponents removed, he defeated Augeas. To celebrate his triumph, he marked out and fenced a sacred precinct dedicated to his father Zeus and founded athletic games in honor of his victory and his father. He presided over the first Olympic games, offering prizes from the spoils of battle, and commanded that a similar festival be held every four years. Pindar reports that there were six contests: stadion sprint won by Oionos, son of Likymnios from Midea; wrestling won by Echemos from Tegea; boxing won by Doryklos from Tiryns; tethrippon won by Samos, son of Halirhothios from Mantinea; javelin won by Phrastor; and hurling the stone (diskos?) won by Nikeus. It has been suggested that Pindar, when writing this ode (*Olympian* 10) in 476 B.C., was attempting to glorify Thebes, the major city of his home district of Boiotia, by crediting the Theban-born Herakles with founding the sanctuary at Olympia and its games; however, Herakles' association with the site almost certainly antedates 476. His twelve labors were depicted on the metopes, six of which were placed over each entrance, front and back. The construction of the temple began in ca. 476 B.C. and the legends selected for display must have enjoyed a long, significant and well-established association with the immediate area. The famous orator Lysias, in a speech delivered at Olympia during the games of either 388 or 384 B.C., also attributed the origin of the games to Herakles.⁵³

52. See Pindar, *Olympian* 1.35-96 for Tantalos and Pelops, with reference to the dromoi of Pelops at 94-95. Pausanias 8.14.10-12 tells a less attractive version: Myrtilos was bribed with the promise of one night with Hippodameia. Myrtilos was Hermes' son and his curse on the house of Pelops launched a series of crimes and murders beginning with Atreus and Thyestes, Pelops' sons, and ending with the death of Agamem-

non and matricide-revenge by Orestes. For the origin of the Olympic Games in funeral games for Pelops, see Clement of Alexandria, *Protrepticus* 11.34, Potter (ed.).

53. For the story of Herakles as founder, see Pindar, *Olympian* 10.24-75; Pindar also briefly alludes to this in *Olympian* 2.2-4 ("Herakles founded the Olympic games as the booty of the war...") and in *Nemean* 10.32-33 and 11.27 (in these odes the games are

Seven centuries later Pausanias reported several stories about the origin of the sanctuary and its games which he had heard while visiting Olympia. One involves a far more extensive account than Pindar's of the revenge attack upon Augeas by Herakles, son of Amphitryon, and the initial defeat of his forces in Elis by the Moliones. A further unflattering detail is added: Herakles killed the twins by ambushing them near Kleonai as they were traveling to the Isthmian games during the sacred truce. After removing the Moliones, Herakles was then able to defeat Augeas and celebrate his victory by an athletic festival with six contests: chariot race, horse race, foot race, boxing, wrestling, and the pankration. The pankration and the horse race have replaced the javelin and the weight-throwing from Pindar's list and the winners were more famous legendary figures: Iolaos, Herakles' nephew and assistant in his labors, won the chariot race with Herakles' mares; Iasios from Arkadia won the horse race; the Dioskouroi, Castor and Polydeukes, won the footrace and boxing respectively; and Herakles himself won the wrestling and the pankration. This double triumph probably reflects a rather late tradition that an athlete who won both the wrestling and the pankration at the same games also earned the title "Successor to Herakles." Pausanias also reports a result of Herakles' murder by stealth of the twins which allegedly had ramifications even into the second century A.D. Herakles never acknowledged this less than heroic deed of his. When Merione, mother of the twins did ascertain what had happened, Elis demanded that Argos punish Herakles, then living in Tiryns within the territory of Argos. When this was refused, Elis requested that the Argolid be denied the privilege of the Isthmian truce (banned from the games?). This request also, failed, and Merione then placed a curse on the Eleans if they participated in the Isthmian games, a curse allegedly honored for centuries.

Pausanias, quoting the Elean antiquarians of his day, also introduced a different and a very much earlier Herakles as possible founder of the Olympic games: when Zeus was born, Rhea gave him to the daktyloi or kouretes of Mt. Ida in Crete to guard; then five of these daktyloi, all brothers, came to Olympia which was a shrine to Kronos, the father of Zeus, where a Herakles, the eldest of the brothers, organized a foot race for the other four, Paionaios, Epimedes, Iasios, and Idas; this Idaean Herakles crowned the winner with wild olive which grew in profusion there; and since he and his brothers were five in number, he ordained that games should be held every five years (pentaeteric) in honor of Zeus. Because the Greeks counted both ends of a sequence, every fifth year would be every fourth year by our reckoning. This curious tale, transparently aetiological with respect to the crown of

referred to as the ordinance or law of Herakles). *Olympian* 3.11-34 explains the origin of the special connection between Olympia and the wild olive: among the tasks assigned to Herakles by Eurystheus was the capture of the hind of Keryneia, a doe sacred to Artemis which possessed golden horns; while pursuing it, Herakles visited the land of the Hyperboreans (those beyond the North wind) where he first saw and

admired the grey-green olive; after founding the sanctuary and the games, he returned to the Hyperboreans to obtain the wild olive for the barren sanctuary at Olympia. For the construction of the temple and the metopes featuring the twelve labors of Herakles, see Yalouris, "Olympia". For a fourth century reference to Herakles as founder, see Lysias *Olympiakos* 1.

wild olive and the four-year cycle, has invited speculation about possible Cretan or even Semitic origins for the games in the form of Phoenician founders coming to Olympia by way of Crete. Although there is an increasing acceptance of forms of athletic competition on Crete during the second millennium B.C., there is unfortunately no earlier version of this story and no archaeological evidence for a Cretan or Phoenician presence at Olympia during the Mycenaean period. The story may reflect merely the attempts of learned antiquarians to speculate about and to integrate tales and figures from diverse sources and to enhance the antiquity of the sanctuary. A sanctuary for Rhea in the metroon, in the Altis, may also have had some connection with this Cretan Herakles.

Pausanias, in completing his survey of possible origins, briefly notes that some assert that Zeus wrestled with Kronos at the site of Olympia and by defeating him gained the kingship over the gods. This implies that Zeus himself was in essence the founder of the games. Others, according to Pausanias, apparently have Zeus conquering Kronos and the Titans in more traditional warfare and then holding athletic competitions at Olympia for his supporters among the gods to celebrate his triumph. Apollo, we are told, was the first double winner, defeating Hermes in the foot race and Ares in boxing. Apollo's success also explained, in a rather strained aetiology, why the Pythian diaulos and its music sacred to Apollo at Delphi accompanied the jumping event in the pentathlon.⁵⁴

As is obvious from this survey of stories of origin, all placed before the Trojan war, there was no clearly dominant tradition in antiquity about the founding of the sanctuary at Olympia or its games. The Greeks themselves had no real knowledge of when, by whom, and under what circumstances the sanctuary and its games were founded. This should not be too surprising simply because this event or series of events took place long before the Greeks were possessed of secure historical data and the games were therefore subject to competing claims of differing oral traditions and later to conflicting theories of origin. The surviving material merely invites a diversity of modern speculation because the actual beginnings cannot be recovered from the mists of prehistory, and the archaeological evidence lacks sufficient precision to offer any but the broadest of clues.

The interpretation of this varied legendary material has been limited only by the scope of scholarly ingenuity. A few examples will suffice both to indicate the influence of the social sciences and to flesh out some of the theories mentioned briefly in the previous chapter. With the development of cultural or social anthropology, evidence from contemporary primitive peoples was and is used to explain the cults and practices of antiquity. A group of

54. For Herakles, son of Amphytryon, see Pausanias 5.8.3-4 (this is the famous hero born in Thebes to Alkmene, the wife of the exiled Amphytryon, but reputedly the son of Zeus). For the Idaian Herakles, see Pausanias 5.7.6-9, and for a defense of the validity of

this "Elean tradition of a Cretan Herakles", see Cornford, "Origin" 235-238 (winner of the footrace to be the fertility daimon for the year). For Zeus himself as founder of his own games, see Pausanias 5.7.10.

English Classical scholars at Cambridge University, headed by the Regius Professor of Greek, Sir James Fraser, and including Jane Harrison, Francis Cornford, and A. B. Cook, used the new information provided by extensive field reports describing the behavior of contemporary primitive peoples as a primary tool in their analysis of the often conflicting and puzzling data concerning ancient cults and rituals. The crowning achievement of this so-called Cambridge school of anthropology was Sir James Frazer's monumental study, the *Golden Bough*. As the result of the work of these scholars early in the twentieth century the origin of athletic competition at Olympia was found in at least two sources: in very primitive rituals, i.e. before there was a concept of divinity, the power of magic was used to control weather, often symbolized by thunder and lightning, and the possessor of this magic usually suffered a diminishing control over it, and therefore to insure continued productivity he had to be replaced; or later cyclical vegetation rites sought to insure continued productivity through the replacement or rebirth of a fertility spirit which symbolized the rebirth and regeneration connected with spring. The cults attached to these replacement or renewal cycles frequently seemed to involve contest, conflict or combat as a prelude or precondition to the renewal or rebirth of the magic or creative powers of spring. It is argued that the conflict may symbolize the overthrow of an older male with diminishing magic or fertility power by a younger more vigorous one, or the death of a failing male fertility power followed quickly by his rebirth with renewed powers, or the selection of a new male consort for Mother Earth through some trial of physical prowess, thus ensuring continued generation of life at all levels. This cosmic crisis, contest or combat, which is essential to all these concepts, is then ritually acted out by humans who play their divine roles and whose actions insure victory to regeneration by means of sympathetic magic. These cultic enactments of conflict then gave rise to stories such as the chariot race between Oinomaos, king of Pisa, and Pelops. Oinomaos, who would permit his daughter Hippodameia to marry only one who can defeat him in a chariot race, was not merely an overly fussy father seeking a suitable son-in-law, or a jealous, incestuous father; he represented the older fertility power, or weather magician, or whatever term one uses to indicate his powers over the continuing cycle of the seasons. He had already withstood a series of challenges to his control, but ultimately the old must give way, frequently each year, and Pelops' winning of Hippodameia represented the triumph of new powers of magic or fertility and guaranteed the continuation of crops and fecundity of all sorts. The seasonal ritual has thus been reduced to human terms and a story of contest and intrigue evolved which pits father against suitor for the hand of his daughter. This critical conflict between old and new powers, it is argued, lurks behind the chariot race and continued procreativity requires victory by Pelops. Earth, the object of the struggle between the old and the new, is reduced to the role of a daughter, hence the later false charge of incest, and the reluctance of Oinomaos to give her in marriage is now easily explained by the ritual origin of the story. Even the tale of Pelops being killed, cooked and resurrected can be viewed as a similar act of regeneration. Pelops' intimate connection with the site of

Olympia is sufficient for those seeking cultic origins to perceive fertility rituals ultimately at the root of the later games.⁵⁵

Fertility cult origins may also be used to explain a curious aspect of the games: the single stadion race, the premier running event and possibly the only event for the first 13 Olympiads, was dedicated to Demeter Chamyne (Demeter of the Ground or Earth) and not to Zeus. This fact, coupled with possible feminine cult domination at major sanctuaries before 1100 B.C., has led to suitable religious explanations for the race. In its earliest form the race was intended to select the new consort for Earth by means of competition and the victor participated in a sacred marriage or *hieros gamos*. Such rites usually were annual, associated either with the winter solstice or vernal equinox or some date in between. The male, selected anew each year for this ritual union with Mother Earth, is referred to as the *eniautos daimon*, or annual spirit. Cornford presumes an earlier annual version of the Olympic games but argues that a major change in the underlying ritual must have taken place to move the festival to late summer on a quadrennial rather than annual basis. Relying heavily on a scholion to Pindar, *Olympian* 3.33, he concludes that the change represents the reconciliation of solar and lunar time within an eight year cycle. The lunar month is 29.53 days in length, providing a lunar year (i.e. twelve-month period) of approximately 354 and $\frac{1}{3}$ days, whereas the solar year has 365 and $\frac{1}{4}$ days. This lack of commensurability between solar and lunar time was a continuing problem in Greco-Roman antiquity until Julius Caesar introduced a solar calendar of 365 days. The lunar month was a very convenient time-reckoning unit but twelve lunar months was ca. 11 days shorter than the solar year, which usually led to the often erratic practice of intercalating extra days in order to keep lunar time approximately in phase with the solar year. Cornford attempts to reconcile the two time units within an eight-year solar cycle which contains 96 lunar months plus 90 days which he equates with three more lunar months for a total of 99; this sum he then divides into units of 49 and 50 lunar months to provide the basic chronological framework for the four-year Olympiads and to explain why the Olympics were held, in Cornford's view, alternately with the full moon in August and then with the full moon in September. Cornford, drawing in the Heraia or games for maidens in honor of Hera held at Olympia, proposes the following sacred drama: the winner of the somewhat shortened stadion sprint for girls (500 rather than 600 feet) was paired in an *hieros gamos* with the winner of the men's stadion sprint, but they now represent the sun and the moon. The wedding of the female moon with the male sun thus represents the reconciliation of the two time systems and included vegetation aspects both in the inherent fertility powers of the sun and the moon and in the redefinition

55. A good sampling of the interpretations of the Pelops legend by the Cambridge school can be found in: Sir James Frazer, *Golden Bough* (first published in two vols in 1890, later expanded to twelve); A. B.

Cook, *Zeus* (three vols 1914-1940); and Cornford, "Origin" 218-229 (chariot race) and 243-251 (the feast of Tantalos).

of the concept of the “year” for the male *eniautos daimon*. Cornford’s elaborate scheme provides an eight-year period of 2924.88 days of lunar time but there are 2922 solar days in an eight-year period. Thus, unfortunately, with in a very few Olympiads the lunar reckoning would be noticeably out of phase with the solar year and the Olympic festival would begin a progression throughout all the seasons of the year, a workable practice in some religious calendars but unacceptable in the Greek tradition. By the fifth century B.C. a 19 year cycle of reconciliation was proposed but this still included some variance between the two time systems. Ultimately a 76 year cycle was developed which came very close to resolving the problem, but this probably had appeal only to astronomers as one might question the utility for the average person of a reconciliation based upon a time span in excess of life-expectancy.

There are at least two additional problems with Cornford’s thesis. First, astronomers are reluctant to date the formation of the eight-year cycle earlier than 600 B.C., if that early, which would be much too late to provide any type of explanation for the time structure of the games. And second, there is no evidence for any ritual association of the male and female sprint champions; in fact, we know of no relationship between the games of Hera and the Olympic games. They were certainly not held at the same time and the traditional exclusion at least of married women from the Olympic festival would heighten the difficulty of any union of the two cults.⁵⁶

The Cambridge school has provided a ritual explanation for the chariot race which endows it with very primitive trappings, but a serious problem remains at least with the chariot race at Olympia: according to the Olympic Register, or victor list, compiled at the end of the fifth century B.C., the four-horse chariot race was introduced into the Olympic program in 680 B.C., with the two-horse chariot race added more than 250 years later in 408 B.C. The dates are puzzlingly late not only with regard to the resumed prehistoric ritual origin in magic or fertility rites but also with respect to the two legendary paradigms at Olympia, the race between Pelops and Oinomaos and the race presided over by Herakles at his founding games. Furthermore, there are several other factors which are troubling for a late entry

56. For Cornford’s views, see “Origin” 224-229 (reconciliation of lunar and solar time) and 229-235 (the Heraia and the footrace for the bride). Cornford put the Heraia in the Elean month of Parthenios simply because the races involved unmarried girls or young women. Parthenios basically was the month of August. There were races for three different age groups and presumably under this theory the winner of the oldest age group would participate in the *hieros gamos*. Theoretically, this union of sprint champions symbolizing the Sun and Moon should have taken place at the summer solstice, since the Sun-groom was the dominant partner. The alternative periods of 49

and 50 months are explained by Cornford as a priestly compromise to prevent the games of Zeus from reducing the earlier games of Hera to an appendage by always preceding them; thus the Olympics were scheduled two weeks in front of and then two weeks after the Heraia. The only secure basis for quadrennial rather than octennial games is that they were in fact held every four years. The scholion to Pindar probably offers a late effort to rationalize historical practice. For a more extensive discussion of when each four years the games were held, see the chapter below addressing the schedule of the Olympic Games.

of equestrian events: there is evidence for chariot racing in the late Mycenaean period; the chariot race is well-established in the Homeric poems and was the featured event in the funeral games for Patroklos; and some of the equine bronze and terracotta votives, including two-horse chariots, at Olympia probably date at least to the eighth century B.C., if not earlier, and therefore point to the existence of equestrian events at Olympia well in advance of 680 B.C. One can dismiss the problem merely by asserting that the Olympic Register is wrong and that chariot racing existed as part of the games from the beginning, thus accommodating both legends and archaeology. Or one can defend the 680 date both by discounting the votives because they were found in a non-stratified context of burnt ash and therefore dating is limited to aesthetic analysis, and by rejecting legends as compelling evidence.

R. Vallois has constructed a complex and ingenious theory which attempts to incorporate all the available data. It is grounded in the assumptions that the cult of Poseidon, not that of Zeus, gave rise to competitive chariot racing and that the accidents and destruction stressed by ancient authors as characteristic of this sport were essential to its origin. For the first point, he argues that Pausanias' description of the hippodrome at Olympia excludes Zeus and identified Poseidon Hippios as the paramount deity of the race track. The second point is based upon the assumption that votive offerings commemorate actual sacrifices or substitute for them. The early presence of equine votives at Olympia thus raises the possibility of sacrifices of horses, which, although attested, was not common in the Classical period. The people of the island of Rhodes sacrificed whole quadrigae in the sea to the sun god Helios and the Lacedaimonians offered holocausts of horses on Mt. Taygetos. Horse sacrifices have also been found in tombs from the Mycenaean and Geometric periods and the slaughter of horses formed part of the funeral of Patroklos in the *Iliad*. Vallois suggests that chariot racing was substituted at Olympia for the direct sacrifice of horses and that this resulted in a type of sacrifice based upon chance and accident or, one might assert, upon divine election. The god received his due through the slaughter incidental to the race, i.e. the victims of accidents in the hippodrome were dedicated to him. Chariot racing was a dangerous sport in antiquity and fatal accidents were used in legend to bring about death of Hippolytos, the son of Theseus, and to provide a convenient but false story about the death of Orestes in Sophocles' *Electra*. We are also told of a chariot race at Delphi in which only one of forty chariots actually finished the race. Presumably, a number of horses would have been killed in these crashes or put to death because of severe injury. According to Pausanias, crashes at Olympia were induced by Taraxippos, "terrifier of horses", a demonic power whose altar is generally located near the far turn of the hippodrome and who caused the panic in horses which brought about accidents. Significant for Vallois' argument is the acceptable identification of Taraxippos with Poseidon.

If chariot racing was associated with sacrifice to Poseidon, a fertility context can also be assumed because Poseidon was a god of water which necessarily involves him with some aspects of fertility. Olympia's location in the Peloponnesos may contribute to this type of cult: the plains of Elis, Argos and Sparta were famous for horse-breeding, perhaps even during

the Mycenaean period, and in the Peloponnesos in particular Poseidon was associated with underground waters; further, earthquakes, another attribute of this god, could be explained as Poseidon racing his horses on the water courses under the earth's surface. And finally, the horse, as many other animals, can serve as a fertility symbol. The best documented example of a combination of chariot race and horse sacrifice, the October Horse ceremony, comes not from Greek but from Roman sources: a horse from the winning team in a chariot race was sacrificed and its head, blood and tail used in a series of ritual acts. Although the components of this rite are susceptible to various interpretations, the fact that the head of the horse, after decapitation, was garlanded with loaves of bread does point toward a fertility cult.

Under Vallois' thesis, then, chariot racing was the final version of the sacrifice of horses to Poseidon. This cult had nothing to do with Zeus and was practiced at Olympia possibly even before Zeus' arrival in the sanctuary. The late appearance of chariot racing on the Olympic Register can then be explained by the apparent difficulty that Zeus' games encountered in incorporating the equestrian events which had belonged to a cult of a different god. According to Vallois, Zeus never managed to intrude himself fully into the hippodrome which remained primarily the province of Poseidon Hippios, a series of other deities beings with Hippios or Hippiia epithets, and to other divine beings and heroes with some logical connection to horses, horse racing, and fertility. Vallois' hypothesis does have the advantage of strong mythic associations of Poseidon with horses and the frequency of crashes in hippodromes, but the deaths of charioteers both in legend and in fact provide a somewhat uncomfortable and unexplained appendage implying human sacrifice along with the union of horse sacrifice and racing. Furthermore Vallois' claim that Zeus had no part in the hippodrome may be somewhat of an overstatement because Pausanias clearly places three altars of Zeus near the entrance or the starting line of the race course; however, Poseidon and other deities with hippios epithets clearly outnumber and outposition Zeus within the central area of the hippodrome.⁵⁷

Apart from the gods and the towering figures of Pelops and Herakles, whose deeds attracted writers and artists throughout the Classical period, there were other legendary figures associated with Elis and with the games at Olympia. These have been arranged by later writers, probably of the Hellenistic period, into chronological and genealogical tables to provide something approaching a continuous, but still often conflicting and confusing, account from shortly after the great flood to the rulers in the territory later known as Elis and of the early, sporadic celebrations of the games of Zeus at Olympia. They also offer an explanation of Epian and Elean, the two terms used to identify the people and the territory. The first legendary figure mentioned by Pausanias is Klymenos, descended from the Idaian Herakles, who reportedly came from Crete to Olympia about 50 years after the great flood

57. For the chariot race at Olympia as part of a sacrificial cult of Poseidon, see Vallois, "Les origines" I 305 ff. For the October Horse ritual at Rome, see C. B.

Pascal, "October Horse", *HSCP* 85 (1981), 261-291. For a description of the hippodrome at Olympia, see Pausanias 6.20.10-19.

of Deukalion's time, held games, and built an altar to his ancestor Herakles. Then Endymion, a great-grandson of Deukalion and grandson of Zeus, drove Klymenos from Olympia and offered the territory to whoever of his three sons (Paion, Epios, and Aitolos) was victorious in a footrace. Epios won the race, became king, and thereafter the people in the region were called Epians. During Epios' reign, Oinomaos, king of Pisa, the region immediately to the south of Elis, failed to defeat Pelops in the chariot race and the latter became king of Pisa and celebrated with more than normal magnificence games in honor of Zeus at Olympia. Aitolos eventually succeeded Epios but was later charged with killing Apis in a chariot accident. He was forced to leave the Peloponnesos and spent his exile in the western part of mainland Greece in the vicinity of the Acheloos river where he gave his name to the territory, Aitolia, and to the people living there, Aitolians. Eleios, Aitolos' nephew and son of Eurykyda, daughter of Endymion, became king of the Epians who then were called Eleans and the territory Elis. Augeas, who appears in some sources as the son of Eleios, succeeded his father and employed the Theban Herakles to clean his stables. After his defeat of Augeas, Herakles, using the spoils of battle, held major games at Olympia in honor of his father Zeus. The next generation saw Agasthenes, son of Augeas, as king of Elis and also witnessed the attack upon Troy. Following this great war, the Herakleidai, prepared to return to the Peloponnesos and, upon the advice of the Pythia, retained as their guide an exiled Aitolian named Oxylos. Oxylos bargained for and received as his pay control over Elis. Oxylos, who thus represents the return to the throne of an earlier ruling family, was succeeded by his son Laias, and after this the traditional genealogy suffers an extensive hiatus until Iphitos, also identified as a member of the Oxylidai or descendant of Oxylos. Wide spread plague and war (with neighboring Pisa?) had led Iphitos to Delphi to ask the oracle for help, and he was ordered to "reestablish" on a regular basis the Olympic truce and games. This was accomplished with the aid of Lykourgos, the great lawgiver of Sparta, and Kleosthenes, king of Pisa. The long interval between Laias and Iphitos allegedly caused the Eleans to forget precisely what events were part of the games and in 776 B.C. they could remember only the stadion sprint (ca. 200 yards? in length). Gradually however they recalled various other events and added them to the Olympic program. With Iphitos and the "reestablishment" of the games at least the threshold of history has been reached. His major role in the Elean tradition is emphasized by a statue of him being crowned by a female figure identified as "Olympic" Truce which was located immediately inside the great temple of Zeus. Pausanias also reports seeing in the temple of Hera an inscribed diskos commemorating this reinstitution of the games and the truce and bearing the names of the three kings who brought it about.⁵⁸

58. For this body of legend, see Pausanias 5.1 ff. Endymion's connection with Olympia is further emphasized by the Elean claim that his tomb was by the starting line in the stadion. Endymion is also involved

in myth with Selene, the goddess of the moon, who bore him 50 daughters. Cornford, "Origin" 228, interprets this union as the sinking Sun married to the Moon and rather extravagantly comments: "The most

Extensive archaeological investigation by the Germans at Olympia and minimal excavation by the Austrians, later joined by the Greeks, at the site of the city of Elis have produced some clues as to human activity in this area during the times presumably reflected in the legends. As already noted, the area which surrounds the sanctuary of Olympia offered fertile, well-watered soil, while the slopes of nearby mountains provided good grazing and abundant wood. The paucity of the Mycenaean remains, although enhanced by excavations within the sanctuary, may not yet sustain an argument for the presence of an important cult or identify the type of deity which might have been worshipped there in the 13th or 12th century B.C. Some have argued for a Mycenaean cult of Pelops, and Dörpfeld in the 1890's believed that he found evidence for a Mycenaean Pelopion in a slightly curved row of stones deeply below the propylon of the early fourth century Pelopion. Mallwitz, rejects this for several reasons: the stones are at a greater depth than the foundations of the Middle Helladic houses found at the site; Dörpfeld was unable to demonstrate that the row of stones could be traced into any type of circular shape such as would contain a tumulus; and there was no cult location in the area of the early fourth century structure when a sizable layer of burnt ash was deposited in this area of the Altis during the first half of the sixth century B.C. The Pelopion obviously was an impressive and important cult center in the early fourth century but so far the excavators have found no trace of a cult of Pelops anywhere in the Altis earlier than the modest remains of an archaic structure near the propylon of the classical structure.⁵⁹

The disruptions and migrations which followed the collapse of Mycenaean civilization left few traces at Olympia. It is widely accepted that the turmoil and dislocation of this period reflects a major, unsettling event: either the arrival into Greece of large numbers of invaders who forced many already established Greek communities to abandon their homes and migrate to other parts of mainland Greece, the islands, or even the coast of Asia Minor; or the occurrence of some natural catastrophe such as an extended drought. If one opts for the invader theory, traditional candidates are a last great wave of Greeks who spoke the Doric dialect of Greek and who settled in large numbers in the eastern and southern Peloponnesos. The "return of the Herakleidai" is thought to be the legendary reflections of this event, which, as with the Eleans, is presented as the return of people with long-standing connections with the region. Sparta later became the militarily dominant Doric center and Herakles became the most famous Doric hero. About 900 B.C. clay and bronze animal and male figurines begin to appear at Olympia, usually interpreted to be votive offerings and thought to indicate the development of a cult center of some importance. By 800 B.C. the votives seem to increase significantly in number and include large bronze cauldrons of great value.

cautious scholars accept Boeckh's view that the fifty daughters of this marriage are the fifty moon months of the Olympiad" (see Roscher, *Lex. s.v. Mondgöttin*, col. 3182).

59. For Dörpfeld's view, see F. Adler, W. Dörpfeld,

Olympia II: Die Baudenkmäler (1892-96) 119 f. (the games initially belonged to Pelops and were taken over much later by Zeus). For Mallwitz' arguments, see Mallwitz, *Olympia* 134 f.

At the site of the classical city of Elis, excavations have brought to light burials dated to ca. 1000 B.C. on the slope of the acropolis which seem to represent the arrival of a new group of people, possibly conquerors who used the acropolis as the seat of their newly established control over the NW corner of the Peloponnesos. The form of burial and the objects found seem to have affinity especially with north and northwest Greece.⁶⁰

This rather sparse archaeological record can, if one wishes, be integrated with the legends. The burials on the acropolis of Elis could represent the arrival of immigrants, i.e. the arrival of Oxylos. These immigrants, based upon the dialect of Greek later spoken in Elis, came from northwest Greece and the area known as Aitolia, the linguistic evidence thus supporting the sketchy archaeological finds. The appearance of votives at Olympia beginning ca. 900 B.C. could represent the southward movement of these Aitolians, bringing them in contact with the people living in the district later known as Pisa and setting the stage for the ongoing struggle between the Eleans and the Pisatans for control of the sanctuary at Olympia. Of even greater possible significance is the presence at Dodona in northwest Greece of a major cult of Zeus, mentioned as early as Homer. It could be argued that these immigrants from Aitolia actually brought the worship of Zeus from Dodona to the sanctuary at Olympia. And finally, the sudden increase in offerings at the beginning of the 8th century B.C. could reflect the establishment on a formal and recurring basis of the Olympic games, traditionally dated at least in the fifth century B.C. to 776 B.C. and credited to Iphitos. Some scholars, however, are skeptical of this convenient mesh of legend and archaeology. The 776 date for the formalization of the games is based upon a chronology initiated by

60. The German school began excavations at Olympia in 1876 and the results have appeared and continue to appear in the following multi-volume series: F. Adler, E. Curtius, W. Dörpfeld et al., *Die Ausgrabungen zu Olympia*, 5 vols. (Berlin 1876-81); *Olympia; die Ergebnisse der von dem Deutschen Reich veranstalteten Ausgrabung*, 5 vols. (1890-97); *Berichte über die Ausgrabungen in Olympia*, 6 vols. (1937-58); and the current ongoing series *Olympische Forschungen* (1944-). Convenient single volume studies by members of the excavating teams are: E. Kunze, *Neue Ausgrabung in Olympia* (1960); and Mallwitz, *Olympia*. E. Norman Gardiner provides an English survey of the earlier phases of the excavation, plus an extensive discussion of the myths and legends with interpretations and a proposed history for the site in his *Olympia*. Coldstream, *GG* examines the archaeological evidence from the major sanctuaries of Classical Greece and concludes that there was a recurring pattern of abandonment ca.

1100 B.C. followed by renewed activity ca. 900 B.C. with a common change from earlier female to male votives. He stresses the minimal Mycenaean evidence at Olympia and the intrusion of a secular Mycenaean structure into the mound later identified as the precinct of Pelops, laments the lack of stratified evidence and painted pottery with the resultant difficulty in dating the geometric male and equine votives, and concludes that after the reshuffling of peoples during the period 1100-900 B.C., stability of worship was established at Olympia characterized by increasingly rich votives reflecting an expanding population enjoying greater wealth. Some of the earliest cults at Olympia are those of Aphrodite Ourania, Eileithyia, Ge, and Themis, located on the slopes of Mt. Kronion, but Mallwitz states that they are not prehistoric. The tombs found on the acropolis of the city of Elis are discussed in *CAH* III.1, 726-27.

Hippias of Elis at the end of the fifth century B.C. and the nature and accuracy of the evidence available to him almost 300 years after that date can legitimately be questioned. It presumes the recording and preservation of the name and home town of the winner at least of the stadion sprint in every Olympics from 776 to ca. 400 B.C. Also, the diskos of Iphitos, seen by Pausanias in the second century A.D. and accepted as genuine by Aristotle, late in the fourth century B.C., is often regarded as an ancient forgery possibly intended to support Elean claims to the sanctuary and its games. The statement that the Eleans gradually “remembered” the events that belonged to the earlier games at Olympia and therefore added them piecemeal over more than a century is far from persuasive and matches somewhat the confusion to be found in the myths and legends associated with the origin of the sanctuary and its games. Nevertheless, the legends and the archaeological evidence in combination support the thesis that the Eleans came to the northwest Peloponnesos at the end of the eleventh century B.C., probably from Aitolia in western Greece, that they eventually claimed control over Olympia from the Pisatans, and that they possibly introduced the cult of Zeus including ultimately a major, recurring festival featuring athletic competition. The role of Pisa in the early stages of the sanctuary and the type of cult, if any, fostered by the Pisatans can only be guessed at. Although the presence of a dominant female deity at Olympia before the arrival of the Eleans is an attractive hypothesis, especially in view of the seeming predominance of female deities at a number of sites at the end of the Mycenaean period, the nature and extent of the remains do not actively encourage such speculations even though later there was a major cult of Hera within the sanctuary and her temple was built ca. 600 B.C. before that of Zeus – possibly during a period when Pisa temporarily regained control of Olympia.

The Elean introduction of the cult of Zeus into Olympia has been challenged as a necessary assumption by Mallwitz. Pisa became the area of refuge for the Achaean population dispossessed by the Eleans, and there is no reason to assume that the Achaeans did not already worship Zeus at Olympia. Zeus was quite at home in the area dominated by the related Achaeans and Arcadians as witnessed by the major cult of Zeus Lykaeos. The 776 beginning date for the games is also called into question by Mallwitz on two grounds. The artifacts which were found in the ash layer and date back to the 9th century B.C. provide no real evidence for the beginning of the games. However, the temporary wells dug to provide water for the contestants and spectators do in fact provide firm evidence for the presence of significant numbers of people at the sanctuary. The earliest wells located near the sanctuary and stadion area date to the end of the 8th century, i.e. to ca. 700 B.C. Because of this Mallwitz would date the introduction of a major festival to the end of the eighth and beginning of the seventh centuries. There may have been earlier athletic competitions at Olympia, probably annual events limited to running contests and attracting a local patronage, but the switch to a major quadrennial festival, Mallwitz believes, reflected not a religious need but the introduction of a major competitive program including equestrian events. Bringing horses and chariots (and an increasing numbers of athletes and spectators

from around the Greek world) to Olympia, which is quite isolated from the major population centers, could not easily be an annual affair.⁶¹

The Homeric poems, often thought to have been put in their nearly final form about 800 B.C. (or 700 B.C. at the latest), do not mention Olympia or the Olympic games, but this may merely mean that the long oral tradition upon which the Homeric poems were based had achieved stability before the cult of Zeus at Olympia had gained real significance.

The relationship between Elis and Pisa presents a problem in the history of the sanctuary down to the early fifth century B.C. The Pisatans were probably Achaeans who were occupying the region south of the Alpheos river at the time the Aitolians crossed over into the Peloponnesos, and possibly also controlled the area of Olympia on the north bank of the Alpheos. A tradition preserved by Pausanias indicates an ongoing struggle between Elis and Pisa for mastery of the sanctuary, temporarily halted by the truce attributed to Iphitos, Lykourgos, and Kleosthenes. Sometime thereafter, Pisa with the help of the troops of Pheidon, tyrant of Argos, seized the sanctuary and jointly presided over the games with Pheidon. The date of this event varies in the ancient sources: Pausanias places it in the 8th Olympiad (748 B.C.); Strabo reports that the Eleans conducted the games from the 1st to the 16th Olympiads (776-672 B.C.), followed by a period of Pisatan control; and Africanus asserts that the 18th Olympiad (668 B.C.) was conducted by the Pisatans. Historians have been unable to agree upon either the 8th or the 7th century date primarily because the tyranny of Pheidon, though regarded as a critical and influential period by ancient commentators, floats in their accounts from the 8th to the 6th centuries and is as elusive as legend. Some defend Pausanias' 748 BC date because the archaeological remains from this period arguably reveal Argos at the height of her creative and political power. Others find the Argive defeat of Sparta at Hysiai in 669 a convincing prelude to Pheidon's march on Olympia and his joint-sponsorship with Pisa of the games of 668. Mallwitz finds this date tempting because it would provide an explanation for the early sixth century ash layer: Pheidon seized the sanctuary by force (some destruction likely) and undertook an extensive reorganization of the Altis; this included the dispersal of vast amounts of ash – not all from destruction but probably most from the many altars in the Altis – which would help in leveling the terrain in the north part of the sanctuary; and finally this rearrangement could have included the introduction of major new cults such as that of Hera, the patron deity of Argos, and that of Pelops whose mythical background is largely Achaean and centered in the Eastern Peloponnesos and the Argolid. Both of these new cults would have immediate political significance, and especially that of Pelops would provide a counterbalance to Doric, and therefore Elean, Herakles in favor of the Achaean Pisatans. There was at least one other Pisatan seizure of the shrine, dated by Pausanias to 644 B.C. In each instance Elis apparently managed to regain control, possibly with Spartan help. The large number of impressive Spartan

61. See Mallwitz, "Cult".

offerings at Olympia during the 7th century, plus Elean assistance during Sparta's wars with Messenia, would support such a conclusion. Without providing a precise date Pausanias reports a war in ca. mid-6th century which led to an Elean victory and to devastation of Pisa and her allies. The major urban center of Pisa traditionally was levelled and its location still eludes the archaeologist. It is generally assumed, however, that this final destruction of Pisa occurred sometime early in the 5th century B.C. and that the great temple of Zeus was built soon after with the spoils of this war. The increased political unification of Elis shortly after 480 B.C. and the creation of an urban center may also have been a critical factor both in the victory and the construction of the temple. Victors at games presided over by invaders were denied official recognition by the Eleans.

Apart from their early alliance with Sparta, which probably was necessary for survival, Elis attempted to maintain a posture of neutrality during the 150 years following the defeat of the Persians in 480-79 B.C. The public esteem for the games and the renown of the sanctuary with its cult of Zeus undoubtedly were assisted by, if not openly dependent upon, Elean aloofness from the inter-city-state strife which dominated this turbulent period. Elis even risked the wrath of her protector by banning Sparta from the games in 420 because of a violation of the Olympic truce. The continued success of this Elean policy also owed something to the sense of unity and common interest among the Panhellenic shrines, and any violation of the truce or the games could incur ostracism at least from Delphi and Olympia. A further compelling reason for the acceptance of the Olympic truce and of the special status accorded Olympia was the general realization of the unparalleled political benefits available to all from a secure truce and an "internationalized" sanctuary. This, along with the dominant cult of Zeus and the prestigious athletic games, must have been Olympia's significant contribution to Greek political and cultural life during the Classical period.⁶²

62. A brief reconstruction of Elean history during the Archaic period can be found in Jeffery, *Archaic Greece* 166-169 ("Broadly speaking, the policy of Archaic Elis seems that which prudence would naturally dictate to the possessor of a great Panhellenic sanctuary: to enforce the holy Truce which forbade any armed men to enter the sacred ground of Olympia, filled as its treasures were with the riches of the powerful colonies, and to side with Sparta, the rising power, in any troubles in the Peloponnese..."). Jeffery also comments that the early sections of all lists such as Hippias' were "patched and padded where necessary..." The diskos of Iphitos is accepted as genuine by N. G. I. Hammond (*CAH* III.3, 323) but Weiler, *Der Sport* 106, rejects it as an ancient forgery intended by the Eleans to provide an historical justification for their

hegemony over Olympia. Certainly a written document from the early 8th century B.C. would be unparalleled. For Pheidon's activity at Olympia, the ancient evidence is found in Pausanias 6.27.2, Strabo 8.3.30, and Africanus. Coldstream, *GG* 154-55, accepts Pausanias' 8th century date, whereas Hammond, *CAH* III.3, 324 and Jeffery, *Archaic Greece* 168 prefer 668 B.C. For Mallwitz' view, see "Cult" 102-103, where he characterizes his intriguing suggestions about Pheidon and the reorganizations of the sanctuary as "intimation" ... "thoroughly hypothetical". Pausanias 6.22.4 reports a war begun by Pyrrhos, king of Pisa, which led to an impressive Elean victory. The more thorough destruction of Pisa usually is assumed to have taken place in the early 5th century.

OLYMPIA: THE SANCTUARY AND ITS BUILDINGS

There are a lot of truly wonderful things you can see and hear about in Greece, but there is a unique divinity of disposition about the mysteries at Eleusis and the games at Olympia.

Pausanias 5.10.1

Olympia, the greatest of the Panhellenic shrines, enjoyed a natural setting which combined mountains with the broad, lush valley of the Alpheios river. Abundance of water, vegetation and trees, including plane, fir, white poplar, oak, and of course wild olive, must have created an idyllic scene to enhance the awe and mystery inspired by the belief in a divine presence. The word *Altis*, the technical term for the sanctuary commonly derived from “alsos” may reflect this luxuriant environment. The area, shielded to the north and east by mountains, was somewhat isolated from the intense activity and rivalries of the major population centers of ancient Greece, a condition which undoubtedly helped sustain during the Classical period Olympia’s claim to a sacred status. The sanctuary could be reached by manageable routes through the mountains and along the northern and western coasts of the Peloponnesos, or by sea because the Alpheios was navigable. Although travel to Olympia was never easy, often by foot and for some days, and in spite of the heat of late summer and notorious lack of adequate housing and food service, by the fifth and fourth centuries B.C. the major quadrennial festival of Zeus attracted the pious, the athletes, the spectators, and the powerful by the tens of thousands and continued through the Hellenistic period and the early centuries of the Roman Empire to receive the throngs from ever more distant places.⁶³

The lure of Olympia was felt again almost a century and a half before Schliemann’s excavations at Troy, Mycenae and Tiryns awakened throughout Europe a vivid awareness of the

63. It is not the intent here to provide an extensive description of all the structures at Olympia but only to comment briefly on those critical for the conduct of the Olympic Games. The specifically athletic units, such as the stadion, palaistra, hippodrome, etc., will be discussed in more detail in the chapter concerned

with athletic architecture. For an excellent survey of the site and its buildings, including many photographs, drawings, and a fold-out plan of the site, plus a photograph of a model of the site, see Mallwitz, *Olympia*. Yalouris, *Olympia*, provides a brief description of the site and its buildings.

magnificent architecture and art which lay behind the works of ancient Greek literature. In 1723 Cardinal Quirini, the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Kerkyra, resisted without comment the urgings of Montfaucon to locate and examine the site of ancient Olympia. Winkelmann proposed a similar effort several decades later but it remained for the Englishman Richard Chandler to find the site in 1767. He was assisted by the fact that the walls of the cells (the main room) of the temple of Zeus were still partially above ground, along with some walls of much later Roman buildings. His book, *Travels in Greece*, brought in subsequent years a number of English and French scholars to Olympia. A French team began the first formal excavation in May 1829, uncovering in six weeks' time the temple of Zeus and returning to France with fragments of the metopes. Finally in 1875 systematic and ongoing excavations were undertaken by a German team headed by E. Curtius and F. Adler. In six years they cleared the Altis of alluvial deposits averaging four meters in depth. A lengthy interlude followed with only sporadic, limited activity, but the Berlin Olympics in 1936 inspired a second major phase in German exploration. World War II forced an interruption but digging began again in 1952 and continued until 1966. By then the excavated area extended well beyond the Altis to include the late classical stadion and a number of major buildings to the south and west. These German excavations and the careful analysis of the finds by scholars now permit an often secure reconstruction of the major events in the history of Olympia from its earliest stages, through the centuries of its greatest fame, into the period of decline occasioned by time, barbarians, and Christians, and finally to its ultimate destruction by earthquakes and floods in the 6th century A.D.⁶⁴

A major problem, already discussed, is centered in the late Mycenaean period (ca. 1200 B.C.): was Olympia a sanctuary or was any significant cult located in or nearby the later sanctuary during this period? As already stressed, the meagre archaeological remains do not at the present time support the presence of a Mycenaean sanctuary or major cult at this site. Pausanias, however, states the contemporary belief that in rather ancient times, before the establishment of the Olympic games or even earlier, there was an oracle of Earth at Olympia. What he saw in the second century A.D. was an area called the Gaion, or sanctuary to Earth with an altar of ash from sacrifices, plus an altar to Themis and a mouth or chasm, a traditional means of communicating with Earth or those below the earth. None of these have been found by the excavators but they are believed to have occupied the slower slope of the hill of Kronos at the north edge of the Altis. In the Classical period, Zeus indeed was a god of oracles at Olympia, as well as at Dodona, and Olympia had two official seers, one from the family of the Iamidai and one from the Klytidai, who were blessed with the ability to "hear the voice that never lies." There are indications that this oracle was well-

64. For brief accounts of the various phases of the excavations at Olympia, see Mallwitz, *Olympia* 292-293 and Holmberg, *Delphi* 89-90.

known and respected and continued to function throughout the Classical period, e.g. it was celebrated by Pindar in the fifth century and was consulted by Spartan kings on difficult questions of foreign policy during the fourth century. However, the fame of Zeus as oracle at Olympia may have been eclipsed by the immense popularity of the athletic games or by the international reputation of the Apolline oracle at Delphi, or by both.

The hypothesis that a very ancient, even Mycenaean, oracle of Earth existed at Olympia, which Zeus later usurped when he arrived on the scene in ca. 900 B.C., has some attraction because it seems to fit the pattern discerned by Coldstream of change from a late Mycenaean female to a Protogeometric male divinity. Strabo's assertion that the early fame of Olympia rested not on the games but on the oracle also fits this pattern. Further, the possibility that the Iamidai were Pisatans and hostile to Elean control may also support this thesis and may even contribute a partial explanation for the decline in public recognition of the oracle. However, the close coincidence of Earth, oracle, Themis, chasm and Apollo at Delphi and Earth, oracle, Themis, chasm and Zeus at Olympia has raised suspicions that the Olympic complex was modeled after the Delphic one and was therefore possibly fairly late. This similarity of cult organization with Delphi and the absence of physical evidence from Olympia greatly diminishes the force of an otherwise persuasive paradigm or parallel. Final judgement must await further information.⁶⁵

The Altis in the eighth century B.C. was relatively simple. An outdoor altar for sacrifices to Zeus probably was located at or near the great ash altar seen centuries later by Pausanias. The other essential facility was a dromos or running track for the single stadion sprint. Its probable location has been identified by a careful study of the terrain of the sanctuary during this early period. The excavators have determined that there was a noticeable slope down from the base of the hill of Kronos from north to south which would have prevented locating the dromos in the central part of the Altis. There was also a downward slope toward the east which would have further complicated an attempt to mark out a level running course. The first level area begins near the east side of the sanctuary, thus the earliest dromos, requiring a straight, level expanse of ca. 200 meters. Probably ended within the Altis but at some distance, possibly as much as 100 meters, eastward from the ash altar of Zeus. It probably followed at a northeasterly slant from the sanctuary along the base of the hill of Kronos which would provide a natural viewing area for spectators. Some have argued for a hero-cult at the tumulus of Pelops, although Mallwitz' objections at the moment are persuasive. Pausanias saw a pillar, the last remnant of Oinomaos' palace which had been blasted

65. For a description of the sanctuary of Earth, see Pausanias 5.14.10. For Pindar's discussion of Iamos (the first of the Iamidai) and his ability to hear the "voice that never lies", see *Olympian* 6.27-72 (apparently Zeus communicated during the Classical period

through the smoke arising from sacrifices). For a brief discussion of the possible early presence of an oracular cult, speculation about the identity of the Iamidai and the Klytadai, and consultations by Spartan kings, see Mallwitz, *Olympia* 64-65.

by Zeus' thunderbolt, which was probably a later pious fraud. The final object of veneration needed was the wild olive tree from which the olive wreath for the victor was cut. The size of the sanctuary at this time whether it was fenced or marked off in some fashion cannot be known.⁶⁶

The seventh century probably saw two major new structures added: the hippodrome outside the Altis and the temple of Hera within the sanctuary. The earliest race track for equestrian events very likely occupied approximately the same area as the elaborate one seen by Pausanias, i.e. the wide, level stretch of ground to the south of the Altis and stadion near the north bank of the Alpheos river. Little beyond Pausanias' description can be said about this unit because nothing of it has been uncovered in this area and the track for equestrian races probably has been totally destroyed by the floodings of the Alpheos over the centuries. Homer's description of the chariot race in the funeral games of Patroklos indicates that a number of chariots could be accommodated on a course of minimal definition, a pattern possibly followed for some time at Olympia. The temple of Hera may have been completed before the end of the seventh century and is therefore the oldest major structure in the Altis. Its walls were constructed of stone at the lower levels and topped with mud bricks. Its overall measurements at the foundation were 18.76 meters by 50 meters, with a height which can only be estimated, possibly as much as 7.80 meters. There is practically no evidence for any type of significant structure beneath this temple. The fact that the earliest temple at Olympia was for Hera is thought by some to reflect the original dominance by a female fertility deity. Another factor may have been more critical: the Zeus of Olympia was closely related to the Zeus at Dodona who was worshipped and sacrificed to in the open air in a grove of sacred oaks. Conservatism of religious ritual would dictate the continuation of worship in an open-air sanctuary near or in a sacred grove and would diminish the need for a temple even when temples began to appear during the eighth century. The argument, grounded in the theory of a primeval female sanctuary, has also been made that the Pisatans built the Hera temple during one of their relatively brief seizures of the Altis, allegedly to reassert a feminine cultic dominance.

The sixth century saw increased building activity. The most important for athletics was a well-drained running track using the slope to the north of the hill of Kronos for spectators and possibly also enhance by an embankment to the south, also for spectators. The finish line did protrude into the Altis but was still some distance from the altar of Zeus. Also constructed were the old prytaneion, the first phase of the bouleuterion, and a number of treasuries, all of which testify to the growing importance and complexity of the sanctuary and its games. The prytaneion was a relatively square building with sides of 32.80 meters

66. Mallwitz, *Olympia* 133-137 and 313, and "Cult", 86 ff. expresses reservations about the high antiquity

of the physical remains of a heroon for Pelops. See Mallwitz, "Cult" 94 for the location of the stadion.

and housed the immediate administrative functions of the sanctuary. It also contained the dining hall for the feast honoring the victors and a hearth with eternal fire, the ashes from which were saved and added to the ash altar of Zeus. The bouleuterion provided meeting space and facilities for the Council (or Senate) of Elis which had ultimate authority over the sanctuary and its activities; it was a fairly complex building, constructed over a period of ca. 200 years and consisting of two sixth century parallel structures (ca. 30 meters by 14 meters) with semi-circular or apsidal areas at their west ends. In the fifth century a rectangular building was added in the space between two units so that all three shared a common eastern line. In the fourth century an Ionic portico was added across the east end more or less uniting the three structures. The bouleuterion also contained the statue of Zeus Horkios, or Zeus god of oaths, before which both athletes and officials took their oaths before the games began. The prytaneion was within the Altis while the bouleuterion, although outside the immediate sacred area, provided a convenient marker for the southern boundary of the Altis. The treasuries were relatively small temple-like structures used to house valuable gifts to Zeus and also various other objects which needed protection from the weather. By 500 B.C. at least ten had been built, the oldest dating to ca. 600 B.C. They were constructed by city-states in Greece or Greek colonies in southern Italy and eastern Sicily, most of which were inhabited by those speaking a Doric dialect. The establishment by increasingly wealthy colonial city-states of these small shrines at Olympia and other Panhellenic sites was a potent symbol of their continued Hellenism and participation in a community of language, cults, and significant activities. These treasuries also contained utensils and objects needed by the official delegations from the city-states which built them for their participation in the ritual and social activities which were part of the great festival. The Elean officials also used them to store implements, such as diskoi, for the games. They were located on what was ultimately a terraced area at the bottom of the hill of Kronos and at the northern end of the Altis.⁶⁷ Some form of a Pelopion probably appeared during the seventh or sixth century but little has been found beneath the early fourth century structure.

The century from 500 to 400 B.C. witnessed one major new structure, the temple to Zeus. It was a sizeable building, in fact the largest temple in the Peloponnesos, measuring ca. 27.68 by 64.2 meters and reaching an overall height of ca. twenty meters. It was designed by Libon, an Elean architect, and built from local conglomerate stone which was then coated with stucco. The sculpture in the east pediment presented Zeus standing between Oinomaos and Pelops at the moment before their fateful chariot race. The west pediment had Apollo

67. Descriptions of the temple of Hera, the prytaneion, the bouleuterion, and the treasures may be found in Mallwitz, *Olympia* 137-49 (temple of Hera), 125-128 (prytaneion), 235-240 (bouleuterion), and 155-160, 163-179 (treasuries). Philip Sapiststein, "The

Columns of the Heronion at Olympia: Dörpfeld and Early Doric Architecture", *AJA* 120 (2016), 565-601. Eric L. Brulotte, "The 'Pillar of Oinomaos' and the location of Stadium I at Olympia", *AJA* 98 (1994), 53-64.

(or Perithoos or Theseus) standing serenely in the midst of the battle between the Lapiths and Centaurs, a scene usually thought to symbolize the struggle between the Greeks and the Persians. This monument of Doric style was completed in 456 B.C. and probably began 10 to 20 years earlier. According to Pausanias it was built with funds provided by the spoils taken by the Eleans when they destroyed Pisa and her allies. The date of this war cannot be established more precisely than early fifth century. Herodotos, writing in mid-fifth century, simply states that "In our days" the Eleans destroyed a number of towns in the neighborhood of Elis. By ca. 470 B.C. Elis underwent a reorganization with the establishment of a central urban area, the city of Elis, through the union of several villages. This event, plus the minting at about this same date of coins boasting of Elean control of Olympia, probably followed this military triumph; thus the beginning of the construction of the temple can reasonably be dated to the 470's at the earliest. If Pisa was populated by the descendants of the people whom the Aitolians found in the region of Olympia when they moved into the northwest Peloponnesos, and if, this is more problematic, Pisa in fact had built the temple to Hera during a period when they had regained control of the sanctuary and had done this as an expression of their renewed supremacy, then the total defeat of a long-term competitor for control of the site of Olympia may have provided, besides funding, an additional impetus for the construction of a magnificent temple to Zeus as the ultimate symbol of his dominion over the sanctuary. Religious scruples would have prevented any overt move against the cult of Hera or her temple. It should be born in mind, however, that the tradition of worshipping Zeus in the open air amidst trees may alone account for the lateness of the preparation of a formal temple and that there is no necessary hostility between the cults of Hera and Zeus. The temple may also have been built simply because the funds were available and/or as part of the general Greek celebration of the defeat of Persia in 480-79 B.C.

Some ten to twenty years after the completion of the temple, an awe-inspiring statue of Zeus was placed in the main room or cella of the temple. The statue was ca. forty feet in height and was constructed of gold, for the garment, and ivory for the skin. Pheidias, the famous sculptor from Athens, supervised the design and execution of this work of art which became known as one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. A staircase in the main room provided access to a gallery from which visitors could admire the upper torso and head of the statue. Zeus held a golden scepter topped by an eagle in his left hand and a golden Nike in his right, and his head was crowned with a golden olive wreath, the symbol of victory in the Olympic games. Outside and to the west of the Altis, the German excavators found a rectangular building with the same dimensions as the temple cella, plus a drinking cup with Pheidias' name on it; the conclusion is inescapable: a workroom the exact size of the temple cella was constructed to provide Pheidias with the same spatial environment which would house the statue. Pheidias' special attachment to this statue was still evident centuries later when the so-called descendants of Pheidias had the exclusive right to clean and polish it. The fate of this chryselephantine marvel is unknown. There is a tradition that

it was moved to Constantinople during the Byzantine period but it has disappeared without leaving a trace.⁶⁸

Several other structures appeared in or near the Altis during the fifth century. Two were critical for athletes: a building containing hip-baths and an outdoor swimming pool, both located outside and to the west of the Altis, which provide the oldest examples of these athletic facilities yet found. The second dromos for track events may have been constructed early in this century, or possibly late in the sixth. Both this track and its predecessor probably followed a northeasterly line from the east side of the Altis. The hippodrome received an elaborate set of starting gates reportedly designed by Kleoitas, an Athenian sculptor.⁶⁹

The fourth century saw major changes at Olympia (pl. VIII). First was the construction early in the century of an elaborate structure for the cult of Pelops. More significant for the athletic festival was the construction of a new stadion or running track further to the east and totally outside the Altis. This meant moving the west end of the track (the finish line) ca. 75 to 80 meters to the east but the same slightly northeast orientation was maintained. Earthen embankments were placed on the west, south, and east sides so that together with the lower slope of the hill of Kronos on the north, spectators numbering as many as 40,000 to 45,000 had good vantage points on all sides. The stadion was moved to this new site perhaps by c. 340, the same time as the construction of the Echo Colonnade, its name indicting the popular tradition that it echoed back seven times words shouted into it. This building, ca. 98 meters by 12.50 meters, provided an aesthetically pleasing means of closing the east side of the Altis and effectively screened off the new stadion. A very narrow passageway was left between the colonnade and the stadion between its north end and the terrace of the treasuries. This was roofed over during the Hellenistic period by a barrel vault of stone covered with dirt to form a dramatic tunnel entryway into the stadion. A stone channel circled the stadion bringing water directly to the competitors and spectators, ending the necessity to dig temporary wells. A large guest facility was built between 330-320 B.C. just opposite the southwest edge of the Altis which was called the Leonidaion after Leonidas of Naxos who provided the funding. With respect to area covered this was the most extensive of all buildings at Olympia, measuring ca. 81 by 75 meters. This nearly square unit contained a large inner courtyard surrounded by a number of rather small guest rooms thought to be reserved for distinguished guests and participants. A small circular shrine, the Philippeion,

68. For Pausanias' description of the temple of Zeus and the statue by Pheidias, see 5.10.2-5.11.11. Pausanias identifies the central figure in the west pediment as Perithoos, son of Zeus and king of the Lapiths. Art historians almost uniformly reject this and insist that the majestic pose and centrality of the figure point to Apollo. See also S. G. Miller, *ARETE*:

Greek Sports from Ancient Sources (1991).

69. For description with illustrations of the hip baths and swimming pool, see Mallwitz, *Olympia* 270-273. For the fifth century stadion, see *ibid.* 185-186. For Kleoitas and the new starting gates in the hippodrome, see Pausanias 6.20.14.

was begun by Philip II of Macedon after his triumph over the Greek forces at Chaeronia in 338 B.C. and completed by his son, Alexander the Great. It was probably constructed by the same architect who supervised the building of the Echo Colonnade and may also have been part of Macedon's activity at Olympia. By the end of the fourth century a wall was constructed to mark the official boundary of the Altis on the west and south sides. The east side had recently been closed in by the Echo Colonnade but the west wall was not parallel to this structure; it veered somewhat to the northwest probably in order to retain within the Altis the Philippeion and the newer Prytaneion. The northern limit had been set from the beginning by the lower slopes of the hill of Kronos with the terrace of treasuries to the northeast and the temple of Hera, to the northwest. Also by 300 B.C. the Altis was beginning to present the visitor with a growing forest of statues commissioned often from the leading artists of the day by victorious athletes; it was their right to commemorate their achievement by erecting a statue within the sanctuary and many indulged this privilege.

Two later structures should be mentioned. A palaistra or wrestling arena was added to the Olympic complex during the third century B.C. It was a nearly square building (66.35 by 66.75 meters) with an inner courtyard measuring ca. 41 and $\frac{1}{2}$ meters square. It provided a training area for the combat sports and was located west of the Altis. Then in the second century B.C. a gymnasium or training area for track and field events was built off the northwest corner of the sanctuary. It probably consisted of four long narrow structures arranged in a rectangular form measuring ca. 220 by 120 meters. The east unit of this building contained a two-lane covered running track the same length as the one in the stadion, while the west unit probably contained housing for competitors. The unit on the south was apparently a covered walkway with benches for resting. Nothing is known about the north unit whose existence even is questioned. The large central courtyard created by these structures provided ample space for the practice of the field events. Greater precision of description is impossible because only the southern section of the covered running tracks and the eastern section of the sitting area have been excavated. The Kladeos river has destroyed the west unit by its flooding. Fear of this eventually had led to the construction in antiquity of a protective or retaining wall between the unit and the river, but over the centuries the river triumphed. Only a small portion of the covered practice tracks has been excavated.

Thus by the second century B.C. the complex of athletic buildings at Olympia was completed. No significant new athletic structures were added during the several centuries before the site was essentially abandoned late in the fourth or early in the fifth century A.D. Mention should be made, however, of the Nymphaion, constructed during the second century A.D. by Herodes Attikos. This brought a secure and elegant source of running water to the Altis, thereby solving what must have been an ongoing problem of providing sufficient water for the tens of thousands of visitors to the sanctuary. The Eleans were conservative with regard to adding elaborate athletic structures, even declining to accept offers of expensive refurbishing of the stadion which remained without seats throughout its long history. This

does not mean that the athletes were not well looked after: as already noted, Olympia possessed the earliest known bathing facilities and swimming pool for the use of competitors at the games; the rather late appearance of the palaistra and gymnasium does not mean that the athletes lacked adequate training facilities. Their required and supervised month-long preparation took place not at Olympia but at Elis which presumably was endowed with ample facilities. Pausanias describes the various practice arenas in the city of Elis of his day but the minimal archaeological exploration of the site does not permit even speculation about the state of affairs in the fifth century B.C. According to ancient comment, the group which found visiting Olympia challenging was the spectators.⁷⁰

70. Mallwitz provides detailed descriptions with illustrations of fourth century and later buildings: the late classical stadion, 180-194; the Echo Colonnade, 194-199; the Philippeion, 128-133; the Leonidaion, 246-254; the palaistra, 278-284; the gymnasium, 284-288; the Nymphaion, 149-155. Pausanias 5.21.17 reports the phenomenon of the seven or more echoes from the Painted or Echo Colonnade.

TRACK AND FIELD EVENTS OF THE OLYMPIC PROGRAM

ATHLETIC NUDITY

In Homer's description of the funeral games for Patroklos, there is no mention of nudity among the participants and those competing in boxing and wrestling are described as girding themselves with belts (*Iliad* 23.683 and 710). By the sixth century, and possibly earlier, athletes stripped, rubbed themselves with oil, and then trained and competed in the nude. Later Greek writers regarded this as a peculiarly Hellenic custom but were uncertain as to its origins and offered several explanations. One story involved Orrhippos or (Orsippos), a sprinter from Megara, who lost his perizoma, or type of loin cloth, in the middle of a race at Olympia in 720 B.C. He managed nevertheless to win the race and it was suggested that the loss of his perizoma was deliberate because he could run faster without it. His success then inspired other runners, and apparently all athletes generally, to compete in the nude. Another version attributes the fashion to Akanthos, a Spartan distance runner, who also at the Olympics of 720 B.C. won the newly instituted dolichos while running in the nude. The Athenians had their own version which placed the chance cause of athletic nudity much later: at the formal institution of the Great Panathenaia in 566 B.C. an Athenian runner not only lost his loin cloth but also tripped over it, lost the race, and apparently his life; the Athenian archon or chief magistrate, Hippomenes, then decreed that all athletes would henceforth compete in the nude in order to prevent similar accidents in the future. There is a series of late sixth century B.C. Athenian black figure vases, the Perizoma Group dated to ca. 520 B.C., which depict athletes wearing loin cloths added possibly as an afterthought because they are painted over the incised genitals. Nothing much can be made of these depictions because of the brevity of the series, plus the fact that they all come from the same Athenian workshop and were all found outside Greece. Accounts of losing one's loin cloth in the course of a race are believable and such occurrences may on occasion have slowed a runner, but the use of such stories – or the assertion that one runs faster without clothes – as the primary aetiology for athletic nudity more probably reflects late fanciful attempts to account for a somewhat unusual Greek practice whose actual origin was unknown. Thucydides vaguely echoes the Akanthos story by merely stating that the Spartans were the first to strip and exercise in the nude and offers no further rationalization.⁷¹

71. For discussions of nudity, see Arieti, "Nudity" (nudity to control sexual arousal); Crowther, "Athletic Dress" 163-68: "Whatever the original reason for nudity in athletics ... it was nudity which separated them

In addition to competing without loin cloths, the athlete did not wear any type of footgear and this custom may have directly affected either performance or the development of certain types of athletic facilities. This issue will be discussed where appropriate in the context of specific events. The modern success of bare foot distance runners from various parts of Africa proves that the absence of expensive, “scientifically designed” footgear does not preclude outstanding performance – at least in some events. Certainly sprinters are aided by spiked shoes, starting blocks, and modern track surfaces.

THE RUNNING EVENTS

According to the Olympic Register the three oldest contests at the Olympic games were all running events: the *stadion* sprint (from 776 B.C.), the *diaulos* (from 724 B.C.), and the *dolichos* (from 720 B.C.). The fourth and final running event, the *hoplitodromos* or race-in-armor was added in 500 B.C.⁷² The unit of measurement for all races was the *stadion*, a term which designated a length of 600 feet. Somewhat in keeping with the lack of political unity in ancient Greece, there was not a uniform length for a foot and thus various tracks presented rather widely differing distances. The track at Olympia measures 192.27 meters, yielding a foot of 0.32047 meters, which is about one-half inch longer than the modern English foot and was the longest of the commonly used linear measurements in ancient Greece. According to legend, Herakles himself marked out the track at Olympia using his own foot as the measuring device. This “Olympic foot” was also used as the basic measurement unit for the temple of Zeus built within the *Altis* during the first half of the fifth century B.C.

(the Greeks) from the barbarians, from whom they wished to be distinguished”; and Sweet, *Sourcebook* 124-33 (discussion of body’s natural power of protecting the genitals by retraction during vigorous exercise, 130-31). For Orrhippos (Orsippos), see *IG* 7.52 (first to be crowned naked at Olympia); and Pausanias 1.44.1 (deliberate shedding of loin cloth in order to run faster). For Akanthos, see Pausanias 5.8.6 (no comment on nudity); Sextus Julius Africanus, *Olympionicarum Fasti* (*List of the Victors at the Olympic Games*), entry for 15th Olympiad “The *dolichos* was added and they ran in the nude; Akanthos the Spartan won”; and Dionysos of Halikarnassos, *Roman Antiquities* 7.72.2-3 (Akanthos was the first to remove his clothes and compete in the nude). For the origin in a tripping and death at Athens, see Isidore, *Etymologiae* 18.17.2; and Sweet, *Sourcebook* 128-29 (confused mixture of the Orsippos and Athenian stories found in

late Homeric scholia). Both Thucydides 1.6 and Plato, *Res Publica* 451C, assert that athletic nudity was a fairly recent development but neither offers even an approximate date. Crowther, relying on Thucydides, Plato and the Perizoma group, suggests that nudity was not introduced until after the Persian Wars, i.e. after 480/79 B.C. The Perizoma group may have been one workshop’s brief concern with foreign customers’ complaints about nudity. Larissa Bonfante, “Nudity as a Costume in Classical Art”, *AJA* 93 (1989), 543-570. J. Mouratidis, “The Origin of Nudity in Greek Athletics”, *JSH* (1985), 213-232.

72. See entries in S. Julius Africanus for Olympiads I (the single *stadion* sprint won by Koroibos in 776 B.C.), XIV (the newly added *diaulos* won by Hypenos in 724 B.C.), XV (the newly added *dolichos* won by Akanthos in 720 B.C.), and LXV (the newly added *hoplites* won by Damaretos in 520 B.C.).

Other measurements of the *stadion* with which the runner had to contend are ca. 181 meters at the Isthmia and 177.5 meters at Delphi. These variations must have caused some concern for all athletes but especially for the distance runners who could face differences of as much as 2,000 meters in their event from one festival to the other. *Stadion*, in addition to meaning a length of six hundred feet, was also applied to the running track and ultimately to the whole structure used for track competition, including the areas for spectators. The word *dromos* was also widely used to designate the track itself.⁷³

The single stadion sprint, traditionally the only event for the first thirteen Olympiads, required a minimal facility, especially since there was ample space in and near the *Altis* at Olympia to accommodate it as a straightway run. For the first years of the Olympic Games, when the festival was basically local, or at best regional, and the athletic program minimal, the *stadion* or *dromos* probably was marked out on a fairly level surface with the starting and finishing lines simply marked on the ground. The starting line was to the east of the sanctuary with the finish line somewhat within the *Altis*. As already noted above, the necessity for a stretch of level ground at least 600 Olympic feet in length forced the placement of the running track some distance to the east and undoubtedly prevented the placement of the finish line next to the ash altar of Zeus. The width of this primitive track may have fluctuated, possibly depending upon the number of contestants, and the lanes were straight and contiguous. Thus, the *stadion* was a rectangular area six hundred Olympic feet in length and of much lesser width with no infield or dead space. By the mid-sixth century there is evidence for the construction of a track with possibly some form of embankment to improve viewing. By the late sixth or early fifth centuries, another track was laid in the same area and was used until ca. 340 B.C. when the last and most elaborate stadion was built. Surprisingly, the track used during one of the premier periods of the Olympic Games, i.e. from ca. 600 B.C. to 340 B.C., was eight meters narrower than the last track. In all its permutations and in spite of the introduction of more running events, the basic form of the area for track competition retained the primitive form suitable for a single lap sprint – a rectangle with no dead space or infield. Whether the running track was treated in any way, e.g. loosening the soil somewhat to provide a softer surface, is probable but unknown for Olympia. The relatively dry, hot summers of Greece can provide a fairly hard, possibly uncomfortable, top layer of earth.⁷⁴

In the early games runners probably started at a voice command – similar to our “one, two, three, GO.” Artistic representations of runners indicate that they employed an upright

73. For the various *stadia* and problems of measurement, see the chapters concerned with athletic architecture.

74. An inscription listing the expenses for preparing the track at Delphi in 246 B.C. for competition in-

cludes costs for cleaning and digging (loosening the surface?) the stadion and for 600 bushels of white earth (for the running track surface?), *BCH* Suppl. IV (1977) 103 ff.

position with one foot somewhat in front of the other, rather similar to a modern middle distance runner (pl. IX, fig. 1). By the beginning of the fifth century B.C. a permanent stone starting line, called *balbis* (or *hysplex*) begin to appear, usually with two parallel grooves separated by several inches to provide a grip for the toes (pl. IX, fig. 2). Ultimately various types of starting mechanisms were developed to insure a uniform start. The most elaborate of those yet found is at the Isthmia and will be discussed later. The late classical *hysplex* or *balbis* at Olympia provided for twenty lanes with runners starting at the east end and finishing at another *hysplex* at the end close to, but outside the sanctuary proper. By the beginning of the fourth century at the latest races were started by a trumpeter selected through a competition probably held on the afternoon of the first day. A herald was present, also selected by competition, both to announce the contestants and then the winners. False starts are always a problem, especially in the sprints. Instead of disqualification after a certain number of false starts, the Hellanodikai, the officials supervising the Olympic games, employed a rather direct penalty: those guilty of a false start were immediately and publicly flogged! The severity of this punishment is indicated by the fact that flogging was normally reserved for slaves and rarely practiced on citizens. Flogging apparently was not accompanied by disqualification. A number of vase paintings depicting runners are extant and the sprinters are easily identified by the vigorous pumping motion of their arms and the length of their stride. Determining the winner must have presented severe problems on occasion. The three Hellanodikai, who along with assistants were assigned to conduct the races, must have been stationed at the finish line, probably in a somewhat elevated area. Their task was simplified by having to select only the winner, but with as many as twenty sprinters in the finals disagreement was possible. Pausanias reports that in 396 B.C. the Hellanodikai by a two-to-one vote declared Eupolemos of Elis the winner over Leon of Ambrakia. One interesting result of this decision is that Leon protested to the Olympic Council and was successful in having a fine imposed on the two Hellanodikai who voted for Eupolemos, but nevertheless Eupolemos retained the crown and other perquisites of the victor. Dead heats or ties were not a welcome outcome. Generally if there was no clear winner, the crown was dedicated to the god and no one enjoyed the rewards of victory. The near total absence of reference to this possibility may indicate that the Hellanodikai, and judges elsewhere, took great pains to avoid it. Winning the single stadion sprint brought great fame. Not only was there the fascination with the "world's fastest human" but also the four-year Olympiad ultimately was named after the victor in this race. As already noted, this race was dedicated not to Zeus but to Demeter Chamyne whose altar was immediately to the north of the track on the lowest slope of the hill of Kronos.⁷⁵

75. For the *balbis* and *hysplex*, see below on athletic architecture. For flogging for false starts, see Hero-

dotos 8.59. For the split vote in favor of Eupolemos, see Pausanias 6.3.7.

The sprint races undoubtedly attracted far more competitors than the *stadion/dromos* could accommodate in a single race. No ancient author, however, provides specific data and only inferences may be drawn from statements that seven runners from the city of Kroton qualified for the *stadion* sprint at the same games. If the Hellenodikai did not trim the number of competitors to twenty during the one month's training at Elis, trial heats were held, apparently with as few as four runners per heat, with the winner of each heat advancing to the finals. The luck of the draw for these heats could have been critical, but here the Hellenodikai's month-long control of training may have provided them with sufficient knowledge to prepare a reasonable seeding system; to be sure, there is no evidence whatsoever for such a procedure. If heats were held, in all likelihood heats for the two shorter or sprint races – the single *stadion* and the *diaulos* – were conducted first thing in the morning, then the finals for the *dolichos* or long distance race, and then the finals for the sprints. Heats for the *dolichos* seem unlikely simply because of the time limitations and the impossibility of requiring distance runners to compete twice within a few hours. The selection of finalists for the *dolichos* may have been somewhat eased by allowing more than twenty to run, just as in modern track meets, because they tend quickly to form clusters or a single line.⁷⁶

The *diaulos*, a race twice the length of the *stadion* (384.5 meters), was added to the Olympic schedule in 724 B.C. The length of the track, however, was not increased nor was any other adjustment made to the 600 foot-long rectangular *dromos*. Runners, therefore, had to turn at the end of the course and race back to the point from which they had begun. A modern track easily accommodates longer races by its oval shape with lanes curving around an infield or open space in the middle. The ancient track did not adopt this format and remained a long, narrow arena with parallel contiguous lanes. The problem of how the athletes managed to turn and compete a second length, or more, is still debated. There are two basic approaches: either all the runners turned around a single post set slightly to the runner's right as he approached and at the opposite end of the track, or they had to turn more sharply around individual posts and return to an adjacent lane or even within the same lane. Requiring all runners to turn around a single post would, in a sprint race such as the *diaulos*, easily lead to confusion, body contact, and intentional or unintentional tripping. Collisions at or near the single turning post in chariot races provided most of the memorable moments in the hippodrome and are frequently mentioned by ancient writers. Near silence as to a similar problem in the *diaulos* may indicate that some other system of turning was used, although there are references to holding or tripping by an "immoral, unskilled athlete" who relies on unsportsmanlike conduct rather than speed. Holding and tripping require close quarters and channeling all sprinters around a single post would provide opportunity for these fouls, although similar fouls may have been possible on the

76. For seven sprinters from Kroton in the same see Pausanias 6.13.4.
finals, see Strabo 6.12. For assignment to heats by lot,

straightway if most of the twenty lanes were used at one time.⁷⁷ There is a more serious objection to a single post for the *diaulos*: it would place some runners, especially those starting from the extreme left lanes (if the post was placed slightly right of center), at an almost insurmountable disadvantage and very probably preclude victory, while those starting in lines just to the right of center would have a distinct advantage. There is modest evidence that the assignment of lanes could have been done by lottery. The fifth century B.C. starting sill at Corinth still retains substantial traces of letters painted to indicate starting positions which would obviously facilitate a lottery for assignment of lanes. Under the single post thesis, good luck in the draw would mean far more to sprinters than to distance runners.

The design of the hysplex or starting sill during the fifth and fourth centuries provides a clue to another possible solution. The stone sills were divided by rectangular holes which probably held posts, and each runner would be assigned a starting position measuring about four-plus feet in width between two posts (pl. IX, fig. 2). These posts may have had two functions in addition to identifying starting slots: they may have been part of some mechanical starting devices and they may also have served as individual turning posts at least for the *diaulos*. In a feasible reconstruction of the turn, the runners would be allotted two contiguous lanes (and thus only ten runners for the twenty lanes at Olympia) and at the end of the first length they would turn around the post to the left and run back to the starting (and now finishing) line in the lane immediately to the left. With some practice and, if the individual posts were sturdy enough, a sprinter would be able to catch the post in his hand or within the crook of his elbow, spin around the post, and thrust himself with some speed onto the adjacent track. This would cause minimum delay and prevent the jostling inherent in a single-post turn. The turnaround an individual post and running the return lap in the adjacent lane accords well with Pausanias' use of the term *boustrophedon* – i.e. turning like oxen in ploughing a field – to describe the two-length sprint. Also supportive is the term *diaulos* itself which designates both this race and a musical instrument with two parallel pipes. It is also possible that the sprinters had to turn around within the same lane and without benefit of the modest sling-shot effect of spinning around a post. Such a system would permit twenty contestants on the track at one time but would slow the runners.⁷⁸

77. Miller, "Turns". For tripping and holding, see Lucian, *On Slander* 12, and Statius, *Thebaid* 6.614-617, where Idas, running next to and slightly behind Parthenopaïos, seizes Parthenopaïos' long hair just as the latter was about to win the race, and pulls vigorously to slow Parthenopaïos and to gain extra momentum to win the race. King Adrastus, after an unseemly hesitation, ordered a rerun between just these two and placed them at opposite sides of the track to prevent further cheating. Parthenopaïos easily won the second race.

78. A survey of the ancient literary references to

the *dolichos* and the conclusion that it was a race of twenty lengths, is done by Jüthner, *Brein* II 180 ff. For a defense of varying distances based on age groups, see Harris, *GAA* 93. For the stadia at Olympia and Nemea, see the chapter on athletic architecture. For the possibility that larger numbers competed in the *dolichos*, see Xenophon, *Anabasis* 4.8.27: more than 60 Cretans participated in the *dolichos* in games held to entertain the troops; this was not, however, a traditional athletic festival and its value as evidence is therefore greatly diminished.

The length of the *dolichos* is not clearly established in any ancient source and estimates range from a minimum of seven to a maximum of twenty-four lengths (ca. 1,350 to more than 4,500 meters). Harris explains the evidence for varying distances by suggesting that this event offered different distances for the three common age groups (boys, youth, and adult men), a proposal supported by a similar variation by age groups in Plato's discussion of the types of athletic competitions in his ideal state. A frequent estimate for the *dolichos* at Olympia is twenty lengths. If this is correct, runners would have to negotiate nineteen turns in the course of a race just under 4,000 in length. Distance runners on a modern, oval track tend naturally to fall into a single file along the inside lane, i.e. the one closest to the infield, because it provides the most direct and shortest course. The ancient runner probably would have pursued the same strategy with a single-post turn: if the posts were placed toward the middle at each end of the track, the shortest course for the race would be to keep to the center of the track and to round the single turn as tightly as possible without losing too much momentum. There are a number of vase paintings depicting runners and the ancient artist clearly distinguished the sprinters from distance runners. The former are depicted in far more vigorous motion with high pumping arm movement and with hands generally open (pl. IX, fig. 3). The latter are characterized by a more controlled stride, an erect posture, and arms held more closely to the body without the high pumping action and with clenched hands. These artistic conventions capture the essential differences between the two running styles and permit some confidence in the use of vase paintings as evidence for ancient practice. Fortunately there are several representations of runners approaching a single *kampter* or turning post, one even with an official seated behind the post and well-positioned to observe the negotiation of the turn. The contestants in these scenes are almost always clearly distance runners, and one is depicted as looking over his shoulder apparently to check his opponents' positions as he approaches the turn. If the single post in these scenes is not itself an artistic convention or short hand for a series of individual turns, then the vase paintings provide support for a single turning post for the *dolichos*.

There is also archaeological evidence for the single post thesis. At Olympia the west hysplex, used as the starting line for all races except the single *stadion* sprint, has a rectangular post-hole just left of center which is larger than the other post holes and which may have functioned as the single turning post. This might also indicate that the other posts were removed for the *dolichos*, a reasonable hypothesis because many more than twenty runners can be accommodated in a race of ca. 4,000 meters and clearly marked individual starting positions are therefore not needed for a distance race. Furthermore, as already noted, elimination heats in the *dolichos* were a near-impossibility, especially given the time available for the completion of all running events, and all distance runners who had completed the month-long training routine at Elis (and had not been dissuaded from continuing by the Hellanodikai) probably were permitted to enter the finals without qualifying trials. The

excavation at Nemea provides more evidence for a single post: a substantial post-hole was discovered just right of center, as one looks from the starting line down the track, but a few meters in front of the one surviving starting-finish line. This post contributed nothing to the marking of starting positions but would have served admirably as a single turning post for the *dolichos*. The few meters separating the post and the hysplex possibly indicates the width of the turn normally taken by distance runners.

Turns around a single post provided easy opportunity for at least two types of fouls: interfering with an opponent (holding, pushing, tripping, cutting in front of) and turning in front of rather than around and behind the post. Some of the Hellanodikai and/or their assistants must have been stationed at the turns to enforce proper conduct, but we have no specific information about punishment for cheating in the course of a race except for the flogging given for false starts.

The last running contest added to the Olympic program and the final event at the games was the *hoplitodromos* or race-in-armor. The statue of Damaretos of Heraia, the first victor in 520 B.C., and repeating in 516 B.C., is described by Pausanias as having a shield, helmet, and leg grieves. This is generally believed to have been the initial complement of armor which then was gradually decreased to merely a shield or possibly only a helmet. At Olympia the *hoplitodromos* was two lengths of the stadion, the same distance as the *diaulos*, but at some other festivals it was four lengths or even more. The race has been viewed as a somewhat comic end to the more serious contests in the program. It has also been argued that the race-in-armor, coming at the close of the games, symbolized the end both of the truce and the ban on weapons at the sanctuary. The truce, however, certainly extended well beyond the conclusion of the games in order to protect both athletes and spectators on their return home. Gardiner felt that this event was intended to restore practicality to athletics and compares it with various modern military exercises such as the obstacle race. The physically challenging aspects of this event and its possible historical genesis have been discussed in conjunction with the Battle of Marathon. The continuing stress on the shield as the one essential accoutrement of the *hoplitodromos* undoubtedly reflects the fact that both the mere carrying and the effective use of the shield were the most demanding physical challenge for the heavily armed infantry soldier.⁷⁹

The turn, whether around a single post or individual posts, must have presented special difficulties for an armed runner. If there was a single post, the certainty of collisions is obvious and would provide something of a tragi-comic effect. Turning to the left around indi-

79. For Damaretos, see Pausanias 6.14.4 (his son and grandson also claimed two Olympic crowns, the son in the pentathlon and the grandson in wrestling); for the *hoplitodromos* as a "slightly comic coda", see Finley, Pleket 41; for Gardiner's militaristic interpre-

tation, see AAW 140; for Sweet's argument for right hand turns, see *Sourcebook* 30; for the ten shields at Delphi, see Harris, *GAA* 203, n. 14; for 25 shields at Olympia, see Pausanias 5.12.18; for the armed race at Plataia, see Philostratos, *Gymnastikos* 8.

vidual posts would require excellent body control and balance; in fact, Sweet argues that carrying a shield in the left hand must mean that the runners turned right – in this event and all other running events. This seems a reasonable deduction but, as noted above, the possible single posts at Olympia and Nemea are positioned to the right of center as the runner approaches and therefore seem better suited for turning left. Turning around within the same lane would only heighten the problem for an armed *diaulos* runner, although one vase painting may hint at the technique developed for this difficult maneuver. Some have argued, on the basis of a gift of ten shields to the Pythian sanctuary at Delphi, that only ten runners used the lanes to the right of center in this event in order to diminish the unfairness of turning around a single post. Not too much emphasis should be placed on this gift of ten shields at Delphi simply because Pausanias reports that twenty-five bronze shields were kept at Olympia for the *hoplitodromos*; there could not have been twenty-five armed *diaulos* runners on a track designed for twenty athletes competing in the nude.

Although the event has been belittled and the amount of armor gradually diminished over time, it survived in the Olympic program as far as our documentary sources permit scrutiny. At least during the fifth and fourth centuries B.C. it was the feature race at some festivals, especially those with direct military overtones, such as the commemoration of the great victory at Plataea where a course measuring fifteen stadia challenged runners dressed in full battle attire. The *hoplitodromos* also had the possible attraction of allowing the non-specialized athlete a chance to compete simply because a great number of men subject to military service would have practiced running and drilling with the shield on a regular basis.

Apart from the events on the Olympic program there were at least two other running contests. One was the *hippios*, a race of four lengths of the stadion, adopted by the crown games at the Isthmia and Nemea, as well as by festivals at Athens, Epidauros and Argos. The name is derived from the noun *hippos* and some see the origin of the term in athletic slang, i.e. a race more suitable for horses. Or it may reflect the possibility that the normal length of the hippodrome, the race track for equestrian events, was four *stadia* or ca. 800 meters. Pausanias reports that the race dies out at Nemea and the Isthmus, probably because in periods of retrenchment it did not have the powerful support of the Olympic program. The second non-Olympic running event was the torch race, a common feature of many religious cults which usually involved the transport of fire from one altar to another, often a preliminary step to a major sacrifice. The race could involve some distance, e.g. up to two miles, and could be run by individual athletes competing for the right to light the sacrificial fire, or relay teams could compete by handing the torch at specific intervals on to teammates. Needless to say, the winning runner or team had to be the first at the finish line with a lighted torch. Team events were not part of the major panhellenic festivals but were somewhat popular at local festivals where competition among tribes was included in the program. The ancient Olympic Games offered no form of transport of fire by relay. The modern practice of bringing fire from Olympia to the site of the games is called a bit of

“Hollywood tushery” by Harris although it owes its origins to Nazi Germany’s penchant for public spectacle and first appeared at the 1936 Berlin Olympic Games.⁸⁰

There is one other category of runner mentioned in the extant sources, the *hemerodromos* or ultra-long distance runner, literally “the day-runner”. Distances beyond the *dolichos* were not used in normal competition and these runners served as message-bearers between city-states. Given the road conditions in antiquity and the great stamina of a well-trained human body, far greater than that of a horse with respect to covering long distances, the quickest means of communications on land was by trained runners. The exploit of an Athenian *hemerodromos*, named either Phidippides or Philippides, is recounted by Herodotos, a near-contemporary. When the Persian invasion force landed at Marathon in 490 B.C., the Athenians dispatched Phidippides to run to Sparta, a distance of ca. 150 miles, with an urgent request for help. He arrived with his message on the second day and the Spartans voted to send aid but delayed their departure for religious reasons and thereby missed the battle. Phidippides, upon his return, reported to the Athenians that he had met the god Pan on the way to Sparta who complained that the Athenians did not worship him. The subsequently reported sighting of Pan assisting the Athenians in the battle at Marathon led to the building of a temple for him at the foot of the acropolis. The story of the run to Sparta has a fair claim to being basically true and is retold by two Latin writers centuries later: Cornelius Nepos and Pliny the Elder. A far more questionable feat is also attributed to an Athenian runner: following the battle at Marathon an Athenian ran from the battlefield to Athens to report the great victory (“Rejoice, we have won!”) and then promptly expired on the spot. Lucian attributes this dramatic action to a *hemerodromos* named Philippides, while Plutarch offers as the hero of the tale either Thersippos of Eroiadai or Eukles. Historians view this affair with justifiable suspicion. Such an event, if true, should have caught the attention of a fifth century B.C. writer – certainly Herodotos who delighted in the patriotic, the dramatic, and the moral. However, even though often rejected by current scholarship, the story has spawned an increasingly popular modern event, the Marathon run. When the first International Olympics were held in 1896 at Athens, this captivating tale was reenacted by a competitive run from the site of the battle at Marathon to the newly rebuilt Panathenaic Stadium in Athens, a distance of ca. twenty four miles and one thousand five hundred yards. For the modern Hellenes this must have been the highlight of the new games because it both commemorated one of the great military victories in Greek history and was the only track event won by a Greek, Spyridon Louis. The Marathon run was retained in subsequent Olympic games, although over different distances which were usually determined by locating a suitable course of approximately the same distance used at Athens and which was also available to

80. Pausanias 6.16.4 identifies the distance of the hippios: “The length of the riding track is twice the two lap race...” (and adds that this event died out at the Nemea and the Isthmus). For torch races, see below the chapter on Athletic Festivals of Athens and

Attica. For “Hollywood tushery”, see Harris, *GAA* 76: “Less happily, the torch, which in antiquity had no connection with Olympia, has been dragged into the Hollywood tushery with which it is considered necessary to open the modern Olympic games”.

spectators. In 1924 the International Olympic Committee, obviously not constrained either by Greek tradition or Greek geography, adopted the distance used in the 1908 games in London – i.e. 26 miles 385 yards – as the official length for all future Marathon runs.⁸¹

One other ultra-long distance run is reported by Plutarch. After the defeat of the Persians at Plataea in 479 B.C., “pure” fire was ordered to be brought from the sanctuary at Apollo at Delphi to replace that polluted by the Persians. All fires in the region were duly extinguished and Euchidas reportedly ran from Plataea to Delphi, purified himself, and returned to Plataea with the required fire all in the course of the same day. He also, according to Plutarch, died upon the completion of the run, which may very well indicate that the story is a doublet of the Marathon run. In order to put these two ancient ultra-distance runs – Athens to Sparta, ca. 150 miles in less than two days, and Plataea-Delphi-Plataea ca. 110 miles in less than one day – in some perspective, modern comparisons might be helpful. The modern record for distance covered in 40 hours is 161.1 miles and the record time for covering 100 miles is 11 hours 56 minutes. Both of these ancient runs are well within the realm of possibility, especially since ultra-long distance running was a profession and provided an essential service to the state.⁸²

These comparisons of modern and ancient achievements also emphasize a major difference: the modern runner is often as much concerned with his performances as measured by a stopwatch as by his performance against other competitors. The best contemporary runners are driven by a desire not merely to win a particular race but also to set ever higher standards of performance easily understood and appreciated throughout the world. The stopwatch therefore functions today as a powerful incentive and the ultimate arbiter. The ancient Greek runner lacked this extra spur of objective, external comparison and his level of performance may therefore have suffered somewhat. Also, as already noted, the design and facilities of the race tracks at Olympia and elsewhere provided further challenges to athletes competing in all running events. This included the single stadion sprinter who, although benefited by a straight track, may have run in a softened surface of loose sand or finely crushed stone. The absence of spiked shoes must have lessened the ability to start quickly and to obtain maximum thrust from each stride. Nonetheless, there is no reason to assume that ancient runners, competing within a centuries’ long tradition and assisted by the development of professional coaching and nutritional studies, did not attain high levels of performance.

81. For ancient ultra-distance running, see Matthews; for the run from Athens to Sparta, see Herodotos 6.105-106 (Phidippides), Cornelius Nepos, *Lives* 1.4 (Phidippides), and Pliny *NH* 7.84 (Phidippides); for the run from Marathon to Athens, see Lucian, *A Slip of the Tongue* 3 (Phidippides), and Plutarch *Moralia* 347C (Thersippus or Eukles); for an explanation of the con-

versation with the god Pan as a result of a “runner’s high”, see Lee, “Ultra-long”. For a convenient summary of the evidence regarding the name and presumed exploits of the Athenian *hemerodromos*, see Frost (with added commentary by the editor, E. Badian, 163-165).

82. For Euchidas and the Plataea-Delphi-Plataea run, see Plutarch *Aristides* 20.5.

THE PENTATHLON

The pentathlon was a multiple event composed of five contests and was added to the Olympic program in 708 B.C. Three were field events, jump, javelin, and diskos, and together with a foot race and wrestling provided the five contests. Some ancient sources present slightly different groups of five events, usually doubling the heavy events at the expense of one field event. A scholion to Aristeides lists wrestling, foot-race, javelin, diskos, and pankration, while a scholion to Pindar *Olympian* 13.39 offers boxing, wrestling, jumping, diskos, and the foot-race. There is no independent evidence for these variations and they are therefore uniformly rejected; they do, however, provide a salutary reminder of the uneven quality of this type of late evidence. The Homeric poems do not refer to any form of a multiple event but do mention individual competitions in jumping, spear throwing, and the diskos. Although there is slight evidence from the historical prod for the possibility of individual contests in the field events, the major panhellenic festivals included them only as part of the pentathlon. The various track events have already been discussed and wrestling will be treated in the chapter concerning the heavy or combat events.⁸³

THE JUMP

Several problems beset any discussion of the ancient jump and they arise from two disparate sources: jumpers carried in each hand a weight averaging four to five pounds each; and two rather late sources mention jumps of 55 Delphic feet and 52 Olympic feet. A frequent response to the use of weights is to assert that they must have impeded the jumper, and long jumps in excess of 50 feet are generally dismissed as impossible. Attempts to salvage the reported distances usually embrace a type of multiple jump, either something resembling the modern triple jump or a series of standing jumps. There is, however, no reference in classical sources to triple or multiple jumps and vase paintings almost uniformly depict the running approach, take-off, and landing typical of the modern long jump. By far the better approach is to give primacy to the evidence from the sixth-through-fourth

83. For a possible separate contest at Eleusis in the long jump for boys, see *IG*² 1.802, 803, discussed by Patrucco 66 ff. and Weiler, *Der Sport* 157. See also, Miller, "The Pentathlon".

centuries B.C. and to consider the exuberant claims found in late authors only when they are not in conflict with earlier sources from the Classical period.⁸⁴

Some aspects of the physical facility for the jump are known either from literary sources or vase paintings. As noted already, there is ample evidence for a running approach which would require some sort of a level, prepared surface, probably similar to that used for the track events. To prevent injury to the athletes, a landing area or pit was prepared by loosening the surface of the ground with a pick axe and possibly even adding a layer of sand. This was called the *skamma*, “the dug up place”, the same term used for the area for wrestling. Vase paintings frequently depict a pentathlete (or possibly a wrestler) with the pickaxe used to prepare the *skamma* (pl. X, fig. 1). A device called the *bater* obviously functioned much like the modern takeoff board in that it marked the end of the approach run and overstepping it must have disqualified that jump. There is no evidence which securely identifies the location of this jumping *skamma* but the *stadion* is the most likely candidate, both for accommodating spectators and also for explaining some vase paintings which possibly show the jumper using the starting line of the track as the *bater*. Also Xenophon, in describing at least some of the non-wrestling events of the pentathlon as *ta dromika*, i.e. those events conducted in the *dromos*, implies that the jump, the diskos, the javelin and the foot-race were possibly all held in the stadion.⁸⁵ None of the extant *stadia* has much open space along the sides of the running track for accommodating a jumping pit with an approaching run-up, and therefore it might have been positioned within the *dromos* itself. If the jumper approached from behind the *balbis/hysplex* and jumped forward into the running track, the digging of the *skamma* would have caused some disadvantage for any runner who subsequently drew a lane which had been part of the jumping pit, and in a common reconstruction of the program at Olympia the track events took place after the pentathlon. Also this arrangement would provide very limited space for the approach run, probably less than 40 feet at Olympia, which is considerably shorter than the 50 plus yards used by the modern long jumper. It is also possible that the jumpers approached the starting/jumping line from the other direction, i.e. from the running track, and jumped into the area behind the *balbis/hysplex*, thus keeping the *skamma* out of the way of any possible later use of the track by runners. The space between the starting line and the spectator area would be sufficient for a long jump, but probably not for any type of a jump exceeding 50 feet – such as a triple jump or a series of up to five consecutive standing jumps. It should be noted

84. For extensive discussions of the jump, see: Gardiner, *AAW* 144-153; Jüthner, *Brein II* 159-221; Patrucco 65-92; Harris, *GAA* 80-85; and Weiler, *Der Sport* 157-161.

85. See Xenophon, *Hellenika* 7.4.29 (to be discussed more extensively below). The interchangeability

of *dromos* and *stadion* as designations for the running track has already been noted. Xenophon's use of the plural *ta dromika* for the events of the pentathlon conducted in the stadion area reasonably includes more than just the foot-race.

that a series of standing jumps would not need a *skamma*; in fact, areas of dug-up earth would be most inconvenient for a series of standing jumps. There are at least two other possibilities. An ample approach with jumping pit could have been placed within the *dromos*, presumably after the track events had been completed. This has the advantage of providing both optimum conditions for the athletes and the best viewing for spectators. It also accounts for the use of a specialized term, *bater*, for the takeoff point for the jump rather than *balbis/hysplex*. Or the jump could have been conducted on any fairly level area other than the stadion. If the stadion was used, the place in the program allotted to the pentathlon probably dictated the area. Before the track events, concern for preserving a suitable surface for runners probably required that the *skamma* be kept out of the *dromos*; after the track events, concern for the jumpers probably dictated use of any part of the stadion which encouraged maximum performance and best sight lines for spectators. In this case the jump could have taken place either toward the middle of the *dromos* or toward one of the ends which accommodated spectators on three sides of the track. If the jump was conducted outside the stadion, viewing area for spectators may have been minimal but at least the stadion was fully available for one or both of the other field events. In fact, the ancient stadion probably could accommodate simultaneous competition in all three field events. The number of entrants forces such concentrated activity in order to finish within an afternoon.

The weights used for the jump are called *halteres* and generally were fashioned either from stone or metal. They were designed to be held firmly and comfortably and were either oblong globular objects with carved hand grips, the common form when of stone, or shaped somewhat like the modern telephone especially when made from bronze (pl. X, fig. 2), for the depiction of a jumper about to begin his approach run with *halteres* in each hand). The use of *halteres* presented problems of coordination and balance. The jumper ran swinging the *halteres* back and forth with the normal arm movement of one running but he had to change that rhythm just before the takeoff so that the weights were swung in unison upward as he jumped. This was admittedly difficult and the jump was assisted by music played on the diaulos. Rhythmic patterns provided by the diaulos-player could have helped the jumper in changing from alternating arm-movement to a single, vigorous upward and forward thrust of the weights at the moment when he would receive maximum upward and forward pull from the weights as he left the ground. If this was the case, a special musical literature for athletics must have developed, and Pausanias reports that the most distinguished musicians contributed their time and talent to this event at the major festivals (pl. XI for a diaulos player between a diskos thrower and a jumper with the telephone-type halters). After providing this initial added impetus, the *halteres* will become a burden and actually shorten the jump if not discarded (pl. X, fig. 3 for the jumper in mid-air with an official or coach observing). Vase paintings are not, however, consistent in depicting this aspect of the use of the *halteres*. Jumpers are shown either landing with them still in hand but thrust downward and backward or, more efficiently, landing after having discarded the weights with a

downward and backward thrust of the arms. All this action took place within a second or two and the artist may be forgiven a generalizing tendency. Ancient authors do not agree on the function of the weights. Aristotle, who had more than a passing interest in athletics, comments that the athletes jumped farther with the weights. Lucian, in the second century A.D., states that the *halteres* were merely a handicap for the jumpers, while Philostratos, in the second or third century A.D., argues that the weights were used to bring the jumper firmly and cleanly to his feet after the jump, allegedly a requirement for an acceptable performance. Aristotle should be regarded as the best informed source.⁸⁶

The distance for each jump was marked by a stake, probably set by the side of the *skamma* and possibly also color-coded to identify which stake marked whose jump. A rod or stick called the *kanon* is mentioned by at least one very late source as being used to measure the distance of each jump. There undoubtedly were rules as to what constituted a legal jump, the most obvious being disqualification of any jump when the jumper overstepped the *bater*. Philostratos's statement (see footnote 86) that the officials refused to measure a jump if the feet marks were not correct may indicate that the jumper could not fall backwards (or sideways?), although Ebert suggests that careful checking of foot marks was also designed to detect illegal forward movement after landing. It is also quite possible that Philostratos in this case, as in others, did not know what he was talking about. It is unfortunate that the only extant ancient text on athletics was written by an author who knew so little about the subject. The number of attempts allotted each contestant is not known, but the time constraints forced by the necessity of completing all five events in a single afternoon would not have permitted a leisurely pace. The usual view, based mostly on less than compelling evidence and modern experience, grants from two to five tries.⁸⁷

Generally, the ancient Greeks were concerned almost exclusively with who won an event on any given occasion and rarely with other standards of performance. Overall achievement was described in the number of wins with emphasis on the major festivals; this to be sure provided a good objective measure of athletic success against presumably the best competi-

86. See Gardiner, AAW 146, and Jüthner, Brein II 167-181 for depictions with weights and measurements of a variety of *halteres*. Aristotle's comment is found in *On Movement of Animals* 3.705a: "A pentathlete using the *halteres* jumps farther than without them" (similarly in *Problems* 5.8.8816). Lucian's statement is in *Anacharsis*. Philostratos, *Gymn.* 35 contains the following: "The *halter* is an invention of the pentathlete and was invented for jumping, from which it gets its name (*halma* means "jump"). Since the jump is one of the most difficult events in competition, the rules permit encouragement of the jumper by means of the *diaulos* and assist him even more with the *halter*. For it

guides the hands unfailingly, the jump is steady, and the landing is in good form. The rules show how important this is, for the officials refuse to have the jump measured if the mark of the feet is not correct".

87. For the definition of the *kanon*, see Pollux 3.151. For Ebert's suggestion, see *Pentathlon* 62 (cited by Weiler, *Der Sport* 159). Gardiner, AAW 149, in favoring the institution of a modern rule which emphasizes form, may overstate ancient Greek attitudes: "We should then be spared the unedifying spectacle of a high jumper landing on all fours. The Greeks paid more attention to style than to records". Young, "First".

tors. But even where there was the capability to record data beyond merely counting victories, as in the field events where measurements of distances of the jumps or the throws were both possible and apparently done, such statistics seem not to have been of vital interest. Nevertheless, two purported distances achieved in the jump during the sixth and fifth centuries B.C. are found in late authors and have caused vigorous debate. A two-line epigram asserts that Phayllos jumped 55 feet and threw the diskos 95 feet. Other late Greek sources repeat this information and stress that it was a prodigious feat because Phayllos jumped beyond the *skamma* which, they assert, was normally 50 feet in length. *Suda*, a tenth century A.D. source, adds the final elaboration: Phayllos jumped beyond the *skamma* and broke a leg when he landed on the hard ground. The second extraordinary jump is reported by Sextus Julius Africanus, a second century A.D. writer, who states that at the 29th Olympiad (660 B.C.) Chionis of Sparta, winner of the single *stadion* sprint, jumped 52 feet. This was presumably at Olympia in the pentathlon and therefore the distance in meters was 16.66 (one Olympic foot equals 0,32045m), while Phayllos's jump was 16.28m (one Delphic foot 0,296m). The current world record for the long jump is 8.9 meters or 29 feet 2 and ½ inches and contemporary performance alone has been sufficient to cause nearly universal disbelief in the possibility of long jumps in excess of 50 feet. The two basic responses, as already noted, have been either to conclude that a multiple jump was involved (and this gave rise to the modern triple jump) or to challenge the validity of these late literary sources. The most telling evidence against the jump at Delphi is that the fifth century B.C. authors who praise the athletic prowess of a Phayllos from Kroton do not mention a 55 foot jump: Herodotos reports that Phayllos won three crowns at the Pythian Games and Aristophanes, refers twice to a Phayllos famous for his swift running. Pausanias, who saw a statue of Phayllos at Delphi, elaborates on Herodotos' statement by adding that Phayllos won one Pythian crown in the stadion sprint and two in the pentathlon, and provides a patriotic touch by asserting that Phayllos fought against the Persians in the naval battle at Salamis in 480 B.C. with his own ship and a crew of Krotonians who happened to be living in Greece. It is widely assumed that these three authors refer to one and the same person. Neither fifth century B.C. author who comments on the athletic prowess of Phayllos nor Pausanias who reports the number of his crowns at Delphi mentions what seems to have been a prodigious leap and hence the epigram and later repetitions and elaborations have been discounted as part of the tradition of athletic exaggeration and tall tales. Also Pausanias mentions Chionis' many triumphs at Olympia – four crowns in the stadion sprint and three in the diaulos – without even a hint about an astounding jump.⁸⁸

88. For an extensive discussion of the literary sources for Phayllos's jump, see especially Gardiner, "Phayllos". The epigram, in *Anthology Pal.* Appendix 297, states: "Five and fifty feet jumped Phayllos and

threw the diskos 100 feet less five". The *Suda*, s.v. *skamma*, defines: "To jump over the *skamma*: 50 feet was the length of the *skamma* in ancient times.... Phayllos in jumping over the *skamma*, jumped more

Gardiner, based upon a communication received from a former high jumper detailing the achievements of jumping with weights in England during the second half of the nineteenth century, has suggested that weights possibly could improve a jumper's performance. He mentions in particular an 1854 report from Chester of a jump of 29 feet 7 inches by J. Howard who carried five-pound dumb-bells in each hand. The description of this jump is not sufficiently detailed to permit an analysis of the technique used by Howard, i.e. whether any other type of jumping aid was used such as a spring board. Gardiner's optimism has been challenged by experiments recently conducted by Ebert who, based upon the results obtained, has concluded that the use of weights significantly decreased performance in the long jump while increasing it in the standing jump; hence his preference for a series of standing jumps.⁸⁹ However, Professor A. E. Bartlett, a member of the Department of Physics at the University of Colorado-Boulder, projected a startlingly different result: based upon the extent to which human physical activity can be quantified and analyzed using the laws of physics, the proper use of *halteres* could improve significantly the length of a jump if at least two conditions were met: the jumper must achieve basically the same speed on his approach with the weights as he does without them; and he must have the proper coordination and use of the weights at takeoff, plus the timely thrusting downward and backward and dropping them just before they become an impediment. Proper use of the weights at the point of takeoff makes two important contributions. If the weights are thrust forward and upward at just the right moment, they provide both extra forward momentum and assist in raising the jumper's center of gravity and angles of takeoff. The optimum takeoff angle is apparently 45 degrees, but jumpers cannot achieve this while still maintaining maximum

than 50 feet". For Chionis' jump, see Africanus, entry for Olympiad XXIX, and for his victories at Olympia, see Pausanias 3.14.3, 4.23.4, and 4.23.10. The modern world record for the long jump is held by Bob Beamon who jumped 29 feet 2 and 2 and 1/2 inches at the Mexico City Olympics in 1968. Gardiner, in *AAW* 153, dismisses the epigram with fairly strong words: "the sporting page is notorious: still more so is the sporting epigram; and this epigram is merely an alliterative jingle. The pages of the *Anthology* are full of epigrams on famous athletes such as Milo and Ladas. Milo, we are told, picked up a four-year-old heifer at Olympia and after carrying it around the Altis killed it and ate it at a single meal! This extraordinary gastronomic feat rests on quite as good evidence as the 55-foot jump of Phayllos". For proponents of a multiple jump, see Jüthner, *Brein* II 218 (triple jump with approach run); Harris, *GAA* 82 (double jump, citing Plato, *Laws*

8.794D); and Ebert, *Pentathlon* 62 (five successive standing jumps, stressing the significance of the number "five" in the pentathlon). For the fifth century B.C. references to Phayllos, see Herodotos 8.47 and Aristophanes, *Acharnians* 215 f. For Phayllos's one stadion and two pentathlon wins at Delphi and his role in the battle of Salamis, see Pausanias 10.9.1. Alexander the Great later honored earlier participants in Greek victories against the Persians by sharing part of his spoils from Issus with Kroton (in memory of Phayllos) and with Plataea (in memory of the Plataean participation in the battle at marathon).

89. See Gardiner, *AAW* 151-52 for the information on jumping with weights provided by a Mr. G. Rowdon, a former amateur high jump champion and later professional jumper. Ebert's experiment is reported in *Pentathlon* 35-42, 62.

forward speed and usually therefore take off at an angle somewhere between 20 to 3 degrees. Every degree in increase contributed by the proper use of the *halteres* permits the jumper to stay airborne longer and therefore adds significantly to distance. Also the vigorous downward and slightly backward discarding of the *halteres* just before they become merely extra weight and a detriment will also slightly increase the jumper's center of gravity and again permit the jumper to stay airborne a fraction of a second longer. Professor Bartlett offered the following interesting projections: a world-class jumper, weighing 185 pounds and with 10 second speed in the 100 yard dash, theoretically can jump about 31 feet; the same jumper, with proper use of the *halteres* and without diminishing his speed, theoretically can jump about 34 or 35 feet. Professor Bartlett's analysis encouraged a modest experiment using the talents of John Alexander, a long jumper from the University of Colorado's track team. After several walk-throughs and slow run-throughs in which the primary concern was to develop some semblance of the intricate coordination between arm and leg movement necessary for the effective use of the *halteres*, Mr. Alexander then jumped almost exactly as far with the weights as without them. Whether or not the use of the weights slowed his approach run was not ascertained, although they did cause him to shorten his approach run by as much as 50% and he felt rather quickly their tiring effect. Mr. Alexander also confirmed one aspect of Professor Bartlett's calculations: he definitely could feel the forward and upward thrust provided by the *halteres*. Although this experiment was not sufficiently extensive to resolve fully the controversy surrounding the use of weights in jumping, it did at least demonstrate that after minimal practice of just a few minutes during a blustery, snowy early spring day the weights were not an impediment and in fact demonstrated the potential to be quite helpful.⁹⁰

The laws of physics, although predicting improved performance with the use of *halteres*, also deny the possibility of a jump in excess of 50 feet. Sports historians, with or without the benefit of physics, have almost uniformly rejected the possibility of an ancient Greek athlete jumping 55 Delphic or 52 Olympic feet. In order to achieve something approximating Phayllos' legendary jump, the triple jump was created and because a world-class triple jumper does in fact exceed 55 feet, those scholars, who wish to believe that Phayllos did jump 55 feet, assert that the ancient pentathlon included a triple jump rather than a long jump. There is, however, no ancient reference to a triple jump, no depiction in vase paintings of what could be interpreted as a triple jump, and no easily discernable method of conducting an effective triple jump or other multiple jump within the softened and sanded surface of the *skamma*. The only ancient reference which might support a triple jump is the statement that jumpers in the pentathlon are not in continuous motion – a cryptic and unex-

90. Themistius, *Notes on Aristotle's Physics* 5.3 comments: "For those jumping in the pentathlon do not make a continuous movement, because they inter-

rupt part of the interval in which they are moving". Professor Albert Bartlett's projections were communicated to me orally.

plained remark which also does not fit a triple jump but could describe a series of standing jumps. The artistic evidence from the sixth-to-fourth centuries B.C., as already noted, stresses a running approach. On balance, the evidence favors a long jump with run up in which the use of weights probably improved performance beyond the current world record but certainly far short of 50 feet. The very late references to these unbelievable jumps should not be allowed easily to overrule the artistic evidence and the lack of earlier comment.

THE DISKOS

The origin of the diskos throw, described by Harris as a “curious and illogical activity”, has attracted more discussion than that of any other event on the Olympic program.⁹¹ The ability to throw stones was useful in ancient warfare, but a relatively flat, circular object is not really suitable for this purpose because of problematic accuracy. Lucian even records the complaint of Anacharsis the Scythian that the Greeks should practice throwing rounded stones because this is a skill adaptable to warfare. Some have argued for an origin which takes into account the peculiar shape and size of the diskos, i.e. the event grew out of the natural human inclination to throw the flat, often circular, water-washed stones often found on shore lines or near river beds. Harris, on the other hand, has argued that the early metallurgical practice of pouring molten metal into hollows scooped out of sand produced a somewhat circular and rather flat chunk of metal; competition in throwing it then naturally followed accompanied by the gradual development of an effective technique which combined strength with skill; and thus was competition in throwing the diskos created. If neither an origin in littoral or riparian stones nor in primitive metallurgy is acceptable, there is also the final counsel of despair when confronted with an action which defies easy and natural explanation, i.e. to claim an origin in religion. The death of Hyakinthos due to an errant throw by Apollo provides a convenient entry into the realm of cult involving a pre-Greek divinity/hero and one of the major Hellenic gods.⁹²

Both Homeric poems include competition in the throwing of some form of weight but they have created a controversy by the use of two different terms for the object thrown. In the *Iliad* Achilles, when announcing the sixth contest at the funeral games for Patroklos,

91. The following provide good discussions of the ancient diskos throw: Gardiner, *AAW* 154-168; Jüthner, *Brein II* 225-303; Patrucco 133-170; Harris, *GAA* 85-92 and *SGR* 38 (for the quote); and Weiler, *Der Sport* 161-166.

92. For the question of military use, see Lucian, *Anacharsis* 32; for the argument that the inclination to throw stones found on shores lies in the nature of

man, see Jüthner, *Brein II* 161-62; for Harris's argument from early metallurgy, see *GAA* 85-86; for an origin in cult, see L. Castiglione, “Die Diskobolia – ein Agrarritus?”, *Acta Antiqua Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 15 (1967), 409-415; for the Hyakinthos-Apollo legend, see Rose, *Mythology* 142. Decker, in “Zum Ursprung” goes to the Near and Middle East for the origin of the diskos.

sets out a *solos* which was both the prize and the object to be thrown. This *solos*, crudely molded and of iron, was of sufficient size to provide a five year's supply of that metal – a description which only invites further questions. In the *Odyssey*, the later widely-used term *diskos* appears. Odysseus, goaded into participating in the athletic contests held after the banquet among the Phaeacians, seizes a stone *diskos* larger than those previously hurled by the Phaeacians and throws it well beyond the earlier marks. Opinion is divided as to whether the Homeric *solos* and *diskos* were the same implement or whether the *solos* perhaps was more similar to the modern shot put or was merely an ill-defined chunk of metal. Those proposing that they were in essence the same describe the *solos* as an early form of the *diskos*. Those suggesting that the Homeric heroes enjoyed two different forms of competition in throwing may point to ancient and modern evidence for the competitive hurling of a wide variety of objects, including tree trunks. Achilles' statement that the *solos* would provide five years' supply of iron may tip the scale in favor of an impromptu contest in hurling a rather large chunk of metal of no particular shape and which may not have been intended to be primarily an instrument of sport although its previous owner, "Eetion of mighty strength, used to throw it"⁹³

Excavations have turned up a number of *diskoi* of varied material, size and weight. They are made of iron, lead, stone or bronze. Sixth century B.C. vase paintings often depict the *diskos* as white, usually thought to be stone and therefore possibly supporting the theory of origin in shoreline stones (pl. XII, fig. 1). By the fifth century B.C. the *diskoi* are almost always painted black, i.e. were metal, and bronze was the material of choice. The shape was round and rather flat, somewhat thicker in the middle and narrowing at the edges – much like the modern *diskos*. Size and weight can vary dramatically, from ca. six to over thirteen

93. The *solos* and *diskos* passages from the Homeric poems are: *Iliad* 23.826-835: "Now the son of Peleus (Achilles) brought out a *solos*, a formless mass of iron which Eetion of mighty strength used to throw, but swift godlike Achilles slew him and brought the mass of iron in his ship with his other possessions. And he stood up straight and spoke these words among the Argives. 'Stand up, you who will compete for this prize. If anyone has fertile fields far away from towns, this iron will last him for five rolling years as he uses it. For if his shepherd or plowman are without other iron, they will not have to go to the city but this will furnish it'". *Odyssey* 8.186-198: "He (Odysseus) spoke and sprang to his feet still clothed and seized a *diskos* which was bigger and heavier than those the Phaeacians had been hurling among themselves. Whirling, he hurled it from his mighty hand, and the stone whistled through the air. Those Phaeacians of the long

oars, those master mariners, hit the dirt beneath the hurtling stone which soared so freely from the hero's hand that it overpassed the marks of every other. And Athena, now disguised as a Phaeacian, set the *terma* and called out: 'Even a blind man, sir, could judge your throw by feeling for it; it is not mixed in with the others, but far out in front. You may take heart from this contest, for no Phaeacian will come close, much less beat you'". (S. Miller translation). For the *solos*, see Gardiner, *AAW* 154 ("an unwrought *solos*, or pig of iron") and Jüthner, *Brein II* 225-231 (who cautions against poetic exaggeration in Homer's description and reminds of the common practice of hurling large stones from walls or cliffs onto the enemy; he also suggests that the *diskos* throw developed out of peaceful competition in throwing readily available field stones.) Confusion is further compounded by late authors' equation of the *solos* with the *diskos*.

inches in diameter and from ca. three to nineteen pounds. These differences can be partially explained by the fact that the major festivals offered at least men's and boy's divisions, and many had men's, youth's and boy's divisions, with the younger groups undoubtedly using lighter, smaller diskoi. Also the diskos was used as a votive offering and may on occasion have been created by the artisan specifically for this purpose with no thought for competition, thus increasing the possibility of odd sizes. Nevertheless, the ancient athlete obviously had to be prepared to throw diskoi of varying weights just as the runners had to contend with differing lengths of stadia. Each athletic festival undoubtedly provided the diskoi to be used in its program and these presumably were of approximately equal size and weight. Performance levels would closely reflect the type of diskos used in that the larger and heavier the diskos, the shorter the throw. The modern diskos is modelled after the ancient and weighs 4.5 pounds with a diameter of eight and $\frac{5}{8}$ inches. The current world's record throw is over 230 feet. The epigram of Phayllos mentions, in addition to a 55 foot jump, a diskos throw of 95 feet. This was little questioned during the resurgence of Greek-style athletics at the end of the nineteenth century probably because the winning throw at the first modern Olympic games at Athens in 1896 was 95 feet 7 and $\frac{3}{4}$ inches. However, the winner, an American named R. S. Garrett, had not even seen a diskos until shortly before the games and certainly had not developed the skill necessary for a superlative performance. Sweet offers an interesting standard against which to judge Phayllos' throw: the modern record for the 16 pound shot put is over 70 feet; thus a 95 foot throw of a diskos weighing up to 15 pounds is a reasonably good effort.⁹⁴

Controversy as to how the ancient Greeks threw the diskos troubled the first several modern Olympics and continues today. One of Philostratos' description of the diskos throw, although unclear (the text is corrupt at this point), and later marble copies of Myron's famous *diskobolos* have had unfortunate influence. Based on these sources, the "Hellenic style" of throwing was imposed at the 1896 Olympics: the athlete had to assume the pose

94. Gardiner, *AAW* 156, presents a chart listing 15 diskoi (14 of bronze, one of lead) with finding place, museum, weight in kilos, diameter in cm, and thickness in mm; they vary in weight from $12\frac{1}{2}$ pounds to ca. $2\frac{3}{4}$ pounds, with seven above $4\frac{1}{2}$ pounds ($12\frac{1}{2}$, $8\frac{3}{4}$, $8\frac{1}{3}$, $7\frac{1}{3}$, $6\frac{1}{2}$, 6, and $5\frac{1}{4}$), four at or near the $4\frac{1}{2}$ pound weight of the modern discus, and four below ($3\frac{3}{4}$, 3, $2\frac{3}{4}$, and $2\frac{1}{4}$). Gardiner believes that three of these were votive offerings because of engravings, flatness, and sharpness of edges: the one weighing $12\frac{1}{2}$ pounds (third century A.D.) and two weighing ca. $4\frac{1}{2}$ pounds (both fifth century B.C.). Gardiner, *ad loc.*, also presents descriptions and illustrations of two stone diskoi from the sixth century B.C. with original weight of ca. 15 pounds,

diameters of $11\frac{1}{2}$ and $11\frac{1}{4}$ inches, and inscriptions reading "From the Games" and "Belonging to Telesarchos from the Barrow" (tomb of the hero in whose honor games were held?). A 19 pound diskos has been found at Nemea (see Sweet, *Sourcebook* 40). Jüthner, *Brein* II 241, presents a similar chart of nine diskoi (seven found at Olympia) with weights varying from $14\frac{1}{2}$ to $2\frac{2}{3}$ pounds; seven of these nine are on Gardiner's list. Legend as reported in Philostratos, *Heroikos* 291, presents the spectacle of the ghost of Protesilaos (the first Achaian killed in the landing at Troy) entertaining himself by throwing a diskos twice the Olympic size more than 100 cubits. For the comparison with the shot put distance, see Sweet, *Sourcebook* 44.

of Myron's statue on a built-up platform and throw with minimal bodily movement and with strict control of foot movement. By the 1908 games the current, more free-style system was becoming widely practiced and accepted, primarily under Scandinavian prodding. From the ancient evidence the following reconstruction of the event can be pieced together. The athlete was confined to an area called the *balbis*, formed by boundaries on the two sides and the front. In all probability the event was held in the stadion with one of the starting lines, also called *balbis/hysplex*, providing the front boundary beyond which the thrower could not step. The debate begins in earnest with the question: did the athlete spin when he threw or was the momentum provided by a primarily perpendicular swing of the arm coordinated with a powerful thrust from the right leg and thigh? Gardiner and Jüthner, based upon extensive analyses of the artistic evidence, have concluded that a perpendicular, non-spinning throw was used. The athlete began by holding the diskos in front and slightly above head-level, with the left foot in front but the weight carried by the right leg. Then the diskos was swung downward and backward in the right hand while the left leg is simultaneously moved backward behind the right, weight-bearing foot. This was followed by a powerful swing forward and upward, relying upon major support from the right thigh, while the left foot is moved forward again for balance and to receive the weight of the body during the follow-through. There may have been another step forward with the right foot, again to sustain the follow-through and to gain extra momentum. Neither Gardiner nor Jüthner believes there was a spinning or whirling motion involved. Each aspect of this reconstruction can be demonstrated by vase paintings or the *diskobolos*. Caution must be exercised, however, when relying totally on artistic evidence. The problems faced by an artist attempting to depict an instant in a spinning motion – whether in painting or in marble sculpture – are severe and further increased by the absence of a camera with which to capture that desired moment of action. Further, there are paintings which are better interpreted as presenting a whirling motion, and more importantly, a number of literary references specifically describe the throwing motion as a spinning or whirling movement. Also Greek legend includes stories of accidental deaths among spectators caused by an errant throw, and a whirling or spinning motion is far more likely to produce a wild throw than is a perpendicular swing of the arm. On balance, it seems that the diskos thrower, using the footwork as proposed by Gardiner and Jüthner, could easily employ a swing at ca. a 45 degree angle, thus creating the spinning or whirling motion mentioned by a number of writers and partially depicted by some painters. This type of throw would take advantage of the extra force of a somewhat circular movement and diminish the control over direction that the perpendicular throw guaranteed. It is also possible that the thrower could use any technique he wished (i.e. free style) provided only that he stayed within the area of the *balbis*; this could include even using the momentum gained from a straight run. This whirling motion need not be a 360 degree turn but only that degree of a circle which the body could easily manage using the footwork already described, i.e. something approaching ca. 300 degrees. Also, if

the diskos used in the men's event was in fact significantly heavier than the modern diskos, a full spin holding the diskos approximately parallel to the ground may not have been advantageous.⁹⁵

The diskos event probably was held in the stadion with the *balbis* set near the center of the starting line to diminish to the danger of wild throws. The ancient stadion was relatively narrow because it lacked a dead space or infield in the middle and the spectators thus were quite close to the area of competition. There is no conclusive evidence about the number of throws allowed each contestant. Again the assumption is that several were granted with either the number three mentioned because of Pausanias' remark that the Sikyonian treasury contained three bronze diskoi for use in the pentathlon or five because of an inscription from Rhodes. Even if only one throw was permitted, which is unlikely, several diskoi would be needed to assure efficient management. Assistants to the Hellanodikai must have marked the distance of each competitor's throw with pegs (pl. XII, fig. 2) for a drawing based upon a late sixth century B.C. vase painting. The spot where the diskos landed seems the logical place for measurement, although some argue for the spot where the diskos actually came to rest, thus giving the thrower the benefit of any slide on the ground.⁹⁶

THE JAVELIN

Among the field events, the javelin throw presents the least controversy about origin and technique.⁹⁷ Athletic competition in the javelin is thought to have arisen from the use of the spear for warfare and for hunting; therefore, a broad spectrum of the male population

95. Philostratos's unfortunately influential description of the diskos throw is in *Imagines* 1.24 (a description of Myron's statue?): "The *balbis* is small, large enough for one man to stand erect, and marked off, in all directions, except at the rear. The right leg supports the front upper part of the body leaning forward and takes the weight off the other leg, which moves at the same time as the right arm and follows through with it. The form of the thrower of the diskos is as follows. He must turn his head to the right far enough so it is possible to see the <right-hand> side of his chest, pulling <against the diskos>, and throw the diskos employing all the right-hand parts of his body. Apollo threw the diskos like this, for he could have done it in no other way". For arguments supporting a non-spinning throwing technique, see Gardiner, *AAW* 157-168, and Jüthner, *Brein II* 276-301. For the use by ancient authors of words indicating a spinning motion, see the

solos and diskos passages in Homer where the verbs *dineuo* and *peristrepho* are used – both denoting "whirling" or "spinning" – and Pindar *Olympian* 10.72 with the expression to throw the stone diskos "with a whirling motion of the hand".

96. For wild throws in legend leading to deaths, see Rose, *Mythology loc. cit.* (Hyakinthos killed by Apollo) and 273 (Akrisios killed by Perseus). For five throws based upon a Rhodian inscription, see Ebert, *Pentathlon* 13; and for the three diskoi at Olympia, see Pausanias 6.19.4. For the possibility that measurement during the Classical period extended to the spot where the diskos actually stopped any movement on the ground, see Weiler, *Der Sport* 165 (only later in Byzantine period to the spot of striking the ground).

97. For convenient discussions, see: Gardiner, *AAW* 169-176; Jüthner, *Brein II* 307-350; Harris, *GAA* 92-97 and "Javelin"; and Patrucco 171-189.

should have mastered the basic skills required for an adequate performance. The athletic javelin, however, was not exactly the same as the military or the hunting spear. The latter two, given their function, were heavier, possibly longer, and tipped with sharp, substantial metal points. The athletic javelin was fashioned from lighter elder wood and was generally no longer than the height of a man (ca. 1 ½ to 2 meters). It was usually depicted in vase paintings as approximately the thickness of a finger, and was presumably tipped, but not with a sharp point, because a shaft of wood with no weight at all on one end will lack the balance necessary for successful flight. Vase paintings often depict pentathletes carrying untipped shafts of wood, even preparing them for throwing, but there are also depictions of the javelins with a blunt, probably metal tip. Pindar twice refers to the “bronze-cheeked” athletic javelin, an adjective used in Homer to describe bronze helmets which provided protection also to parts of the face. This phrase is most easily interpreted as indicating some sort of bronze sheathing at the tip of the javelin. The ancient Greeks practiced with both types, spear and javelin, but with different purposes in mind: the military and hunting spears were thrown from afoot or horseback at targets, and therefore necessarily for accuracy, while the athletic javelin was thrown primarily for distance.⁹⁸

The significant difference between the ancient and the modern javelin throw is that the athlete in antiquity assisted his throw by means of a leather thong. This was wrapped around the shaft in such a way so as to leave a loop just behind the place where he would grip the javelin and the thrower then would insert generally the first two fingers in this loop, holding the javelin between his thumb and other fingers (pl. XII, fig. 3). When he threw the javelin, the two fingers in conjunction with the leather thong added extra thrust through a sling-shot effect. At the same time, the unraveling of the thong caused the javelin to rotate or spin on its own axis, thereby creating a rifling effect which provided a steadier, longer flight and increased the chances that the javelin would land point-down. This thong is called *ankyle* in Greek, or *amentum* in Latin, and its use is widely attested in antiquity in Greece, Italy, and northern Europe, and it is still to be found among some modern primitive peoples. Vase paintings often seem to show the *ankyle* wrapped six or more times around the shaft of the javelin, but modest experiments at the University of Colorado demonstrated conclusively that two and one-half to three times was the maximum possible; otherwise the thong did not have time to unwind completely and pulled the javelin abruptly down in front of the thrower.⁹⁹

98. For Pindar’s “bronze-cheeked” javelins, see *Pythian* 1.44-45 and *Nemean* 7.70.73. For throwing the javelin at targets from horseback see the chapter below concerned with the ephebeia; for throwing in the gymnasium at targets, see Antiphon, *Tetralogy* 2. See Gardiner, *AAW* 173 for several possible techniques.

99. Gardiner, *AAW* 173 for the wide distribution of the throwing thong in ancient Europe: the Etru-

scans, Samnites, Messapians, Spanish Gauls, Danes, and Irish. The throwing thong could be fastened firmly to the shaft and remain with it during flight or it could be merely wound around the shaft in such a way so as to fall off after unwinding. The Greek *ankyle* seems to have been of the latter type. Philostratos, *Gymn.* 31, adds that long fingers were an advantage to javelin-throwers, possibly stressing the sling-shot effect.

This event also was probably conducted in the stadion. Vase paintings depict the athlete in a running approach, carrying the javelin at about ear-level in much the same way as his modern counterpart. The point of throw seems to have been one of the starting lines and the area designated for the approach run could have been the same *balbis* as used for the diskos throw, although installing a *balbis* at each end of the running track would have allowed simultaneous activity in both events, an advantageous situation if there were ten to fifteen competitors each with several attempts in each field event. There is no ancient testimony about the number of throws permitted and no reference to a specific number of javelins housed at any of the major religious centers. Vase paintings often depict the pentathlete carrying two javelins but these are undoubtedly practice scenes and are at best merely suggestive. Pindar, whose poetry is often elusive in the extreme, does with greater than normal clarity indicate several things about this event; overstepping the line (*balbis*?) meant disqualification of that throw or of the thrower; there was an area marked by boundaries within which the javelin was to land; and the purpose of the throw was distance, so as to surpass one's competitors. These provisions accord well with modern rules which also provide a fault-line which cannot be overstepped, stipulate a fair area, measured as a 30 degree sector from the point of throw, and determine the winning throw on the basis of distance – provided that the javelin lands point first.¹⁰⁰

Unfortunately, no ancient source records the distance of an actual or presumed throw. This is in keeping with the Greek attitude that winning is of primary importance and they probably would have agreed with the modern dictum that statistics are for losers. There is one somewhat vague statement that a hippodrome was the equivalent in length of four good javelin throws or three arrow shots. This statement cannot be converted into a secure figure for the javelin simply because we cannot measure an ancient hippodrome. The location and excavation of the hippodrome at any of the major crown game sites has so far escaped the archaeologist, possibly because they involved few permanent architectural structures and have therefore been totally obliterated during the intervening centuries. No one supposes that a major hippodrome had a straightaway track less than ca. 400 yards, or 1200 feet, and some accept 600 yards, or 1800 feet. Either of these figures converts into an impressive dis-

100. The allusion to a faultline occurs in Pindar, *Neemean* 7.70-73: "...I swear that I, as if (throwing) the bronze-cheeked javelin, have not let loose my swift tongue after having overstepped the line..." The reference to an area within which the javelin must land and to throwing for distance appear in *Pythian* 1.41-45: "But I, eager to praise that man, hope as I shake the javelin in my hand not to throw the bronze-cheeked javelin as it were out of bounds (literally "out of the contest") but to throw it far in order to surpass my opponents". The statement "Phras-

tor hit the mark with his javelin": in Pindar *Olympian* 10.71 may, on the other hand, imply that accuracy in some form was also involved. Sweet, *Sourcebook* 54, offers a plausible explanation: "... according to Liddell and Scott, the verb we translate as "strike" means to strike with a weapon (like a sword) but never with a missile like a javelin. The word "mark", as used here then, is probably a metaphor meaning "throw to the spot he needed to reach for victory". Questions of safety are raised in Plutarch *Perikles* 36.2.

tance for the javelin – either 300 feet, as one-fourth of 1200 feet, or 450 as one-fourth of 1800 feet. A throw of this magnitude approaches closely or significantly exceeds the modern world's record of 340 plus feet and therefore is usually regarded with suspicion, if for no other reason than that the modern javelin is a scientifically, aerodynamically designed instrument in contrast to the ancient handmade wooden shaft which was possibly even heavier. However, the one critical difference between the modern and the ancient event is the Greek use of the *ankyle*. For more than a century a number of people have undertaken to demonstrate the distances to be obtained with and without the throwing thing and the reported results are often startling, claiming in excess of a 200% improvement in one case and an average 40+ meters in a second. In an experiment at the University of Colorado, Mr. Cedric Kweim, a member of the university's tennis team who had not thrown the javelin competitively since his high school years, experimented briefly in throwing with and without the *ankyle*. The results were fairly consistent: the throws with the *ankyle* averaged a ca. 20% greater distance than those without. His best throw with the *ankyle* was 195 feet compared with 160 without the *ankyle*. Mr. Kweim's previous experience was of minimal duration and at the level of secondary school competition in the decathlon. It would have taken extensive practice on his part to acquire an effective throwing form with proper coordination of foot, body and arm movement, and he was therefore limited to throwing primarily with his arm only and after a rather short run. Nevertheless, improvement was significant and immediate and Mr. Kweim was convinced that with some practice with the *ankyle*, plus relearning to use his body and the run up, his performance would show even greater improvement. Although this experiment did not produce the major differences in achievement of which the other experiments boast, a minimum twenty percent increase added to an excellent modern throw would easily exceed the current record. There should be little doubt that the *ankyle* contributed to superlative ancient performance with the javelin and the centuries' long tradition of competition must have brought about refinements of technique which increased the distances achieved. A throw of 300+ feet is easily believable.¹⁰¹

The other two events of the ancient pentathlon were a foot race and wrestling. The track events have been discussed above and the wrestling will be addressed in the following chapter.

101. For Emperor Napoleon's experiment, see Gardiner, *AAW* 174 ("impracticed thrower who could only throw 25 meters unaided increased his throw to 65 meters by using the *amentum*") and Jüthner, *Brein* II 329 (identifying A. Bertrand and General Reffye as

conducting the actual tests); for the experiment with an average improvement of 46 meters, see also Jüthner, *Brein* II 343, n. 116 (quoting Vogt, *Sport* 27). See also Harris, *GAA* 92-97.

THE PENTATHLON: ORIGIN, ORDER OF EVENTS, AND SCORING

The Homeric poems do not mention the pentathlon or any other multiple-event contest but they do refer to individual competitions in the jump, diskos, and spear-throwing. There is very modest evidence that some of these events might have occasionally appeared at local festivals as individual contests but at the major festivals, including the crown games, the field events were scheduled only as parts of the pentathlon. The obvious question is why did they lose the status of independent contests as evidenced in Homer and why were these particular events, along with a foot race and wrestling, selected to form a single contest? Philostratos recounts a story attached to the legend of Jason and the Argonauts. Telmon was the best in the diskos, Lynkeus in the javelin, the sons of Boreas in running and jumping, and Peleus was second best in these four but best in wrestling. During an extended stay on Lemnos, where they repopulated the island having only female inhabitants, Jason held athletic competitions, and allegedly to please Peleus, he combines these five into a single event. Apparently each of the five won his specialty, with Peleus second in the other four(?), and Peleus was declared overall winner both because he was considered the best soldier and because he won the pentathlon, a military exercise of the javelin competition. This forced aetiology is vague in detail and unpersuasive in the controlling emphasis given to Peleus's military abilities and to the presence in the pentathlon of the javelin, an event won not by Peleus but by Lynkeus. Furthermore, this story does not appear in the earlier epic version of this great adventure to recover the Golden Fleece as told by Apollonios of Rhodes.¹⁰²

There are modern attempts to find some rationalization for this hybrid event. Gardiner proposed that it "was representative of the whole physical training of the Greeks, and the pentathlete was the typical product of that training". He adds that it may have developed out of a battle of champions, i.e. a special competition at the conclusion of an athletic festival in which the various winners competed for the title of best all-around athlete. This thesis puts the event in a very positive light and accords the pentathlete a position of high honor. Harris is more skeptical of the status of the pentathlete and suggests either that at an early date the field events were not judged worthy of individual crowns at Olympia and therefore were joined together, and embellished with other contests, or that the pentathlon was a

102. For the story of Peleus and the alleged first pentathlon, see Philostratos, *On Gymnastics* 3. The military character given the pentathlon in this legend has an interesting parallel in the "modern" pentathlon, an event designed by the French to test the skills of a

military courier, i.e. horseback riding, fencing, pistol-shooting, swimming, and cross-country running. This strange hybrid replaced the pentathlon composed of the long jump, javelin, 200 meter dash, diskos, and 1500 meter run.

“consolation” prize for athletes unsuccessful in any of the individual, specialized events. Whatever the origin, according to the Olympic Register, the pentathlon was added to the Olympic program before the end of the eighth century B.C. – at the same Olympiad as wrestling and before boxing, the pankration or any equestrian event. It maintained its position as a standard event at all major athletic festivals and received praise and criticism in antiquity in much the same vein as that from Gardiner and Harris. Aristotle, for example, stresses the versatility and balance of athletic skills: “The pentathletes have the most beautiful bodies because they are constructed for strength and speed together”. The *Amatoria*, on the other hand, a work in the Platonic corpus but not by Plato, criticizes the pentathlon as the refuge of mediocrity.¹⁰³

No ancient source lists the order in which these five events were contested and the only secure position is that of wrestling which a number of writers from as early as Herodotos uniformly identify as the final one. One commonly held assumption is that the three field events, which were the hallmark of the pentathlon, were scheduled one immediately after the other, i.e. jump, diskos, javelin. Of the scholars who have addressed this issue only Jüthner breaks this sequence in his reconstruction; relying on a fragment of the poet Simonides, he argues that the order was jump, run, diskos, javelin, and wrestling. Simonides’ statement is generally dismissed as evidence either because, as poetry, the word-order would be governed by the demands of meter, and therefore unreliable, or even that it is simply a disorganized statement in which the word order has no significant value. The foot-race is generally placed either first, before the field events, or fourth, after the field events and immediately before the wrestling. Thus the vast majority of scholars addressing this issue have one of two schedules: foot-race, field events, and wrestling, or field events, foot-race, and wrestling. Those who emphasize the field events’ importance to the pentathlon tend to place them at the beginning of the competition. Those who seek some clue from ancient sources find the footrace mentioned first more often than not and therefore begin the program with it. Holding the race first may have had some practical advantages: not only was it the simplest to manage but if the surface of the *dromos* was in any way affected by the preparation for and conduct of the field events, then the race should have been the first event scheduled.

There is only one clue as to the order within the field events: Pindar, in an extremely vague and disputed passage, possibly states “... I deny that having stepped over the boundary I let loose my swift tongue like the bronze-cheeked javelin which sends forth the neck and unwetted strength from the wrestling bouts”. The reference to javelin-throwing can be interpreted “the bronze-cheeked javelin, the winning of which event, frees the neck and strength unwetted by perspiration from the wrestling event”, i.e. the javelin event immediately pre-

103. For Gardiner’s view, see *AAW* 177; for Harris’s more negative attitude, see *SGR* 33; for Aristotle, see *Rhetoric* 1.5, 1361b.

ceded the wrestling. Beyond this possible allusion, there is no other clue as to the order of the field events.¹⁰⁴

The winner in the modern decathlon for men or heptathlon for women is determined by a system in which the athlete is awarded points from a table based upon his or her performance in each event, i.e. so many points are automatically awarded for running the 100 meter dash in 10.5 seconds, so many for jumping 7.5 meters, etc. The one with the most points at the end of the tenth, in the decathlon, or seventh event, in the heptathlon, is the winner. This point system is felt today to be the most accurate way of selecting the best all-around athlete who must be able to perform moderately well in most of the individual events and rather well in several in order to win. There is not even a hint of a point system for the ancient pentathlon, although proponents of a modified point system are not lacking.

The ancient evidence may be presented briefly as follows. The so-called foundation myth for the event has already been discussed but what should be emphasized here is that Peleus is described as being second best in the three field events and the footrace and best in wrestling and therefore overall winner. A scholion to Aristeides' speech in praise of the Great Panathenaia at Athens asserts that the winning pentathlete did not generally win all five events but that winning three was sufficient for overall victory. This principle of three wins equaling victory is reinforced by an inscription which describes Polykrates, a boy pentathlete, as twice winning the pentathlon by winning the "first triad" – i.e. by winning the first three events, and other late sources also connect victory in the pentathlon with winning three events. The passage from Xenophon already discussed seems, by stating that the competitors who had advanced to the wrestling were no longer in the stadion, to indicate that not all entrants in the pentathlon reached the wrestling and that some form of elimination reduced the number of participants at least for the final round. A far less specific reference in Plutarch, also used to support a phased reduction in participants, argues that the letter *alpha* is purportedly superior, like pentathletes, to the other letters of the alphabet in three

104. Ancient sources indicating that wrestling was the final event are: Herodotos 9.33; Pausanias 3.11.16; Xenophon, *Hellenika* 7.4.29; Bakchylides 9.27 ff., and Artemidoros 1.57. For modern reconstructions of the order of events, see Gardiner, *AAW* 177; Jüthner, "Pentathlon", col. 524-28; Bean, "Victory" 363-64; Ebert, *Pentathlon* 18-20; Harris, *GAA* 77-80; and Weiler, *Der Sport* 191-192 (with chart listing the order of events as proposed by nine scholars). Fragment 151D in the corpus of Simonides states: "Diophon, son of Philo, won at Olympia and Delphi in the jump, the sprint, and the diskos, the javelin and the wrestling". This either claims a phenomenal achievement for Dio-

phon – defeating the best pentathletes in all five events at the two most important athletic festivals – or it may possibly reflect a result similar to that of the Spartan Akamatides who, according to an inscription on a halter found at Olympia, won the pentathlon *akoniti* (without dust – see Moretti, *IAG* 8). The "Without dust" designation for Akamatides may, however, indicate that he won without having to wrestle, i.e. either that he had won three of the first four events and was therefore proclaimed overall winner even before the wrestling or his opponent(s) in the wrestling withdrew for whatever reason and he therefore won *akoniti*.

ways: it is superior first to the consonants by being a vowel, second to some vowels by having two quantities, short and long, and third to all vowels by never coming second in a diphthong. This statement has been used to support not merely a single phase reduction before the wrestling but a three-phase system of elimination which could diminish the number of participants as early as the completion of the third round.¹⁰⁵

The two general principles derived from the ancient evidence and commonly accepted are that winning three of the five events automatically guaranteed overall victory and that the number of competitors was reduced before the final event. In the first instance, once an athlete had won three events further competition was suspended as unnecessary, a situation which may be implied in the passage from Pindar discussed above, i.e. the winning of the javelin, if it was the third win, frees the athlete from the wrestling simply because a third win immediately produces an overall victor. In all likelihood, one athlete winning three of the first three or four events must have been somewhat unusual and the occasion for boasting (hence the statement about Polykrates above?); therefore, some further method of determining a winner existed. The simplest approach is to limit the competition in wrestling to the winners of the first four events. This would produce one of three results: two finalists who had won two events each; one who had won two and two who had won one each; or four who had won one event each. In the case of two finalists, the winner of the single wrestling match would be the overall victor. In the case of three finalists, two situations are possible: either an elimination is set up by having the three draw lots with one bye included; or, more reasonably, the double-winner is given the bye and the two single winners compete in the semi-final match. If there were four individual winners, they drew lots for opening round opponents and the winners then faced each other for the crown. This reconstruction, however, has not found many supporters because it guarantees a champion with three separate victories only in the case of two finalists with two individual wins each. In the other cases someone could claim the crown with victories in only two of the five events – unless the elimination bout in wrestling counted as a separate win. This latter case possibly places too much emphasis upon wrestling by allowing two wins in this event to count toward the three victories. Also there is no possibility of reconciling this system with the legend of Peleus' win in the alleged first pentathlon because he would have been eliminated before his specialty. Harris, who has argued for a system limiting the wrestling competition to the winners of the first four events, has sought to increase the chances of producing a triple winner by limiting access to the footrace only to those who had won at least one of the field events.

105. For the statement that winning three of the five events was sufficient for victory, see the scholion to Aristides 3.339; for the inscription reporting that Polykrates won the first triad, see Moretti, *IAG* 82; for other definitions suggesting three wins for the pen-

tathlon, see Pollux *Names* 3.151 (*apotriasai*, to win three times) and the scholion to Aeschylus, *Agamemnon* 171 (*triakter*, a word also used to describe throwing one's opponent three times to win in wrestling).

This would insure, failing a triple winner, one double winner in the wrestling finals, i.e. wins in either two field events or in one field event and the footrace, and would also give primacy to the field events, usually thought to be the “hallmark” of the pentathlon. Bean, in a 1965 study, argued for a somewhat similar reduction, i.e. limiting access to the running event, but broadening the pool for the ace by admitting any athlete who had won two seconds in the field events. Bean offered the possible addition of double second-place finishers in order to account for Peleus’ appearance in the finals of the Argonautic pentathlon and suggested that two second places may merit equation to one first place. Furthermore, Bean used the footrace to reduce the number admitted to the final round by permitting only the first and second place finishers in the *stadion* sprint to advance to the wrestling. For those who insist that the pentathlon victor must be a triple winner, neither Bean’s nor Harris’ proposal is persuasive. Also these systems may produce a winner possibly unworthy of the crown allegedly representing all around athletic ability. Bean admits to two least satisfactory situations, the more extreme being the following:

EVENT	I	II	III	IV
1 st place	A	A	B	B
2 nd place	C	C	A	C
3 rd place	B	B	C	A

Contestant A came close to winning the first triad of field events but because of a third place in the footrace would have been excluded from the final event. Harris proposal, which limits admission to the footrace to the winner of at least one field event, has been criticized on a number of grounds: it creates a possible sixth event, the semi-final match in wrestling, it provides for reduction in participation only after the third and fifth events; it does not explain the Peleus legend; and it also can produce unsatisfactory results. An example of this latter complaint is the following:

EVENT	I	II	III	IV	semi-final	V
1 st place	A	B	C	A	B	B
2 nd place	C	A	A	C	[C]	[A]
3 rd place	B	C	B	B		

At the end of four events, A has two wins and two second place finishes, is awarded a bye to the final wrestling competition and faces B who has only one win and no second place finishes. B wins the wrestling and the crown, a result which could not happen under a point system which awarded points for first, second, and third places; in fact A, after the first four events, has won almost twice as many points as B, if first place received three points, second two, and third one. Harris’ system also favors the heavy athlete, especially the wrestler. In the example above, B could have won the one heavy event of the first triad,

the diskos, and then clinched the final victory by defeating in wrestling A who had won the long jump and the footrace and finished second in the diskos and javelin, arguably a superior performance. Sweet, who also limits entry to the wrestling to those who had won one of the four previous events, has proposed a “repechage” system to preserve the three win rule and reduce the importance of wrestling: if two of the four reached the wrestling with only one victory each, they are matched in non-wrestling events which they had not already won. If there were two with one win each, e.g. in the footrace and the javelin, they would compete against each other either in the jump or the diskos as determined by lot. The winner of this event would then wrestle the two-event winner for the crown. If there were four individual winners, they would be matched in pairs by lottery in events, also selected by lottery, which neither had won; then the winners of these repechage rounds wrestled for the crown and the ultimate victor thus would have in a sense won three different events.¹⁰⁶

Attempts to reconcile the reduction of the number of competitors advancing to the wrestling, the tradition of a pentathlon victor being a triple winner, and the value of second places in the Argonautic pentathlon have led to the concept of comparative or relative wins. Gardiner and a Finnish athlete, Captain Pihkala, published in 1925 a brief description of such a system: after the first four events relative performances are examined and any athlete who has been defeated three times by the same rival is eliminated. For example, if A finished first in the long jump, third in the javelin, and second in the footrace, while B finished fourth, fifth and third in these same events, B has been defeated three times by A and is therefore dropped from further competition. After the elimination procedure has been carried out, only those should be left who show two wins and two defeats vis-à-vis every other athlete admitted to the wrestling. Thus second place finishes can be crucial and the ultimate winner may be said to have three wins, i.e. he has achieved three comparative or relative wins over every other competitor. Ebert, in a major study published in 1963 and in a brief restatement in 1973, presents an extensive argument for this system of relative wins which incorporates phased reduction, triple (comparative) wins, and the Argonautic tradition. To be sure, three outright or simple wins secured overall victory and this could happen in the third, fourth or fifth event. If someone did not win the first triad, any competitor who in these first three events had finished behind the same entrant was eliminated, thus making possible both significant reduction after the third round and the selection of a winner before the fifth round. The following example illustrates this principle of relative wins; brackets indicate elimination:

106. For limiting the wrestling to winners of the first four events, see Harris, *GAA* 78-79, and for his later view limiting access to the footrace, see *SGR* 33-35. For Bean, see his “Victory” 366-67. For criticism

of Harris’ proposals, see especially Ebert, “Noch einmal” 261. For Sweet’s view, see “A New Proposal” 287-290. There is no evidence either for any type of a point system or repechage.

EVENT	I	II	III	IV
1 st place	A	B	C	A
2 nd place	E	A	A	[B]
3 rd place	B	C	B	[C]
4 th place	C	D	[D]	
5 th place	D	E	[E]	

D is eliminated after the third event because he has finished three times behind both A and B, while E is eliminated because he finished three times behind A. The fifth event, wrestling, is not necessary because by the end of the fourth event A has defeated the remaining rivals three times comparatively and is therefore overall winner. Ebert's system also permits all entrants in a well-balanced field to reach the final round:

EVENT	I	II	III	IV	V
1 st place	A	B	C	D	E
2 nd place	B	A	D	C	[A]
3 rd place	E	E	E	E	[B]
4 th place	C	D	B	A	[C]
5 th place	D	C	A	B	[D]

Ebert's system comes close to a point system in that it rewards above average versatility. In the example above, at the end of the fourth event all five athletes have earned twelve points on the basis of five points for a first place finish, four for a second, etc. It departs from the modern approach by requiring that the contestant performs well in the first three events or risk elimination without being given a chance to demonstrate his skills in the footrace and wrestling. This prejudice in favor of the field events, as already noted, may well have been a central feature of the ancient pentathlon. Ebert's thesis presents a problem, however, with the legend of Peleus and the alleged first pentathlon. We are told that four heroes are the best in one of the field events and the footrace, while Peleus was the best in wrestling and second in the other four events. Philostratos does not specify who won each event or state that Peleus was actually second in the first four events, although the general description of the athletic abilities of the five participants can imply that this was the result. If Peleus did finish second in the first four events, he would have accumulated three relative wins over the hero destined to win the fourth event, thus eliminating him and upsetting the structure of the story. Ebert tries to avoid this by arguing that *deuteros*, the Greek word for "second", can also mean "defeated" or "not first", and Peleus then needs to accumulate only enough seconds to protect against elimination before the wrestling. This approach offers the possibility of reducing the number of contestants after the third and fourth events and thereby increases the chances of one athlete winning outright three events, but it also has the severe disadvantage of requiring the elimination of an individual winner of one of

the first four events who also happened to have finished behind another athlete in three other events. Also, if the number of entrants was large, e.g. fifteen, the record keeping would have been extensive and, furthermore, determining the order of finish in the footrace, most probably the single *stadion* sprint, if most of them survived to this event, could have been difficult if not impossible. Indeed, the larger the number of entrants, the greater the chance for the unusual. Although there were prizes for second place at some festivals, the crown games honored only the winner of each event and this emphasis probably precluded any system of determining a pentathlon victor by other than outright wins. The example above of a possible result using Ebert's system reveals a most probable fatal flaw: E wins the crown after having finished third in the first four events and has won only the wrestling.¹⁰⁷

Accepting all the fragmentary evidence at face value and insisting upon reconciling the Peleus legend with the references to winning the first triad and to winning three times has created unnecessary problems. Aetiological myths, i.e. stories purportedly explaining the origin of something, are often fanciful and not to be taken literally. The basic thrust of this legend may have been merely to stress versatility. Wining the first triad must have been an unusual feat and deserving of mention. Therefore, the concept of three wins must have had limited application and may possibly have been unduly fostered and emphasized by analogy with the *triakter* or winner of three falls in wrestling. Restricting the wrestling competition to those who had won individual events is easily managed and accords well with the Greek emphasis upon excelling all others, even though it may have meant presenting the crown to a winner of only two events.

In site of the frequent assertions in most theories about scoring the ancient pentathlon that too much emphasis is given to wrestling, Patrucco has asserted that during the Greek Classical period athletes especially skilled in wrestling were discriminated against by the

107. For Gardiner's and Pihkala's theory of comparative wins, see "The System" (restated in Gardiner, *AAW* 178-180. Sweet, *Sourcebook* 80, points out a serious flaw in the Pihkala-Gardiner system: if the relative wins and losses are tabulated only after the fourth round, with just the right placements every competitor could have defeated every other competitor three times and therefore no one could win:

JUMP	DISKOS	JAVELIN	RUN
A	B	C	D
B	C	D	A
C	D	A	B
D	A	B	C

With this pattern of finishes A has been defeated

three times by D, B three times by A, C three times by B, and D three times by C. Ebert's system of calculating the relative wins and losses after the third round would prevent this impasse by eliminating D after the third round (defeated three times by C), the eliminating B after the fourth round (defeated three times by A), leaving A and C to wrestle for the crown. Ebert presents extensive discussion of his system in *Pentathlon* 1-34, and later in "Noch einmal" 257-262 (with charts illustrating various applications on 259-62). For criticism of Ebert's system of relative wins, with special emphasis upon the Argonautic pentathlon, see Merkelbach, "Der Sieg". See also, Lee, "Scoring".

order of events, i.e. they would have found it difficult even to reach the final round to enjoy the benefit of competing in their best event. He proposes that a change in the system took place during the Roman Imperial period under which all competitors took part in all five events and then the overall winner was selected by a point system.¹⁰⁸ To be sure, specialists in wrestling if they were as large and heavy as those competing for the individual crown in wrestling, probably could not easily compete in the footrace or the jump, but certainly the diskos and possibly the javelin throw presented suitable opportunities for their weight throw presented suitable opportunities for their weight and strength. In fact the first four events of the pentathlon did test both speed and strength: the ancient evidence, reinforced by modern experience, indicates that the best long jumpers were also excellent sprinters. The two credited with astounding leaps, Chionis and Phayllos, were both winners of the single *stadion* sprint. The diskos was regarded then and now as a “heavy” event generally requiring both size and strength for superlative performance. The javelin throw, classified as a “light” event, probably falls in between and provided a middle ground to challenge the athletic skill of both types of athletes. Generally speaking, if the first four events were won by two contestants, the deciding wrestling match probably pitted speed against strength; the same easily may have obtained if there were more than two finalists. The best balance of speed with strength would then have won. Undoubtedly the ideal conclusion to the pentathlon.

108. Patrucco 217-222. He would award points as follows: a first place finish earned a point total equal to the number of participants (n), a second place finish received $n-1$ points, etc. A point system was also proposed by Moretti in *IAG* 17-19. There is no evidence for a change in the system of scoring the pen-

tathlon during the Roman imperial period and the point system, apart from having no support in the ancient sources and being cumbersome in application to any but a small group of competitors, could permit someone with three absolute wins to be defeated by someone with no absolute wins.

THE HEAVY EVENTS: WRESTLING, BOXING, AND THE PANKRATION

The three combat sports in the Olympic program were wrestling, boxing, and the pankration. They were called “heavy” events undoubtedly because they were dominated by the heavyweights. Where there are no weight divisions for contests in which strength, weight, and agility are critical, the strong, agile big man will generally prevail over the strong, agile smaller man. Wrestling was the first to be introduced at Olympia (708 B.C.), followed by boxing (688 B.C.) and the pankration (648 B.C.).

WRESTLING

Wrestling was the most popular sport in Greek antiquity at least with respect to numbers of participants. Acquiring the basic skills of wrestling was a required part of the school curriculum for boys, and men continued to wrestle as physical conditioning and social exercise well into middle-age. Athenian writers as early as Aeschylus (ca. 525-456 B.C.) used technical terminology and imagery from the wrestling arena, a literary practice which assumed widespread familiarity with the sport. By the end of the fifth century B.C. *palaistrai*, or wrestling schools, became common both as public and private enterprises and served also as social and political centers. Many of the famous figures from Athenian history are reported to have been active in wrestling. Socrates continued to practice the sport at a fairly advanced age and Plato was a superior practitioner of the art, allegedly competing in the Isthmian games. It has even been asserted that “Plato” was an athletic nickname meaning something like “broad-shouldered”. Perikles, the dominant Athenian leader of the 440’s and 430’s, and Euripides, the Athenian dramatist, have also been associated with wrestling in more than a casual or social way. Protagoras, the distinguished sophist and teacher at Athens during the second half of the fifth century, reputedly composed a manual on wrestling.¹⁰⁹

109. For a discussion of wrestling imagery in Aeschylus, see Poliakoff, “Fall” 251 ff. Plato describes Socrates wrestling in the palaestra with the young Alkibiades in *Symposium* 217c. Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* 3.4 asserts the following about Plato: he studied gymnastics with the Argive wrestler Ariston; according to some his given

name was Aristokles (his grandfather’s name) but he received the nickname “Plato” because of his athletic figure (*platys* means “broad” = broadshouldered?), although according to others it was because of his “Broad style” or even his “broad forehead”. Both Diogenes Laertius 9.55 and Plato, *Sophist* 232e refer to a textbook on wrestling by Protagoras.

As expected, given the social significance of the sport, Greek myths provide many stories of wrestling bouts, featuring especially contests between Herakles and Antaios, the king of Libya, and between Theseus and Kerkyon and even between the heroine Atalanta and Peleus, the father of Achilles. Artists delighted in depicting such legendary matches, as well as painting in profusion scenes of wrestlers in training and in competition. The *palaistra* provided a rich source of material for the artist and very likely even functioned as a studio or as a classroom for the beginning artist. Mythology, fulfilling one of its major functions of providing stories of origin, i.e. aetiological myths, involved a number of divine beings and heroes with the invention of wrestling. Among others, Herakles and Theseus are both credited with the introduction of formal or scientific wrestling, the latter in some versions having learned it from the goddess Athene herself. A later tradition has Palaistra, here a personification of the wrestling school, a goddess and daughter of Hermes who was the patron deity of athletic training and the gymnasium, as inventor of the art of wrestling. Skill and grace of movement, resourcefulness, and indomitability of spirit are stressed in the literary tradition over brute strength, violence, and ignorance of proper techniques. Legendary triumphs of preeminent Greek heroes, such as Herakles defeating Antaios, came to symbolize the superiority of Hellenic culture over the barbarian.¹¹⁰

In keeping with its early popularity, wrestling was the first combat sport added to the Olympic games. In spite of the numerous references and representations, however, the rules of the sport have not been preserved for us. Our evidence comes from a wide range of literary sources covering over a thousand year period, from Homer to late Latin and early Christian writers, and from an artistic tradition also spanning hundreds of years. Unfortunately, the writers assumed a fair degree of knowledge on the part of their audience and

110. Antaios, the legendary king of Libya and son of Earth, challenged travelers to his country to wrestling matches in which he killed them in such numbers that he was able to construct a temple to Poseidon using their skulls as the building material. Defeating him was especially difficult because so long as he maintained contact with the ground, Earth provided great strength to him. Herakles, seldom the “dumb jock” type, realized in the course of the match the source of Antaios’ continued strength and managed to lift him from the ground and strangle him while holding him overhead. Theseus, whose exploits often mirror those of Herakles, faced a series of challenges on his trip to Athens to present himself as the son of king Aegeus. One was a wrestling match with Kerkyon of Eleusis, an infamous wrestler who forced all travelers passing by Eleusis to a match. Theseus defeated him thereby

ending his career of harassment. The legends of the heroine Atalanta, who was brought up in the wilds by a she-bear and was therefore athletic and swift, crossed paths with the stories of several heroes. One of these was Peleus, whose wrestling match with her is depicted in rather early Athenian art. Most cultural institutions and important activities were provided with aetiological legends explain their origin. Both Herakles and Theseus, probably a more consciously created figure to serve Athenian interests, are credited with the invention of the art of wrestling. In some sources Theseus learned the skill directly from the warrior goddess Athena, in others from his wrestling teacher Phorbas. A statue of Hermes Enagonios, the god of athletic competition, usually was present in the *palaistra* or gymnasium.

artistic depictions without accompanying commentary and they are notoriously imprecise and subject to differing interpretations. There may also have been changes in the rules during this extended time period. Thus there is an ongoing, vigorous debate, not limited to wrestling but including all Olympic sports, as to the rules governing competition. We do have one papyrus fragment from Oxyrhynchus dated to the second century A.D. containing thirty-one lines of a wrestling training manual apparently designed to guide a class through a series of wrestling holds and maneuvers; frustratingly, the document is badly mutilated with often only half-lines preserved.¹¹¹

Training and competition took place in the open air in the skamma, an area in which the earth had been dug-up and sanded. This provided a suitably soft surface offering some protection to participants. The central, open air courtyard of the *palaistra* contained at least one skamma for practice. The sand used in the skamma might be imported if the locally available was not of suitable quality. For competition possibly the skamma was placed at one end of the stadion where more spectators could have a good view and where the softened surface would have little or no effect upon the track used for footraces.

Prior to practice or competition, wrestlers rubbed themselves with olive oil. This was also true of athletes competing in the other heavy events and in the track and field events. The aryballos is constantly depicted in athletic scenes on painted vases. To prevent wrestling from becoming the comic efforts of two oiled and slippery competitors trying to hold on to one another, wrestlers dusted themselves with a fine sand, or rather often dusted each other to make sure that the sand was properly and evenly applied.¹¹²

The selection of opponents in formal competition was done by lottery. If twelve wrestlers were to compete at Olympia, twelve lots would be placed in a silver helmet or urn, two with the letter alpha, two with the letter beta, and so forth. The two who drew the same letter would be matched in the first round. The six first-round winners would then draw for opponents in the same way for the second round. The drawing for third-round opponents provided an advantage for one of the three still competing for the crown. There would be two alphas and one beta in the helmet or urn and drawing the beta provided a bye for that

111. Translations of this document vary extensively both because of the fragmentary nature of the document and of the necessity to extract technical wrestling terminology from words of more general use. For discussions with translations see: Gardiner, "Wrestling" 263 ff and *Classical Review* (1929), 210-212; Jüthner, *Philostratos* 26-30; Marrou, *History* 124; Poliakoff, *Studies* 161-72 (with line-by-line commentary); and Poliakoff, *Combat Sports* 52-53 (with photograph of the papyrus fragment).

112. Thucydides 1.6 credits the Spartans with being the first to strip naked and oil themselves before athletic exercise. The use of oil had several purposes: it assisted in the massage both before and after training or competition; it lessened the danger of abrasion; and it kept sand and dirt out of the skin pores. See Poliakoff, *Combat Sports* 13-14 and Marrou, *History* 126-27 (and sources cited therein). For wrestlers dusting each other after the application of oil, see Lukianos, *Anacharsis*, quoted below.

round and put a somewhat rested athlete into the final round against the winner of the third-round bout. The one who drew the bye was called *ephedros*, meaning “sitting in the side”, i.e. not competing in a given round. If there was an uneven number from the beginning, e.g. thirteen, six pairs would be matched and one would draw a bye. This would result in six winners plus the one who had drawn the bye and would produce a lottery of three pairs plus another bye. Finally, for the third round there would be four competitors left and everyone would have an opponent for the semifinal and final contests. If there were nine competitors at the beginning, it was theoretically possible for the same wrestler to draw a bye all the way into the finals. An athlete who won the crown without drawing a bye for any of the elimination bouts could and did boast that he had won *anephedros*, i.e. “without sitting on the side”.¹¹³

Once the wrestling competition began, the elimination bouts continued without interruption and all bouts, including the final one, were concluded within the span of a single afternoon. What limited evidence we have indicates that as many as three or four rounds may have been necessary to produce the champion and therefore drawing a bye for the semi-final round may have been crucial for the final outcome. The order of bouts in each round probably also was determined by lottery, most economically by having those who drew alphas wrestle first and so on. If this was the case, then drawing an alpha would have provided the longest rest period between bouts. Conversely, drawing the final bout in the first round and the first bout in the following round would have greatly diminished the chances of winning, especially at the major festivals which attracted the best athletes in the Greek world. A

113. Lukianos, *Hermotimos* 40 provides a vivid description of the lottery procedure: “A silver urn dedicated to the god is placed before them (the competitors). Into this are thrown small lots, the size of beans, with letters on them. Two are marked alpha, two beta, two gamma and so on in the same way, if there are more competitors, two lots always having the same letter. Each of the competitors comes up and offers a prayer to Zeus, puts his hand into the urn, and picks up one of the lots. After him another does the same. A policeman (*mastigophoros* or “Whip-bearer”) stands by each one and holds his hand, not letting him read what the letter is which he has drawn. When all now have their own, the chief police officer (*alutarchis*), I think it is, or one of the national judges themselves (*Hellanodikai*) (I don’t remember now) goes round the competitors, who are standing in a circle, and inspects their lots. In this way he matches one who has the alpha to the one who has drawn the other alpha.... Similarly, he matches the two betas.... This is what he does

if the contestants are even in number.... they are odd, he throws in with the rest a lot marked with an odd letter which has no duplicate. Whoever draws this is given a bye and stands out until the rest have competed.... This is no small boon to the competitor – the opportunity to come fresh against tired opponents”. The elaborate precautions involving a supervisory staff exceeding the number of competitors must indicate the potential for foul play at this critical stage. Aulus Gellius, a Latin writer of the first century A.D., in his *Noctes Atticae* 5.9.5-6, tells the following story: a Samian athlete named Euchelos, who had been mute for years, was suddenly roused to vigorous speech when he saw a potential rival substituting lots at the drawing. Unfortunately, Gellius does not describe precisely how the cheating was committed. The advantages of drawing a bye, especially at a festival attracting high caliber athletes, were sufficient apparently to induce attempts to switch or change lots.

wrestler, or boxer or pankratiast, whose opponents all withdrew rather than face him was said to have won *akoniti* – “without dust” – i.e. without having to dust himself or without having to get into the *skamma* and become dusty through actual competition. Withdrawing at the last moment at major festivals probably was not too common and the *Hellanodikai* at Olympia could punish such conduct. Withdrawal probably occurred more frequently at local athletic festivals when a well-known champion or professional unexpectedly entered and the local athletes decided not to step into the *skamma* with him.¹¹⁴

The iconographic tradition of depicting wrestlers in action, i.e. the traditional poses used by artists, seems to have been remarkably consistent throughout antiquity. This conservatism may be accounted for by one of two principles. Or both: the rules and style of wrestling, and of all other major events in the Olympic program, changed very little because of the close connection between athletic competition and major religious sanctuaries and their rituals; and/or a trend toward repetitiveness and hostility to change on the part of artists may have caused reuse of standard and traditional themes. The association with religion may in fact have resulted in minimal change in the style and rules of competitive sports and this therefore invites some confidence in the rather late writers who lived well after the Classical period and whose statements are the most extensive available to us. Caution, however, should not be totally abandoned. A vivid description of a wrestler preparing to grapple with this opponent was written by Heliodoros during the third century A.D. but is probably accurate even for a much earlier period:

“Taking a firm stand with his feet somewhat apart and knees slightly bent, rounding his back and shoulders, his neck advanced but pressed down into his shoulder blades, and his waist drawn in, he tried to avoid giving any opening himself, while his outstretched hands were ready to seize any opening offered by his opponent.”

From this position wrestlers could spar at arm’s length, grappling only with their hands, a practice known as *akrocheirismos*. Leontiskos of Messena in Sicily, the Olympic wrestling champion in 456 and 452 B.C., developed a hold by which, during this initial grappling at arm’s length, he was able to bend back his opponents’ fingers even to the point of breaking them; he therefore won apparently because his opponents were unable to continue. This use of *akrocheirismos* in wrestling (i.e. breaking of fingers) is not referred to again and is there-

114. Multiple elimination rounds in wrestling at the crown festivals were probably not unusual. Pindar, *Pythian* 8.82 honors Aristomenes who defeated four rivals on the way to winning the crown at Delphi. This would require at least nine initial entrants with Aristomenes drawing an opponent for each round. An athlete probably could have withdrawn during the thirty-day training period at Elis, but once the competition

began at Olympia the *Hellanodikai* were not very receptive to withdrawal, even, apparently, in the case of bodily injury and exhaustion (cf. below the story of Theogenes at the Olympic games of 480 B.C.). Fines and banishment from further participation were available sanctions. Plutarch, in recounting the ca. 1,300 victories attributed to Theogenes, discounts many of them as worthless, i.e., acquired *akoniti* at local festivals.

fore widely assumed to have been outlawed as a wrestling technique. It does, however, reappear a century later when Sostratos of Sikyon used it in the pankration. The breaking of bones was legal in this event and Sostratos became so adept at it that he earned the nickname *akrocheiristes*. Fittingly, the victory statues of Leontiskos and Sostratos, although their athletic careers were not within the same century, were side by side in the Altis at Olympia.¹¹⁵

The artistic evidence for wrestling, although abundant, is limited by the repetitive use of a relatively few standardized scenes, while the literary evidence is frequently metaphorical or, as already noted, characterized by a brevity which presumes the reader's acquaintance with the sport. There is general agreement on many points, but debate continues about some critical aspects of the ancient rules. The standard repertoire of holds depicted on vases of the Classical period stresses upright wrestling in which the intent of the competitors was to throw their opponents to the ground. A common initial posture is often referred to as the ram position, i.e. the wrestlers are at close quarters, forehead to forehead, each one attempting to gain some advantageous hold while in the meantime trying to control the movement of his opponent by grasping his wrists or forearm (pl. XIII, fig. 1). There certainly was a psychological aspect as the wrestlers were practically eyeball to eyeball. One maneuver from the ram position, requiring speed and agility, was to suddenly grasp with both hands one arm of your opponent, spin quickly – to the right if you have grasped the right arm or to the left if the left – bend forward and throw your opponent over your shoulder. This is what today is called the flying mare (pl. XIII, fig. 2). Possible defenses against this tactic which are depicted on Greek vases include: using one's free hand to prevent your opponent from turning quickly; moving forward quickly, to the right if your opponent controls your left hand, and with your free hand reaching around and grasping his right arm from behind (pl. XIV, fig. 1); or grasping his head or neck with your free hand. Quickness of movement,

115. The description of the wrestler is from Heliodoros, *Aethiopika* 10.31. For Leontiskos and Sostratos, see Pausanias 6.4.3 and 6.4.1. The exact meaning of *akrocheirismos* is somewhat elusive. See M. Bulard, "Akrocheirismos", *REA* 26 (1924), 193-215 and Poliakoff, *Studies* 27 n. 4: "akrocheirismos is a wrestling tactic in Pl. *Alcibiades* 107e, a part of pankration and boxing in Jüthner, *Philostratos* 36; it denotes sparring without close engagement". Brophy and Brophy I, 179-180, n. 29, offer a somewhat different interpretation: "Leontiskos may not have been crippling his opponents to throw them easily, despite Pausanias 6.4.3, but rather may have used a skillful takedown known to oriental martial arts. He seized and bent his opponent's fingers not straight back but sideways, back and

over with a clockwise or revers twist.... Aside from a quick counter-blow (not permissible in Greek wrestling), the only chance the adversary has to avoid a broken wrist is to flip himself over in the direction of the twist – and three such throws would make Leontiskos a clear winner. A. Westbrook and O. Ratti, *Aikido and the Dynamic Sphere* (1971) 165-223, explain and illustrate the seven basic "immobilizations" of this Zen art. The seventh "*koto gaeshi* (wrist turn out)" is most probably what Leontiskos and Sostratos used". Poliakoff, *Combat Sports* 28, refers to an inscription recently found at Olympia, dating to the sixth century B.C., which bans finger-breaking holds in wrestling. For some reasons lost to us this technique enjoyed a brief renewal with Leontiskos.

balance, and strength were the physical qualities demanded of the successful wrestler, either offensively or defensively.

A modest variety of neck holds are illustrated on vases. This is to be expected because the neck is quite vulnerable and strength of the neck is stressed as necessary. From a neck-hold one could twist or spin an opponent to the ground or throw him by means of a cross-buttock throw (pl. XIV, fig. 2).

Various body holds were practiced, either from the front or back. The apparent intent of such holds, as least on vases of the Classical period, was to lift your opponent off his feet and throw him to the ground. Theseus has been depicted with a controlling body hold on Kerkyon as an example of skill over brute strength: Kerkyon charges forward while Theseus either steps to one side to obtain a hold which will permit him to throw Kerkyon backward across his thigh; or, if Kerkyon is charging low – almost as if to tackle Theseus – the latter obtains a neck or body hold from above and is then able to swing Kerkyon off his feet and throw him. Another common body hold was to seize your opponent around the waist and control him by lifting him off his feet (pl. XIV, fig. 1, pair to the right). A good defense against a number of body holds, once obtained, is to attempt to trip your opponent or, if he has picked you up in a bear-hug, to hit him behind his knee with one of your feet. Tripping an opponent was legitimate and apparently practiced in wrestling classes as evidenced by the papyrus fragment from Oxyrhynchus which contains the class drill: “You sweep and knock his foot out.”

There is wide agreement on the types of holds found on classical Greek vases; the difficulties began with the issue of precisely how did one win a match. The literary evidence from the fifth and early fourth centuries B.C. uniformly points to three falls as the criterion for victory: Aeschylus uses *atriaktos*, “the one who has not been thrown three times”, to mean “unconquered” and *triakter*, “the one who has thrown his opponent three times”, to mean “conqueror”. Plato even more specifically includes the verb for “throwing down” to remove all doubt as to what is happening for the third time. Thus, from the standing position (upright wrestling) one wins a match by throwing his opponent three times.¹¹⁶ Controversy begins with the definition of a fall, a problem which apparently aroused occasional dispute even in antiquity. Throwing someone so that his back or shoulders touched the ground certainly constituted a fall – without the further requirement of holding him down or pinning him. Although it has been argued that touching a knee to the ground counted as a fall,

116. The root of the words used by Aeschylus and other classical authors to designate “Victory” is *tria* thus stressing the three falls from wrestling. See Aeschylus, *Agamemnon* 167-70 for *triakter*, and *Choephoroi* 339 for *atriakter* (with A. F. Garvie, *Aeschylus Choephoroi* [1986]). The verb *triazein*, meaning “to con-

quer”, has the same root and in the expression “to be totally defeated or destroyed” the word “totally” translates the phrase “*dia trion*” – “by means of three”. Plato uses the phrase “Throwing down for the third time just as in wrestling” in *Euthydemus* 277d.

some holds require the offensive wrestler to support himself on one knee and it is therefore likely that although being on one knee, or both knees, may in some circumstances be regarded as a disadvantage, it probably did not constitute a fall. Throwing someone so that he is flat on his stomach may, contrary to modern practice, have counted as a fall. The boundary of the wrestling arena or skamma may also have been critical for scoring a legitimate fall. Obviously throwing one's opponent within the skamma so that he touched the ground with the required part of his body produced a fall, but was this the case also if the opponent landed outside the skamma? There is little direct evidence from any period of Greek antiquity which addresses this question. Modern practice does not recognize a throw outside the specified area, and this may well have been true for ancient wrestling. Such a rule requires greater, but not unreasonable, control on the part of the offensive wrestler and may be implied in the very act of defining an arena for the action.¹¹⁷

Because of the traditional emphasis in both classical literature and art upon throwing one's opponent from the standing position, the possibility that a fall may be gained through other means is often dismissed. A recently discovered Panathenaic vase, dating to 360 B.C., depicts two athletes grappling on the ground, and the possibility that this presents ground wrestling, i.e. not from a standing position, during the Classical period encourages a review of the available evidence. The limited artistic evidence fails to persuade completely: if vase paintings clearly depict athletes on the ground employing various wrestling holds and not striking each other, it is nonetheless extremely difficult to conclude firmly that any given

117. One of the early literary references which seems to indicate that touching the ground with the shoulders constituted a fall is Aristophanes, *Knights* 571-73, which describes wrestlers jumping up, quickly brushing the dust from their shoulders, and denying that there had been a fall. Gardiner's definition in *AAW* 185 is somewhat imprecise ("If a wrestler fell on any part of the body, hip, back, or shoulder, it was a fair fall") in that the stomach and chest are not specifically included. The argument that throwing an opponent outside the skamma counted as a fall has been made most recently by Poliakoff in *Combat Sports* 28, and more extensively in "*Asynexostos*". In the latter study, he offers as a definition of the term *asynexostos* – which appears in several sources, along with *peridonikes* and *aleiptes*, as epithets for the pankratiast Marcus Aurelius Asclepiades – "no opponent could ever throw him out of the area of competition" (i.e. out of the skamma). The meaning of the term is debated: never expelled by the officials for stalling in order to force a tie (G. E. Bean, *AJA* 60 (1956), 198-99); and

never pushed from his initial position (Moretti, *IAG* 79, 232). Poliakoff derives his definition from a statement in Nilos, *de voluntaria pauperitate ad Magnam* 60 PG 79.1049: "... having seized us around the waist and throwing us outside the skamma, a thing which even though not a fall nevertheless is a defeat (disadvantage?) to be moved from one's firm stance". He argues that the obviously honorific nature of the other two epithets applied to Asclepiades requires something more positive than the definitions of *asynexostos* offered by Bean and Moretti, and fully accepts Nilos' statement to mean that a throw outside of the skamma was a legitimate fall. His argument is supported generally by the conservative nature of ancient athletics and the presumed competent knowledge of athletics possessed by early Christian writers. One troubling aspect of this argument with respect to competition during the Classical period is that a throw out of the skamma is a fairly dramatic maneuver, and if it counted as a fall or as a defeat, why must we wait for a late Christian writer to comment upon it?

scene in fact presents wrestlers – and not pankratiasts – pursuing their struggle on the ground. M. Poliakoff, as already noted, has examined in detail all the combat sports and has fashioned an extensive argument in support of ground wrestling throughout the long history of Greek athletics. He has marshalled the literary evidence which, although generally late, is impressive. Lukianos, a first century A.D. Greek writer, describes in his *Anacharsis* a training scene from a *palaistra* which raises enough issues to merit extensive quotation. The scene is set in Athens during the time of Solon and presents the Scythian Anacharsis discussing the activities of the *palaistra* with Solon, one of the Seven Sages of Greek antiquity.

(1) “And why are your young men doing all this, Solon? Some of them are tripping one another up, while others are choking and twisting each other and groveling together in the mud, wallowing like swine. Yet, in the beginning, as soon as they had taken their clothes off, they put oil on themselves and took turns at rubbing each other down very peacefully – I saw them. Since then, I do not know what has got into them that they push one another about with lowered heads and butt their foreheads together like rams. And see there! That man picked the other one up by the legs and threw him to the ground, then fell down upon him and will not let him get up, shoving him all down into the mud; and now, after winding his legs about his middle and putting his forearm underneath his throat, he is choking the poor fellow, who is slapping him sidewise on the shoulder, by way of begging off, I take it, so that he may not be strangled completely. Even out of consideration for the oil, they do not avoid getting dirty; they rub off the ointment, plaster themselves with mud, mixed with streams of sweat, and make themselves a laughing-stock, to me at least, by slipping through each other’s hands like eels.

(2) Another set is doing the same in the uncovered part of the courtyard, though not in mud. They have a layer of deep sand under them in the pit, as you see, and not only besprinkle one another like so many cockerels, in order that it may be harder to break away in the clichés, I suppose, because the sand takes off the slipperiness and affords a firmer grip on a dry surface.

(3) Others, standing upright, themselves covered with dust, are attacking each other with blows and kicks. This one here looks as if he were going to spew out his teeth, unlucky man, his mouth is so full of blood and sand; he has had a blow on the jaw, as you see. But even the official there does not separate them and break up the fight – I assume from his purple cloak that he is one of the officials; on the contrary, he urges them on and praise the one who struck the blow.

... Solon (7) “The place itself, Anacharsis, we call a gymnasium, and it is consecrated to Lyceian Apollo; you see his statue – the figure leaning against the pillar. ... As for these forms of athletics, that one yonder in the mud is called wrestling (*pale*), and the men in the dust are wrestling too. When they stand upright and strike one another, we call it the

pankration.... (28) As for the mud and the dust, which you thought rather ludicrous in the beginning..., let me tell you why it is put down. In the first place, so that instead of taking their tumbles on a hard surface they may fall with impunity on a soft one; secondly, their slipperiness is necessarily greater when they are sweaty and muddy. This feature, in which you compared them to eels, is not useless or ludicrous; it contributes not a little to strength and muscle when both are in this condition and each has to grip the other firmly and hold him fast while he tries to slip away. And as for picking up a man who is muddy, sweaty, and oily while he does his best to break away and squirm out of your hands, do not think it a trifle! All this, as I said before, is of use in war, in case one should need to pick up a wounded friend and carry him out of the fight with ease, or to snatch up an enemy and come back with him in one's arms. So we train them beyond measure, setting them hard tasks that they may manage smaller ones with far greater ease."

Lukianos describes the activity in both the wet and dry skammas and specifically refers to the fighting on the ground in the wet skamma a wrestling. The wrestlers in the dry skamma are said to be doing "the same thing" – presumably as those in the wet skamma, i.e. fighting on the ground. Poliakoff's question based on this passage is why practice ground wrestling if it is not permitted in competition? This passage from Lukianos, although suggestive, is not totally persuasive. Pausanias reports that at Elis, during the last month of intensive training, the wrestlers at the conclusion of their workouts were matched by the Hellanodikai with soft gloves. No one argues from this that striking with the fist was an acceptable part of wrestling. Lukianos also refers to the practice in the wet skamma specifically as overtraining and, further, presents an unfortunately misleading description of the pankration.¹¹⁸

Poliakoff presents three other descriptions of ground wrestling: Philo Judaeus (ca. 30 B.C. - A.D. 45) states that you can win the crown in wrestling by throwing your opponent and stretching him on the ground either on his back or stomach; Statius (first century A.D. Latin writer) describes Tydeus throwing his opponent, following him to the ground where, wrapping his right arm around his neck and his legs around his groin, he stretched him out on his chest and stomach; and Jerome (fourth century A.D.) reports that a wrestler, who is down but supporting himself with his hands while his opponent is on top of him, loses if he is put down on his stomach.

One further bit of evidence is derived from a scholion to a passage in the *Republic*, where Plato states that if both wrestlers fall on the ground together, neither wins a fall but they

118. Lukianos' military reasons for practicing in the wet skamma may not be compelling (although see discussion below in chapter on uses and functions of athletics), but wrestling with a slippery opponent cer-

tainty would increase the difficulty of training and contribute "not a little to strength and muscle". No one argues for mud wrestling in the Olympic or other major games.

resume wrestling in the same position and holds they had immediately before they fell. The scholion adds that this is true when neither has fallen on top of the other, i.e. (apparently) when neither has an advantage or controlling hold. This implies that the contest would continue on the ground if one was on top (or in control?), and that therefore one could attempt while on the ground to put an opponent flat on his back, or cause his back or shoulders to touch the ground, or to put him flat on his stomach and be awarded a fall. This rule seems reasonable and would prevent an opponent from attempting to escape difficulty merely by struggling to fall to the ground in some position other than on his back. The role of the referee would also be greatly increase, if ground wrestling was legal.¹¹⁹

Winning solely by means of a controlling hold or by forcing an opponent to concede through a strange hold or other life-damaging or threatening hold, Poliakoff's third way to achieve a fall, presents a more difficult problem. The literary evidence is again quite late and the artistic evidence is inconclusive simply because of the impossibility of clearly and indisputably identifying a given vase painting as a wrestling scene or a pankration scene. This latter event presented contestants who usually wore nothing which distinguished them from wrestlers and who were permitted to break bones, use strangle holds, and even kill an opponent if he failed to concede. In this case, the failure of fifth and fourth century B.C. writers to mention such a dramatic event as a forced concession, especially one gained from a life-threatening hold – or in the extreme the defeat and death of a wrestler who refused to concede – is not easily overridden by late literary sources. Furthermore, there is the statement in Plutarch that Sparta permitted its combat athletes to compete only in wrestling to prevent the disgrace of losing in the other heavy events by having to yield. This comment would make no sense if wrestling also involved the possibility of having to give up a match to prevent serious injury or loss of life. The stress placed upon skill and control required to win by means of three falls, possibly including falls gained either from the upright position or while fighting on the ground, provided the ground activity was not the result of a chance or uncontrolled fall of both athletes, may have excluded winning merely through attaining a strangle or other damaging hold. The offensive wrestler may have been required, at least during the sixth, fifth, and fourth centuries B.C., to convert an advantageous and controlling hold into a throw by forcing the requisite part of his opponent's body to touch the ground.

119. See Poliakoff, *Studies* 20-25, 101-127, and *Combat Sports* 23-53 (citing in footnotes on 169-171) Philo, *de agricultura* 113, Statius, *Thebeid* 6.898-904; and Ambrose, *Commentary on Psalms* 36.51 (PL 14.1038-39). For further evidence for ground wrestling, Poliakoff, *Studies* 101-127, points to late erotic literature

which plays upon the convenient *double entendre* of wrestling terms and applies them to sexual activity place on the ground. For the practice of resuming the same position and holds which immediately preceded an inconclusive fall, see the comment in A. F. Garvie, *Aeschylus Choephori* 180-81, at lines 497-9.

BOXING

According to tradition, boxing was added to the Olympic games in 688 B.C.¹²⁰ As in wrestling, there were no weight divisions and, as in all combat sports, the heavyweight undoubtedly dominated. Also, what ancient comment is preserved stresses that boxing was the most dangerous and damaging individual event. No clear presentation of the rules has survived, only the rather curious statement in Philostratos that Onomastos of Smyrna, the first recorded Olympic champion, was invited to devise the rules for future Olympic contests. By the beginning of the seventh century B.C. formal completion in boxing had already achieved a fairly standard format as evidenced both by the bout which was part of the funeral games for Patroklos in the *Iliad* and by the impromptu match between Odysseus and the beggar Irus in the *Odyssey*. If there is any truth to the Onomastos story, the Eleians may have asked their first victor to advise them on such issues as the types of acceptable punches, what precisely constituted a victory, the role of the referee, time and space limits of a bout, etc. Whatever rules were adopted at Olympia probably became controlling at the major festivals in Greece, but some variation may have continued at local competitions. Our main sources of information are again vase paintings and a variety of literary descriptions. Although depictions of boxing from the sixth and early fifth centuries B.C. may be more numerous than those of wrestling, they unfortunately present a narrower range of stereotyped scenes and are therefore of limited value in reconstructing the boundaries of acceptable action. The literary descriptions, with few exceptions, are also somewhat repetitive and thus their contributions to our understanding of the sport are reduced.¹²¹

120. This is the date derived from Hippias' list of Olympic victors.

121. Pausanias 6.15.3-5 implies that boxing was the most damaging of the heavy events. At the Olympic games in 212 B.C. Kleitomachos of Thebes had reached the finals both in boxing and the pankration, while Kapros of Elis had earned the final rounds in wrestling and the pankration. Kapros won the crown in wrestling and the next match should have been boxing, followed by the pankration – thus giving Kapros a modest rest period but forcing Kleitomachos to fight consecutive championship matches. Kleitomachos petitioned the Hellenodikai to reverse the order so that he could contend for the crown in the pankration before becoming battered and cut-up in the boxing. The Hellenodikai granted this request even though it forced their fellow-citizen, Kapros, to compete in the pankration immediately after the wrestling. In spite of this disadvantage Kapros won the match and the

crown in the pankration, while Kleitomachos salvaged some honor by then defeating Aristonikos of Egypt for the crown in boxing – to the delight of the crowd according to Polybios. The Hellenodikai may also have been influenced by another, but unstated, claim to equity; by granting the request to reverse the order of events, both finalists were required to fight consecutive matches. See Philostratos, *Gymn.* 12, for Onomastos and boxing rules. Pausanias 5.8.7 mentions Onomastos as the first boxing champion but does not add that he also devised the rules for the Olympic Games. An inscription dated to ca. 300 B.C. (Moretti, *IAG* 33, 1-5) refers without explanation to another set of rules for boxing attributed to Polydeukes, one of the mythic Dioskouroi and famed for his boxing ability. Possible local variations may be implied in the encounter between Polydeukes and Amykos in Theokritos, *Idyll* 22: when the latter challenged Polydeukes to “stand and raise your hands to me, man to man”, Polydeukes

Opponents for each round of elimination bouts were selected. As in wrestling, by lottery, and the competition had to be finished within the span of a single afternoon. It is possible that on occasion fewer boxers presented themselves at Olympia for the first lottery. The danger involved may have persuaded those of lesser talent to withdraw during the thirty-day training period at Elis or the Hellanodikai may have pressured the less competitive to withdraw. A story in Pausanias may indicate that only four were present for the games in 388 B.C. in that Eupolis reportedly bribed three boxers in order to win the crown. Drawing a bye in boxing must have been a great advantage not just because of the extra rest but also because of the avoidance of exposure to severe physical damage.¹²²

There is no literary reference to anything resembling the formal limited and roped-off ring in which the modern boxer must fight. The ancient wrestler and pankratiast fought within the skamma and there probably was some sort of limit to the space in which the ancient boxer could move during a formal bout. The matches, often in informal settings such as funeral games, provided some restriction of space merely by the throng of spectators gathered on all sides. One such reference specifically mentions the offensive advantage resulting from the narrow arena provided by the natural setting and the crowd. Possibly the ancient boxer in formal competition was not as severely limited defensively as his modern counterpart but there are two early vase paintings which, combined with late lexicographical comment, indicate that the referee could restrict the space by means of a wooden ladder or pole held so as to compel the boxers to confront each other at closer range. Possibly this was the last resort in cases of extreme reluctance to fight.¹²³

The impromptu boxing match between the disguised Odysseus and the beggar Iros, staged as entertainment at a banquet, was based on clear expectations as to how the two were to fight and demonstrates an established pugilistic tradition. Although these two fought bare-knuckled, in keeping with their presumed low social status and the intended comic effect of the bout, boxers in formal competition usually wore some form of leather covering on

inquired about rules. Legakis, *Contests*, reports that there are more depictions of boxing than either of the other events. See also Legakis, "Nikosthenic" 41-50: of the preserved athletic scenes attributed to Painter N in Nikosthenes' workshop, twenty-nine are of boxers, four of wrestlers, two of runners, and three of pentathletes.

122. For Eupolos, see Pausanias 5.21.3 and the discussion of bribery in chapter below.

123. See Theokritos, *Idyll* 22, 91-94, where the companions of Polydeukes are concerned that the narrowness of the space available to the boxers would favor the much larger Amykos – i.e. by limiting the ability of the smaller, faster man to move about. Several ancient

lexicographical works, plus Eustathios' commentary on *Iliad* 23.686 (the boxing scene), explain the expression "from the ladder" (*ek klimakos*) as a boxing term referring to the use of a ladder to limit the space available when boxers are wasting time and/or refusing to fight with sufficient vigor. Two sixth century B.C. vases possibly depict the use of a wooden barrier during boxing matches. These lexicographical and art works are discussed extensively in Poliakoff, "Melankomas" (with illustrations), Poliakoff, *Combat Sports* 79-80 (with illustrations), and Sweet, *Sourcebook* 68-69 (with illustration).

their hands. From the funeral games in Homer's *Iliad* to well into the fourth century B.C. this consisted of wrapping leather bands or things, called *himantes*, a number of times over the knuckles and often some distance up the wrists (pl. XV, fig. 1). A modest description is provided by Pausanias: "At that time boxers did not wear a sharp thong on the wrist of each hand, but still boxed with the soft gloves, binding them over the hollow of the hand, so that their fingers might be left bare. These soft gloves were then thongs of raw ox-hide plaited together after the ancient manner". This statement, with further details provided by vase paintings, indicates that a loop was first formed, tightened over the knuckles, and then the thong was wrapped a number of times around the knuckles and often also round the wrist. The thongs, according to vase paintings, were long and probably were supple in that they were referred to as "soft things". Their purpose is debated: were they used to protect the knuckles or to increase the damaging effects of a punch? Probably both are correct in varying degrees. The wrappings around the knuckles certainly would provide some cushioning to the hand delivering the blow, but they would also increase the cutting effect of some punches, especially if the things were twisted or plaited. One aspect of the *himantes* should be stressed: the fingers usually were not bound along with the knuckles but were free (pl. XV, fig. 2).¹²⁴

There was nothing similar to the modern system of rounds with automatic rest periods. Once a bout began it was fought through to the end, although there is some literary evidence for brief rests arranged by prior, mutual consent. A bout ended when one fighter either gave up or was for some reason unable to continue. The sign for giving up was raising a hand usually with the index finger extended, no definition of a knockout is provided in the ancient sources, i.e. did the referee determine when a knockout had occurred or when a fighter was unable to continue? Possibly a knockout was in fact limited to the condition of being literally knocked unconscious and, further, the silence of the texts may indicate that the referee did not have the authority to stop a one-sided bout in order to save an overmatched boxer from further damage. In fact, clinching, a common defensive tactic for a tired, injured, or lesser fighter, was forbidden. The right of a competitor simply to give up may have been thought sufficient protection in this matter. There is also no evidence for determining a winner by means of a point system. The stipulation that all heavy events must be concluded by sundown produced at least two results: a match still in progress at sunset could be declared a draw

124. The description of the 'soft thongs' is from Pausanias 8.40.3. See also Philostratos, *Gymn.* 10. Poliakoff, in *Combat Sports* 70 (with fig. 71 on p. 71), concludes that according to the artistic evidence the individual boxer had some control over how the *himantes* were wrapped: he could put them over the knuckles and wrists and even include much of the fin-

gers or just over the wrists leaving the knuckles bare. Based on the latter case, he argues that the *himantes* must have been intended primarily to protect the boxer's hands; otherwise, if they contributed significantly to the force or damage of a punch, all boxers would wear them wrapped in a similar fashion.

– and therefore no crown would be awarded – or the opponents at least in boxing could agree to an exchange of unopposed punches until one wins.¹²⁵

The level of skill attained by the ancient boxer was probably quite high, if for no other reason than the centuries' long tradition of the sport and the appearance by the sixth century B.C. of trainers or coaches. A further indication may be found in the fact that Apollo, also functioned as the patron deity of boxing. His victory in Zeus' Olympic Games over Ares, may easily be interpreted to stress the Greek emphasis upon skill and grace over brute strength. Within the ancient tradition the Olympic Games of 588 B.C. marked a watershed with the appearance of a boxer from Samos named Pythagoras, thought to be a relative of the philosopher-mathematician of the same name from the same island. He arrived at Elis to compete in the boys' division, was rejected in this classification by the Hellanodikai, enrolled in the men's division and won the crown. His precocious and virtuoso performance was attributed to his mastery of "scientific" boxing, undoubtedly meaning that in his training he had developed a wide range of offensive and defensive skills which, through his win at Olympia, set a new standard for the sport. The somewhat later story of a novice fighter winning the crown at the Olympic Games in ca. 520 B.C. does prove that strength was important. Glaukos from Karystos, described as a farm worker, used his fist to pound a ploughshare back onto the plough. His father saw this and took him to Olympia for the boxing competition (boys?). Glaukos reached the finals on sheer punching power but was so badly damaged through his inability to protect himself that his defeat in the championship match seemed assured. However, his father shouted "Come on son, (hit him with) the one for the plough!" and this rallied Glaukos sufficiently to land one hard punch and win by a knockout. That Glaukos then mastered the art of boxing is demonstrated by his long, successful career at the crown games, certainly an impossible attainment if he had continued as he had begun. The statue at Olympia commemorating his victory also emphasizes this mastery: it portrayed a man shadow boxing because "Glaukos had the best natural hand movement in his generation".¹²⁶

125. For mutually agreed upon rest periods in literary accounts, see Statius, *Thebeid* 6.796-801 and Apollonii Rhodii, *Argonautica*, Oxford edition, 2.86-87; for possibly more historically based evidence, see Polybios 27.9.7-13. For prohibitions against clinching, see Plutarch, *Moralia* 638e-f. For the necessity to complete all heavy events by sundown, see Pausanias 8.40.3-5.

126. In *Iliad* 23.659-62, Achilles in announcing the boxing competition specifically associates Apollo with this event. For Zeus as founder of the Olympic Games

and Apollo's defeat of Ares, see Pausanias 5.7.10. The third century A.D. biographer Diogenes Laertius (8.47) provides the following description of Pythagoras of Samos at Olympia: "Eratosthenes says ... that (this Pythagoras) was the first to box scientifically, in the forty-eighth Olympiad, keeping his hair long and wearing a purple robe; when he was excluded with ridicule from the boys' contest, he went at once to the men's and won that". For Glaukos of Karystos see Pausanias 6.10.1-3.

Some aspects of the style of fighting and the legality of various tactics are debated simply because of the generalized nature of our evidence. Boxers are usually depicted sparring in one of two standard positions. Most commonly they confront one another in the still classic posture of the left hand lead with the left hand held high and extended forward and the right hand held back but also kept fairly high so that the body is less protected than in the modern ring. Vase paintings depict punches delivered by either hand, e.g. a clinched left hand to the head with good thrust and follow-through with the whole body or a right cross to the head. The artistic convention does stress either punches to the head or the hands being held high up to protect the head, so much so that some have concluded that a punch to any other part of the body was illegal. This artistic practice, however, could merely have emphasized the most spectacular moment in boxing, the knockout punch to the head. It is also quite possible that given the conditions of competition at an athletic festival, i.e. the necessity of having to fight as many as three or four times in a single afternoon in untimed bouts in which one competitor had either to acknowledge defeat or be unable to continue, the knockout punch to the head became of necessity the most important offensive weapon. There is, however, both artistic and literary evidence for blows to the body and, furthermore, such a severe limitation on offensive boxing, i.e. blows only to the head, should have been mentioned even within our limited sources.¹²⁷

In the other sparring position, the boxers have one or both hands open and are usually in a less rigid stance, even with both hands extended and ready to attack or defend. This posture may reflect the use of open-handed blows, which could, however, be delivered from either sparring position. That open-handed blows were used is vividly demonstrated by a late sixth century B.C. Athenian Panathenaic amphora: one boxer has lunged forward and hit his opponent in the area of the mouth and nose with the heel of his open hand (pl. XVI, fig. 1). This type of blow is extremely effective and damaging and takes full advantage of the limited restrictions of the *himantes* on the use of the hand; in fact, it is probably more lethal with the palm of the hand bound several times with a leather thong.¹²⁸

This use of open-handed punches and blows, especially with the upper part of the hand and wrists bound with the *himantes*, broadens the range of attack and possibly incorporates some aspects of karate. If the latter is true, requires agility for the boxer using the soft

127. For a recent argument for a rule permitting blows only to the neck and head, see Brophy, "Deaths" 172, 188-89. For the legality of body blows, see Poliakoff, *Combat Sports* 84-85 (with depiction from a sixth century B.C. vase of a blow to the genitals on p. 86, fig. 89). For a good right hand to the stomach on a vase from ca. 500 B.C., see Legakis, "Nikosthenic" 45, fig. 7.

128. Papalas, "Development" 73, presents a differ-

ent evaluation: "The most puzzling tactic, however, was striking with the open hand. Such blows would sting rather hurt a fighter and in Greek boxing, where points were not counted by judges, these open handed slaps would have little effect on the outcome of the fight (citing W. Rudolph, *Olympischer Kampfsport* 12). Open handed blows need not, as the Oriental martial arts demonstrate be mere 'slaps'".

himantes. A further point of contact with modern martial arts is arguably contained in the following curious story from Pausanias about the boxing finals at the Nemean games ca. 401 or 399 B.C.:

“For the Argives gave the crown of the Nemean games to Kreugas although he was dead, because Damoxenos of Syracuse, who was fighting against him, violated their agreement. Because evening was about to come upon them while they were still boxing, they agreed within the hearing of witnesses that each side should in turn allow the other to deal him a blow. On the head of Damoxenos, and the latter made Kreugas lift up his arm. On his doing so, Damoxenos with straight fingers struck his opponent under the ribs; and with the sharpness of his nails and the force of the blow he drove his hand into the other’s inside, caught his bowels, and tore them as he pulled them out. Kreugas expired on the spot, and the Argives expelled Damoxenos for breaking his agreement by dealing his opponent many blows instead of one. They gave the victory to the dead Kreugas, and had a statue of him made in Argos.”

Kreugas, by some unexplained means, was given the right of the first unopposed punch and did not succeed in ending the match by a blow to the head. He was, nonetheless, awarded the crown posthumously ostensibly on the grounds that Damoxenos had violated the agreement of unopposed single punches: driving his fingers into Kreugas’ abdominal cavity was ruled, according to Pausanias, and the story given him by his guides at Nemea or Argos, to be a multiple punch. This explanation seems bizarre at best and is often challenged. A recent study by Brophy argues that the real reason for the disqualification is that Damoxenos violated a cardinal rule of boxing by hitting below the head. As already noted, there is evidence for the legitimacy of body blows. But if they were in fact outlawed, Damoxenos’ unbelievably flagrant violation of such a rule is beyond belief. It must be assumed that, having reached the final round at a crown festival, he was an experienced athlete who, with victory within his grasp, would not so openly invite disqualification. Brophy, the holder of the black belt in Tae Kwon Do, offers the interesting observation that Damoxenos’ punch was the grab and pull following a finger thrust – a tactic common in karate; if so, the cause of instantaneous death was not the disemboweling, which causes a lingering death, but the damage done on impact to the internal organs – “especially the spleen (if Damoxenos struck Kreugas’ left side)... or the liver (if he struck the right), and the massive internal hemorrhaging that follows”. If some karate tactics were part of Greek boxing, as very likely was the case, the judges’ decision to disqualify Damoxenos is justifiable only if there were limitations on the types of open-handed blows. Possibly unopposed lethal blows were outlawed, or more probably in this case deemed to be extremely unfair, and therein was Damoxenos’ error. However, if such lethal blows were in use, one might easily wonder why Kreugas has been so cooperative. Pausanias strongly implies that the “sharpness” of Damoxenos’ nails contributed to the effectiveness of his finger thrust. Although (long?) sharp nails might have contributed

to the damage of some types of open-handed blows, they certainly would have impeded Damoxenos' ability to clinch his fists and thereby greatly limit his offensive style. The whole story, unreported in other ancient sources, smacks of the elaboration of some generations of tour guides. The one kernel of historical truth is that Kreugas was awarded the crown posthumously because of a disqualification beyond that one can only speculate.¹²⁹

With some frequency, the question is raised as to whether kicking was permitted or not. If it was, this would bring ancient boxing even closer to the oriental martial arts. No extant vase painting unequivocally depicts a boxer kicking his opponent. The issue of interpreting possible scenes of kicking is complicated by the possibility that pankratiasts, who could kick, also occasionally wore the *himantes* and therefore a given vase painting may depict either boxers or pankratiasts. Also one may question the perspective of the artist: it is one boxer kicking the other, is he merely stepping on the leg or foot of his opponent, or did the artist intend to depict any foot contact at all? A statement in Theokritos has further encouraged debate. He has Polydeukes, one of the Dioskouroi and famous for his boxing skill, inquire of Amykos, who has challenged him to a fight, whether the legs would be included, presumably through kicking. The question is cast in a sufficiently vague manner so that it could refer to a form of combat other than boxing – i.e. the pankration. The mere fact that the inquiry was made would seem to indicate that kicking was not automatically included as a generally accepted part of boxing and may have been locally optional. Literary references to possible kicking as part of the offensive strategy of boxing are all quite late, primarily from the Roman period. A statement in Philostratos *Περὶ Γυμναστικῆς* 11, has been used to prove the legality of kicking in boxing. The Greek verb used means either to approach or draw near or to attack. The noun completing the phrase is legs, specifically the shin or that part of the leg between the knee and the ankle. This phrase has been translated as “to kick against the shins (of your opponent)”, or “to take a stance near the shins (of your opponent)”. Neither translation makes perfect sense: if kicking is referred to, it seems to refer only to kicking your opponent's upper legs, probably not the most effective use of kicking; if merely the positioning of the boxers is involved, taking a stance near the shins of your opponent seems odd advice. One can often wish for a clearer statement from Philostratos whose understanding of athletics may frequently be challenged. Eusebius, a Greek Christian writer from the third and fourth centuries A.D., has also fueled the debate with his statement that asses, especially wild asses, are good boxers. This seems to imply that kicking was an important part of Greek boxing. One can interpret this metaphorically; boxing is violent, or as confusing boxing with the pankration, or as importing some later Roman form of boxing, or simply as confused. The most telling evidence against kicking as a major offensive weapon in boxing is the total absence of any reference in the earlier lit-

129. For a discussion of various points of possible contact between Greek boxing and oriental martial arts, see Brophy, “Deaths” 363 ff. For the bout between Kreugas and Damoxenes, see Pausanias 8.40.3-5.

erary sources. If kicking had developed as an integral part of boxing one would expect both some level of skill to have developed and the devastating potential of kicking to have drawn some comment. One cautionary note must be kept in mind: kicking definitely was part of the pankration and some of the best combat athletes participated in both boxing and the pankration; therefore some boxers competing at the highest levels, i.e. the crown games, had mastered the kicking techniques of the pankration and could have used them if permitted. The skill was there but evidence for kicking in boxing remains very slender.¹³⁰

Theokritos' match between legendary figures vividly illustrates one aspect of the strategy of an outdoor fight. Polydeukes successfully maneuvers from the beginning to have the sun at his back and in the eyes of his opponent. All heavy events at Olympia were scheduled for the afternoon which would increasingly bring the position of the sun into the immediate tactics of the combatants. Obviously, boxers in particular would attempt to take advantage of this factor.¹³¹

The boxer who has been knocked down or was in the process of going down frequently is pictured as raising his hand in submission. This reflects his obvious disadvantage: his opponent could hit him while down or while in the act of trying to get up. This possibility, plus the variety of types of attack available and the later introduction of the "hard" thongs, undoubtedly caused an increasing emphasis upon defense and caution and may account for the apparently extreme concern for protecting the head. The agile big man with a good reach and good use of each hand had an even greater advantage in Greek boxing than he enjoys today.

In spite of the danger – and boxing as already noted was recognized as the most dangerous of the Olympic sports – athletes of aristocratic background continued to participate throughout the fifth century B.C. This seems to have been especially true among Dorians and conservative Athenians who openly expressed their pro-Spartan views by adopting Spartan dress and customs, including the fairly uninhibited form of Spartan boxing. Plato preserves for us the late fifth century B.C. phrase used to describe pro-Spartan Athenians: "those with cauliflower ears", i.e. those whose ears had been damaged in boxing. The Spartans reportedly withdrew rather early from boxing competitions at the crown festivals after the development of "scientific" or highly stylized boxing which required extensive training for the development of a wide range of skills. The Spartans allegedly preferred strength and bravery to be the arbiters of good boxing rather than laboriously acquired skill. As already noted, there was another factor in their absence from boxing in the crown festivals: Spartan athletes were forbidden by their city-state to participate in boxing, for the pankration, simply

130. See Theokritos, *Idyll* 22.65-68 for the question about the use of legs. A recent and concise discussion of the problem is provided by Crowther, "The Evidence", whose conclusion is negative. Papalas, how-

ever, in "Development" 73, accepts kicking without discussion.

131. Theokritos, *loc. cit.*

because of the personal and national disgrace inherent in having to admit defeat. The Athenians with the cauliflower ears possibly pursued boxing in the more brawling, less sophisticated Spartan style and quickly showed the resulting physical damage. It should be stated that not all Dorians living outside Spartan territory shared this view. The Diagorai, a Doric noble family which had earlier migrated from Sparta to Rhodes, produced three consecutive generations of Olympic victors in boxing and the pankration between 464 and ca. 400 B.C.¹³²

Sometime between 340 and 336 B.C., for reasons unreported in the texts, the so-called “soft thongs” were replaced at least at Athens by more elaborate and possibly damaging gloves. This adoption of new style boxing gear at Athens may be presumed to reflect similar actions generally at major athletic festivals. The boxer no longer wrapped several feet of thin, soft strips of leather around his knuckles and wrists. The new device seemed to have been pre-wrapped and, more like the modern gloves, were merely pulled onto the hands and up the wrists and forearms. There were holes for the fingers which remained uncovered but easy use of them must have been impeded by the rather massive piece of leather situated over the knuckles. This latter could consist of several rather wide and thick bands of leather held together by small straps and stabilized by a somewhat rolled piece of material immediately behind them and by leather bands connecting them with the solid leather wrappings over the wrist. The leather covering protecting the wrist usually extended well up the forearm and often ended in two wide bands of sheepskin (pl. XVI, fig. 2). An excellent example of the fully developed type of this glove is provided by a first century B.C. bronze statue of a boxer. Not only were these leather bands over the knuckles thicker than the “soft thongs”, they were also described as dried or parched which should indicate that they were hard and stiff and therefore certainly more damaging. Their cutting ability must also have been much greater and the fairly solid wrapping from the hand well up toward the elbow must have been designed to protect the forearms, used defensively, from the damaging effects of either direct or even glancing blows. The destructive potential of these new “gloves” attracted the perverse humor of satiric writers. Loukillios, a Greek writer of the first century A.D. wrote a number of epigrams which stressed the mutilating effect of the “hard thongs”. One is about a well-travelled boxer named Androleos (Loeb translation):

*I, Androleos, took part in every boxing contest
that the Greeks preside over, every single one.
At Pisa I saved one ear, and in Plataea one
eyelid, but at Delphoi I was carried out insen-
sible. Damoteles, my father, and my fellow-*

132. For Plato’s reference to the boxing fad among Athenians with pro-Spartan views, see *Protagoras*

342b. For the Diagorid family, see the chapter below on the Greek athlete in legend and reality.

*townsmen had to be summoned by herald to bear
me out of the stadion either dead or mutilated.*

Another addressed to a boxer named Apollophones encourages him to continue his career because his head is already like a sieve and cannot receive any more marks than it already has. A third is addressed to a (fictitious?) boxer named Stratophon (Loeb translation):

*When Odysseus came home after twenty years, his
dog recognized him at once. But you, after a
mere four hours' boxing, are unrecognizable not
only to dogs but to the city. Look in the mirror
and you will say under oath, "I am not Stratophon".*

Two others are about the same person, Olympikos, who once had a nose, a chin, a forehead, ears, and eyelids, but after becoming a boxer lost not only these but also his portion of his father's estate because he had become so unrecognizable as to be declared a stranger and not entitled to inherit!¹³³

It is possible that this larger, more cumbersome type of hand covering reduced somewhat the open-handed or karate-style of attack. This seems to be implied in Pausanias' account of the bizarre conclusion to the bout between Kreugas and Damoxenos at Nemea where the possible finger-thrust technique is clearly associated with the older, softer things.

No ancient writer comments on this change and given the extremely limited evidence from painting and sculpture both the timing and the precise nature of the change are subject to question. The depiction of the new style glove on the Athenian vase painted in 336 B.C. is not exactly the same as that found on a bronze statue of a boxer dated to the first century B.C. The latter has an additional thick piece of leather over the knuckles which, if dried and hard, would greatly enhance its destructive potential. The left arm and hand of a bronze statue of a boxer dated to the third century B.C. also presents this extra strip of leather over the knuckles. Without clarifying literary comment, there are at least two interpretations of the artistic evidence. Either a new larger hand gear, more like a glove, was introduced at least at Athens by 336 B.C. which may or may not have increased boxing's potential for injury, but with the addition within a century of another hard leather strap over the knuckles, the clearly destructive "sharp things" were created. Or it is possible that the painter of Panathenaic vase of 336 B.C. somehow failed to depict the extra strip of leather. Proponents of the developmental view argue, based primarily upon Plato's reference to a type of practice (*sphairai*), that the individually laced soft thongs were replaced by 336 B.C. with the larger, somewhat padded glove which had possibly been used in practice. The use of larger, softer practice gloves to prevent unnecessary injury during training is eminently reasonable and

133. These satiric verses are contained in the *Palatine Anthology*.

has modern parallels. Two questions remain: are the Athenian gloves of 336 B.C. in fact the same as practice gloves or are they potentially too damaging for this purpose? Why were practice gloves suddenly adopted for competition, thereby reducing the danger of the sport, and then changed into something far more damaging than the original competition gloves? The attempt to identify a reason may easily involve speculation about a decline in cultural and moral values. The devastating potential of the new gloves would have been obvious even before they were used and their adoption must be viewed as a deliberate act fully intended to increase the already significant danger in boxing. Proponents of historical decline can attach this event to one of two convenient “turning points” in Greek history: either to the end of the Classical period or to the fairly massive introduction of foreign cultures during the third century B.C. Also not to be forgotten is the significant increase in spectatorism seen in the development on the late fourth century B.C. of new large stadia at most sites with large athletic festivals. The crowd’s desire for blood and violence has been lamented on the sports pages of many a twentieth century newspaper and there is no reason to presume that the ancient crowd was different.

The ultimate degradation, however, of the ancient boxing glove is not to be found in the “sharp thongs” but in the Roman *caestus*, a hand-covering which included lead pellets or, even more extreme, projecting sharp pieces of metal. The protective arm wrappings of the *caestus* could extend almost to the shoulder. There is no evidence for the use of the Roman *caestus* at any of the Greek athletic festivals, even after the Roman conquest of Greece. They were used in the more congenial surrounding of the Roman arena: boxers armed with the *caestus* would appear as part of the general carnage of the gladiatorial shows of the amphitheater.¹³⁴

One result of the introduction of these so-called “sharp thongs” must have been to place greater emphasis on defensive boxing and to inject even more caution. This tactic is pushed

134. The larger, more formal type of “gloves” appear first on a Panathenaic amphora dated to 336 B.C. A Panathenaic amphora of 340 B.C. depicts the traditional strips of leather or “soft thongs”. Thus a fairly secure date of 336 B.C. can be established for the introduction of the new gloves at the Great Panathenaia and this probably reflected a similar change elsewhere. Plato, *Laws* 830b specifically refers to the *sphairai* as practice gloves as opposed to gloves used for competition. Modern practice gloves and gloves used in amateur competition weigh ten to twelve ounces, while gloves worn in professional bouts weigh eight ounces and only six ounces in championship fights. See Sweet, *Sourcebook* 69. In addition to “soft” and “sharp” himantes, late writers also use the term *myrmex* (plural *myrmekes*) to describe all hand gear for boxing, although possibly the term was initially intended to re-

fer only to the “sharp” thongs and later became generalized. *Myrmex* means “ant” and the reason for its application to boxing gloves has stirred some debate. The “biting” or “stinging” capability of an ant provides a lively association with boxing and sufficient if one does not insist upon a fairly literal transference to these gloves of the variety of destruction an ant can cause or of the other meanings of the term in Greek. Extensive recent discussions of the various types of boxing gloves are found in: Poliakoff, *Studies* 54-63 and 88-100, and *Combat Sports* 68-79; Scanlon, “Greek Boxing” and Papalas, “Development” 67-76. Scanlon argues for the following development: from the eighth to the fourth centuries B.C. the himantes or long strips of supple leather (later called *meilichai* or “soft”) were used; during the fourth century the padded practice glove appeared (Plato’s *sphairai* or

to an absurd conclusion in the story of a boxer named Melankomas as told by Dio Chrysostom, a Greek Christian writer active at the end of the first and beginning of the second century A.D. This Melankomas, allegedly the son of an Olympic boxing champion from Caria, remained both undefeated and as unmarked as an athlete who specialized in running in spite of a long boxing career and participation at major festivals. All the more starting is the assertion that he was never hit nor did he strike any of his opponents. Such was his diligence in training and conditioning that he was able to keep his guard up and stay out of reach of his opponents for two whole days in succession, thus apparently forcing his opponents to give up out of sheer exhaustion. Part of Dio's funeral oration for Melankomas deserves quotation (Loeb translation):

"For often he would fight throughout the whole day, in the hottest season of the year, and although he could have more quickly won the contest by striking a blow, he refused to do it, thinking that it was possible at times for the least competent boxer to overcome by a blow the very best man, if the chance for making it were offered; but he held that it was the very truest victory when he forced his opponent, although uninjured, to give up; for then the man was overcome, not by injury, but by himself; and that for an adversary to give up because of the condition of his whole body and not simply of the part of the body that was struck, meant brilliant work on the part of the victor...."

The existence of this Melankomas (or more precisely of his athletic feats) has been doubted both because of the almost ludicrous nature of his achievement and the absence of any other near contemporary mention of him besides Dio's highly rhetorical praise. The rule that all bouts must be finished by sundown or a draw would be declared certainly and would challenge the effectiveness of his totally defensive tactics; if Melankomas refused to hit anyone and was quick enough to avoid blows (both propositions dubious at best), some opponent should have been able to force a draw. The referee's ability to force boxers to fight by use of the "ladder" or a barrier would also reduce the effectiveness of the type of stalling.¹³⁵

The references to training practices of the Greek boxer have a fairly modern sound. A type of punching bag called the *korykos* was used, suspended about head-high as with the

Pausanias' *malakoterai* or "softer" thongs); sometime in the third century B.C. the "sharp thongs" (*himantes oxeis*) may have developed from the *sphairai* by the addition of a thick, dried band of leather over the knuckles. Scanlon (36-39 with figs 1 and 2 on 36) also argues that the term *myrmex* was applied to the boxing glove because of its visual resemblance to the ant, i.e. its segmented appearance (this also takes into account the use of *myrmex* to describe rock ridges extending above sea level, etc.) I prefer not to bring the practice gloves or *sphairai* into competitive boxing

during the late fourth and early third centuries B.C. but believe it more reasonable to posit the development (gradual?) of a preformed competition glove quite distinct from the heavily padded practice glove and not less damaging than the old *himantes*.

135. For Melankomas, see Dio Chrysostomos, *Orationes* 28 and 29. Papalas, "Development" 76, accepts Melankomas' feat with the following explanation: "In the age of the Second Sophistic, Greek boxing, like oratory, had become more or less an exhibition. As orators were not necessarily expected to persuade, boxers

modern punching bag. Whether a larger body-bag was used is somewhat less clear. One illustration proves the availability of the larger bag in a caricature of pankratiasts at training (pl. XVI, fig. 3). Plato's reference to hanging up an image of dummy might point to the use of a large body bag. The use or non-use of the larger bag goes to the question of whether the Greek boxer concentrated exclusively on head blows or whether he also resorted to body blows. The evidence, although not extensive, supports the latter. Another training routine, also mentioned by Plato, is shadow-boxing where one practices against a non-existent opponent, still a standard modern routine to stress quickness of movement. There is also a vase painting illustrating two boxers, with both hands up, dancing or skipping to the tune of a diaulos. This would bring some rhythm and grace to their movement and undoubtedly lightened the tedium of a practice designed to strengthen both the legs and arms.¹³⁶

PANKRATION

The noun *pankration* is composed of two words: *pan* meaning "all" and *kratos* meaning "strength" – hence a contest meaning all or every form of strength.¹³⁷ The athlete who participated in this event was called a *pankratiastes*. It was the last of the heavy events added to the Olympic program (648 B.C.) and, although it claimed origin in the legends of pre-Trojan war heroes, it was the only combat sport not mentioned in Homer. It was also called *pammachon*, "all fighting" or "every form of fighting", which is more descriptive of this event because it included most aspects of wrestling and boxing, plus other forms of attack, such as kicking and strangling, which may not have been allowed in the other two combat sports. The expectation was that the match ended when one contestant gave up, but the use of strangle holds led to death in at least one instance.¹³⁸ Philostratos provides a much quoted description:

were not necessarily expected to injure". Harris, *GAA* 190, regards Melankomas' fighting style as a decline in standards caused by professionalism in athletics: "It was in the heavyweight events of the Great athletic program that the professionals desire to avoid taking risks and to escape defeat at all costs showed its deadly results". Gardiner, *AAW* 105, 208, similarly faults professional decadence, concerned more for money than honor. Poliakoff, "Melankomas", while accepting the historicity of Melankomas (see C. P. Jones, *The Roman World of Dio Chrysostom* [1978], 17), doubts both the report of his boxing achievement – simply because of "the clear impossibility of the agonistic details..." – and the presumed severe decline in Greek boxing. The evidence basically favors Poliakoff. Cer-

tainly the satiric poetry about the destructive aspects of boxing, which are contemporary with Melankomas, would neither make sense nor be funny if boxing had become totally defensive and a "track meet."

136. For the body bag and shadow boxing, see Plato, *Laws* 830b.

137. Selected bibliography for the pankration: Georg Doblhofer and Peter Mauritson, *Pankration* (1996).

138. The signal for giving up was the same as that for boxing, the raising of a hand (and index finger). Possibly the tapping of an opponent on his side (if in the down position) or unable to raise a hand, also indicated defeat: see Lucian, *Anacharsis*.

“Those who engage in the pankration, my boy, employ a wrestling that is hazardous; for they must meet blows on the face that are not safe for the wrestler, and must clinch in struggles that one can win only by pretending to fall, and they need skill that they may choke an adversary in different ways at different times, and the same contestants are both wrestling with the ankle and twisting an opponent’s arm, to say nothing of dealing a blow and leaping upon the adversary, for these things are all permissible in the pankration – anything except biting and gouging. The Spartans, indeed, allow even these, because, I suppose, they are all training themselves for battle, but the contests of Elis exclude them, though they do permit choking.”

The rules at Olympia were probably followed at most major athletic festivals but did not necessarily control every local contest. Apparently the rule against biting and gouging was not in force in Sparta, but biting was practiced so widely, either within or without the rules, that pankratiasts could be referred to as “lions” because of their ability to bite. Gouging probably refers to attempts to dig a finger or thumb into an opponent’s eye or other soft part of the body (pl. XVII, fig. 1). The testicles may not have been protected from this or other types of attack.¹³⁹

The pankratiasts began the bout in a standing position, probably often sparring with open hands very much like the wrestler and boxer (i.e. *akrocherismos*). Sostratos of Sikyon revived the finger breaking technique employed earlier by the wrestler Leontiskos and became so adept at it that he won three Olympic crowns in the pankration and added victories at the other major festivals as well; further, he earned the nickname *akrocheristes* – “fingertips”. Open-handed blows or blows with fists were available to the pankratiast, and punches to any part of the body may have been used both to injure or tire an opponent and to force him to release a hold. The pankratiast generally fought with bare knuckles, but there is some artistic evidence that soft himantes were worn on occasion. A vase dated to ca. 500 B.C. shows two contestants, one on the ground on hands and knees with the other above him, both with himantes (pl. XVII, fig. 2). This scene is difficult to reconcile with a boxing match unless the rules are being grossly violated and the judge immediately to the right is about to use his stick to rectify a foul. It is less likely to see a wrestling scene in which the himantes are mistakenly added by the artist and the clinched fist of the competitor on top is in violation which the judge is preparing to stop. Or it could be a pankration bout with soft himantes worn (by mutual agreement?) and the judge not at the point of interfering. Further support for this possibility is provided by a fragmentary Athenian Panathenaic amphora, dated to 360 B.C. excavated at Eretria in Euboia, which shows one fighter

139. For the description of the pankration, see Philostratos, *Imagines* 2.6. For pankratiasts as “lions”, see Philostratos, *Demonax* 49. For striking an oppo-

nent’s genitals with one’s knees, see Poliakoff, *Combat Sports* 61, fig. 61 (sixth century B.C. vase) and 62 (second/third century A.D. Roman relief sculpture).

downed by his standing opponent who holds one leg in his right hand and either pushes or strikes the heads of his downed opponent with his left hand; both wear soft himantes. One advantage of fighting with the himantes, in addition to protecting the knuckles, is that open-handed blows, glancing blows, back-handed blows and even vigorous scraping of or slaps at an opponent's face or body would be far more effective with soft thongs. However, the larger, more cumbersome "sharp thongs", later adopted in boxing, were probably not used in the pankration because they would greatly reduce the ability to use the hands for the various wrestling and strangle holds of this event; the light or "soft thongs", however, if properly laced over the knuckles and wrists, so as to leave maximum freedom to the fingers, could have been used effectively. There is another bit of late evidence: an ancient commentary on Pindar states that Theseus invented the "pankration without himantes", implying that the opposite was possible, i.e. the pankration with himantes.¹⁴⁰

Kicking was a major part of this event, and later definitions specifically include blows both with the hands and the feet. Galen, famous as physician to the emperors of Rome, awards in his spoof of the Olympic games the prize for the pankration to the donkey because of his powerful kicks. The increasing popularity of various forms of martial arts have heightened awareness of the devastating potential of this aspect of fighting, but the level of sophistication in kick-fighting achieved by the ancient pankratiast cannot be determined from the available evidence. Probably the small size of the skamma – plus the fact that it provided a surface of soft, deep sand – must have limited somewhat the development of this aspect of the sport.¹⁴¹

In addition to boxing and kicking techniques, the pankratiast employed wrestling holds, especially those which provided the opportunity of a possibly damaging throw, those which caused pain, such as various arm and leg holds, or those which permitted various types of strangling, such as headlocks and neck holds. One called the "ladder-hold" involved, in the standing position, getting behind an opponent by side-stepping or spinning him around, jumping on his back, wrapping one's legs around and behind his knees and then using one's arms and hands to apply a choke hold. Since the object was to force an opponent to give-up, mere throws or controlling holds were insufficient by themselves and had to lead to the application of limb – or life – threatening force or extreme pain.

140. For Sostratos, see Paus. 6.4.1. Sostratos won a total of twelve times at the Nemean and Isthmian games, two at Delphi, and three at Olympia. His first Olympic victory at the 104th Olympiad in 364 B.C. was not recognized by the Eleians because the Pisatans and Arkadians had seized the sanctuary and conducted those games. An inscription in verse celebrating Sostratos' victories was found at Delphi: see *BCH* 6 (1882), 445-466. For Theseus as inventor, see scholion to Pindar, *Nemean* 5.89.

141. For kicking included in the definition of the pankration, see *Suda*, sv. *Pankratiasts* ("Athletes fighting with blows of the hands and feet."). For the donkey as pankratiast, see Galen, *Protrepticus* 13. A number of fighting positions in Panathenaic amphorae from Eretria, see Πάνος Βαλαβάνης, *Παναθηναϊκοὶ ἀμφορεῖς ἀπὸ τὴν Ἐρέτρια* (1991) πίν. 15-31. J. Frel, "Arts Atheniensium: Panathenaica", *AAA* (1969), 377-386.

The pankration was fought also on the ground, either by both contestants willingly going to the ground or by one throwing his opponent and then jumping on top of him. It has been argued that by the fourth century B.C. the pankration was fought mostly on the ground and that this reflected a decline because it resulted primarily from the wish to avoid the greater physical damage possible in the upright position which permitted the broader range of more destructive tactics of boxing and kicking and of vigorous wrestling throws. Fighting on the ground did, however, present more opportunities for obtaining an arm or leg hold wherein the pain and threat of dislocating or breaking the limb would encourage surrender. Also the possibility for various strangle-holds probably increased, including the down version of the ladder hold. The life-threatening potential of this hold is dramatically, if somewhat vaguely, described by both Pausanias and Philostratos in their accounts of the third and final victory won by Arrachion (or Arrichion) at the fifty-fourth Olympiad in 564 B.C. Pausanias' report is occasioned by his seeing a statue of Arrachion in the market-place of Phigalia, a town not too far from Olympia (Loeb translation):

“Arrachion won two Olympic victories at festivals before the fifty-fourth, while at this festival he won due partly to the fairness of the Hellanodikai and partly to his own manhood. For when he was contending for the wild olive with the last remaining competitor, whoever he was, the latter got a grip first, and held Arrachion, hugging him with his legs, and at the same time he squeezed his neck with his hands. Arrachion dislocated his opponent's toe, but expired owing to suffocation; but he who suffocated Arrachion was forced to give in at the same time because of the pain in his toe. The Eleans crowned and proclaimed victor the corpse of Arrachion.”

Philostratos' description, based on a painting, is somewhat fuller but also different in that the victor's name is Arrichion and it is the opponent's ankle that is dislocated (Loeb translation):

“... the antagonist of Arrichion, having already clinched him around the middle, thought to kill him; already he had wound his forearms about the other's throat to shut off the breathing, while, pressing his legs on the groins and winding his feet one inside each knee of his adversary, he forestalled Arrichion's resistance by choking him till the death sleep thus induced began to creep over his senses. But in relaxing the tension of his legs he failed to forestall the scheme of Arrichion; for the latter kicked back with the sole of his right foot (as the result of which his right side was imperiled since now his knee was hanging unsupported), then with his groin he holds his adversary tight till he can no longer resist, and, throwing his weight down toward the left while he locks the latter's foot tightly inside his own knee, by this violent outward thrust he wrenches the ankle from its socket.”

Philostratos, in another passage, identifies Arrichion's coach and the role he played in this victory (Loeb.):

“The pankratiast Arrichion had won two Olympic victories and was fighting in the finals to win still another, but he was weakening. His gymnast Eryxias inspired him with the desire for death by shouting from the crowd, ‘What a wonderful inscription on your grave: He did not give up at Olympia!’ ”

In this bout the Hellanodikai ruled that the opponent’s act of giving up, apparently simultaneous with Arrichion’s death, took precedence and therefore Arrichion was the victor.¹⁴²

The act of pretending to fall backward, referred to by Philostratos in his description of the pankration, would allow the grabbing of an opponent by some part of his upper body while deliberately falling backwards. Then, while in the process of falling backwards, one could put one or both legs into the stomach of the opponent and, using the greater thrust of the legs, hurl him over one’s head.

“Wrestling with the ankle” is well illustrated by another story from Philostratos. A rather small athlete from Cilicia, nicknamed Halter, named after the jumping weight used by long-jumpers, was on his way to compete in the Pythian games at Delphi and stopped to consult the oracle of Protesilaos near Troy. He asked what he should do to win and received the disheartening reply, “Be walked on”. Halter ultimately perceived that the oracle meant that he should grab his opponent by the foot and not let go, for in so doing he would be walked on. But in the process, if he withstood the kicking, trampling, and pummeling, he might be able either to topple his opponent and/or twist his leg sufficiently to force a surrender. Halter reportedly became so proficient that he never lost a bout.¹⁴³

Although the pankration seemed to invite the worst form of mayhem and bodily injury, the Greeks regarded it as a contest requiring both strength and skill. Its invention was attributed both to Herakles and Theseus, the two greatest athletes in the Greek mythological tradition, and it attracted a number of aristocratic practitioners. Eight triumphs in the pankration, mostly, and probably all, achieved by members of socially distinguished families. Agility, strength, and quickness in response to any form of attack were demanded. In spite of this potential for inflicting serious harm the ancient evidence is almost unanimous in labeling boxing as the more dangerous sport, and the death of Arrichion seems somewhat unusual when compared with the more numerous stories of death and serious injury asso-

142. For ground-fighting as perhaps a decline in the sport see Gardiner, *AAW* 220 (“Perhaps the pankratiast, like the modern wrestler, was apt to take to the mat, or rather the mud, in order to avoid the heavy falls or blows he might receive while on his feet”). The three quotations are from Pausanias 8.40.1-2, Philostratos, *Imagines* 2.6, and Philostratos *Gymn.* 21. As to the type of hold involved, Sweet, *Sourcebook* 85 argues that it was the standing body scissors (or standing ladder hold): “Arrichion’s opponent had at the outset a

standing body scissors. Arrichion’s only hope of breaking the hold was to put pressure on one of his opponent’s legs joints (compare the collegiate tactic of locking the leg and sitting through on a figure four body scissors). Arrichion did this by first freeing his right leg, then hooking his opponent’s left ankle in the bend of his right knee and, while drawing the ankle to the right side, falling with his body to the left”.

143. For Halter, see Philostratos, *Heroic.* 15 (146K), and Gardiner, *AAW* 215.

ciated with boxing. In 212 B.C. Kleitomachos was the defending champion in the pankration when he also reached the finals in boxing. His successful petition to reschedule the pankration ahead of the boxing final may reflect the deference accorded to defending champions, but it may also be the result of vigorous efforts by the Hellanodikai to avoid even the appearance of favored treatment of Elean athletes at the Olympic games; Kleitomachos' opponent in the pankration was Kapros of Elis. One factor which may have contributed to the relative safety of the pankration was that the pankratiasts probably had a better opportunity than the boxer of perceiving the difficulty of his situation and of giving up before suffering serious injury – especially with respect to limb- and strangle-holds which apparently were common methods of attack. In pl. XVII, fig. 3 a pankratiast, falling backward while being both pummeled and choked by his opponent, is raising his hand to signify surrender; the official probably is about to tap the winner to indicate that the match was over. The story of Arri-chion does not encourage the belief that officials at major crown games were quick to intervene if they perceived a fighter to be in serious difficulty.¹⁴⁴

In spite of the popularity of the pankration among the Greek aristocracy and its praises sung in the fifth century by Pindar, during the fourth century Plato was openly hostile to this, as well as other events in the Olympic program. His opposition was rooted in his emphasis upon athletics as training for the military and especially his conclusion that soldiers must be taught to keep to their feet, an injunction consistently violated by the “down” fighting in the pankration.¹⁴⁵

Two inscriptions from the period of Roman domination of the eastern Mediterranean add interesting footnotes to the history of the pankration. The first, from Aphrodisias, a Greek city in what is now southern Turkey, records the cash prizes given at the local games:

stadion race	1,250	denarii (one denarius was a day's wages)
diaulos	1,000	denarii
dolichos	750	denarii
race-in armor	500	denarii
pentathlon	500	denarii
wrestling	2,000	denarii
boxing	2,000	denarii
pankration	3,000	denarii

144. Pindar's *epinikia* celebrating victories in the pankration are: *Isthmia* V-VIII. Artemidoros, *Book of Dreams* 1.62, supports Kleitomachos' evaluation of the relative dangers of these two heavy events: "The pankration has the same characteristics as boxing except it does not have the injuries". Both these sources could be used to support the thesis that upright fight-

ing became secondary to ground fighting in the pankration: punches, for example, can be delivered with far greater force from the standing position where better traction and more effective use of body weight is possible.

145. See Plato, *Laws* 830 ff., and Gardiner, *AAW* 220.

The variation in prizes should reflect crowd appeal and the necessity to attract the best possible athletes into the events which drew the most spectators into the stadia of Greek cities. The stadion race still held pride of place amount in the running events. The race-in-armor and the pentathlon were allotted less than half the prize money available for the stadion, while the combat events obviously were regarded as the premier contests, with the pankration valued significantly higher than the other two. This ancient preference probably would be duplicated by a modern crowd: violent combat sports would surely be the most popular, and the running events probably would be ranked by distance with the sprints as the premiere events. The prizes at Aphrodisias also clearly demonstrate that the superior athlete could become quite wealthy if he was willing to make the rounds of local and regional athletic festivals.¹⁴⁶

The second inscription was found in Asia Minor at Faisiller in Pisidia and is dated to the second century A.D. It records the rules for the pankration and reports several other interesting restrictions in the local games:

“The pankratiasts must take notice that they are not to use sand for dusting or wrestling falls, but are to contend with upright hitting. He who has won one victory and received the prize has finished and must not enter for another competition on the same day. If a slave has the good luck to win, a quarter of the prize money is to go to his fellow competitors. The same owner is not to have two or more hoses competing on the same day, but only one.”

This inscription proves that local rules governing individual events could be significantly different from those at the crown festivals. Here the only event singled out for specific directions as to how it should be conducted is the pankration: wrestling falls and presumably the consequent struggle on the ground were forbidden. This left the full range of hitting and kicking and probably favored those with boxing skills over those better at wrestling. A possible interpretation of the rules at Faisiller is that upright fighting in the pankration became more important in later antiquity, if the presumption that ground fighting became dominant after the Classical period is correct. Evidence for this may be found in the earlier emphasis in art on upright fighting, plus the fact that Theogenes of Thasos, the one athlete who won crowns at Olympia in two different heavy events early in the fifth century B.C., gained them in boxing and the pankration. It is also possible, in fact probable, that some very local, and unrecoverable, attitude at Faisiller dictated the somewhat unusual rules.¹⁴⁷

The training of the pankratiast was rather complex but divisible into components: he trained as a boxer and apparently on certain occasions could wear the soft himantes; he trained as a wrestler, both upright and ground wrestling; and he also trained in the various

146. For the inscription, see *CIG* 2758.

the American School of Classical Studies at Athens,

147. For the inscription from Pisidia, see *Papers of* 3, no. 275, 167.

techniques of kicking, strangling, and dislocating and breaking of bones. He could use both the smaller korykos, or punching bag, and the larger body bag, possibly filled with heavier material and designed both for hand punches and kicking. The training in boxing and in upright wrestling probably was similar to that used by regular boxers and wrestlers. The major difference would be the necessity to prepare for a far greater range of attack. Agility, quickness, strength, and toughness should have been even more important for the pankratiast than for the other heavy athletes.¹⁴⁸

148. Ground wrestling was also taught in a step-by-step approach to various holds. Two late epigrams combine elements of a drill in ground wrestling with pederastic content. Also the *Asinus*, attributed to Lucian, contains an erotic scene in which the hero enjoys

a “ground wrestling” lesson offered by a slave girl fittingly named Palaistra. The terminology and action of ground wrestling is easily adapted to various types of sexual union.

COMBAT SPORTS: VIOLENCE IN SOCIETY

Two of the three heavy events permitted, even encouraged, display of violent behavior sufficient to be limb- or life-threatening. The third, wrestling, is described by Pindar in terms stressing hostility and evil intent. Boxing, even with the soft thongs, was the most damaging event, although the late satiric epigrams possibly exaggerate the injuries suffered to the head, e.g. loss of eyes, ears, nose, eyebrows, during the period of the sharp thongs. The organized mayhem of the pankration must have claimed its share of broken bones and other serious injuries, as the story of Sostratos indicates. But in spite of this potential for life-threatening situations in the heavy events, few deaths arising from competition or training are mentioned in ancient sources. As expected boxing leads with four deaths, followed by the pankration and wrestling with two each. Three of the boxing fatalities are placed in the fifth or very beginning of the fourth century B.C. and in each instance caused disqualification of the opponent. In the earliest reported case, in either 496 or 492 B.C. at Olympia, Kleomedes of Astypalaia killed Ikkos of Epidauros in the final match but was denied the crown by the Hellanodikai. Late sources state that Kleomedes broke open his opponent's chest, thrust in his hand, and seized the lungs, and they attribute disqualification to the excessiveness of his savage behavior. This may or may not be a doublet of the third case, the death suffered by Kreugas at the Nemean games of ca. 401 or 399 B.C. and described in detail above. The second case is less securely dated but has been placed at Olympia in 488 B.C. A certain Herakles was reportedly killed in the finals by Diognetos from Crete, and this apparently caused Diognetos the loss of the crown. The circumstances of the death are not reported and the reason given for the disqualification, i.e. because the name of the boxer killed was Herakles, is certainly to be rejected. Diognetos was later worshipped as a hero in Crete and this has led to the conclusion that he must be a contemporary of the other early fifth century divinized athletes such as Kleomedes, Euthymos, and Theogenes. The last recorded fatality occurred at Olympia late in the second century A.D. and involved a boxer from Alexandria, the Greek city in Egypt. His name was Agathos Daimon but he was also called "the camel" probably because of his stubborn courage. An inscription commemorating his death has been found at Olympia and in addition to his name and origin states: "A victor at Nemea, he died here, at Olympia, while boxing in the stadion after having prayed to Zeus for the crown or death". He was thirty-five, must have been near the end of his career and his victory at Nemea assures that he was, or had been, one of the best. The prayer for victory or death may have been part of the preliminary posturing of

the ancient athletes in the combat sports, or his trainer, publicist, friends, and/or family may have contributed this “heroic” sentiment after the fact.¹⁴⁹

It may seem unexpected that three of these four deaths are dated to a fairly early period when the less destructive soft thongs were in vogue. However, two of the three specifically identify the fatal blow as one requiring a fairly open hand and use of the fingers. Perhaps the major lethal threat was precisely that the soft thongs allowed a greater use of the hand and fingers. In all likelihood the sharp thongs, or more formal type of glove, increased the destructive effect of blows with the fist but they must also have limited other types of punches, especially use of the fingers. These four deaths probably form a very small percentage of the deaths caused by boxing-related injuries. They all occurred at major crown festivals where the level of skill and experience was high, a factor which should diminish serious injury. A fatality at Olympia or Nemea, especially in the finals and involving well-known athletes, would attract broad attention and more comment by far than deaths at local festivals.

The pankration claimed the life of Arrichion at Olympia and another death is reported in an inscription from Ephesos to have happened in a palaistra probably during the first century A.D., which points toward the certain occurrence of serious injury and even death during training. Another possible fatality is implied in an ambiguous statement from a coach to a pankratiast’s mother: “If you should hear that your son has died, believe it, but if you hear he has been defeated, do not believe it”. As already noted, the emphasis upon ground wrestling and the pankratiast’s right to give up when in difficulty may have diminished the danger of fatal injury.¹⁵⁰

149. Poliakoff, *Combat Sports* 27-28, offers this characterization of wrestling: “The Greek rules were remarkably tolerant of rough tactics. Striking was forbidden, but some fairly brutal, limb-threatening holds at least at certain times in its history were considered legal Greek wrestling was, to put it simply, a bitter struggle”. He also cites Pindar’s use of the phrases “fierce looks” (*Olympian* 9.108-112) and “with evil intent” (*Pythian* 8.82) to describe the attitudes of victorious wrestlers. For extensive discussions of deaths reported in combat events, see: Brophy, “Deaths”; Brophy and Brophy; Poliakoff, “Deaths in the Pan-Hellenic Games: Addenda et Corrigenda”, *AJP* 107 (1986), 400-402, and *Combat Sports* 89-91 (and note 12, p. 175). For Kleomedes of Astypalaia, see Pausanias 6.9.6 and Eusebius, *Praeparatio Evangelica* 5.34 B C; and Forbes, “Accidents” 56, n. 50. For Diognetos of Crete, see Photius, *Bibliotheca* 190 (p. 151 Bekker

for disqualification), Moretti, *Olympionikai*, no. 181 (for date). For the inscription concerning Agathos Daimon, see de Riele, “Inscriptions” 186-87 and “Remarks” 585-86; and Jean and Louis Robert, *BE* (1965), 182. The name Agathos Daimon (good or noble daemon or divine being) is to say the least curious. Was it a “stage name”?

150. For Arrichion (Arrachion), see discussion above in section concerning the pankration. For the inscription from Ephesos, see *IK Ephesos* 7.1, 3446 = Peek, *VersInscr.* I.680 and Brophy and Brophy 400. Brophy and Brophy 194-95, also cite Philo, *Quod omnis probus liber sit* 17.110-13, for the report of two pankratiasts who fought until both of them fell dead at a crown game (Olympia or Nemea?); no other source mentions this highly unusual event and suspicion is therefore justified. For the coach’s letter, see Philostratos, *Gymn.* 23 and Poliakoff, *Combat Sports* 63.

Two deaths are attributed to wrestling, one during the fifth century and one reported in the Hippocratic medical corpus. The first is recorded in a fourth century B.C. inscription at Delphi commemorating former champions from a Thessalian family, including two brothers, Haghias and Telemachos. Haghias, celebrated as the first man from Thessaly to win the pankration at Olympia, is credited with thirteen victories at the other crown games during the fifth century. The wrestling fatality appears in the text describing the career of Telemachos, who claimed an equal number of victories: "I killed a very powerful man from among the T..senians (name not fully preserved), although he was willing", i.e. willing to die in the heat of combat? The athletic festival where Telemachos wrestled with the unnamed opponent is not identified nor are the circumstances of the death. The second fatality is discussed in some medical detail in the Hippocratic corpus but the circumstances of the death are only briefly described as Hipposthenes, a wrestler, falling on his back on hard ground. This should mean a throw or fall on the back and/or shoulders and neck outside the skamma or even a hard fall in a similar posture outside the skamma with the opponent on top. The sun-baked, dried earth outside the skamma, either in a stadion or in the courtyard of a palaistra, could indeed be very hard and offer another hazard to both wrestlers and pankratiasts.¹⁵¹

A society's acceptance or rejection of violence in athletics – or in the daily routine of life apart from athletics – may be employed as a criterion in the evaluation of that society's cultural progress and sophistication. In addition to the scattered and chance information about athletics in Greece, the occasional glimpse of daily activities in the city of Athens afforded especially by speeches prepared for delivery in court is not too encouraging for those with an idealized view of Classical Greece. The absence in most communities of an effective police power, the reliance upon self-help, the emphasis upon vengeance, and both in athletics and other activities the paramount importance placed upon winning seemed to have permitted, certainly in the streets and possibly also in athletic complexes, a level of violence unacceptable to a standard of behavior which insist upon individual and community safety and dignity. The roughness and violence in athletics were linked with military preparation by ancient authors. Moreover, controlled displays of violence through athletics has been defended as allowing vicarious release of the basic drives still lurking barely beneath the surface of presumed civilized society. Poliakoff pointedly argues that an advancing culture may even require such outlets:

"Clearly, as archaic Greek society developed, the need for expression in violent sport increased, and pankration filled a niche of total contest that neither boxing nor wrestling could."

151. For the initial publication of the inscription from Delphi, see Th. Homolle, "Ex-voto trouvé à Delphes: 33 Statues du Thessalien Daochos et de sa famille," *BCH* 21 (1897), 592-98. For discussion of the problem of dating the athletic careers of Hagias and

Telemachos and for the difficulty of reconstructing the place of origin of the wrestler who died, see Moretti *IAG* 68-75, and Ebert 137. For Hipposthenes, see Brophy and Brophy 401, and *Hippocratic Corpus, Epid.* 5.14 (5.212L).

Part of his proof is that the pankration has no parallel in Near and Middle Eastern societies and is a purely Greek phenomenon.¹⁵² Greece during its Classical period has long been admired and studied for its amazing achievements in literature, art, philosophy, government, etc. Its failure to espouse and attain higher standards in the control of violence, although rightly criticized, should also be judged in comparison with the same failure in the late twentieth century.

152. For Poliakoff's assessment, see *Combat Sports* 54, and 89-115. For the connection made in antiquity between athletics and military preparation, see discussion below in Chapter: Equestrian Events.

EQUESTRIAN EVENTS

The horse probably had limited utility in antiquity, especially because neither the horse collar, horse shoes, saddles, nor stirrups were available until very late in the Greco-Roman period. The rough terrain of Greece was not well-suited to transportation by horse and the farmer found donkeys, mules and oxen more serviceable as work animals. Without saddles and stirrups a rider can be rather easily unseated and this restricted the offensive capability of the cavalry basically to protecting the wings of the phalanx formation from attack and to pursuing a fleeing enemy; nevertheless, membership in the cavalry remained throughout Greek antiquity a mark of prestige and social distinction undoubtedly because the cavalrymen had to furnish and support their own mounts. The keeping and breeding of horses was an expensive activity generally limited to the wealthy and was one of the prime symbols of social status. This is reflected in the aristocratic overtones attached to names including *hippo*, e.g. *Hippokleides* or *Xanthippos*, and satirized by Aristophanes in his play the *Clouds*: Strepsiades, a farmer married to a lady of some social status from Athens, and his wife bickered over the name of their son; the father preferred Pheidonides (*pheido* means thrift) while the mother preferred a name of obvious social status such as Charippos; the compromise, Pheidippides, was a comic hybrid of “thrift” and “horse”. This same attitude of social superiority is stressed in a speech written by Isokrates in defense of Alcibiades, the wealthy, brilliant but erratic military and political leader of Athens during the late fifth century B.C., and delivered by his son, also named Alcibiades:

“My father was not inferior to anyone in ability and strength, but as he thought the situation through, he considered the athletic contests to be beneath him, for he knew that some of the competitors were members of the lower classes, came from small cities, and were not well educated. Consequently, he turned his attention to raising horses, which is the activity of the most wealthy and not one which a poor man should attempt, and he surpassed not only his rivals but also all earlier victors. For he entered chariots (at Olympia) in a larger number than the largest cities could match and of such quality that he came first and second and third.”

Thucydides presents a speech attributed to Alcibiades which changes somewhat the order of finishing for his four-horse chariots to first, second, and fourth places. Alcibiades delivered this speech in response to an attack by Nikias challenging both the wisdom of the proposal to dispatch an expedition against Sicily and Alcibiades’ qualifications as a commanding general; his stated grounds for this attack were Alcibiades’ youth and his probable need for profit from the expedition because of his expensive passion for horse racing. Alcibiades’ replied:

“Athenians, I have a better right to command than others – I must begin with this as Nicias has attacked me – and at the same time I believe myself to be worthy of it. The things for which I am abused bring fame to my ancestors and to myself, and to the country (Athens) profit besides. The Hellenes, after expecting to see our city ruined by the war, concluded it to be even greater than it really is, by reason of the magnificence with which I represented it at the Olympic games, when I sent into the lists seven chariots, a number never before entered by any private person, and won the first prize, and was second and fourth, and took care to have everything else in a style worthy of my victory. Custom regards such displays as honorable, and they cannot be made without leaving behind them an impression of power.”

Even though this need for wealth effectively limited participation in equestrian competition to the upper economic classes, there are scattered references to a town acting more or less as a privileged social and economic status of horse breeding and racing did not prevent the sport from being the most popular with spectators; indeed, success at the great panhellenic festivals was flaunted and even used as a basis for political privilege – as illustrated by the case of Alcibiades.¹⁵³

As already seen, there is very good artistic evidence for equestrian competition in the form of chariot racing in Greece during the late Mycenaean period. Also already noted are foundation legends for the Olympic games featuring the chariot “chase” in the Pelops myth and the chariot race in Heraklean story. Furthermore, the miniature bronzes found at Olympia and dating to as early as the 10th century B.C. also point to the possibility of chariot and horse racing at the sanctuary before the traditional establishment of the games

153. For general discussions of the horse in Greek antiquity, see J. K. Anderson, *Ancient Greek Horsemanship* (1961); P. Vigneron, *Le cheval dans l'antiquité Gréco-romaine* (1968); and J. Wiesner, *Fahren und Reiten*, *Archaeologia Homerica* Bd. 1 F (1968). For the military use of the horse, see P. A. L. Greenhalgh, *Early Greek Warfare. Horseman and Chariots in the Homeric and Archaic Ages* (1973). Sweet 94, citing Forbes, *Studies in Ancient Technology* II (1965) 80-88, states that a horse can carry about four times as much as a man (and eats four times as much), but with an effective horse collar (absent in ancient Greece) a horse can pull a load fifteen times greater than a man can. For Aristophanes' humorous play on names with *hippo*, see *Clouds* 63 f. For the speech by Alcibiades' son, see Isokrates 16.32-34. Thucydides 6.16.2 credits Alcibiades with finishing first, second, and fourth and is generally thought to be more accurate than the spe-

cial pleading in Isokrates; however, Plutarch, *Alcibiades* 2.2 quotes an epinikion attributed to Euripides and celebrating this event which also claims a first, second, and third place sweep. For a discussion of the evidence, see Gomme, Andrewes, and Dover, *An Historical Commentary on Thucydides* IV (1978) 246-247. For references to cities acting as corporate sponsors, see: *FGrH* II B Phlegon #6 (Dyspontum 672 B.C.); *P.Oxy.* 2.222 (Argos 480 B.C.); Thucydides 5.50.4 (Thebes leased team of Lichas of Sparta in 420 B.C. when Sparta was banned from the games); and Xenophon, *Hell.* 3.2.21 (story of Thebes and Lichas). The statement in Isokrates 16.32-34 that Alcibiades “entered chariots in a larger number than the largest cities could match: seems to refer to this practice of city-sponsorship. Clemens Heucke, “Hippodrom und Politik”, *Nikephoros* 8 (1995), 183-202.

on a regular quadrennial basis in 776 B.C. (pl. XVIII), a miniature bronze charioteer with part of the chariot preserved, dated to 800-750 B.C. And finally, the chariot race dominates the description of the funeral games of Patroklos in Homer's *Iliad*. Yet in spite of all this evidence for the early popularity of equestrian events, especially of chariot racing, the Elean tradition indicates a rather late admission of equine competition to the Olympic program. The four-horse chariot race did not appear on the Olympic Register until 680 B.C., after all the men's combat and track and field events except the pankration and the hoplitodromos. Vallois' complex argument that chariot racing was at Olympia at a very early date but as part of a cult of Poseidon has already been discussed. Weiler offers another ingenious and perhaps more persuasive interpretation of the extant evidence. He argues that the evidence for early, but post-Mycenaean, chariot racing has a strong Attic-Ionic character: Homer is primarily within the Ionic tradition; the famed Charioteer of Delphi is dressed in an Ionic chiton; and the Athenians, whose dialect is within the Ionic group, have left traces of a flourishing equestrian tradition from the Geometric period. Thus, Weiler suggests, equestrian competition, although well-established among the Ionic communities, may have come late to the areas dominated by Doric Greeks, including Elis.¹⁵⁴

The equestrian events which appeared at various times on the Olympic program are the following: the tethrippon (pl. XIX, fig. 1, Panathenaic amphora ca. 420-400 B.C.), the synoris, two-horse chariot race (pl. XIX, fig. 2, Athenian hydria ca. 520-500 B.C.), the keles, horse with jockey (pl. XX, fig. 1, Panathenaic amphora ca. 480 B.C.), the apene, pair of mules with four-wheeled cart, and the kalpe, mare with jockey, in which contest the jockey apparently had to dismount near the end of the race and run the final distance leading his mount. After nearly three hundred years of competition for adult horses, events for foals were gradually introduced. The date of first appearances for each of these contests, according to the Olympic Register, and their presumed distances may be reconstructed as follows:

154. For general discussions of chariot and horse racing, see Harris, *SGR* 151-183, and Patrucco 373-403. The description of the chariot race in the funeral games for Patroklos is in *Iliad* 23.287-650. For the proposal of an early Attic-Ionic tradition in chariot racing, see Weiler, *Der Sport* 205-206. The Elean dialect of Greek technically is not part of the Doric group but is classified as a Northwest Greek dialect along with Phocian (with evidence primarily from Delphi), Locrian, and the later Northwest koine. Elean is, however, classified along with the various Doric dialects as West Greek – as opposed to East Greek. The East and West classifications refer to the location of various Greek speaking peoples before the fairly

massive migrations of the Sub-Mycenaean and Geometric periods. For these periods our evidence is practically limited to the East Greek dialects (Attic, Ionic, Aeolian, and Lesbian), while the western part of Greece remained in obscurity. This lack of early evidence for equestrian activity from West Greek sources, however, can be only suggestive simply because evidence is lacking from the West for practically all activities. For analyses of the linguistic evidence, see: C. D. Buck, *The Greek Dialects. Grammar, Selected Inscriptions, Glossary* (1955) 7-11; and *CAH* III.3, 850-865. Erich Pernice, "Ein Korinthischer Pinax", in *Festschrift für Otto Benndorf* (1898) 75-80.

tethrippon	680 B.C.	12 “runs”
keles	648 B.C.	6 “runs”
apene	500 B.C.	(dropped in 444 B.C.)
kalpe	496 B.C.	(dropped in 444 B.C.)
synoris	408 B.C.	8 “runs”
tethrippon	384 B.C.	8 “runs”
(for foals)		
synoris	280 B.C.	3 “runs”
(for foals)		
keles	256 B.C.	? “runs”
(for foals)		

Not only were the equestrian events late to arrive on the Olympic program but also their rate of admission in comparison with the events for humans was remarkably sluggish. Between 776 and 616 B.C. all track and field events except the race-in-armor and all combat events available to man and boys were instituted, but over 400 years elapsed from the first running of the four-horse chariot race to the first keles for foals. The brief tenure of the apene and the kalpe is also unusual, partially matched only by the single appearance of the pentathlon for boys in 628 B.C. The disappearance of the apene is often justified on the basis of the less than dignified reputation mules seem to enjoy, heightened by the possible comic aspect of drivers attempting to coax speed from animals noted both for stubbornness and slowness. If this is an acceptable reason for dropping the event, one may wonder what possessed the Eleans in the first place when they accepted it into the Olympic program. There is some evidence that the mule was not so uniformly despised and that it enjoyed some popularity at least among the Greeks in Sicily and with the Great King of Persia. The kalpe was a mixed event in which the speed of both the horse and the jockey was tested and this may have been sufficiently unsatisfactory to horse breeders to bring about its demise.

The distances listed above for the continuing events are designated as “runs” – a literal translation of the term used by Pindar who describes the tethrippon as *duodekadromon* or 12 runs. Converting this into a specific distance involves two problems. Does the term “run” mean a complete circuit of the race track or does it mean only the length of the track in one direction? Accepting the first definition effectively doubles the distance of the race. Also, the dimensions of the hippodrome at Olympia are unknown and may never be recovered because of destruction caused by the flooding waters of the Alpheios river. Weiler proposes that for Olympia a run was a circuit with an average distance of eight stadia, which converts to 1,538 meters minimum per circuit. The twelve runs of the tethrippon would therefore provide a race of 18 and $\frac{1}{2}$ kilometers or about 11 miles. The keles would be 9 and $\frac{1}{4}$ kilometers or more than five miles, extremely long when compared with most modern horse races. The synoris would be 12 and $\frac{1}{4}$ kilometers or ca. 7 and $\frac{1}{3}$ miles. Assuming

that a run was only four stadia also results in races of considerable distances, e.g. a tethrippon of ca. 5 and $\frac{1}{2}$ miles. Equating a “run” with a single length of the track with an absolute minimum distance of two stadia still results in a tethrippon of over one and $\frac{1}{3}$ miles. However, few accept this shortest distance. The Greek horse breeder therefore had to be concerned with both speed and great stamina in his efforts to produce a winner at one of the crown games. The origin, structure (e.g. heavy-boned, thin boned), and size of the horses bred in Greece during the seventh through fourth centuries are still matters of debate. Types and amounts of food can have significant influence on the ultimate size and strength of the adult animal but genetic factors remain extremely important (pl. XX, fig. 2, depicting a horse and jockey with adult male figures preceding and following the horse and compare the relative sizes of horses and humans depicted here and in fig. 1). Several centuries of careful breeding must have produced a horse suited to the rigorous demands of the Olympic events.¹⁵⁵

For the hippodrome at Olympia some idea of its structure and equipment is provided by a lengthy description in Pausanias. The horse track was outside the Altis and located between the stadion and the Alpheios and parallel to the stadion. An earthen embankment between the stadion and the hippodrome provided convenient elevations for spectators at either facility, and a second embankment may have performed the same function on the river-side of the hippodrome. If Weiler is correct, the track provided a straightaway of approximately 400 meters with relatively sharp turns around posts at either end. The starting mechanism, attributed to Kleoitias, an Athenian sculptor of the fifth century B.C., was quite elaborate. The starting gates were arranged in the form of a V, or a ship’s prow in Pausanias’ words, with the tip of the V pointing towards the track. The two sides of the V were about 400 feet in length and the stoa of Agnaptos served to enclose the area at the open or broad part of V. There were two gates on a parallel near the tip of the V, then two more on a parallel further down the sides of the V, and then two more, etc. Once the chariots and/or horses had been placed within their allotted gates and the rope barriers fastened,

155. For the evidence for the date of introduction of the various events at Olympia, see Moretti, *Olympionikai*. For a manuscript from Constantinople reporting distances of the various races and the proportions of the hippodrome at Olympia (often rejected by scholars), see Patrucco 396 and Drees, *Olympia* 97 f. For Pindar’s use of the term “12 runs” for the tethrippon, see *Olympian* 2.48-51 and *Pythian* 5.30-33. For popularity of mules in Sicily, see Weiler, *Der Sport* 205, but for a rather negative characterization, see Harris, *SGR* 158 (although he does point out that two of Pindar’s 13 *Olympian* odes celebrate mule victo-

ries). One tangential bit of evidence for equating a “run” to a minimum of four stadia (one length of the track) or eight stadia (a circuit) is that a running event of four stadia for humans was called the hippos (“horse-like” or “fit for horses”). This track event appeared at a number of festivals, including the other crown games, but was never adopted at Olympia. The controversy over the physical characteristics of the horse in Greek antiquity was brought to my attention in an unpublished paper by Pamela Young, a graduate student at the University of Colorado at Boulder.

the signal for the start of the race was given by the trumpeter. When this was heard, an official began operating some type of mechanical device which caused a bronze eagle with outstretched wings to rise up from an altar in the middle of the V. Apparently the same mechanism then released the rope barriers at the two parallel gates located at the open end of the V and farthest from the track. When these two chariots or horses were underway and abreast of the next two gates, the rope barriers of these were also dropped. This action was repeated until all the gates were opened and all the chariots and/or horses with jockeys were underway. This fairly complicated device gave the competitors with the most disadvantaged starting positions, i.e. those toward the rear of the V and on the outer edges of the track, somewhat of a running start over those in favored positions, i.e. those toward the tip of the V and near the center of the track. Starting positions were assigned by lottery. Charioteers and jockeys may have had to hold their lanes and not maneuver toward the center of the track until a certain point or line was reached in order to diminish the threat of immediate collisions, although Pausanias states that once all the gates were open, then the skill of the charioteers and the speed of the horses were what mattered. J. Ebert (pl. XXI, fig. 1) and J. Humphrey (pl. XXI, fig. 2) present two somewhat different reconstructions of the hippodrome at Olympia. Humphrey's design, by placing the V-shaped starting device totally to the right of the central axis of the track, greatly eases the problem of getting up to 40 horses or horses and chariots off to reasonably fair start.¹⁵⁶

The length of the race and the design of the track forced both charioteers and jockeys to weigh at least two aspects of strategy. Distances involving miles certainly required considerations of what pace was reasonable for the team or horse being driven or ridden in any given event. Also the hippodrome probably resembled the stadion in that it was not a broad oval but presented parallel tracks with very sharp turns and effectively negotiating each turn demanded a blend of diminished speed and a careful, tight semi-circle around the post. In a chariot race this would involve simultaneous reining in of the left or inside horse while urging on the right or outside horse, and a shifting of weight, i.e. a leaning to the left, by the charioteer to help stabilize the chariot. Our earliest description of a chariot race presents the wise Nestor stressing both these points to his son Antilochos before his event in the funeral games for Patroklos:

“By plan does a woodcutter accomplish more than by strength; by plan, moreover, the captain on the wine-dark sea steers his swift ship tossed by winds; and by plan does one

156. For the hippodromes at Olympia, see Pausanias 6.20.20-621.1. Pheidippides (Aristophanes, *Clouds* 25), dreaming that he is in a chariot race, shouts out to another driver to “stay in your lane”, possible evidence that there were some restrictions on when a charioteer could change lanes. Also, for the role of

apobates see Stefan Müller, “Herrlicher Ruhm im Sport oder im Krieg – Der Apobates und die Funktion des Sports in der griechischen Polis”, *Nikephoros* 9 (1996), 41-69. John H. Humphrey, *Roman Circuses: Arenas for Chariot Racing* (1986) 7-8 fig. 2a-b.

driver defeat another. But one person, trusting in his horses and chariot, carelessly swings wide around the post and veers from side to side, and his horses wander over the racecourse and he does not control them. But he who understands the tactics of racing, ever though he may be driving inferior horses, always keeps his eye upon the post, passes it close, nor does he fail to consider how much he should urge his horses with their ox hide reins, but holds them in safety and watches the leading driver ... Drive chariot and horses so close to this (turning post) as to graze it, and in the well-wrought car lean slightly to the left horse, and calling upon the right horse by name, prick him with your goad and let out his reins from your hand. Let your left horse graze the post so that the hub of the well-fashioned wheel will seem to touch it. But avoid making contact with the stone, so that you will not injure your horses and wreck your chariot, which will be a joy to your opponents and a distress to you. But, dear son, be alert and watchful.”

The danger in misjudging a turn and striking the post is graphically illustrated in Sophocles’ account of Orestes’ feigned death at the Pythian games:

“Orestes drove in last place, holding back his horses, trusting in his finish but when he saw that the Athenian alone was left (in the race), he sent a sharp cry whistling into the ears of his swift colts, and the two drivers raced with their teams neck and neck, as first one then the other moved his chariot team in front by a head. And now ill-fated Orestes had negotiated all the other laps safely and was unharmed, with his chariot also unharmed. Keeping close to the turning post on every turn, he grazed the pillar with his axle, giving slack to the right-hand trace horse and checking the one on the inner side. But at the last turn as he slackened the left rein as the horse turned in, he misjudged and struck the edge of the turning post. The axle box of the wheel broke in two, and he slid over the chariot rail. He was completely entangled in the reins cut from leather, and as he fell to the ground, his colts bolted around the middle of the course. When the people saw him fallen from the car, they bewailed the youth who had accomplished such feats and had gained such ills, who was now being smashed to the ground, now tossed feet upward to the sky. At last the charioteers with difficulty checked the flight of the horses and freed him from the reins, so covered with blood that none of his friends seeing the wretched corpse would have recognized him.”

Making the turn as close to the pillar as possible more than compensated for the loss of speed required in order to maintain control, but maneuvering for position at each turn, and especially at the first turn, provided opportunity for fouls, collisions, crashes, and panic among the horses. One chariot bumping another could ultimately involve a number of chariots in collisions and wrecks. Tradition at Olympia accounted for this apparently unavoidable destruction on the track by attributing it to a power known as Taraxippos – “Terrifier of Horses” – whose altar was located near the far turn. Taraxippos was identified as Poseidon Hippios or occasionally as the spirit of some hero who delighted in frightening horses and

causing collisions. Those about to compete in the hippodrome attempted to propitiate this malevolent spirit with offerings. The presence of Taraxippos was also felt at the Isthmia, while at Nemea a formation of red rocks near the track, which especially glistened in the sun, served a similar function. There is no report of a Taraxippos at Delphi, although Pausanias somewhat wryly comments that Delphi nevertheless had its share of crashes. There have been modern attempts to rationalize Taraxippos into some more pedestrian source of fear, e.g. the horses suddenly seeing their shadows as they rounded the first turn. Certainly no other explanation is needed than several dozen chariots or horses attempting to negotiate a sharp turn in a rather narrow space. All turns would provide opportunity for collisions and the tethrippon of twelve runs involved eleven turns, if each run was one length of the track, or twenty three turns, if each run was a full circuit of the track. In a race up to eleven miles, caution in the earlier stages may have been wise, the strategy allegedly adopted by Orestes in Sophocles' *Electra*. There is little doubt of the spectator appeal of the equestrian events, especially the chariot races. The entry parades, the introduction with trumpet fanfare of owners, often the rich, powerful and well-known figures of the Greek world, the anticipation, and finally the elaborate starts would have all contributed to heightened interest, but the drama of crashes and carnage on the rack must have been a major attraction and cause of public enthusiasm. We are told by Pindar of one chariot race at the Pythian games of 462 B.C. where only one entry of 41 managed to finish.¹⁵⁷

The skill and experience of the charioteers must have been a critical factor in the winning of victories at the great crown games which presented the most prestigious and competitive challenge. By the fifth century it seems that charioteers for the most part were hired professionals and the best of them undoubtedly were much in demand and well paid simply because an owner, after the significant time and expense already involved in the breeding (or purchasing) and training of horses, would have sought to acquire the best driver possible. The Homeric poems present the heroes/aristocrats themselves as drivers, a situation that probably continued into the historical period but became increasingly rare and merited special comment, e.g. Pindar praises Herodotos of Thebes for having driven "not with the hands of another" his tethrippon to victory at the Isthmian games of 458 B.C. The danger to life and limb, especially with increasing numbers of entries as the ability to accumulate wealth improved, may have persuaded most aristocrats to hire professionals.

Jockeys may not have faced the same danger to life and limb as the charioteers but again skill and experience in a race of possibly ca. five miles with tight turns must have been essen-

157. For Nestor's advice, called by Weiler, *Der Sport* 202 "perhaps the oldest Greek evidence for *Leibeserziehung* ("physical education" or here "coaching"), see *Iliad* 23.304-348. For Orestes' presumed death, see Sophocles,

Electra 734-756. For Taraxippos, see Pausanias 6.20.15-19 and for the absence of Taraxippos at Delphi, 10.7.3 f. For the race at the Pythian games in which only one chariot managed to finish, see Pindar, *Pythian* 5.49-54.

tial. Weiler even states, probably correctly, that because saddles and stirrups were unknown the ancient jockey had to have greater skill and body control than his modern counterpart. The turns especially must have been quite challenging to a rider without the support provided by saddle and stirrups. No ancient source comments on concern for weight of either jockeys or charioteers, but the artistic evidence does reveal attention to this aspect of improving performance at least in the case of jockeys, who often are depicted as rather small, even possibly as children. A spectacular example of this is the near-life size race horse on display in the National Museum in Athens with its very childlike jockey. In spite of the importance of the charioteer and jockey, they remained anonymous employees and the victory ceremonies centered upon the owner. Riesch, one of the early writers on ancient athletics, even preferred to call these events contests in horse-breeding rather than in horse racing.¹⁵⁸

The equestrian events provided the only opportunity for women to compete at the Olympic games because female owners of chariots and teams and of race horses could enter them in their own names. Pausanias reports seeing in the Altis a group statue of a chariot, charioteer, horses, and the owner Kyniska. An inscription undoubtedly belonging to this statue has been found at Olympia with the following statement in verse:

*My father and brothers were Spartan kings,
I won with a team of fast-footed horses,
and put up this statue: I am Kyniska;
I say that I am the first woman in Greece
to win this wreath.*

Pausanias adds that other women later won crowns in the equestrian events at Olympia, especially other members of the royal families of Sparta, but none more famous than Kyniska.

Another incident from the Olympic games which occurred late in the 6th century B.C., also reported by Pausanias, portrays a most unusual event. A mare named Aura (Breeze),

158. For Herodotos of Thebes driving his own chariot, see Pindar, *Isthmian* 1.14-15. See also Moretti, *IAG* 16 for a lengthy inscription from Sparta, dated to 440-435 B.C., recounting the equestrian and athletic exploits of Damonon and his son Enymakratidas, in which it expressly states the Damonon drove his own teams. Harris, *SGR* 161, was not overly impressed with the recital of victories (numbering 43) because they were at local Laconian festivals, the father and son therefore avoiding "real competition". For praise of the athletic skills of the ancient jockey, see Weiler, *Der*

Sport 203. The statue of the horse with jockey on display in the National Museum in Athens dates to the second century B.C. and this statue group came from the same shipwreck which produced the great fifth century statues of Zeus/Poseidon. There is no assurance that the jockey actually belongs on this horse which was badly fragmented and has required extensive restoration. For a brief discussion. See M. Robertson, *A Shorter History of Greek Art* (1981) 203-204 and S. C. Gwinne, *Empire of Summer Moon* 177: "Comanchi boys by age six were riding young colts barback".

owned by Pheidolas of Corinth, threw her rider at the start but ran the race and when she heard the trumpet indicating the last lap, she put on a good stretch drive and reach the finish line in first place. She stood in front of the Hellanodikai aware that she had won and the Eleans proclaimed Pheidolas the victor. This story, if true, reveals great appreciation for a well-trained horse, even to the point of ignoring the rules which must have required riders for each mount.¹⁵⁹

159. For Kyniska (“puppy”), see Pausanias 3.8.1 and 6.1.6. The verse contained in the early fourth century B.C. inscription was also preserved in *Palatine Anthology* 13.16. For Aura, see Pausanias 6.13.19. Pausanias’ description of this race contains at least

one ambiguity: he uses the singular “she rounded the turn in good order”. This could be used to support the assertion that the keles was only one circuit of the track, but why would there be a trumpeter to signal the last lap if there was only one turn?

THE PROGRAM OF THE OLYMPIC GAMES

By tradition the first of the regularly recurring Olympic games consisted only of the single stadion race with the other events added gradually over several centuries. As noted above, the rather strange explanation was that when the games were “reinstated” in 776 B.C. the sprint race was the only event “remembered” from the earlier games but as others were recalled, they were added to the program.¹⁶⁰ Hippias of Elis, the town and district which controlled the sanctuary and the games at Olympia, allegedly compiled what is known as the Olympic Register, a list of victors from 776 B.C. to his day. Of necessity this list also indicated when each event had been added. In the first modern study of this list, Mahaffey suggests that the “remembering” really reflects Hippias’ discovery of information about individual events: each first reference to a contest was treated as the first appearance of that event in the Olympic games. The oldest tradition was about the single stadion sprint won by Koroibos and therefore the first games must have included only this one event.¹⁶¹ Most scholars are skeptical of the 776 B.C. date on the basis that very little secure information was available before ca. 600 B.C. Mahaffey believes that Hippias followed ancient tradition by looking for an historical, or legendary, figure to account for the first games, and having selected Iphitos, he then found a reasonable date for him, e.g. ca. 400 years before his own time. He thus had a beginning point and counted down from this rather than backward from the present to the presumed founding. He filled in the first two hundred years with victors as best he could from oral traditions and very occasional early monuments. The fact that no fifth century writer refers to a list of Olympic champions invites the conclusion that none existed until Hippias began his work. In the following century it becomes known, and no less a figure than Aristotle is credited with further research and expansion of this list.

160. See the discussion above in Chapter Olympia: Legends and History.

161. See Mahaffey 164-178. Pausanias 8.26.4 is the major source: “When Iphitos restored the Olympic Games after they had died out for a long time and they held the Olympic festival all over again, the only contest then was a race, and it was Koroibos who won it. An inscription on the tomb declares that Koroibos was the first man who ever won in the Olympic Games”. Also Pausanias 5.8.5-6: “When Iphitos, as I have already said, restored the games, people had still forgot-

ten the old days; little by little they remembered, and whenever they remembered something else they added it on. You can prove it: in the period when the Olympic Games have been continuously remembered, the prize was first of all for a foot race, and Koroibos of Elis won it. There is no portrait of Koroibos at Olympia, but his grave is on the boundaries of Eleia”. It was common for real or imaginary champions to be buried at the frontiers of a country. H. Tzavella-Evjen, “Burials of heroes: Aitolos and Koroivos”, *Ἑπετηρίς Ἑταιρείας Ἡλειακῶν Σπουδῶν* (1989-1990), 5-9 (in Greek).

By the third century B.C. the Olympic Register provided a method of time-reckoning which transcended the many local calendars and therefore provided the framework for a national, even international, system of recording and communicating significant events. Practically every Greek city-state had its own calendric system, usually based upon strictly local data such as the Athenian list of eponymous archons, and therefore communicating chronological information was difficult. By the third century, however, the widespread availability of the Olympic Register allowed each political unit to match its calendar with the Register and more easily transfer historical information, e.g. this happened in the first year of the one-hundredth Olympiad. The following dates for the introduction of the various events are ultimately derived from the work of Hippias.¹⁶²

776 B.C.	single stadion sprint	τὸ στάδιον
724 B.C.	diaulos	ὁ δίαιλος
720 B.C.	dolichos	ὁ δόλιχος
708 B.C.	pentathlon	τὸ πένταθλον
708 B.C.	wrestling	ἡ πάλη
688 B.C.	boxing	ἡ πυγμαχία
680 B.C.	tethrippon	τὸ τέθριππον
648 B.C.	pankration	τὸ παγκράτιον
648 B.C.	keles	ὁ κέλης
632 B.C.	single stadion sprint for boys	
632 B.C.	wrestling for boys	
628 B.C.	pentathlon for boys (discontinued after this Olympiad)	
616 B.C.	boxing for boys	
520 B.C.	hoplitodromos	ὁ ὀπλιτοδρόμος
500 B.C.	apene	ἡ ἀπήνη
500 B.C.	kalpe	ἡ κάλπη
408 B.C.	synoris	ἡ συνωρίς
396 B.C.	salpinktes (competition for trumpeters)	ὁ σαλπινκτής
396 B.C.	keryx	ὁ κῆρυξ

162. This Hippias became sufficiently well known as a teacher (sophist) that Plato named two dialogues after him. Mahaffey 170, describes him as a vain but clever polymath. Pausanias (6.6.3 and 6.8.1) refers to Eleans inscribing victors' names (the current year?) at Olympia, but no dates are given. Since they involve boys who also won at Nemea, these lists would have to date from 573 B.C. at the earliest. For more criticism

of the validity of the Olympic Register, see A. Körte, "Die Entstehung der Olympionikenlisten", *Hermes* 39 (1904), 224 ff. Mallwitz, "Cult" 96 ns. 80 and 81) adds: "We cannot go into the problematic aspects of this list here except to say that those who doubt its reliability concerning the earliest Games and the date 776 are probably right".

384 B.C.	tethrippon for foals
264 B.C.	synoris for fouls
256 B.C.	keles for fouls
200 B.C.	pankration for boys

The Olympic Register indicates that the single stadion sprint was the only event for the first thirteen Olympiads and then the diaulos and dolichos were added in the following two Olympiads. The next seventy-two years witnessed the addition of six more events and thus by mid-seventh century the Olympic program contained most of its major contests. As one might expect, according to the victors' list the early Olympiads were dominated by athletes from the communities within the immediate vicinity of the sanctuary and the festival was rather regional in character. However, its popularity increased steadily and soon attracted competitors more widely from the Peloponnesos. Again, it is not surprising that Sparta, the city-state in the Peloponnesos famous for its military regimen and emphasis upon physical training, was a dominant force until ca. 600 B.C. During the sixth century greater numbers of athletes came from the Greek mainland north of the Peloponnesos and also from Greek colonies in Italy, Sicily and the coast of Anatolia. In fact the colonists came close to dominating the games during the sixth century as the Spartans had done during the preceding century. This increase both in the number of people involved and in the distances they traveled necessarily caused more complex problems of management for the festival.

Travel in ancient Greece generally involved some risk, especially during the summer months when the fairly constant warfare among the various city-states was conducted. To address this problem an Olympic truce was created which formally banned all warfare at least within the vicinity of the sanctuary, and guaranteed safe conduct to and from the sanctuary for a period sufficient to allow competitors, spectators, and official delegations from the various city-states to travel to and from the games. In the extreme statement of the terms of the truce even legal disputes and executions were also suspended. Initially the truce probably was relatively short but as the fame of the Olympic games attracted athletes and pilgrims from ever more distant places, the time period of the truce had to be increased to ca. three months. Every four years in advance of the games, the Eleans dispatched sacred heralds throughout the Greek inhabited regions to announce the date of the Olympic festival and its truce. By the sixth century this involved Greek communities scattered throughout the Mediterranean area: in Italy and Sicily, the north coast of Africa, the coast of Asia Minor, and into the region of the Black Sea. The truce seemed to have been remarkably, if not totally, successful. There are rather few references to it in extant Greek literature but two reports involve significant military powers: Sparta was excluded from participation in 420 B.C. on the charge of having violated the ban on warfare by overrunning a fort on the borders of Elis; in the following century Philip II of Macedonia was forced to pay a fine and to apologize for the actions of his mercenaries who robbed an Athenian while on his

way to Olympia for the games. This truce undoubtedly received support from other pan-hellenic sanctuaries such as Delphi. A potential transgressor, especially a city-state, would be reluctant to incur hostility and banishment from these major religious centers. Greek ingenuity nevertheless, managed to maintain a vigorous schedule of warfare in spite of the Olympic and other religiously sanctioned truces which fairly clearly indicates that the ban on warfare was limited to the territory near Olympia, probably only Elis itself.

In order to have any claim to the right to enforce the truce, Elis had to adopt a general policy of neutrality in the midst of the numerous wars among the Greeks. This did not force Elis totally to reject military activity as her struggles with neighbouring Pisa demonstrate. Elean troops were also dispatched to participate in a united Greek action against the Persian invaders at Plateia in 479 B.C. but they arrived after the battle. Elis and the sanctuary suffered an invasion in 400 B.C. by Spartans as punishment for having supported Athens in the recently concluded Peloponnesian War and again in 365 and 364 B.C. by Arcadians whose forces interrupted the competition in the pentathlon. But by and large Elis did manage to avoid most of the destructive conflicts which plagued Greece from the sixth to the fourth centuries B.C. This aloofness from the divisive passions of the day reputedly developed in the Eleans a taste for the idyllic pleasures of a comfortable rural life-style, and a preference for the bucolic may also be reflected in the fact that an urban center was not developed in the district of Elis until ca. 472 B.C. when the voluntary union of several villages created the city also called Elis. This, along with the building of the great temple for Zeus in the sanctuary at Olympia, may, as noted above, have been one of the results of the final conquest of Pisa and her allies, if that destruction can be dated to the early fifth century B.C.

The proclamation by the sacred heralds of the forthcoming games had to identify the date for the festival in terms readily understood throughout the Greek world. Unfortunately, no source refers to the time of the games more precisely than that they were held in the summer. The only precise time reference is that the third day of the festival was preceded by a full moon on the previous night. A common approach has been to place the games alternately on the second and third full moons after the summer solstice, basically in August and then in September. Steven Miller has demonstrated that the second full moon after the summer solstice did fall with some regularity alternately within the modern months of August and September, thus giving rise to the unnecessary assumption of two different dates. A dating scheme combining the summer solstice with subsequent full moons would have been easily grasped throughout the Mediterranean area, even though each state had its own calendric system. States were apparently expected to honor the truce even if the sacred heralds had not yet reached their territory, another indication that the system for designating the date of the games was easily understood in advance of any formal notice.

Athletes who wished to participate had to arrive in the city of Elis thirty days, i.e. the first full moon after the summer solstice, in advance of the opening date of the games in order to complete their training under the direction of the Hellanodikai. Their title means

“judges of the Hellenes” and initially there seems to have been only one to supervise the games, probably following the precedent of the king as master of the festival. But in 580 B.C. two were chosen by lottery and this system obtained until 400 B.C. when nine were selected. Pausanias reports that three had charge of the horse races, three supervised the pentathlon, and the other three managed the rest of the contests.¹⁶³ One of the first tasks of the Hellanodikai was to examine both the parentage and age of all would-be competitors. Only free persons of pure Greek descent presumably could compete during the Classical period but after the conquests of Alexander the Great late in the fourth century B.C. and even more extensively after the conquest of Greece by Rome, participation was open to an ever widening population. By late in the sixth century B.C. several events offered two levels of competition: for adults, those twenty years of age and older, and for boys, those under twenty. During the fourth and third centuries B.C. competition for foals or colts was added to the program of equestrian events. The absence of a widely acceptable system of birth certification must have presented problems of proof both with respect to parentage and age. An athlete apparently often brought a father or brother or some other relative(s) to help persuade the officials as to descent and age. The story of Pythagoras of Samos, a boxer rejected from the boys competition by the Hellanodikai who then entered and won the men’s competition, indicates both that the Hellanodikai were not bound by the claims and oaths of the athletes and their relatives and that their own assessment of the physical maturity of a candidate for the boys’ contests was determining. Also the would-be competitor had to swear that he had trained diligently for at least nine months before his arrival in Elis.

If an athlete satisfied the Hellanodikai as to his descent and age, he was then subjected to a rigorous month-long training not under the direction of his own coach or trainer but exclusively under the control of the Hellanodikai. To charge nine or ten men selected by lot with responsibility for the final preparation of the premier athletes of the Greek world for the Olympic games may seem incredible but the government at Athens, for example, assigned many major governmental posts annually by lot. Possibly the Hellanodikai could retain the services of professional trainers as advisers or possibly the level of expertise demanded was within the competence of most adult male Eleans who survived the procedures used to create the pool of names for the lottery. This latter possibility is enhanced both by the fact that the conduct of the Olympic games certainly occupied much of the time and energy of the Elean government which was probably oligarchic in structure and by the probability that former athletes, especially champions, managed to achieve the status of Hellanodikai. Little comment has survived about this final month in Elis. The training was apparently rigorous, especially for the heavy athletes, wrestlers, boxers, and pankratiasts, whose practice sessions were scheduled for the midday hours. In the months of July

163. See Pausanias 5.9.4-6. Further fluctuation in numbers of Hellanodikai continued until 348 B.C. when the number settled at ten.

and August this must have been taxing because of the often intense summer heat. The cooler early morning hours were allotted to the track and field athletes. To accommodate the expanding need for training facilities, the city of Elis constructed several gymnasia-palaistra complexes and converted for each game a major market area for equestrian practices. A training table may also have been established and controlled by the Hellanodikai, but too much emphasis should not be placed upon the story preserved in Pausanias that a diet primarily of cheese and fruit did not include meat until early in the fifth century B.C. when Dromeus, a distance runner from Stymphalos, brought about its addition to the athletic diet. A predominantly non-meat fare apparently was the common practice among many elements of the Greek population but the tradition of the prodigious consumption of meat by Milon of Kroton even at the Olympic games during the sixth century B.C. cannot be totally dismissed even though probably based upon the legends of Herakles.¹⁶⁴

The Olympic games must have drawn increasingly large numbers of competitors by the late sixth and early fifth centuries B.C. We have no information about any process within the various city-states designed to select the best among each state's athletes and stables to represent their community at the Olympic games. There certainly was growing local and regional competitions but perhaps the final arbiter in most cases was who could afford the time and expense both of the nine-month preliminary training, the travel to Elis, and whatever expenses the month in Elis entailed. Once the athletes were in Elis and began the final phase of their training, the Hellanodikai may have accomplished it indirectly by the severity of the training and by suggestion rather than by order. The awareness of inadequacy or inability to compete certainly would have arisen in some athletes simply as a result of the common training program, especially among those competing in the combat events. Concern for personal safety and/or embarrassment may have been sufficient to persuade some to withdraw before the opening of the festival itself. One further consideration may have prompted the Hellanodikai to eliminate non-qualified athletes where possible: the necessity to complete all of the events at the games within two and one-half days would seem to have presupposed a manageable number of entries. What evidence survives supports some form of elimination, whether self-motivated or directed in some form by the Hellanodikai, in the heavy events where the time available for elimination bouts and championship bouts in three events was only about one-half day: the largest number of victories claimed by a victorious heavy athlete in winning the crown was four which presumes a maximum of sixteen athletes competing at the games in that event.¹⁶⁵

164. For Dromeus see Pausanias 6.7.10: a two-time winner at Olympia and Delphi, a three-time winner at the Isthmia, and a five-time winner at Nemea, Dromeus is said to have conceived of eating meat "for until then the food for athletes was cheese from the baskets, i.e.

wicker baskets used for the drying of fresh cheese". For Milon, see the chapter on athletes in *Legend and History* below.

165. See Harris, *GAA* 164 for discussion of the evidence from Lucian and inscriptions.

Philostratos reports a “charge” given by the Hellanodikai to the athletes preparing for Olympic competition:

“If you have exercised yourselves in a manner worthy of Olympia, if you have been guilty of no slothful or ignoble act, go forth with a good courage. You who have not so practiced, go whither you will.”¹⁶⁶

Does the reference to slothful or ignoble act imply that there was a “moral” standard in addition to the required months of practice which had to be met by those who wished to compete? Allegedly Themistocles, the famous Athenian statesman, tried to have Hieron, tyrant of the Greek city-state of Syracuse in Sicily, banned from competing at Olympia because he was a “national disgrace”. Hieron had refused to bring his considerable military forces to Greece to assist in the defense against the Persian invasion. Themistocles was unsuccessful, but this alone should not eliminate moral preconditions for competing at Olympia. The Sicilian tyrants were a major presence at Olympia, and Elis may have been reluctant to offend them. However, the evidence for banning states or individuals from the games is limited to offences committed in violation of specific rules related to the management of the games – e.g. violation of the truce, violation of rules of competition, etc.

Two days before the opening ceremonies of the festival, the Hellanodikai, along with the athletes and the horses who had survived the training period at Elis, began the two-day trek to the sanctuary at Olympia, a journey of ca. thirty miles along a road called the Sacred Way. When they arrived they must have found the area filling rapidly with the official delegations, *Theoriai*, sent by many city-states, with spectators who by the fifth and fourth centuries B.C. numbered in the tens of thousands, and with the inevitable and necessary sellers of food and drink and everything for offering sacrifice or gifts to the many gods and heroes who had sanctuaries or altars in or near the Altis. There was no village or community at or near Olympia nor, during the fifth century B.C., public facilities of any kind. Visitors had to provide for themselves and probably slept on the ground or in tents. The wealthy used the occasion for ostentatious display with elaborate tents, large retinues, and elegant, for the setting, parties. The festival also attracted orators, philosophers, poets, historians, et al., who gave public readings of their works. Less intellectually oriented entertainment undoubtedly was available also, creating the atmosphere of a large rural fair. Gardiner’s idyllic description of the scene is worth quoting in full:

“Meanwhile, visitors of all classes and from every part were flocking to Olympia. The whole Greek world was represented, from Marseilles to the Black Sea, from Thrace to Africa. There were official embassies representing the various states, richly equipped; there were spectators from every part, men of every class. Men, I say: for the only people excluded from the festival were married women and even if unmarried women were allowed to be present,

166. Philostratos, *Vita Apollonii* 43.

few probably availed themselves of the right except those from the neighborhood. Apart from this Olympia was open to all without distinction, to hardy peasants and fishermen of the Peloponnese and to nobles and tyrants from the rich states of Sicily or Italy. All had the same rights. There was no accommodation for them except such as they could provide or procure for themselves; there were no reserved seats at the games, indeed there were no seats at all. The plain outside the Altis was one great fair, full of tents and booths. There you might meet every one who wished to see or to be seen, to sell or to buy: politicians and soldiers, philosophers and men of letters, poets ready to write odes in honour of victors in the games, sculptors to provide them with statues, perhaps already made, horse-dealers from Elis, pedlars of votive offerings, charms, and amulets, peasants with the wine-skins and baskets of fruit and provisions, acrobats and conjurers, who were as dear to the Greeks as to the modern crowd.”

This charming and bucolic description needs to be balanced with the following touch of realism provided by Epictetes:

“True, there are hardships and difficulties in life. Are they not to be found even at Olympia? Don’t you get baked by the sun there? Don’t you get crushed by the crowds? Don’t you find it impossible to get a bath? Don’t you get soaked when it rains? Don’t you have an overdose of noise, of shouting and of exasperation? Yet you steel your heart and put up with it all, because you think that the spectacle makes it worth while.”

An extreme statement of the difficulties in attending the Olympic games is provided by Aelian, who reports that a farmer of the island of Chios threatened a laggard slave not with the treadmill but with a trip to Olympia as a spectator!¹⁶⁷

Unfortunately, there is no ancient description of the games which indicates the precise order of the events. By 472 B.C., a five-day festival had developed, two and one-half of which were devoted to athletic competition, E. N. Gardiner’s reconstruction of the basic order, with modest comment, is as follows:

FIRST DAY: No athletic events were held. Athletes, accompanied by their fathers, brothers, and even their personal coaches or trainers, swore the required oath over cut portions of a wild boar that they had met all the qualifications for competing in the games, i.e. that they would commit no wrong with respect to the Olympic games and that they had trained continuously for the preceding ten months. This oath-taking was held in the bouleuterion – possibly in the courtyard between the two wings of the bouleuterion – in front of the statue of Zeus holding thunderbolts and stressed the reputedly of terrifying mien. The Hellanodikai, those charged with determining whether an entrant, human or horse, qualified for admission to the boys’ or colts’ competitions, also swore to judge the issue of age fairly and

167. The quotation from Gardiner is from AAW 224.

without bribes.¹⁶⁸ On this day the athletes also made offerings at the various altars and sanctuaries, soliciting divine and/or heroic assistance for the forthcoming contests. Sooth-sayers and oracles might also be consulted.

SECOND DAY: The morning hours presented what was regarded as the premier spectator events of the games: the four-horse chariot race and other equestrian events. The Hellanodikai, clothed in purple robes, led a parade into the hippodrome. In 400 B.C. there were three events on the program: the four-horse chariot race, the two-horse chariot race, and the horse with jockey race. The order of these events is not known but the four-horse chariot race is thought by most to have opened the program.¹⁶⁹ During the afternoon hours, spectators and competitors moved to the stadion for the pentathlon with the possibility that wrestling, the final event of the pentathlon was held in the area near the altar and temple of Zeus.

THIRD DAY: The night preceding the third day witnessed the full moon. This heralded the major sacrifice to Zeus on the morning of the third day. A procession headed by the Hellanodikai and the priests who were to perform the sacrifice set out from the prytaneion and made a circuit of the Altis and ended in front of the great ash-altar of Zeus. Included in the procession were the theoroi, official delegates representing various city-states, and the athletes. Traditionally, one-hundred oxen or bovines were slaughtered and their thighs burned with the resulting ashes added to the top of the altar. The afternoon was given over to the boys' events: the stadion sprint, wrestling, and boxing. There is, however, a greater probability that the boys' events were contested at the same time as the corresponding men's events.

FOURTH DAY: The three major track events, single stadion, diaulos, and dolichos, were held in the morning. Generally it is assumed, primarily from lists of events at other games, that elimination heats – if needed – for the sprint races were held first, followed by the finals in the dolichos (no elimination heats), the finals in the stadion and diaulos, and possibly the hoplitodromos. The combat or heavy events took place during the afternoon, probably in the stadion in this order: wrestling, boxing, and then the pankration. There is also a chance that hoplitodromos was held as the final event of the games.

FIFTH DAY: The formal crowning of victors may have been held on this day, although it is possible that victors were crowned shortly after their events. Pausanias mentions a table kept in the Heraion made of ivory and gold on which the wreaths for winners were placed. The artist who created this tale is identified as Kolotes either from Herakleia or the island

168. For the oath-taking ceremony, see Pausanias 5.24.9.

169. In Sophocles' *Electra* the description of the order of events at the Pythian games places the chariot race last. This may reflect actual practice at Delphi but it also may result from the necessity to create a

dramatic (and false) story about the death of Orestes in a chariot accident after heroically and successfully winning a number of earlier events. For Harris' defense of holding the equestrian events on the second day of competition, see *GAA* 159 f.

of Paros and who is said to have been an apprentice of a Pasiteles.¹⁷⁰ A banquet, for victors only, was offered by the Hellanodikai in the prytaneion. This concluded the official program, although private parties, offered by individual victors and theoroi, undoubtedly occurred throughout the five-day period.¹⁷¹

By 396 B.C. probably the first competitive event held was that for trumpeters and heralds, designed to select the trumpeter and the herald who would participate in the conduct of the remaining events. The trumpeter was used to assist in starting the running events, very likely with some elaborate sequence of notes. He also may have provided appropriate fanfares for the introduction of various events and parades, either around the Altis, or entering the stadion and hippodrome. The herald was used possibly to introduce the competitors and certainly to announce the winners and their home states. Apparently the victors were able to claim a state other than their own and thus possibly hoping to enhance the value of their victories. Pausanias (6.13.1) reports that Astylos from Kroton in Italy, a sprinter who won both the stadion and diaulos sprints in three successive Olympiads (488, 484, and 480 B.C.), had himself announced at his final Olympiad (480 B.C.) as a citizen of Syracuse. This was done ostensibly to please Hieron, the tyrant of Syracuse, who would in some ways repay Astylos for sharing this honor with him. The citizens of Kroton, however, were so incensed by this that they converted Astylos' home into a public prison and destroyed the statue they had dedicated to him in the city. This story does encourage speculation that states (primarily those controlled by tyrants?) could purchase the loyalty of athletes in order to enhance their reputations and to share in the public adulation awarded the winners. Although such may have been possible, the available evidence does not indicate that it became a widespread practice.¹⁷² One further musician was obviously present, the diaulos player who provided

170. Pausanias 5.20.1-2. Pliny, *Natural History* 35, 54, asserts that Kolotes was the pupil of Pheidias. Pliny also credits Kolotes with the gold and ivory statue of Athena located on the acropolis of Elis, although Pausanias 6.26.3 relates that the Eleians claim this also to be the work of Pheidias.

171. Gardiner's reconstruction of the order of events basically accords with Pausanias' somewhat vague statement in 5.9.3. In 472 the Olympics became a five day festival. Pausanias' statement does seem to put the horse racing and the pentathlon before the sacrifice, on the second of the five days, while the other contests (heavy events and track events) came after the sacrifice, on the fourth day. Gardiner places the boys' events on the third day following the sacrifice,

while many scholars prefer to have them conducted in conjunction with the men's competitions in the same events. Harris rejects placing the pentathlon before the track events because of the problems of digging up a skamma in the stadion for the jumpers before the track events have been held.

172. Pausanias records two more examples: Syracusans, representing the tyrant Dionysios, bribed the father of Antipater of Miletos, the boys' boxing champion, to have the boy introduced as a Syracusan, but the boy refused and insisted upon being introduced as from Miletos (6.2.6); in 380 B.C. Sotades, the defending dolichos champion from Crete, accepted money from Ephesos to be introduced as an Ephesian when he won the dolichos for a second time (6.18.6). In this

the musical accompaniment for the jumpers, but no ancient source describes a selection process. Possibly the various pentathletes may have provided their own.

The Hellanodikai had near total control of the conduct of the games. Their power included whipping runners guilty of false starts, hitting the combat athletes with their rods if any of them were violating the rules, and disqualifying those guilty of egregious fouls. Kleomedes, a boxer in the early fifth century B.C. from Astypalaia, was disqualified and “lost his victory” when he killed his opponent. The Hellanodikai at least on one occasion changed the order of the combat events at the request of Cleitomachos of Thebes who had successfully fought his way to the finals in both boxing and the pankration. Caprus, an Elean, had gained the finals in both wrestling and the pankration and had already won the crown in wrestling. The next finals should have been boxing but Cleitomachos petitioned the Hellanodikai to host the pankration finals because he would be subjected to less damage in the pankration than the boxing. Even though such a change would put the Caprus at a disadvantage, since he had just completed the wrestling and would be deprived of the normal rest period occasioned by the boxing finals, the Hellanodikai granted Cleitomachos’ request. Nevertheless Caprus won the pankration, while Cleitomachos then went on to win the boxing.

One of the most difficult tasks of the Hellanodikai must have been judging the finish of the stadion sprint and even the diaulos sprint. With as many as twenty runners accommodated on the track of the Olympic stadion, determining the winner may in many instances have been challenging. The final result of a dead heat with no one receiving the crown is a possibility. Or those runners actually involved in the dead heat may have been forced to run a second time in order to select a winner. Pausanias 6.3.7 and 8.45.4 present a curious appeals procedure: in 396 B.C. Eupolemos of Elis was selected as winner narrowly defeating Leon of Ambracia by a two-to-one vote of the Hellanodikai; Leon protested this decision to the Elean Council, the ultimate authority for the games, and they awarded him damages against the two judges who had voted for Eupolemos as winner; but this award did not change the results of the race and Eupolemos retained his crown.

Bribery officially appeared at Olympia in 388 B.C. At the 98th Olympiad Eupolos, a boxer from Thessaly, bribed three other contestants, one from Arcadia and two from Anatolia, including the defending champion from Halikarnassos. Pausanias, the major source for this incident, does not indicate at what point in the elimination bouts the bribery took place. There probably were more than our total entrants, and if so, Eupolos may have bribed the other three semi-finalists. The punishment inflicted by the Hellanodikai is quite unusual: all four were fined and with the money six bronze statues of Zeus were commissioned and then

case Crete responded by exiling Sotades. The threat of reprisal from one’s home city-state was probably sufficient to control extensive abuse in the buying of athletes to represent communities other than their own, certainly

during the Classical period. Since there is no hint of action taken by the Eleans in these cases, it seems safe to conclude that identification of home state was not a matter of real concern to the Hellanodikai.

placed at the base of the terrace holding the treasures and next to the path taken by the athletes as they entered the stadion. The careful placement of these statues indicates that Hellanodikai intended them to be a forceful warning to athletes who were about to compete. This is further emphasized by the inscriptions recorded on the bases of four of these statues: you win at Olympia not by money but by the speed of your feet and strength of your body; the statues are erected for religious reasons and to frighten crooked athletes; Elis is praised for punishing the boxers; and the statues are a warning to all Greece not to attempt to win through bribes at Olympia. These statues were called *Zanes*, presumably an Elean dialectal form for the plural of Zeus.¹⁷³ The next group of six *Zanes* noted by Pausanias resulted from the attempt of an Athenian pentathlete Kallippos to bribe his opponents at the 112th Olympiad in 332 B.C. In this case Kallippos refused to pay the fine and it seems that Athens sent Hypereides, one of its most famous orators, to persuade the Eleans, probably the Elean boule, to withdraw the fine. This maneuver was unsuccessful, but payment of the fine was refused, and Athens even prohibited its citizens from attending the Olympic games. At this point in the dispute, the Eleans called upon Delphi for assistance: the oracular shrine of Apollo formally announced that it would refuse any oracles to Athens until the fine was paid. Faced with the hostility of the two major religious sanctuaries in Greece, Athens (Kallippos?) paid the fine and six more *Zanes* were set along the path leading to the entrance of the stadion.¹⁷⁴ This fairly permanent display and identification of the wrongdoing of athletes and their city-states should have provided a potent reminder to contestants that cheating and other forms of foul play at Olympia were subject to punishment and perpetual disgrace.

Pausanias reports an interesting event from an Olympiad late in the fifth century which indicates that (married?) women were banned from the vicinity of Olympia during the games upon penalty of death by being hurled from the steep rocky precipice of a mountain called Tropaion located just before the Alpheios river. Kallipateira, daughter of Diagoras an Olympic boxing champion, and sister of three Olympic champions, Akousilaos in boxing, Damagetos in the pankration, and Dorieus in the pankration, wished to see her son, Peisirodos,

173. Pausanias 5.21.2 f. Gardiner, ever the spirited defender of the British Victorian ideal of gentlemen's amateur athletics, comments AAW 103-104: "The vigorous action of the authorities of Olympia had its effect, and throughout the history of the festival very few cases of corruption are recorded. But when corruption was even possible at Olympia, we may be sure that it was prevalent elsewhere".

174. Pausanias 5.21.5-7. A late biography of Hypereides (*Vitae decem oratorum*) reports that Hypereides won his case. The presence at Olympia of the six

Zanes, which were clearly the product of this affair and openly name Athens, indicates otherwise. The inscriptions on the bases of these *Zanes* continued the tone and content of the first six: praising the Eleans for their action, reminding that the Olympic games were not a test of one's wealth, identifying the reason for these *Zanes*, and recording the Delphic oracle's response to the Athenians. A total of sixteen bases for *Zanes* have been found along the path leading to the entrance to the stadion, one actually within the tunnel from the Altis to the stadion.

compete at Olympia in boxing. She disguised herself as his trainer and managed to remain undetected until her son won the crown. At that point she leapt over the rope barrier, which kept trainers segregated from their athletes during competition, and thus somehow revealed herself as a woman. The Eleans did not exact the death penalty but pardoned her on the basis of the number of Olympic champions in her family. They did, however, in an attempt, successful it seems, to prevent a similar event in the future ordain that all trainers must be naked to enter areas of competition.¹⁷⁵ The presence or absence of women at Olympia has been much debated. Certainly a few women won crowns at Olympia in the equestrian events and commemorated their victory by erecting statues. The priestess of Demeter Chamyne, who had to be a married woman, was present at the games and at the running of the stadion sprint held a position of honor because this race was dedicated to Demeter and not to Zeus. Were unmarried women permitted to attend the games? How did one prove unmarried status? Apart from Pausanias' remarks, no other ancient writer comments on this problem.

175. See Pausanias 5.6.7-8 and 6.7.1 f. Pausanias also indicates that some sources name the mother Pherenike rather than Kallipateria. Another son of

Diagoras' daughter, whether Pherenike or Kallipateria, named Eukles won the boys' boxing crown at Olympia.

THE PYTHIAN GAMES

MYTHOLOGY

The mythology attached to the great oracular shrine of Apollo at Delphi provides no real foundation legend for the Pythian games even though these were second in importance only to the Olympic games. Apollo's arrival at Delphi initially was occasioned by his desire to avenge his mother, Leto, who had been tormented during her pregnancy by a very jealous Hera. Zeus was the father of the twins soon to be born and his wife Hera undertook to harass Leto, even to deny her a calm moment in which to give birth to Apollo and Artemis. In addition to avowing punishment for any land seeing the light of sun which gave her refuge, she sent a giant snake, Python, in pursuit of Leto. The home of this monster was located on the slopes of Mount Parnassos overlooking the Gulf of Corinth. The other gods, with Poseidon as main instigator, finally arranged for Leto to give birth on the tiny island of Delos, then so insignificant that it did not enjoy a permanent position in the sea but floated about at the whim of waves and currents. Poseidon offered to negate Hera's threat by submerging Delos so that it did not see the light of the sun and promised that Delos, in return for providing Leto an end to her travail, would become famous as the birthplace of powerful deities and would also receive a stable location in the sea. In such circumstances were the twin offspring of Zeus and Leto born, with Artemis as first-born even assisting her mother in the delivery of Apollo. Apollo's immediate thought was for vengeance, but since there was little he could do about Hera, he centered his attention upon Python. The pursuit led him ultimately to Mount Parnassos, where he killed the monstrous snake with a rain of arrows from his golden bow. The killing of Python caused Apollo to seek cleansing in the Vale of Tempe. Then the beauty of the site of the snake's lair led Apollo to establish a sanctuary there. Sanctuaries need priests, and conveniently at that moment he noticed a ship of Cretan merchants in the Gulf of Corinth below his new sanctuary. Changing into a dolphin, Apollo swam out to the ship, leapt aboard, and ordered the Cretans to come ashore to serve his new sanctuary.

Several aspects of this story were later used to provide rather fanciful explanations of names and even of the origin of the games themselves. The site was known by at least two names: Pytho and Delphi. The Apollo of Delphi was called Pythian or Delphinian Apollo and his priestess there was the Pythia. Pytho and Pythia are obviously very close to Python, Apollo's immediate predecessor at Parnassos. Less seemly, some thought that Apollo left the carcass of the snake to rot in the sun, an odiferous if not impious act which permitted speculation upon the connection between Pytho-Pythian and the verb *pythein* meaning "to rot". Delphi and Del-

phinian were connected with *delphis* (genitive: *delphinos*), the Greek word for dolphin and presumably derived from Apollo's epiphany as a dolphin. In literary source dated much later, Apollo was credited not only with burying the Python but also with holding funeral games in its honor and thereby providing a divine origin for the games at an extremely early period.

One other myth relates directly to the athletic festival. Apollo became enamored of Daphne, the daughter of the river god Kephisos. In spite of the presumed attractiveness of this most powerful and multi-talented of the younger generation of male Olympians, Daphne was firm and persistent in her rejection. Finally in exasperation Apollo dropped pleas and blandishments for direct physical action and pursuit. Daphne, when she was about to be caught, prayed to the gods, or to her father, or even to Artemis, to save her, and her plea was answered: just as Apollo reached to grasp her she changed into a tree which thereafter bore her name – Daphne. Apollo garlanded himself with laurel and determined that this would be his sacred plant thereafter. Thus the laurel wreath crowned victors at his games at Delphi and ultimately gave rise to the expression still current “the laurels of victory”, e.g. “Nobel laureate”.

The sanctuary at Delphi was known for the oracular responses it provided. In fact it became the most famous of all oracular shrines in Greece. One tradition, preserved by Aeschylus in the opening lines of his *Eumenides*, gave pride of place to Earth as the first provider of oracles, with Apollo gaining possession of the shrine by peaceful inheritance rather than violence:

Pythian priestess: I give first place of honor in my prayer to her who the gods first prophesied, the Earth; and next to Themis, who succeeded to her mother's place of prophecy; so runs the legend; and in third succession, given by free consent, not won by force, another Titan daughter of Earth was seated here. This was Phoebe. She gave it as a birthday gift to Phoebus, who is called still after Phoebe's name. And he, leaving the pond of Delos and the reef, grounded his ship at the roadstead of Pallas, then made his way to this land and a Parnassian home. Deep in respect for his degree Hephaestus' sons conveyed him here, for these are builders of roads, and changed the wilderness to a land that was no wilderness. He came so, and the people highly honored him, with Delphus, lord and helmsman of the country. Zeus made his mind full with godship and prophetic craft and placed him, fourth in the line of seers, upon this throne. So, Loxias is the spokesman of his father, Zeus.

This opening scene in the *Eumenides*, with the prayer of the Pythia, presents a startlingly different version of Apollo's arrival at Delphi, “a Parnassian home” and his assumption of oracular power and duties. The epithet or title *Loxias* is derived from the Greek verb to speak, *legein*, and presumably indicates his role as spokesman for Zeus. It also gives a prominent role to the Athenians in the establishment of the sanctuary and provides a different source for the words based upon the root *delp-* associated with it: Delphus, the local

king. This story, very likely an Athenian invention, or at least modified in Athenian interests, provides no connections with the Pythian games and focuses exclusively on the pedigree of the oracle.

Delphi could claim no major local heroes but asserted some Homeric connections. The youthful Odysseus, while visiting Autolykos, his maternal grandfather whose kingdom was immediately to the west of the later sanctuary, was wounded by a wild boar allegedly on the very spot of the classical gymnasium. The resultant scar became one of the tokens of recognition later when Odysseus, after ten years of war under the walls of Troy and another ten years of wandering, gained again the shores of Ithaka. This event is not specifically connected with Apollo's sanctuary at Delphi by Homer who seemed totally unaware of its existence. One permissible conclusion is that Delphi's, as Olympia's, great religious significance developed after the Homeric poems achieved near final form ca. 800 B.C. In a post-Homeric legend Neoptolemos, Achilles' son, was killed at the sanctuary while returning home from the Trojan War. Sophocles provides another incident involving an offspring of one of Homer's major heroes. Orestes, the only son of Agamemnon, was sent as an infant to the court of king Strophios of Krisa when his mother Klytaimnestra began her ill-fated liaison with Aegisthus. Sometime after Klytaimnestra, or Aegisthus, had killed Agamemnon upon his return from Troy, Orestes, now grown to young manhood, returned home to avenge his father by killing the murderer, his mother and Aegisthus. His intention and his arrival is cloaked by a messenger bringing a false report of Orestes' death in the chariot race at Delphi. This version of the legend gives the Pythian games a history dating well back into heroic times.¹⁷⁶

176. The *Homeric Hymn to Apollo*, dated as early as the mid-seventh century B.C., is the most important ancient source for the cult of Apollo at Delphi. An English translation is in A. N. Athanassakis, *The Homeric Hymns* (1976) 15-30. Several recent studies of the myths associated with Delphi and of the history of the Delphic oracle are: P. Amandry, *La mantique Apollinienne à Delphes: Essai sur le Fonctionnement de l'Oracle* (1950); H. W. Parke and D. Wormell, *The Delphic Oracle I: The History*, and *The Delphic Oracle II: The Oracular Responses* (1956); J. Fontenrose, *Python: A Study of Delphic Myth and its Origins* (1959), and *The Delphic Oracle: Its Responses and Operations with a Catalogue of Responses* (1978). The translation of lines 1-19 of Aeschylus, *Eumenides* is that of Richmond Lattimore. One of the earliest writ-

ers to connect the Pythian Games with the slaying of Python was Ovid in *Metamorphoses* I. 445 ff. Since the slaying of Python antedated Apollo's affair with Daphne, Ovid states that the crowns initially awarded at Delphi were of oak leaves. Clement of Alexandria, an early Christian writer (born ca. A.D. 150), also mentions the origin of the Pythian festival in the funeral games for Python in *Protrepticus* 11.3 f. The references to young Odysseus' hunting adventure and the wound caused by the boar are: Homer, *Odyssey* 19.428-66 (no specific mention of Delphi); and Pausanias 10.8.4 (event took place in area of later gymnasium). Sophocles' account of Orestes' participation in the Pythian games and his presumed death in the chariot race is found in *Electra* 681-763.

ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORY OF THE SITE

Mycenaean remains at Delphi are far from impressive, thus indicating a modest presence. Probably a relatively small village existed within the area of the later sanctuary. The major archaeological discovery was more than two hundred terracotta female figurines dated mostly to the twelfth century B.C. and found in the vicinity of the classical temple of Athena Pronaia located some one hundred meters beyond the lower terrace of the gymnasium. This number of statuettes found in a single location invariably persuades the archaeologist that a sanctuary has been found and that these figurines, were votive offerings to a female deity. Following the pattern seen elsewhere in Greece, Delphi was apparently abandoned by ca. 1100 B.C. and witnessed little human activity until the eighth century when bronze and other votives again reappear.

The number of bronze offerings and pottery found within the temenos are second only to that found at Olympia, indicating that a major sanctuary had been established. No trace of an eighth century temple has been found, and if one existed it was undoubtedly constructed of wood and probably located on or very near the site of the sixth century stone temple; therefore, evidence of its existence would be doubly difficult to recover. At what date Apollo became the dominant deity within the sanctuary cannot be precisely dated but possibly it coincided with the appearance of significant votives in ca. 750 B.C. Apollo seems to have been worshipped at Corinth by ca. 800 B.C. and the Corinthians may have been involved in bringing him to Delphi because practically all the very early pottery and a significant portion of the first bronze offerings were of Corinthian manufacture. Apollo's occupation of the sanctuary at Delphi also fits the pattern of a male deity supplanting a Mycenaean goddess after a hiatus of several centuries. The tradition presented by Aeschylus, as already noted, preserved indication of the dominance of a female oracular deity, Earth, preceding the arrival of Apollo. Although there is no evidence for continuous habitation from the Mycenaean period to the ninth century, there still is a debate as to whether the oracular shrine goes back to Mycenaean times or whether the oracle can only be dated to the ninth-eighth centuries and the arrival of Apollo. If there was continuity, it would be a rare phenomenon and require some substantial evidence to be persuasive. Not only must the hiatus of two to three centuries be overcome but also the existence of oracles during the Mycenaean period must be established as a reasonable supposition.¹⁷⁷

177. For continuity of an oracular shrine at Delphi, see G. Roux, *Delphes, son oracle et ses dieux* (1976) 19-34. For the contrary view, see Cl. Rolley, *Les trépieds à cuve clouée, Fouilles de Delphes V*, 3 (1977) 134-145. For a brief discussion of the archaeological finds at Delphi from the late Mycenaean period and the eighth century B.C., see Coldstream, *GG* 178 f and 330. Fontenrose argues that Apollo was of Anatolian origin and did not

arrive in Greece until sometime between 1000-800 B.C. (citing Wilamowitz-Moellendorf, "Apollo", *Hermes* (1903), 575-86, and M. P. Nilsson, *Geschichte der griechischen Religion* (1967) 559-84). As a further indication that Apollo did not exist in Greece during the Mycenaean period, he points to the absence of Apollo's name in the extant Linear B tablets. See Fontenrose, "Cult of Apollo" 121-140, esp. 121.

During the historical period the sanctuary at Delphi provided oracular responses both to states and individuals with Apollo through his Pythian priestess relaying the unerring judgements of god. The fame of the shrine was well-established by the sixth century B.C. and attracted inquiries from throughout the Greek world and even from non-Greeks. The initial great success of the oracle was in advising various Greek states as to where to found colonies, especially during the seventh and sixth centuries B.C. when Greek communities were established from the Black Sea to the coast of southern France. There is a tradition that the oracular responses were given in ambiguous or “slant-wise” speech which left open the possibility of after-the fact interpretation to salvage the reputation of the oracle. Fontenrose, who has examined this issue carefully, states categorically that this was not true based upon the responses available for study today: the Pythian priestess hardly indulged in predictions but spoke simply and directly in answering inquiries.¹⁷⁸

About 600 B.C. a new temple was probably constructed of mud brick and undoubtedly occupied the same position as the later temple. The increasing number of valuable offerings clearly demonstrates that the sanctuary and the cult of Apollo attracted broad respect throughout the Greek world. Although isolated from major population centers, and possibly because of this isolation, it obviously had assumed panhellenic importance, commanding increasing respect and patronage from both Greek and foreign states. This in turn roused ambition and desire to exercise influence, if not control, over the cult and its activities. From this arose the so-called First Sacred War generally dated to the initial decade of the sixth century and continuing into the second. The precise date and causes are debated. There is always a strong suspicion that a war purportedly lasting ten years has attempted to enhance its importance by claiming the same decade-long duration as the Trojan War. The victors in the war justified their actions on the grounds of preserving both the integrity of the sanctuary and the safety of the pilgrims and delegations wishing to consult the oracle. The villain was the Phokian city of Krisa or Kirrha, the names are usually thought to be interchangeable, which was accused of harassing and/or robbing the pious and furthermore even of attempting to undermine the integrity of the oracle. Krisa/Kirrha occupied the plain at the foot of Mount Parnassos and also controlled the harbor, later known as Itea, which provided the easiest access to the sanctuary. Thus many would-be visitors to Delphi had to pass through Krisan/Kirrhan territory. The self-proclaimed defenders of the god were members of an association of ethnic groups and city-states known as the Pylaeon Amphiktyony

178. See Fontenrose, “Cult of Apollo” 123-124 “Accurate predictions of the future in specific terms, ambiguous predictions, ambiguous commands and prohibitions of the kind found in Herodotos’ history, are not genuine pronouncements of the Delphic Pythia. They have the same character as the responses

of legend and folktale, such as those spoken to Oedipus, Orestes, Agamemnon, and Kadmos. Nothing like them was ever spoken at Delphi or Didyma or any other ancient oracular establishment, as far as reliable records show”.

which was initially centered at Thermopylai and dedicated to the maintenance of the sanctuary there of Demeter. This amphiktyony, reinforced by a military contingent from Athens commanded by Alkmaion and a naval contingent from Sikyon under its tyrant Kleisthenes, attacked Krisa/Kirrha sometime around the beginning of the sixth century B.C. Overall command was provided by the Thessalians who dominated the Pylaeon Amphiktyony. Although the precise date of the beginning of the war cannot be determined, there is some evidence that in 591/0 B.C. the amphiktyones captured the city of Krisa/Kirrha, seized control of the sanctuary, and held musical contests in honor of Apollo to celebrate this victory. Valuable prizes provided by the spoils of battle were awarded the winners, i.e. a chrematitic (value prize) as opposed to a stephanitic (vegetation crown) festival. Tradition asserts that a festival held every eight years and highlighted by musical competition had been offered to Apollo from time immemorial. This capture of Krisa/Kirrha apparently did not end the war as some of the Krisans held out in the mountains above the sanctuary for a number of years, possibly until 586 B.C. Some ancient sources – especially Pausanias – report that a festival offering both musical and athletic contests and awarding valuable prizes was held in 586 in honor of the final victory. Presumably the city of Krisa/Kirrha was leveled, and the Krisan/Kirrhan plain was dedicated to the sanctuary of Apollo with the proviso that it never be again cultivated. The town of Delphi, probably a modest community close to the sanctuary, assumed some responsibility for the day-to-day management of the cult and its increasing number of buildings and other possessions. The amphiktyones, now increased by the addition of Athens and Sikyon, maintained overall control, meeting once a year, in the spring, at the sanctuary of Demeter Anthela and once a year, August-September, at Delphi. The greater fame and importance of the Apolline cult was quickly reflected in the fact that the amphiktyony became more commonly known as the Delphic Amphiktyony.¹⁷⁹

In 548 B.C. the major temple to Apollo was destroyed by fire and its eventual rebuilding involved Athenian politics. In 565 B.C. Peisistratos established himself as tyrant in Athens and eventually found himself in open conflict with the Alkmaionidai, the Athenian family/clan which through Magakles had led in the suppression of the would-be tyrant Kylon

179. Motives for the First Sacred War proposed by scholars include the following: a response to the oracle's support for political change during the seventh century (among others, an Athenian anger over the oracle's support of Kylon's attempt to install himself as tyrant at Athens – hence the presence of Athenian troops under the command of Alkmaion, the son of the Athenian magistrate who quashed the attempt and ordered the slaughter of the conspirator); and Kleisthenes' anger at the insulting reply he received from the oracle when he sought permission to abolish a cult

of Adrastus at Sikyon. For discussions of motives, see: G. Forrest, "The First Sacred War", *BCH* 80 (1956), 33-52; Jefferey, *Archaic Greece* 164; and *Cambridge Ancient History* III.3 (1982) 311-315. The composition of the Amphiktyonic League could change with the ongoing wars and power struggles among the Greek states: see G. Daux, "Remarques sur la composition du conseil amphictionique," *BCH* 81 (1957), 95-120, G. Roux, *L'Amphictionie, Delphes et le Temple d'Apolon au IV^e siècle* (1979) 1-19, and J. Tréheux, *BCH* 104 (1980), 510.

and had provided Alkmaion, son of Megakles, as the commander of the Athenian forces in the First Sacred War. Peisistratos exiled the Alkmaionidai who chose Delphi as their base of operations. Tradition relates that, after the destruction of the temple, the amphiktyones contracted its rebuilding with the Alkmaionidai who exceeded the specification of quality in order to gain greater influence at Delphi. A sizeable stone temple was completed before the end of the sixth century. This ploy succeeded to the extent that the Pythian priestess, in replies to Spartan inquiries on other subjects, always appended the injunction to free Athens from the tyranny. Ultimately in 510 B.C. Hippias, son of Peisistratos, was driven from Athens primarily by a Spartan force.

Delphi suffered some loss of political influence during the two great Persian invasions of 490 and 480 B.C., when the Pythia medized, or counseled non-resistance. In spite of this mistake, the sanctuary continued to flourish and grow in wealth and magnificence. It also escaped damage in the devastating war between Athens and Sparta during the final third of the fifth century. By 371 B.C. the Alkmaionid temple was destroyed and its rebuilding can be followed through a series of inscriptions dated primarily in the 350's and 340's. During the final third of the fourth century, a training facility was constructed on two terraces just below the sanctuary. Possibly a new stadion was also constructed above the sanctuary late in the fourth century, although a later date has been proposed by the French scholar who has published this part of the excavation.

The major event, however, during this period was the Second Sacred War which began in 357 or 355 B.C. Reasons for this renewed struggle for control of the sanctuary are not clearly stated in ancient sources. The pretext this time for the opening of hostilities was the alleged illegal planting in the Kirrhan plain by the Phokians. The Thessalians, who then along with the Thebans controlled the Delphic Amphiktyony, once again launched the attack. This time there was less uniform enthusiasm for the war because Athens and Sparta, though hostile to Thebes, were moderately supportive of the Phokians. The war dragged on for years and became an extreme financial burden for the Phokians. Ultimately they were forced to finance their conduct of the war by an ongoing conversion of the sanctuary's treasures to hire mercenaries and purchase supplies. In 350 B.C. Phokian troops encountered a Macedonian army in Thessaly and lost heavily in the battle. This marked the appearance of Philip II, the king of Macedonia, in Delphic affairs and his forces were decisive in bringing the war to an end in 346 B.C. Part of the terms of the peace settlement involved dispersing the Phokians into small villages, the payment of restitution by the Phokians in annual installments for their plundering of the sanctuary, and the loss of their right to own horses until payment was completed. Philip II became a member of the amphiktyony and presided over the Pythian games of 346 B.C. as agonothetes. The annual payments from the Phokians were instrumental in the rebuilding of the temple and undoubtedly assisted in the construction of the training facilities.

In the 280's B.C. Greece suffered an invasion by the Gauls, a new enemy attracted by reports of great treasures to be taken. Delphi and its riches were known to them and in

fierce fighting the Gauls were repulsed from Delphi in 279 B.C. largely due to the efforts of the Aetolians. This led ultimately to Aetolian control of the amphiktyony and to the establishment of a festival called Soteria celebrating the defeat of the Gauls. Aupert, the French scholar who published the excavation of the stadion built above the sanctuary, proposes to date its construction to this period.

The second century B.C. witnessed the arrival of the Romans and their ultimate control of Greece. The major event for athletics at the Pythian sanctuary during this period was the rebuilding of the stadion in the second half of the second century A.D. by the great Athenian philanthropist, Herodes Atticus, whose vast fortune paid for a new stadion in Athens and the Nymphaeum at Olympia. As already noted, the Eleans, however, rejected his proposal to rebuild on a magnificent scale the stadion at Olympia.

THE SANCTUARY AT DELPHI

The location of the sanctuary on the steep slopes of Mt. Parnassos gives the site its awe-inspiring beauty but it also must have presented severe challenges in planning and construction. The various structures of the sanctuary, including the temple to Apollo, had to be set on terraces which exposed them to the dangers of avalanche, erosion, and obviously heightened fears of earthquakes. In spite of these difficulties the sanctuary ultimately boasted an impressive temple, a number of treasures, a gymnasium area with practice tracks, palaestra, and swimming pool, a stadion for competition some distance above the sanctuary proper, and a beautiful theatre for the musical and drama competitions. As at Olympia, the sanctuary became filled with statues of victors, other art works and various exhedras and stoas along the path leading from the entrance to the temple of Apollo. Two of the most interesting are works, indeed two of the very few athletic statues of the fifth and fourth centuries to survive, were found at Delphi. In 1896 the famous charioteer of Delphi came to light almost intact, missing the left arm, in the rubble near the temple of Apollo. It is only surviving part of a massive life-size group sculpture in bronze featuring horses, a chariot, the charioteer, a groom, and very probably the owner/winner of the race. An inscription records that this impressive group was dedicated by Polyzalos from Syracuse, possibly the brother of Gelon, tyrant of Syracuse. The extant statue is dated to the 470's B.C. and therefore probably commemorate a victory in the Pythian games of 478 or 474 B.C. The other notable example, the marble statue of Hagias, was also part of a large group dedicated between 433-334 B.C. by Daochos from Thessaly. It was a row of nine individual statues representing famous members of five or six previous generations of Daochos' family. Parts of six or seven of these statues were found, with that of Hagias in the best state of preservation. One generation produced three brothers, Hagias, Telemachos, and Agelaos, all athletes and victors at crown games. An inscription on the base informs us that Hagias was obviously one of the outstanding heavy athletes of his generation: he was the first Thessalian to win the pankra-

tion at Olympia and he also won the pankration three times at Delphi and five times at the Isthmian and Nemean festivals. Again, as at Olympia the Pythian sanctuary was crowded with the creations of the leading artists of the Greek world, both athletic and religious, which must have contributed to the overall impression of magnificence and awe experienced by the visitor, whether athlete or pilgrim.¹⁸⁰

One other item would also draw the visitor's attention: a massive inscription listing all the Pythian victors from the beginning to 330's B.C. and possibly including a brief statement about the First Sacred War and the origins of the Pythian festival. This historical record was the result of researches undertaken by the famous philosopher Aristotle, assisted by his nephew Kallisthenes. Unfortunately this inscription has not survived, although an inscription from 335 B.C., recording thanks and crowns voted by the city of Delphi for Aristotle and his nephew, has been found. This project is very similar to the study of Olympic victors also done by Aristotle.¹⁸¹

The steep mountainous terrain which gave the sanctuary a spectacular setting also must have challenged the amphictyones when they expanded the early musical competitions to include the basic Olympic schedule of athletic and equestrian contests. Initially, and before the athletic complexes were developed within the sanctuary during the second half of the fourth century, the only area available certainly for the track and field and equestrian events would have been the narrow valley carved at the foot of Parnassos by the Pleistos river. This area continued to be called wither Kirrha or Krisa and for the first 250 years of the Pythian games houses all the contests.¹⁸² After the construction of the stadion above the sanctuary, the equestrian events continued to be held in the valley. The individual stone segments of the starting finish lines are thought by the French archaeologists to have been moved from the valley to the later site of the stadion. Any other traces of temporary wooden bleachers or dirt embankments for spectator viewing would have been destroyed and/or buried through

180. See John Boardman, *Greek Sculpture. The Classical Period* (London 1985) 52 and 59-60, of a discussion of the Charioteer with illustrations and a reproduction of the inscription identifying Polykalos as the dedicator (and therefore winner?). For the Daochos group, see Gisela M. A. Richter, *The Sculpture and Sculptors of the Greeks* (New Haven 1957) 289, which includes a discussion of the possibility that the marble Hagias was a contemporary copy in marble of a bronze (now lost) done by Lysippos and placed in Pharsalos, Hagias' hometown. For the Daochos group, there is also an extensive discussion with illustrations in Fontenrose, "Cult of Apollo" 131-134.

181. The inscription honoring Aristotle is published in *Fouilles de Delphes* III.1, 400.

182. Pindar, when celebrating Pythian victors during the first half of the fifth century, uses the following geographical references: "Pythian contests... in Kirrha" (*Pythian* 3.72-74), "Pytho granted glory by means of his horses from the Pythia (as games)": (*Pythian* 5.21), "the hill of Krisa" (*Pythian* 5.37), "victory in the Krisan dells" (*Pythian* 6.17-18), "two victories from Kirrha" (*Pythian* 7.16), "received him from Kirrha crowned with Parnassian green" (*Pythian* 8.19-20), "the Parnassian dell proclaimed him the best of the boys to run the diaulos" (*Pythian* 10.8-9), "the rich-meadowed contest under the rock of Kirrha" or "the contest under the rock with the rich meadows of Kirrha" (*Pythian* 10.15-16), and "Kirrha's contest" (*Pythian* 11.12).

the centuries under thick deposits of earth and stone brought down the mountain-side by run off of rain and snow and by avalanches caused by earthquakes. The flooding of the Pleistos river, as with the Alpheios and Kladeos rivers at Olympia, has also contributed to the probable destruction of any remains of the stadion or hippodrome.

THE PYTHIAN FESTIVAL

There is an ongoing debate concerning the precise date of establishment of the quadrennial recurring festival, and further whether subsequent games were numbered from this initial celebration in the form of Pythiads thus providing a time-reckoning system similar to Olympiads – e.g. the tenth Pythiad or tenth celebration of the Pythian games. One thesis, recently argued by Steven G. Miller, is that at the conclusion of the Sacred War, presumably in 586/85 B.C., the amphictyones held an expanded chrematitic festival funded by the spoils of war to which they added the basic Olympic program of athletic and equestrian events to the traditional musical competition. Miller bases his view primarily upon Pausanias 10.7.4-5: In the third year of the forty-eighth Olympiad (586/5 B.C.), at which Glaukias of Kroton won (the single stadion sprint), the amphiktyones held contests for singing to the accompaniment of the kithara, just as from the beginning, and they added contests in singing to the accompaniment of the diaulos and in the playing of the diaulos.... They also offered contests for athletes, the same as the Olympic games except the tethrippon. At the second celebration of the festival (582/81 B.C.) they did not invite competition for prizes but established the festival, *agon*, as stephanitic.

There are other, but ambiguous, references, primarily within the Pindaric scholia (notes written centuries later by commentators and attached to the margins of Pindar's poems) which may support a chrematitic festival in 586 B.C. including musical, athletic and equestrian events. If accepted as valid, these sources date the first officially recognized and recorded quadrennial games to 586 B.C., the first Pythiad, with a change from value to crown prizes in 582 B.C., the second Pythiad. The rejection of a chrematitic festival including athletic contests in 586/5 B.C. and also of a time-reckoning based upon Pythiads is also argued, by Alden A. Mosshammer who proposes that, apart from the single statement in Pausanias, the chronological evidence preserved from antiquity supports neither a chrematitic festival in 586/5 B.C. nor a Pythiad era. In this view the first celebration of the quadrennial Pythian festival was in 582/1 B.C. and the only chrematitic festival was held in 591/0 B.C. and was limited in musical competition. Olivier Picard reads the evidence somewhat differently: he assumes that precise information was available because of Aristotle's researches; the Parian Marble or Chronicle reports that in 590 B.C. the Amphictyones, having conquered the Kirrhans, offered a sacrifice and established athletic games with value prizes from the spoils of the war; the same Chronicle records that in 582 B.C. the Delphic

contest was held again as a stephanitic contest: Pausanias relies too much on unreliable traditions; therefore the dates of 590 B.C. and 582 B.C. are to be preferred as “based on precise factual material”.¹⁸³ Fortunately, there is no disagreement among the ancient sources or modern that stephanitic games at Delphi began in 582/1 B.C., recurred every four years, and were held in the third year of the quadrennial cycle of the Olympic games.

The various competitions offered at the Pythian games and the dates of their addition to the program of events are listed by Pausanias. The amphiktyones, according to Pausanias, basically adopted the existing Olympic schedule of events minus the tethrippon and enlarged the scope of musical competition inherited from the earlier festival held every eight years. The structure of the list is thought to be based upon the researches of Aristotle and his student/relative Kallisthenes who produced, as noted above, a list of all Pythian victors down to ca. 330 B.C. Pausanias does not say that he consulted this list when he visited Delphi and the presumption that he did may be debated, especially in view of the controversy over the issue of the first Pythian games. Pausanias’ list is as follows:

FIRST PYTHIAD (586/5 B.C.):

Musical Contests:

- singing to the accompaniment of the kithara
- singing to the accompaniment of the diaulos
- playing the diaulos

Athletic Contests for Men:

- stadion race
- diaulos race
- dolichos race
- pentathlon
- wrestling
- boxing
- pankration

Equestrian Contests:

- keles

SECOND PYTHIAD (582/1 B.C.):

Musical Contests:

- abolished singing to the diaulos

183. Miller, “The date” 127-158. Mosshammer, “The Date” 15-30 and Picard, “Delphi” 71. Other studies: Grenfell and Hunt, *OxyPap* II (London) arguing for 582 B.C. as the date of the first Pythian games on

the basis of a papyrological text found at Oxyrinchus; and H. A. Bennett, Jr., *HSCP* 62 (1957) 61-78 arguing for the 586 B.C. date.

Equestrian Contests:

added the tethrippon

EIGHTH PYTHIAD (558/7 B.C.):

added playing the kithara

TWENTY-THIRD PYTHIAD (498/7 B.C.):

added the hoplitodromos

FORTY-EIGHTH PYTHIAD (398/7 B.C.):

added the synoris

FIFTY-SECOND PYTHIAD (382/1 B.C.)

added the tethrippon for foals

SIXTY-FIRST PYTHIAD (346/5 B.C.)

added the pankration for boys

SIXTY-THIRD PYTHIAD (338/7 B.C.)

added the keles for foals

SIXTY-NINTH PYTHIAD (314/13 B.C.)

added the synoris for foals

The various rules and procedures in accordance with which the games were conducted and the various agencies and officials who devised and enforced them are less well known than at Olympia. The overall control of the festival clearly was in the hands of the amphiktyones, probably a group of twenty-plus individuals representing the city-states which were members at any given moment of the Pylaian/Delphic Amphiktyony. Whether the whole group functioned as agonothetai during the preparation leading up to the games and during the festival itself, or whether an executive committee was selected from among the amphiktyones to perform this function is not known. At times a distinguished political/military leader from a community which was a member of the amphiktyony served as agonothetes, such as Philip II in 340 B.C. In these instances the title agonothetes was probably equivalent to honorary president of the games. Local Delphic officials had some role, glimpses of which may be preserved in later inscriptions. One of the first major acts was to dispatch the sacred heralds, *theoroi*, to announce the date of the festival and to invite participants and spectators. Delphi also claimed a sacred truce in the name of Apollo designed to insure safe passage to and from the festival. Part of a fifth century inscription and a much longer fragment of a third century inscription provide some insight into this aspect of the games. The Delphic sanctuary appointed official representatives called *theorodokoi*, those who receive the *theoroi* or sacred heralds, i.e. those who housed and assisted the *theoroi* when they arrived. The *theorodokoi* were resident-citizens of the various Greek communities scattered throughout the Mediterranean area. The third century inscription in particular is preserved in sufficient

length to reconstruct the routes of these heralds. There were probably several groups of them since they had to cover, in addition to mainland Greece, the islands, the Greeks in Asia Minor and the Greeks in Sicily, Italy and North Africa. The theoroi undoubtedly began their journeys some months in advance of the opening date of the festival, possibly dispatched by the amphiktyones at their spring meeting. As at Olympia it was intended to give ample notice to those wishing to attend or compete, although this date was probably already fairly well known by those with a special interest in coming. The ritual announcement of the sacred truce, however, remained a recurring necessity. The Pythian games were held in late summer and probably fluctuated between the modern months of August and September, although we have no lunar and solar references to assist in identifying more precisely the date. Possibly the games were held in conjunction with the early fall meeting of the Amphiktyonic Council. There is no hint of the Olympic requirement that all athletes wishing to participate must be in Delphi one month in advance of the games, although such a rule may easily have obtained. The invitation to compete was also undoubtedly limited to free-born Greek citizens.

The nearby city (village) of Delphi was able to provide some of the amenities missing at Olympia. It seems that various city-states entered into a special relationship, *proxenia*, with prominent residents of Delphi to provide housing and hospitality to their official delegations to the Pythian festival, also called theoroi, while other states apparently rented housing. The influx of athletes, trainers, and spectators must have strained the housing capacity of ancient Delphi and encouraged city-states which sent large delegations to undertake careful preparation for acceptable housing. As at Olympia, the Pythian festival provided a forum for diplomatic and commercial negotiations in addition to the common worship of shared deities.

A series of inscriptions dated to the fourth and third centuries B.C. reveals another aspect of preparations for the games. The facilities for the various competitions were used only once every four years and the training facilities and the facilities for spectators were not heavily utilized on other occasions. Therefore they had to be repaired, refurbished, and renewed for the quadrennial flood of athletes and spectators. The necessary work of replastering, repainting, resurfacing and rebuilding was divided into smaller clearly defined segments and the let out on bids. The winning contractor was expected, under pain of a monetary penalty, to perform the contracted labor within the set time limits and to acceptable standards. The fairly extensive recording of contracts in an inscription of the mid-third century B.C. will be discussed in some detail below in conjunction with the various athletic facilities.

As to the actual supervision of the games themselves, there is no extant reference to officials called the Hellanodikai but there is mention of *brabeis* or *brabeutai*, a general term for those who served as officials and umpires/referees in athletic competitions. They may have been members of the amphiktyones but since the latter represented different city-states and were selected at home based upon political standing and possibly for limited terms, it is probable that the various umpires/referees were appointed by the amphiktyones from the citizenry of Delphi or from among experienced athletic officials who may have come from

different city-states. The *Electra* by Sophocles provides a fairly early reference to *brabeis* and describes briefly their duties in conjunction with the chariot race:¹⁸⁴

“And then when the appointed officials (*brabeis*) assigned by lottery their starting places and positioned their chariots, they darted forward at the sound of the bronze trumpet. And at the same time shouting encouragement to their horses they shook the reins in their hands. And the whole hippodrome, *dromos*, was filled with the sound of rattling chariots and dust rose upward.”

The leading Delphic families filled the various priesthoods and if for no other reason than convenience may have also provided the immediate supervisors of the games themselves. Two other officials are mentioned in the inscriptions: a *gymnasiarches* who supervised the training facilities or gymnasium, and an *epimeletes* who possibly had charge of the maintenance of the buildings critical to the festival. Also recorded is the title of a slave, *palaistrophylax* – guard of the palaestra, who apparently was assigned to maintenance duties in the athletic training complex. The Amphictyonic Council did institute at least one further athletic festival, the Soteria, which would have used the various facilities; and the citizens of Delphi may have had the right to use the training facilities between festivals.

We have no firm information about the length of the festival. The athletic competition for men and boys undoubtedly took at least two days, the equestrian races one, and the musical competition probably were allotted a separate day. Competitions for boys and men alternated thus providing more rest for athletes competing in more than one event. The major sacrifice to Apollo and the enactment of any cult rituals could consume the better part of another day. Thus the Pythian festival probably occupied at least five days, plus another devoted to a meeting of the amphiktyones.¹⁸⁵

THE TRAINING FACILITIES OF THE GYMNASION

Although there is little doubt that various types of training facilities existed in Greece by the fifth century, and probably even earlier, the excavations at Delphi have uncovered the earliest and most extensive remains from the Classical period at a crown-game site. It should be noted, however, that the athletes completed their training for the Olympic games not at Olympia but at Elis, which possessed, according to Pausanias, sizeable facilities for

184. The date for the production of Sophocles' *Electra* is not agreed upon but generally is placed after the *Antigone* which was performed in ca. 441.

185. For the sacred heralds, see A. Plassart, “La Liste des Théorodques”, *BCH* (1921) 1-85. Fontenrose, “Cult of Apollo” 127 reproduces the schedule of Pythian events as devised by A. Mommsen (*Delphika* [1878]

213-14): first day (the 7th of the Delphic month Bukatios, a day especially sacred to Apollo) was devoted primarily to sacrifices; second day featured the sacred banquet; the third day was given over to the musical and dramatic contests; the fourth day presented the athletic contests; and the fifth day brought forth the equestrian events.

both athletes and horses. The archaeological exploration of the site of ancient Elis has not progressed very far and little activity is currently in evidence; therefore nothing can be said about early gymnasia provided for the Olympic competitors beyond Pausanias' description. The most remarkable aspect of the structures at Delphi is the inhospitable terrain available at or near the sanctuary. As already noted there is no doubt that the games were initially held in the valley beneath the steep slope which housed the temple and other structures by means of terraces supported by massive stone walls. The existence of the gymnasium complex on the slope just below the sanctuary is attested in an inscription dated to 327/6 B.C. which mentions the installation of a water conduit and the appointment of Chares as *epimeletes* with salary paid for six months by the amphiktyonic treasury. This indicates that the complex was completed by this date and Jannoray, who has published the gymnasium complex, assumes that the contracts were let at least seven years earlier in 334/3 B.C. This means that construction was begun as the rebuilding of the major temple was in the final stages of completion. In fact some of the foundation blocks in the palaestra carry the identification marks of the same contractor who supplied cut blocks for the above-ground walls of the temple, and Jannoray suggests that they were perhaps left over from the temple project and then put to use in the construction of the gymnasium.

The location selected for the training complex consisted of two natural ridges, one above the other, below the sanctuary and some hundred meters north of the complex of structures which included the temple to Athena Pronaia. According to Pausanias, the gymnasium was immediately below the path which brought visitors to Delphi via a route from Thebes and just above the town of Delphi. This was a fully developed, although small training complex with practice tracks for runners, palaestra with facilities primarily for the heavy events, and a bathing area. These were divided into two units, one for each terrace: the practice tracks were placed on the upper terrace and the palaestra and bathing unit on the lower.

The upper terrace, was a rectangular unit ca. two hundred meters long and thirty-four meters wide. The natural ledge was fairly long but in order to accommodate the practice tracks about thirty meters had to be added to the south end. This upper terrace was supported by a fairly massive retaining wall some two-hundred-fifty meters in length. Two practice tracks were constructed side-by-side. The interior track built next to the mountain-side was the *xystos*, or covered track, which provided a maximum space of 184.83 meters in length and seven and one-half meters in width. This was covered by a wooden roof supported by a colonnade probably of the Doric order, little trace of which is left and what has been found is a Roman replacement with an Ionic colonnade. The full upper terrace has recently been excavated. Modest excavation in 1936 and 1937 uncovered the starting/finishing lines of a *paradromis* immediately to the west of the *xystos*. Each consists of several dressed slabs with only a single groove. Rectangular holes, cut to hold the posts used to mark the positions for the runners, indicate that the *paradromis* could accommodate as many as three runners at a time. The total width available is just over five meters and basically fills the space

between the xystos to the east and a water channel to the west. Three different measurements of the length produced an average figure of 172.996 meters. The distance between the two starting/finishing lines in the stadion built just above the sanctuary is 179.55 meters, producing a foot measurement of 0.2959. This latter measure is the same as the Roman foot and the options suggested at the first uncovering of the stadion during the late 1890's was either that the stadion in its final refurbishing by Herodes Atticus adopted the Roman foot ($0.2959 \times 600 = 179.550$) or that the Pythian foot was fortuitously the same as the Roman. Jannoray argues the former and proposes a Delphic foot of 0.2883 meters, yielding a stadion distance of 172.996 meters, i.e. the same length as the practice tracks. His basic assumption, which is by no means self-evident, is that the distance of a practice track must necessarily be exactly the same as the official track used for competition. Even if there had been a general attempt within the same athletic complex to provide tracks for competition and tracks for practice of roughly equivalent distances, the difficulty of the terrain and the necessity to extend the natural ledge more than thirty meters by means of an artificial terrace supported by a retaining wall may have led to some compromise.

The paradromis is bounded in the west for ca. one hundred thirty meters by an open water channel with occasional settling basins which provided water from the Castalian springs for athletes during training. This channel then turns abruptly west before reaching the end of the track and emptied into a covered conduit which brought it ultimately to the bath area on the lower terrace. Beyond this channel to the west was an open space of several to more than ten meters which probably functioned as an esplanade with shrubbery, benches, commemorative stelai, statues, etc. At its southern end a small structure was discovered whose foundations date back into the early Archaic period and which Jannoray proposes to identify as the Damatrimon, a shrine of Demeter, mentioned in the inscription recording the repair works let out to bid in preparation for the games. Jannoray very correctly stresses the close association between athletic centers and chthonic cults and, as already noted above, there was a shrine for Demeter in the gymnastic area in Elis. This shrine and possibly other structures located on the upper terrace at a much earlier period were sufficiently important to occasion a similarly massive supporting wall which was constructed ca. two centuries later. Thus there may have been some cultic reason for placing the gymnasium here, in addition to whatever reasons there were for moving the athletic facilities from the valley to the immediate vicinity of the sanctuary. The upper terrace could be entered from the road just above it or by means of at least two staircases leading from the lower terrace.

The lower terrace was less than half the length of the upper and enjoyed relatively natural stability only in the area of the basins for washing and the pool, *loutron*. This section was pentagonal in shape, measuring ca. twenty-eight meters at its greatest width next to the base of the wall supporting the upper terrace by ca. twenty-four meters at its greatest depth. The washing and swimming area was an open-air facility. It featured a circular swimming pool composed of four concentric rings of tufa, plus a narrow ring of crowning stones

(pl. XXII, fig. 1). These rings are inset providing an average 0.20 meter surface for either steps or seats. The diameter at the top row is 9.70 meters and the maximum depth is 1.90 meters. There are still some traces of a stucco width and depth are ample for modest swimming. This pool is situated slightly less than three meters from the support wall for the upper terrace. Placed against this wall were ten sizeable water basins ca. 1.82 in length, 0.825 in width, and 0.582 in depth. These had channels cut into their top narrow sides and aligned so that water could flow from one basin to the next, from the outside basins toward the middle. The basins were grouped in units of five each with an open space in the middle between the two units. Above each of the ten basins was an aperture in the support wall through which flowed water brought from the upper terrace. There was also a larger opening in the open area between the two sets of basins which brought a greater flow of water into a basin or channel set into the ground which led to the swimming pool. In fact, the sets of basins were so designed to cause the water to flow constantly from the outside toward the middle and then into the same central, ground-level receptacle and into the pool. An appropriate flow of water was insured by the ca. one meter drop in level of the underground conduit bringing water from the upper terrace. A slight tilt of the bottom of the pool to the west or open side of the lower terrace, coupled with a hole at floor-level at this side connected with a conduit leading to a discharge point in the support wall of the lower terrace, provided a constant exchange of water. The *loutron* also had sufficient space for relaxation and easy movement. Careful planning guaranteed an ample supply of fresh spring water both for washing in the ten basins and for swimming in the pool. The present-day athlete would especially appreciate the height of the basins which at 1.057 meters is more than ten inches higher than the average bathroom basin in the modern American home. The modern athlete also would probably applaud the later Roman addition of hot baths constructed to the north of the *loutron*.

Adjoining the bathing complex on its south side was the *palaistra*. This structure is the least well preserved for two reasons: a significant portion of the earth supporting it, especially on the western side, was basically land fill held in by massive stone walls and therefore damage resulting from erosion and earthquake has been especially heavy; and a monastery was constructed in 1743 within the ruins of the *palestra* reusing much material from the classical building. Today only foundations remain of a building ca. thirty-five meters square, a rather small *palaistra* obviously reflecting the difficult terrain but nevertheless providing the necessary facilities for the athlete. It had the typical *palaistra* layout: a quadrangular open-air court somewhat less than fourteen meters per side, surrounded by a roofed portico with rooms only on the north and west side opening onto the portico and court (pl. XXII, fig. 2). There were three rooms on the north side (A, B, and C on Jannoray's plan) with basically equal interior measurements of ca. 8.50×5.50 meters. On the west end of this series of three rooms is a wide passageway (D on the plan) leading from the portico to the bathing complex. On the western and most damaged side are the two largest rooms, F and G, measuring 7.0×10.70 and 11.50×10.70 meters. It is assumed that all five rooms opened onto the

portico and court. There was one other large unit, designated as E, with interior measurements of 11.0×6.80 meters, which may have been the entrance way into D and there from into the palaistra and bathing complexes. A space of ca. three meters remained between the wall of rooms F and G and the support wall for the lower terrace, which provided a rather modest esplanade. An inscription recording repairs done in preparation for the games names three of the rooms: the *apodyterion* or room for undressing, the *konima* or room with the finely powdered dust used by wrestlers to counteract the slipperiness of the oil applied to their bodies, and the *sphairisterion*. This last is frequently thought to have provided space for some sort of ball game since *sphaira* is the Greek word for ball and *sphairestes* for ball-player. Jannoray, however, identifies it as the room containing the *korykoi* or leather bags filled with sand used in training by both boxers and pankratiasts. A palaistra also usually had an *ephebeion* containing a cult center. Jannoray suggests Room G as the *apodyterion*, a persuasive identification simply because it was the first room one could enter and also had appropriate size. He suggests more tentatively Room B as the *ephebeion* because this room was usually between two other rooms and often had an interior division probably because of the presence of a cult. The archaeological remains do not encourage further attempts to assign functions to the other rooms.

The inscription dated to the archonate of Dion (247/42 B.C.) and mentioned above lists specific repair projects for the gymnasium-area that were let out on bids, the contractor with the winning bid, and the amount bid. The surface of the stone carrying the inscription has been damaged and therefore a number of letters and words have been lost. The legible units of work are as follows: digging up and leveling the xystos and the peristyle court, digging up and leveling the paradromis, putting white dirt on the xystos, something involving a fence for the xystos, a fragmentary reference to some care given the xystos, perhaps the peristyle, and the sphaerestiria [in plural] and the gymnasium, (repair of) the water conduit near the Damatrion, possibly roping off the peristyle, repair of the wall in the sphairisterion, the sifting (?) of white earth (mortar?) for the apodyterion, the digging, leveling and raking (?) of the sphairisterion, putting black earth in the sphairisterion, providing black earth for the sphairisterion, the repair of the wall of the Damatrion, the plastering of the apodyterion and of the wall of the Damatrion, providing white earth for the plastering of the apodyterion and the wall of the Damatrion, and some reference to the paradromis and pool – possibly cleaning the conduits and drains. This inscription provides some insight into the variety of mundane tasks necessary for the mounting of a major. The expense incurred in these preparations was significant.¹⁸⁶

186. See annual reports of these excavations in the *BCH*. Individual studies of various aspects of the excavation are published in the series *Fouilles de Delphes*. For the final publication of the gymnasium complex see Jean Jannoray, *Le Gymnase, Fouilles de*

Delphes II, *Topographie et Architecture* (Paris 1953). For the inscription concerned with repairs to the athletic complex, see Jean Pouilloux, “Travaux à l’Occasion des Pythia. Les Comptes de Dion”, *BCH* Suppl. IV, *Études Delphiques* (1977) 103-121.

THE STADION

Pausanias' description of the various structures at Delphi indicated that the stadion was located above the sanctuary. Apart from Pausanias' help visitors during the early nineteenth century had no difficulty in finding the stadion not only because of the site and shape of this type of structure but also because part of the seating area was above the modern ground level. When the French began their excavation in April, 1896, they soon discovered, while clearing the massive retaining wall, a stone set in the west section of this wall, measuring 1.48 meters in length and 0.35 meters in height, on which the following inscription had been carved: "One shall not carry off wine from the *dromos*. If one does carry it off, he must propitiate the god for whom it was prepared and make an offering in its place and pay a fine of five drachmas, half of this to go to the informer". The lettering of the inscription dated it to the first half of the fifth century B.C. and Homolle, the director of the excavation, concluded that the retaining or terrace wall, and therefore the stadion, dated to the first part of the fifth century. Pierre Aupert undertook the final publication of the stadion and his extensive study of the initial excavation, reinforced by various soundings of his own, appeared in the *Fouille de Delphes* series in 1979. His conclusions propose a history of the stadion marked by four identifiable stages or periods.¹⁸⁷

The builders of Stage I of the stadion took advantage of a sizeable natural ledge above the sanctuary which had sufficient length and width to accommodate a running track and spectral area. This ledge was relatively flat but because of a depression in the middle required some fill. The frequent presence of water from rain, snow, and nearby springs was obviously a major concern which was addressed by slightly tilting the track from west to east and from north to south, thus providing a natural drainage ultimately to the open or south side. An underground channel also assisted the north-south flow of water. Aupert suggests that the running track was initially ca. 178.324 meters in length (a 0.2974 foot) measured from the axis of the interior edge of the two starting-finish lines. He also notes evidence for a *hysplex* or starting device just in front of the starting lines. The width is 29.32 meters (29.44 at the parapet) but the number of lanes was not ascertainable although Aupert assumes that Stage 1 may have had the same number of lanes, i.e. 17, as Stage 2. In soundings conducted in 1971, four blocks of a limestone starting line were discovered. These had a single groove and were not in position. Aupert suggests that they were brought from the stadion in the plain, reused in the first construction of the new stadion above the sanctuary,

187. The translation is that of C. D. Buck, "The Delphian Inscription", *Classical Philology* 7 (1912), 78-81. The wording of the inscription has occasioned some debate since its first publication. Buck reasonably concludes that this prohibition was directed against taking from the stadion wine consecrated or

intended for a particular ritual which was to take place in the stadion. He cites similar injunctions against the removal of sacrificial meat. See P. Aupert, *Le Stade* (1979) for his extensive study of the stadion and p. 36 ff. his discussion of the inscription on wine.

and then replaced by new starting lines of marble with a double groove. The spectator area was limited to the north and west sides. And even though a fairly massive retaining wall was constructed on the south or open side to provide stability for the track, no seating facility was built on the south. There is also no evidence for the construction of a system to provide water to the track area even though a fairly elaborate fountain structure had existed above the west end of the stadion from Archaic times.

Dating the initial construction of the upper stadion presents some problems. The fill under Stage I contains primarily pottery and tile fragments dated to as early as ca. 350 B.C. but “rare” fragments of third century pottery were also found. Pottery fragments found behind some fairly massive blocks which have not been moved after the initial construction phase date to the fourth century B.C. and as early as ca. 350 B.C. Aupert dates the wall construction techniques to ca. 320-250 B.C. and ultimately places the building of the upper stadion to just after 279 B.C. His reasons are basically the following: the rare third century sherds, plus the possibility that the retaining wall may also date to the third century, provides an archaeological argument for this date; the money available from the fines levied against the Phokians after the Second Sacred War, which was used to finance the rebuilding of the major temple of Apollo and the construction of the training facilities just below the sanctuary, was probably not sufficient to support the construction also of the upper stadion; the Macedonians were experiencing sufficient difficulties in central Greece and it is unreasonable to suppose that they could manage the financing for the upper stadion; the Aetolians, who led the successful defense of the sanctuary against the Gauls in 279 B.C., were therefore the only ones capable of financing this major project. However, a Macedonian impetus and financial support for the construction of the upper stadion should not be dismissed lightly. Following Philip’s victory over the Greek forces at Chaeroneia in 338 B.C., Macedonia was involved in major construction projects at Olympia, Isthmia and Nemea. These included the Philippeion and the Echo Portico at Olympia, the latter of which may have impinged on the stadion, very probably the construction of a very elaborate new stadion at the Isthmia, and the return of the Nemean games to Nemea from Argos along with the construction of both a new stadion, other athletic facilities, and a new temple to Zeus. All these projects were undertaken in the last third of the fourth century B.C. and indicate an intense Macedonian interest in the major panhellenic sanctuaries and their crown games. A variety of political reasons may be offered for this interest, including Philip’s apparent intention to hold the annual meetings of his congress of Greek states at the various crown festivals. Philip’s successful entry into central Greece resulted from his involvement in the Second Sacred War and he presided as agonothetes over the Pythian games of 346 B.C. It seems unlikely that Delphi would be the only crown game site ignored during a period of very impressive Macedonian building activity at the other crown sanctuaries. Also the archaeological evidence just as easily supports a fourth century B.C. date for the first phase of the upper stadion. The rare third century sherds found in the first level may be accounted

for by the continual disturbance occasioned by the digging up, leveling and resurfacing of the running track which took place during the preparation for the games every four years. More crucial is the fact that the sherds found behind fairly massive stones which prevented any disturbance all date to the fourth century B.C.

The stadion underwent modest change in the mid-third century B.C. (Stage 2) and more extensive change near the end of the second century B.C. (Stage 3). Aupert dates the extensive rebuilding in stone undertaken by the Athenian philanthropist Herodes Atticus to 167-177 A.D. (Stage 4). This is the structure visible at the site today (pl. XXIII).

THE HIPPODROME

Not much can be said of the equestrian facilities at Delphi. Certainly they were located in the valley at the foot of Parnassos throughout the history of the Pythian games. Constructing such a massive structure as a horse racing track on the side of a mountain would have required extensive digging into the mountain to provide an area wide enough for a race track for upwards of forty chariots. Also moving horses and chariots up a steep slope would have added further complications. As already indicated there is little to no hope of discovering any trace of this structure. Even the inscription detailing repairs preparatory to the games has suffered more damage in the section concerned with the hippodrome.

THE ISTHMIAN GAMES

MYTHOLOGY

The third of the great Crown games was held in the sanctuary of Poseidon near Corinth on the east side of the isthmus connecting the Peloponnesos to mainland Greece. The games were provided with legendary origin in the distant past; in fact there were two competing foundation stories. The major deity honored was Poseidon but as at Olympia there was a hero cult closely attached to the sanctuary and to the games. Unfortunately, the extant references to this hero, Melikertes, or Palaimon, are fragmentary and contradictory. A somewhat simplistic version will suffice. Ino, daughter of Kadmos and Harmonia of Thebes, married Athamas and bore him two sons, Learchos and Melikertes. Ino then incurred the wrath of Hera by taking care of the infant Dionysos, the son of Zeus and Semele, Ino's sister. Hera had already arranged Semele's death through trickery and her hostility continued to be directed against anyone who assisted Dionysos. In one version of the story, Hera drove Athamas mad and he killed Learchos. Ino took Melikertes and jumped off the Molourian rock into the sea, either in a fit of madness or in an attempt to save both herself and her son from Athamas. At this point either Dionysos or Aphrodite intervened to save them. Ino was transformed into the goddess Leukothea and Melikertes was also deified in some form under the name Palaimon (Wrestler). In spite of this, the corpse of Melikertes-Palaimon was later brought ashore by a dolphin on the coast near Corinth and was found lying under a pine tree by Sisyphos, the king of Corinth famed for his cunning. The burial of Melikertes-Palaimon, either voluntarily undertaken by Sisyphos or forced by a famine, led to funeral games in his honor which were repeated at regular intervals as part of his hero cult. This legend places the hero as a central figure in both the founding of the games and in their ongoing celebration. It also provides an aetiology for the initial victor's crown at the Isthmian games which were made from pine. This worship of Melikertes-Palaimon at the Isthmia is attested by Pindar in the first half of the fifth century B.C., and Corinthian coins of the second century A.D. depict the pine tree and a dolphin with Melikertes' body. One may legitimately conclude that the foundation of the Isthmian festival as a result of the funeral celebration for Melikertes was the accepted version in Corinth.

Plutarch in his life of Theseus, however, suggests that these "games" in honor of Melikertes were nocturnal rites rather than a major public gathering and spectacle and that the foundation of the major festival was the work of Theseus. Two possible reasons for Theseus' involvement are given: either he wished to emulate Herakles' establishment of the Olympic games in honor of his father Zeus by founding games at the Isthmus in honor of his

“reputed” father Poseidon; or he established the games as atonement for the murder of a relative. The latter is based upon the curious story of Theseus’ birth in Troizen and, when he reached manhood, his trip to Athens filled with adventures. Aegeus, king of Athens, had failed to produce a son and heir and had received riddling advice from Apollo at Delphi: “Loosen not the jutting foot of the wineskin until you have returned to your paternal hearth.” He sought assistance from Pittheus, the king of Troizen noted for his wisdom, who understood the oracle to mean that Aegeus’ next indulgence in sexual intercourse would produce the desired son. He did not explain this to Aegeus but placed his daughter in bed that night with a drunken Aegeus. This led to the birth of Theseus who, when sufficiently grown, past the test left for him by Aegeus to remove a sword and pair of sandals placed under a large rock. He then set off for Athens to claim his birthright, preferring the dangerous land route (infested with robbers and ruffians) over the relatively safe voyage by sea. Among his adventures along the way was an encounter near the Isthmus of Corinth with an infamous brigand named Sinis who destroyed his victims by bending two pine trees to the ground, tying one leg to each of two pine trees, and then simultaneously releasing both trees. This rent his victims asunder and also earned him the nickname of Pityokamptes (Pine-Bender). Plutarch reports that Theseus instituted games at the Isthmus in expiation for his murder of Sinis, a close relative as the son of his mother’s sister. Plutarch alternatively suggests that Theseus may have instituted the Isthmian games because of his murder of Skeiron, also possibly the son of the sister of Theseus’ mother. Apparently because of this story of Theseus’ involvement in the founding of the games, the Athenians claimed and were granted the special status of *proedria* at Isthmia, that is they enjoyed a reserved section of prime viewing area at the festival selected in an unusual fashion: the sail of the ship bringing the official Athenian delegation to the game was spread over a section of the stands and the area covered by it was given to the Athenians. Plutarch cites an early authority for this Athenian version, Helanikos, a fifth century B.C. writer of a history of Athens. The special status yielded to Athens also demonstrates the potency of myth and legend in inter-city-state relations.¹⁸⁸

ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORY OF THE SANCTUARY

Excavations at the Isthmia were begun by Oscar Broneer in 1952 and have continued under the aegis of the University of Chicago and the American School of Classical Studies in

188. Aegeus’ problem, his visit to Delphi, and the riddling oracle is reported in Euripides, *Medea* 665-681. Plutarch, *Theseus* 25 tells of Aegeus’ visit with Pittheus, Theseus’ birth, his recovery of the sword and sandals, and his encounters with his cousins, Sinis and Skeiron. He also states that Pittheus initially did not reveal the true cause of Aithra’s pregnancy but spread

the story that the father was Poseidon, the principal deity worshipped in Troizen. This is cited, along with other evidence, by scholars who argue that Theseus was in fact the offspring of Poseidon *Aegeus* (and not of an Athenian king Aegeus) and that in origin he had no real connection with Athens.

Athens. The excavation was undertaken in 1989 under the direction of Elizabeth R. Gebhard.

The sanctuary is located on the Isthmus of Corinth about a mile from the Saronic Gulf and ten miles from Corinth which ultimately dominated the site and its activities. There was a small Mycenaean settlement with Late Helladic sherds found in most areas of the sanctuary but no evidence of cultic activity. There is a Mycenaean fortification wall dated to ca. 1200 B.C. which was intended to block access to Isthmus but was never completed. A fairly rich level of deposit of ash, bone and broken pottery was found on a rocky plateau where later a very long altar to Poseidon was constructed. The fact that the pottery fragments primarily were from vessels of open form, many from drinking cups, indicates an ongoing pattern of dining which in the Greek tradition frequently accompanied sacrifice: the gods received their due through burned parts of the sacrifice and dining began. This practice dates at the second half of the eleventh century B.C. Modest offerings began to appear by ca. 800 B.C. and from 750 to 700 more substantial votives appeared such as a few bronze helmets and a bronze tripod. The excavator's interpretation of this data is that a relatively small and simple shrine drew its business from the fact that it was placed almost immediately beside the road which came onto the Isthmus from the north (and such cities as Megara and Athens) and led to Corinth. The findings also indicate that some local inhabitants also frequented the shrine. There is no clear indication of which deities were worshipped through the sacrifices and ritual dining but Poseidon, the dominant god of the more fully developed sanctuary, is a likely assumption.¹⁸⁹

During the Archaic period Corinth began an elaborate development at the sanctuary. Probably during the second quarter of the seventh century a temple was built after a level surface was prepared on the plateau where the sacrificial meals had taken place. A fairly long altar was also constructed in front of the temple. Somewhat later, after 650 B.C., the first of a series of terraces was built designed to enlarge the usable space in the temple plateau, a good indication of the increased importance of the shrine. By tradition the Panhellenic Isthmian Crown games began in 582 B.C. and the preparation of the required athletic facility, i.e. a running track of 600 feet, presented a major problem: the area of the sanctuary is on an uneven terrain in all directions, so much so that a usable track could not simply be placed anywhere on the existing surface. The position selected for the first stadion, built basically on a northwest-southeast axis, closely associated the temple, altar and athletic competition in that the starting line was set next to the temple. Because of a six meter drop in level from the northwest to the southeast ends of the dromos, vast amounts of earth had to be brought in to create a suitable surface. The final 65 to 70 meters toward

189. O. Broneer: *Isthmia* I. *Temple of Poseidon* (1971), *Isthmia* II. *Topography and Architecture* (1973), and *Isthmia* III. *Terracotta Lamps* (1977). Gebhard, *Mind and Body* 82-88 Gebhard, Hemans and Gebhard, *Sanctuaries*. For the Mycenaean and Iron Age artifacts and excavation, see Gebhard, *Mind and Body* 82 and Gebhard, Hemans 61-68 and 19 (by Catherine Morgan).

the far end of the track probably required about 5,000 cubic feet of dirt alone to create a basically level surface. The date of the track cannot be ascertained from pottery found in conjunction with it, but certainly track and field events could not have been conducted without an artificially levelled surface. Its construction was probably about contemporary with an East Terrace built in the second quarter of the sixth century, and this would accord well with the 582 B.C. date for the first festival. The difficulty and expense in preparing the site for athletic competition stress the vigorous effort undertaken by Corinth to establish a major festival and certainly implies the presumed significant political and economic benefits accruing to the sponsoring city-state. Temples and sanctuaries served as symbols of a city's power and influence, while also providing a very visible arena for the propagandistic display of war booty. Corinth, for example, placed some of its war booty within the temenos (sacred precinct) easily visible not only to those visiting the sanctuary but also to those merely travelling by on the major road which boarded the shrine.

Within fifty years crowds attending the festival were sufficient to merit the construction of an earthen embankment accommodating spectators for ca. 67 meters on the northeast side of the dromos. In fact, because of the uneven terrain and the absence of a hill or suitable small valley or depression to assist in providing natural elevations for spectator viewing, the stadion at Isthmia was totally composed of artificial embankments, a further testament to the difficulties the Corinthians had to surmount.

In 480/79 B.C. an event is reported which highlights the importance of the sanctuary's location next to the north-south roadway entering the Peloponnesos and its easy approach by sea. Following the Battle of Salamis, the Greeks first dispatched the first fruits of victory to Delphi and then the commanders of the fleet sailed to the Isthmus for a meeting at the temple of Poseidon. The purpose was to select by vote the commander most deserving of a special prize for contributing to the Greek victory. As Herodotos reports, every commander voted for himself as deserving the prize, while many added a second place vote for Themistocles, the Athenian who drew up the Greek battle plan. Since nobody received more than one first place vote, no prize was awarded. This is the first in a series of significant meetings of Greek representatives at the Isthmian sanctuary of Poseidon. In addition to convenience of location, it has also been pointed out that one of the attributes of Poseidon was that of god of assemblies.¹⁹⁰

190. Discussion of the construction projects in the sanctuary during the Archaic period will be found in the works by Broneer and Gebhard cited in n. 189 above. For sanctuaries as vehicles for the display of war booty, see Snodgrass, *Archaic Greece* 104 ff. (Greek temples as war museums). For the political, propagandistic, and other aspects of temples and sanctuaries, see N.

Marinatos, "What were Greek Sanctuaries? A Synthesis", in *Greek Sanctuaries. New Approaches*. For the meeting of the Greek commanders at Isthmia following the Battle of Salamis, see Herodotos 1.123. For Poseidon as god of assemblies, see W. Burkert. "Heros, Tod und Sport". Gunter Gebauer (ed.), in *Körper- und Einbildungskraft* (Berlin 1988) 31 ff.

The fifth century saw major improvements and expansion of facilities at the sanctuary. The initial impetus was a massive fire ca. 470-60 which destroyed the temple. This disaster was apparently accidental and not the result of any deliberate aggression. The Corinthians quickly rebuilt the temple on a grander scale in the Doric style with stone rather than wooden columns and also expanded the altar to match the new size of the temple. Probably at the same time a very elaborate and unparalleled triangular starting line, or *balbis*, was constructed for the stadion. Ultimately increasing attendance required enlargement of the spectator embankment which was also reinforced by retaining walls. Probably during this century a theatre was built within the sanctuary to properly house the musical competitions. The protracted war between Athens and the Peloponnesian League (Sparta and allies – including Corinth) which dominated the final third to the fifth century did not impinge upon the sanctuary or its major festival.

The fourth century, at least until the Macedonian victory at Chaeronia in 338 B.C., was unkind to Isthmia. Another war, usually referred to as the Corinthian War, erupted, and this time Corinth joined with Athens, Thebes, and Argos against Sparta and her League. Again, very likely because of its strategic location, the Isthmus was used as the coordinating point for the alliance of Corinth, Athens, Thebes, and Argos. Not the least concern of these allies was to keep Sparta from bringing her troops by land out of the Peloponnesos. The temple was burned again during this period, quite possibly as the result of a hostile action, necessitating a second rebuilding program but on a lesser scale. This militant event emphasizes the political significance of these major sanctuaries: even though they were sacred institutions and proclaimed and enforced sacred truces for their festivals, none of them escaped attack, plundering, and destruction at the hands of Greek forces. Also early in this century, and possibly associated with the temple construction, a new starting line was placed some eleven meters down the track from the triangular *balbis*. This was of poor quality and very likely indicates hard times for the sanctuary because of the war and its aftermath.

The whole sanctuary benefited greatly from Philip II's victory at Chaeronia, again because of its location and the fact that it was a Panhellenic site. Philip summoned a meeting of Greeks to Isthmia to discuss his projected invasion of Persia. His intent to hold meetings of an assembly of Greek representatives at regular intervals and timed to coincide with one of the crown festivals led to fairly massive Macedonian spending to refurbish the facilities at these sanctuaries. Since the stadia were used as the forum for these meetings, they received particular and probably immediate attention. A totally new facility for athletic competition was built some 250 meters from the southeast end of the previous stadion. The construction of this new stadion once again forced the movement of massive amounts of earth as the embankments of the earlier stadion were removed from the immediate environs of the temple. Philip's son, Alexander, continued his father's initiative by holding two assemblies at Isthmia.

The sanctuary was basically destroyed, along with the city of Corinth, in 146 B.C. by the Romans in reprisal for Corinth's participation in a revolt. The games allegedly continued

but were transferred to Sikyon. During the first century A.D. the city and the sanctuary were rebuilt when Caesar Augustus decided to settle a significant number of his veterans there. Certainly the temple, the stadion, and the theatre were rebuilt and the Isthmian festival once again attracted the premier athletes of the day along with crowds of spectators, merchants, and anyone else seeking a forum for display. For the second time in its history the Isthmian sanctuary and its festival were rescued by a dominant military power which perceived some major advantage in enhancing or even reviving the shrine, this time by a foreign authority which had no claim on the Hellenic traditions associated with it. This is the Isthmia visited by Pausanias during the second century A.D. and his description confirms the continuity of attitudes toward athletics and cult probably from the sixth century B.C.:

“So they say the isthmus belongs to Poseidon; you should see the theatre and the white stone stadium. As you go into the sanctuary, there are portrait statues of athletes who won at the Isthmian games, and some pine trees in a line, mostly going straight up. The temple itself is no higher than the trees; there are bronze Tritons standing on it. In front of the temple there are two Poseidons, an Amphitrite, and a Sea, all bronze; inside Herodes Atticus of our own day has dedicated a team of four gilded horses with ivory hooves. There are two golden Tritons beside them, ivory from the flanks: Amphitrite and Poseidon are standing in the chariot, and the boy Palaimon upright on a dolphin, all this of ivory and gold.... Inside the ring-wall (a rotunda) on the left is the shrine of Palaimon which has statues of Poseidon, Leukothea, and Palaimon himself. There is another (shrine of Palaimon) also, called the holy place, with a way down to it underground, where they say Palaimon is hidden. Any Corinthian or foreigner who swears an oath there can never escape his oath by machination” (Pausanias 2.7 f, Levi translations).

The sanctuary enjoyed several centuries relatively free from further assaults, but it came to an end as an impressive architectural complex near the end of the fourth century A.D. The threat of major barbarian incursions from the north persuaded the inhabitants of the region to dismantle the major buildings, including the temple of Poseidon, and use the stone in the construction of a six-mile long fortification known as the Hexamilion Wall.¹⁹¹ This guarded the entrance to the Peloponnesos throughout the Medieval period, a mute but eloquent reminder of the violent end of one segment of a vision of Panhellenic peace and harmony.

ISTHMIAN FESTIVAL

This festival was instituted probably in 582 B.C. and scheduled biennially during the later spring, April or May, in even numbered years. Thus the Isthmian games and the Pythian

191. For argument and evidence for an actual attack upon the sanctuary by Alaric late in the fourth century A.D., see Ann E. Beaton and Paul A. Clement,

“The Destruction of the Sanctuary of Poseidon”, *Hesperia* 45 (1976), 267-79.

games, were providing athletes for two major “international” competitions within three or four months. By ancient reckoning, since the new year generally began with the summer solstice, the Isthmian games were held near the end of one year and the Olympic or Pythian games were celebrated within two months of the following year. The Isthmian festival could also claim to be the second oldest athletic crown festival in Greece, having been founded in the spring of 582 B.C. just ahead of the crown games at Delphi first held during the summer of the same year.

The program of athletic and equestrian events was that of the Olympic games with two additions. A running event, the *hippios*, was added. This race was four lengths of the stadion, i.e. ca. 800 yards. The name *hippios* has been variously explained: either it reflects the length, or circuit, of a hippodrome or possibly it refers to the horse-like strength necessary to compete successfully in a sprint-like strength necessary to compete successfully in a sprint-race of this length. Also the Isthmian festival added a third age-group by ca. 370 B.C., *ageneios*, a category of age between boys and men. These three groups are conveniently equated to those under seventeen boys, those seventeen to nineteen, *ageneios* or youths, and those twenty and above. The Isthmian festival also included musical contests, possibly from the beginning. Since no comment has survived about the equestrian events, it is assumed that they were the same as those at Olympia.

There is a total lack of evidence as to who were the officials at these games, how many days were involved, or even the precise nature of Corinthian control and maintenance of the shrine. There is good evidence for the prize given victors. The crown awarded fluctuated between one of pine or one of wild dried celery. The earliest reference is in a fragment of a satyr play, the *Theoroi*, or *Isthmiastai* – “competitors at the Isthmian games”, by Aeschylus where the athletes are described as crowned with pine. However, Pindar several times refers to crowns of celery at the Isthmian games and the usual conclusion is that by ca. 478 B.C. the crown of dry celery had been introduced. This is the date assigned to Pindar’s *Nemean* 4; the Aeschylean play is therefore assumed to have been written before 478 B.C. The use of pine crowns seems to reappear by the second century B.C., possibly along with crowns of celery, and is further attested by writers during the first and second centuries A.D.¹⁹²

192. Aeschylus’ reference to pine crowns is at line 75 of the *Theoroi*. The earliest Pindaric reference is *Nemean* 4.88. Plutarch, *Quaest. Conviv.* 5.31 and Dio Chrysostom, *Orat.* 8.10 ff. also refer to Isthmian pine crowns. Pausanias 8.48.2 adds that the pine crowns at Isthmia were worn in mourning for Palaimon (see below) just as the crowns of celery were worn at the Ne-

mean games in mourning for Opheltes. For several hundred years both the Isthmian and Nemean games apparently awarded crowns of celery, with the possible distinction that the Isthmian crowns were of wilted celery while those at Nemea were of fresh celery. For a survey of the evidence, see O. Broneer, “The Isthmian Crown”, *AJA* 66 (1962), 259-263.

ATHLETIC FACILITIES

The excavations of the sanctuary have revealed a very interesting but so far modest athletic complex. Only the early stadion has been excavated, although the later stadion has been located and minimally explored via tunnels. No training facilities have been discovered or mentioned by any ancient writer. Bathing facilities and a pool were available but were replaced during the second century B.C. by elaborate Roman baths. Certainly there was a hippodrome but its location is a matter of conjecture, i.e. some distance to the west near the road to Corinth. No trace has been found of accommodations for athletes or spectators. The city of Corinth, ca. ten miles away, may have been too distant for daily commuting by foot but it was certainly near enough to provide whatever supplies were needed.

As already noted the terrain did not offer sufficient level ground which would have provided a natural and easily used setting for a dromos. Therefore the construction of a stadion was an absolute prerequisite before any athletic festival could be held. Very little evidence remains of the first track used when the games were organized as a crown festival, although Broneer detected signs of stone packing used possibly to support an embankment for improved spectator viewing. As noted above, the inhospitable terrain required bringing massive amounts of earth to create a level surface of 600 feet. The slope of the ground, as measured in 1988 by an electromagnetic conductivity meter, produced a drop of ca. six meters from the vicinity of the temple and the starting line to the projected end of the track. The drop seems to have been more pronounced for the final 65-70 meters, requiring about 5,000 cubic meters of earth to raise this segment to a level close to that of the starting line. An extensive embankment to enhance the area for spectators to at least 67 meters on the northeast side was put in place during the third quarter of the sixth century (pl. XXIV). Also constructed were one or two passageways from the temple and altar into the stadion, probably for athletes and officials.

An elaborate starting device was constructed early in the fifth century, probably between 470-460 B.C. when the temple of Poseidon was rebuilt. This *hysplex*, or *balbis*, a stone sill in the form of a very squat triangle, is 20.42m on its long side and contains a starter's pit somewhat off center near the top of the triangle. The starting line is the long side which contains a series of eighteen modest sockets (ca. 0.07×0.035m) cut through the sill at intervals averaging 1.049m. The starter's pit measures ca. 0.53m in diameter and 1m in depth. Radiating from this pit in a semi-circular line facing the starting line are grooves cut into the stone with bronze staples at ca. 0.5m to hold a cord in place. The grooves terminate near the starting line next to the sockets where another bronze staple is set in lead at the end of each groove (pl. XXV, fig. 1). The sockets undoubtedly were designed to hold posts with moveable arms at or near the top. This intricate device probably allowed a starter to stand in the pit, pull the cords attached to each moveable arm and held in place by the staples and grooves, thus raising them. At the given signal, whether by voice or trumpet, the person

in the pit would drop simultaneously all cords allowing the moveable arms in front of each starting position to drop and the runners to begin the race. Because there were only sixteen grooves the track probably accommodated only sixteen rather narrow lanes (ca. 1.049m on average) with an open or unused lane in front of the starting pit. Since the far end of the track, as well as the embankments, were removed when a new stadion was constructed during the final third of the fourth century, the precise length of the *dromos* used during the sixth and fifth centuries cannot be recovered. Broneer believes that it was the same length as the track at Olympia, i.e. 192.27m. His one bit of evidence is that the Olympic foot was the measurement used in the construction of the temple ca. 470 B.C. and therefore possibly also reflected that used for the stadion when the new starting line was built at approximately the same time. This would certainly imply that the initial distance of the track in 582 B.C. was based on the Olympic foot. For whatever reason, a new starting sill of more traditional form was possibly installed ca. 0.905m in front of the triangular sill, although the major evidence for this is a line of discolored earth ca. 0.70m in width running across the track. If this elaborate starting device was in fact quickly replaced, it must have failed to provide an easily managed fair start. An enlarged embankment for spectators was also part of the fifth century activity, including a retaining wall.

Partial remains of another *hysplex* have been found 10.93m from the base of the triangular sill. This is dated to ca. 390 B.C. and probably coincides with the rebuilding of the temple early in the fourth century. Only a single groove was cut into the softer, porous stone of this sill and the starting positions were marked by larger lead-lined sockets positioned so as to provide a lane of ca. 1.59m in width. This track could accommodate thirteen lanes but Broneer believes that there were probably only twelve with a rather sizeable dead lane in the middle. If the position of the other end of the track remained the same, the movement by 10.93m of the major starting and finish line would have shortened an Olympic size track to ca. 181 meters, a distance which became popular in the Peloponnesos during the fourth century B.C. Broneer also found evidence on the southeast side of the track of retaining walls used to stabilize man-made earthen embankments used for spectator areas. The southwest side apparently had a sufficient natural slope so as not to need artificial embankment.

Later a new stadion was constructed some distance from the temple and outside the immediate area of the sanctuary in a streambed whose water had been diverted by means of a series of tunnels (pl. XXV, fig. 2). The streambed was flattened to prepare a surface suitable for the *dromos* and the rather steep banks on either side of the stream provided a natural setting for the spectator area. Broneer, unable to purchase the land above this later stadion, obtain permission to dig a few trial trenches and also with the aid of miners to explore parts of the stadion by digging tunnels branching off from these trenches. This ingenious and dangerous effort enabled him to conclude both that this stadion is the best preserved structure of its type in Greece and is of excellent Greek workmanship. He was able to examine part of one starting line, a stone sill 0.46m in width with two v-shaped

grooves. The sockets or postholes were 0.07m square and were set at intervals of 1.51m. He believes that the hysplex was ca. 25 meters long, providing sixteen fairly wide lanes, plus a middle dead space. Broneer concludes that the track length was in the 181 meter category and based upon a foot measurement of 0.302m ($600 \times 0.302\text{m} = 181.2\text{m}$), which was the presumed length of the shortened earlier early fourth century stadion and the length of the stadion in nearby Epidauros. The 1.51m width of the lanes offers corroboration: 1.5m is five of the 0.302 feet. The track at its widest is 2.35m wider than the track at its open end and 2.46m wider than the closed end, thus providing a slight bulge outward possibly designed to improve the sight-lines of spectators. Also found flush against the inner end of the starting line was a sizeable block (1.26 $\times$ 0.55m) with a complicated set of cuttings. This probably held part of a new starting device whose operation has so far eluded analysis. The date of this new stadion could not be established through these modest exploratory efforts. Given its fairly grandiose nature and fine workmanship Broneer suggests that it may have been the result of the conquest of Greece by Philip II and his son Alexander in 338 B.C. As already noted Philip had selected Corinth as the capital or major place of assembly of the union of various city-states now under his control and it seems to have been Macedonian policy to improve the public facilities of this new center of power. Constructing an elaborate stadion at the Isthmia would certainly have been part of an effort to enhance the reputation of the Isthmian games which may have declined during the mid-fourth century as possibly evidenced by the relatively poor quality of the hysplex installed sometime earlier in the century and by the reduction in the number of lanes from sixteen to twelve. Philip II apparently intended to hold official meetings of the assembled Greeks at the Panhellenic festivals and to this end also seems to have returned the Nemean games to their original location and to have undertaken the rebuilding of the Nemean sanctuary.

The Isthmian athletic complex was basically abandoned after the conquest and destruction of Corinth by the Roman general Mummius in 146 B.C. and games apparently were not held there until the first century A.D. when Caesar Augustus began refurbishing the city and the sanctuary. Broneer found evidence of this in the form of some obviously Roman repair work on the newer stadion. In A.D. 396 Alaric invaded Greece and possibly destroyed much of the sanctuary of Poseidon at the Isthmus. Theodosius I had quite recently outlawed the cult. Whatever architectural structures still existed in the sanctuary were soon uprooted and out into a defensive wall stretching across the Isthmus from the Corinthian to the Saronic gulfs.¹⁹³

193. See O. Broneer, *Isthmia* II 46 ff. for his detailed discussion of the various stadia. See Gebhard, Hemans 57 ff. for the results of an examination and excavation: Broneer's archaic stadion is now classified

as Early Stadium, phases one through four. Panos Valavanis, "HYSPLEX, The starting device of Classical Stadia", *First Scientific Symposium, University of Athens, Athens* (1996) 10-13.

THE NEMEAN GAMES

The festival at Nemea achieved Panhellenic and crown status in 573 B.C. and by its addition the classical circuit of four crown games was completed. The sanctuary was located in an area with no nearby major population center and was initially under the control of Kleonai, a relatively small city some ten kilometers distant. Zeus was the god honored by a major temple. Stephen G. Miller of the University of California at Berkeley has directed the major excavations from 1973 which has recovered much of the sanctuary and the athletic facilities.¹⁹⁴

MYTHOLOGY

Nemea presents two foundation legends, one involving Herakles and the other the legend of the Seven against Thebes. Both place the origin of the games before the Trojan War and well before 573 B.C. Herakles began his twelve labors at Nemea by killing a lion with an impenetrable skin. He used a club and his own great strength to subdue and strangle the monstrous creature. He also used the lion's own claws to skin it. This adventure provided the hero with the two major items of his costume, the club and the lion skin. In this possible foundation legend, Herakles held the first games at Nemea in honor of his father Zeus to celebrate the successful completion of his first labor.

The other legendary account involves the seven heroes setting out from Argos with their forces to attack seven-gated Thebes. Their first stop along the way was near Nemea to find water. Hypsipyle, a slave recently acquired by the local priest-king, Lykourgos, was attending her master's infant son when she was asked by the heroes to direct them to a sufficient water source. In the process of guiding them, Hypsipyle temporarily placed the infant Opheltes on the ground on a bed of fresh wild celery, thus violating her instruction never to let the baby touch the ground. This admonition was based upon an oracle from Apollo at Delphi that the infant, if he is to reach manhood and succeed to the throne, should not touch the ground until he could walk. During her brief absence a poisonous snake bit Opheltes and he died. This was regarded as a bad omen for the army and in an attempt to forestall its possible consequences, Adrastus, king of Argos and commander of the army, held funeral games for the young prince, now also called Archemoros, thus beginning the

194. The excavation reports are found in *Hesperia*, volumes 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, and 57. His recent publication, *Guide* provides ...a convenient overview of the excavations and the sanctuary. He describes the lo-

cation of Nemea as falling in the middle of several major powers with Corinth to the northeast, Argos to the south and Arkadia to the west – “a sort of international no-man's land”: Miller, *Mind and Body* 89.

tradition of games at Nemea. The findings at Nemea indicate an early and continuous concern for a cult involving an infant and only late and limited concern for the slaying of the Nemean lion by Herakles. Nemea thus had an important hero-cult, centered in a heroon near the temple and funeral games similar to those seen at Olympia (Pelops) and at the Isthmus (Melikertes-Palaimon). This legend of Opheltes-Archemoros provided an aetiology for several aspects of the sanctuary and its games: the crown awarded was of wild celery, presumably reflecting the fact the Opheltes was placed on a bed of wild celery; the judges at the games wore black and the sacred grove was of cypresses, the tree of mourning.¹⁹⁵ Delphi ultimately was brought into a similar pattern through presumed funeral games offered by Apollo for the python he killed there in revenge for harassment of his mother and whose territory he seized for his own Pythian sanctuary and games.

ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORY OF THE SANCTUARY

There is evidence of a small but vigorous Mycenaean settlement in the area of Nemea but nothing to establish the presence of a cult or continuation of a cult or sanctuary. In fact we have to jump a number of centuries to find items of interest as far as a major shrine is concerned.

The sanctuary, established in the early sixth century (573 B.C.) with the founding of its major festival at least eight hundred years later, presents a curious historical feature: there was neither a powerful city-state in the immediate vicinity, such as Corinth for the Isthmian sanctuary, nor an association of major communities, such as the Delphic Amphiktyony for the Pythian sanctuary, to provide security for the festival and its games. To be sure, the presence of such agents did not always protect the sanctuaries at Delphi and the Isthmus from destructive attacks, but Nemea, unlike Olympia, was close enough to a number of urban centers, especially Argos, to attract covetous attention. In the one-thousand year history of the Nemean games, the great majority of the festivals were celebrated in Argos without a change of name or of deity honored.

Modest excavations at the site were carried out by the American School in Athens during the 1920's and 1960's and a more thorough exploration by Stephen Miller uncovered the various buildings supporting the festival and athletic activities.

A temple to Zeus was constructed late in the seventh century, not too long before the institution of the games. As might be expected, an early hysplex or starting line was found near the temple indicating that the sixth-century stadion was placed within the sanctuary.

195. The physical remains greatly favor the Opheltes story as critical to sanctuary: a heroon dedicated to an infant was discovered near the temple. Thus, as at Olympia and the Isthmian sanctuary, a hero cult was

closely associated with the worship of a major Olympian god and with the crown games at this Panhellenic sanctuary.

This proximity to the temple is similar to the placement of the early stadia at both Olympia and the Isthmia. The festival remained at Nemea throughout the sixth and fifth centuries but in ca. 415-410 B.C. the sanctuary was overrun and the temple destroyed, probably as the result of an armed attack. Miller found arrow heads, spear heads, and blackened stone from this time period dumped into a well at the site. The Nemean games were moved to Argos, the probable attacker, where they continued for seventy to eighty years. Strangely, there is no strong protest against this sacrilege, or even a report of it, in the rapidly growing corpus of historical writings of the late fifth and early fourth centuries.

In the 330's B.C. the games were transferred back to the Nemean sanctuary, a move accompanied by an extensive building program. The temple was rebuilt or refurbished,¹⁹⁶ an altar ca. forty meters long placed in front of the temple, housing facilities constructed, a bathing complex added, and a new stadion placed some distance from the sanctuary proper (pl. XXVI). The massiveness of the undertaking and the obvious expense point toward Macedonia as the primary agent. It is difficult to identify another state capable at this time both of removing the games from Argos and of financing such activity. Also the number of Macedonian coins from this date found at the site point to the same source as does the presidency of the Nemean games in 315 B.C. held by the Macedonian Kassander. The Macedonian victory at Chaironeia in 338 B.C. and Philip's formation of a union of Greek states which were to meet each year at a Panhellenic festival probably led to the transfer of the games back to Nemea and to the massive building program to restore both the temple and the athletic facilities. Near and to the south of the temple, a row of nine buildings, some of which had dining facilities, were constructed along one side of the so-called Sacred Square. They are identified on excavation drawings as *oikoi* and were erected by various city-states somewhat on the model of the treasuries at Olympia and Delphi. Various states, including Epidauros and Rhodes, had constructed them early in the fifth century and they were rebuilt during the late fourth century renovation.¹⁹⁷

The Nemean festival, after the Macedonians had returned it to its original location and had rebuilt and enlarged the site, survived at the Nemean sanctuary for only about fifty years. During the 270's B.C. the city of Argos reclaimed control of the games and brought

196. Miller, encouraged by the survival of the majority of the stone blocks of the temple, undertook the reconstruction of the temple of Zeus. The Nemea Center for Classical Archaeology has undertaken the study of the materials from this site.

197. Miller determined the chronological development of the site from excavation of wells into which debris from the destruction levels was thrown. One well includes such debris from the late fifth century B.C. The virtual lack of any artefacts at the sanctuary

from the first half of the fourth century B.C. further testifies to the abandonment of the site at this time. A second well reveals occupation activity from the second half of the fourth century B.C. See Miller, *Guide* 39-43, and Miller, "Kleonai, the Nemean Games, and the Lamian War", in *Studies in Athenian Architecture, Sculpture and Topography*. *Hesperia* Suppl. XX (1982) 100-108. For the *oikoi*, see Miller, *Mind and Body* 91. *Ancient Greek Athletics* (Yale University 2004) 105-112.

them once again to its territory. This obviously reflects the loss of control by the Macedonians which had brought, albeit briefly, some measure of independence to the various Greek city-states and stability to major sanctuaries. In the 230's B.C. Aratos of Sikyon, as part of his dispute with Argos, temporarily blockaded the games at Argos and put on alternate games at Nemea. In an attempt to fully undermine the Argive festival, he sold into slavery any athlete caught trying to reach Argos. This was a short-lived aberration and the games were soon celebrated in Argos and remained there for the duration of their history.

THE NEMEAN FESTIVAL

The festival was celebrated in alternate odd-numbered years (by our reckoning) during the summer, probably July/August. As with the other Panhellenic sanctuaries, Nemea dispatched heralds throughout the Greek world to announce the games and to proclaim the sacred truce. The length of the festival is unknown, but it probably followed the Olympic adoption of a five day schedule. Because Zeus was the honored deity at Nemea, the conduct of affairs may have been rather closely modelled after of Olympia. This may explain the coincidences of names for the managing officials/referees: at both Olympia and Nemea they were called Hellanodikai.

The program of competitive events at the Nemean games was the same as the Olympic program with the addition of the *hippios*, a race of four lengths of the dromos. The schedule of events would thus include five track events stadion sprint, diaulos, hippios, dolichos, and hoplitodromos, three combat events, wrestling, boxing and the pankration, the pentathlon, and the equestrian events, featuring at a minimum the tethrippon, the synoris, and the keles. Nemea also added a third age group, the *ageneios* or youth group. Miller projects the following age classifications: boys (12-16 year); ageneios or beardless youths (16-20 years); and men (21 and over). There were also, as at Olympia and other major athletic festivals, competitions for the *keryx*, herald, and *salpinktes*, trumpeter, which selected and crowned the herald and the trumpeter who participated in the conduct of the games through introduction of competitors, announcement of winners, and providing the necessary signals for the various contests. As noted the victory crown was made of wild celery, allegedly commemorating the death of the infant Opheltis-Archemoros.

The Nemean festival without doubt attracted the leading athletes of each generation, most of whom probably hoped to win their event at all four crown games. Official delegations would be present to represent their city-states as well as the usual mixture of spectators, merchants, and others attracted by the opportunities afforded by large crowds in a festive mood. Nemea's proximity to a number of towns and villages should have ensured good attendance, with the added bonus of somewhat cooler temperatures and mountain breezes resulting from Nemea's 1,000 foot elevation.

THE ATHLETIC FACILITIES

Little evidence exists for the facilities available at the sanctuary during the sixth and fifth centuries. A starting line for an early stadion was found within the temenos, but not much else. The excavation have, however, revealed a fairly complex series of buildings and a stadion built ca. 330-320 B.C. Those with possible athletic importance are a sizeable two story-structure, to the south of the *oikoi* built by various city-states, which may have been rooming accommodations for athletes, the *xenon* (pl. XXVII) and the bath complex just to the west of the *xenon*. This latter, with the same orientation and width as the *xenon*, had a sunken complex of rooms containing two smaller areas with four tubs each and a larger area in between with a plunge pool. If the *xenon* was for athletes, the bathing complex must also have provided them with the necessary means for cleaning up after workouts and competition. However, no trace of training facilities such as a palaistra and practice tracks have been located; in fact, the sanctuary does not have sufficient room for such large complexes. If they existed, they would of necessity have been placed some distance from the sanctuary. Further to the south behind the *xenon* more house-like structures were found which exhibited sporadic occupation and are thought to have possibly housed the Hellanodikai, the priests, and caretakers during the season of the festival.¹⁹⁸

Following other late fourth century patterns, the stadion was moved some distance from the sanctuary and temple and built between two low hills which provided gradually rising slopes for spectator viewing (pl. XXVI). There was insufficient level ground to support the six hundred plus feet of the dromos as the ground had a pronounced slope downward from south to north. The builders therefore had to use the earth, which was removed from the hills in the construction of the spectator area and the running track, as a land fill to raise the elevation by over eight meters for approximately 200 feet of the track. Unfortunately, no retaining walls were constructed to stabilize this built up terrace and thus this less stable area has been totally eroded away. Only the southern end of the track set against the hills is preserved. 100-, 200-, 300- and 400-foot markers have been found *in situ* and indicate that a 0.296m foot length was used. This is the same foot measurement used in the extant stadion in Delphi and provides a dromos of ca. 178 meters in length. The running track is not a perfect rectangle but bulges slightly in the middle: the width at the preserved starting line is 23.52m, at the 100-foot marker 25.58m, at the 200-foot marker 26.66m, and at the 300-foot marker 26.93. The usual explanation for this slight bulge is to provide better viewing for the spectators. Somewhat irregular seating was cut into the soft rock of the preserved end of the stadion, and the only other identifiable seating is that provided for the judges and dignitaries, one placed on the west side of the track about 100 feet from the south start-

198. Miller, *Mind and Body* 91 and *Guide* 110 f. intimated by the presence within them of official
The official nature of the houses behind the *xenon* is weights and other utensils necessary for the festival.

ing line (auxiliary judges' stand in pl. XXI, fig. 1) and the other (judges' stand) at approximately the same location on the east side. Miller estimates the capacity of this stadion at ca. 30,000 to 40,000.

The preserved hysplex is 21.15m long and made of stone with two grooves to provide the runners with foot-grips for better starts. The groove closest to the track, i.e. the northern groove, is continuous and is cut with an inward slope, while the southern groove, cut straight down, has gaps of 0.25m every 1.63m to accommodate sockets for the posts dividing the starting positions. Twelve such postholes provided for thirteen lanes. One interesting discovery was a free standing posthole with socket located 5.30m north of the starting line and 3.40m west of the center of the track. Miller presumes that a similar posthole with socket existed at the non-preserved end of the track and provided turning posts especially for the dolichos. The approximately five meters between the post and the hysplex would have provided ample space for negotiating the turn, while the off-center placement would give the runner more area for turning near the center of the track (pl. XXVI). Water was brought into the stadion from some as yet undetermined source by means of an underground pipe emptying into stone water channels which delivered water to basins situated ca. every twenty five meters around the dromos. To ensure proper flow of water from south to north, the track had a very gradual drop in elevation of ca. two meters in its 600 foot length. This meant that half of all but one race was run slightly uphill, while the stadion sprint, if it started at the north end, was all uphill. The grade probably was insufficient to really effect the performance of the athletes.

About 200 feet north of the extant stating line a tunnel some thirty-six meters in length was cut into the slope supporting the spectator area on the west side of the stadion. Miller concludes that a tunnel entrance was preferred because placement of the entrance further to the north would have provided easy and direct access to the stadion without the need for a tunnel. But a path or Sacred Way must have led from the tunnel to the temple of Zeus located ca. 400m to the north and west. The tunnel thus made possible the desired spectacular entrance of athletes and judges at the beginning of competition and also provided a cool, convenient waiting area for athletes between events. This latter function produced a number of graffiti scratched by competitors probably as they awaited the call for their events. The ceramic evidence and the design of the tunnel point towards a late fourth century construction date of the assumption of hegemony by the Macedonians and probably reflects as well their construction efforts at other crown game sanctuaries. At the W. entrance of the tunnel is the apodyterion, a court with a colonnade on its three sides.

As with all other major sanctuaries with athletic competitions, no trace of a hippodrome has been found. One of the rare references to it is in Pausanias (6.20.19) where he discusses the phenomenon of taraxippos (scarer of horses) at Olympia and adds that at Nemea there were red rocks above the turn in the hippodrome which looked like fire when lighted by the sun, thus terrifying horses.

THE PERIODOS OF THE CROWN GAMES AND PANHELLENISM

According to our calendar the Olympic games were held every four years on even numbered years divisible by four, the Pythian games were held every four years on even numbered years not divisible by four, the Isthmian games were held every two years on even numbered years, and the Nemean every two years on odd numbered years. This schedule presents the following pattern:

400 B.C.	Isthmian games and Olympic games
399 B.C.	Nemean games
398 B.C.	Isthmian games and Pythian games
397 B.C.	Nemean games
396 B.C.	Isthmian games and Olympic games

The Olympic, Pythian and Nemean games were held in late summer while the Isthmian games took place in late spring. The ancient calendars generally began the New Year on the summer solstice and therefore the ancient pattern would more resemble the following:¹⁹⁹

Solar Year 1, July/August:	Olympic games (e.g. 400 B.C.)
Solar Year 2, July/August:	Nemean games (399 B.C.)
Solar Year 2, April/May:	Isthmian games (398 B.C.)
Solar Year 3, July/August:	Pythian games (398 B.C.)
Solar Year 4, July/August:	Nemean games (397 B.C.)
Solar Year 4, April/May:	Isthmian games (396 B.C.)
Solar Year 5, July/August:	Olympic Games (396 B.C.)

Thus the Isthmian and Nemean games shared solar years 2 and 4, while the Olympic games and Pythian games were the only crown games celebrated in solar year 1, Olympics, and solar year 3, Pythian. The place of the Isthmian games in the rotation provided athletes with two of the most prestigious competitions within a span of two to three months. The Greek term for this four-year schedule of athletic festivals was *periodos*, or circuit. Winning one's event, e.g. wrestling, at all the crown games was considered a major achievement. Winning one's event at all the crown games within a single Olympiad, i.e. winning the wrestling crown six times, was the ultimate athletic achievement and brought with it the title *periodonikes*, "winner of the circuit".

These four sanctuaries and their festivals are often regarded as the focal points for the development of Panhellenism, that growing awareness that the Greeks shared a common lan-

199. Miller, *Guide* 3.

guage, a common set of religious beliefs and, one might add, a common passion for competitive athletics, which distinguished them from the surrounding peoples called *xenoi* or *barbaroi*. The causes for the development of Panhellenism have been debated over the past century. An early view, argued by J. B. Bury in 1890, attributed it to the Greek tyrants who controlled many city-states in Greece during the seventh, sixth, and even into the fifth centuries B.C.: Olympia became famous and important because of the intervention of Pheidon, the elusive tyrant of Argos; the Pythian and Isthmian games owed their fame to two tyrants, Kleisthenes of Sikyon and Periander of Corinth; and the Nemean games owe their origin to Argive hostility to Kleisthenes of Sikyon and were probably founded to celebrate the town of Kleonai winning, with the help of whoever was the ruler of Argos at the time, its independence from Sikyon. A further aspect of this argument is that the Greek tyrants generally based their power on popular support and the crown games had democratic appeal because, except for the equestrian events, competition was open to any individual on a one-to-one basis.²⁰⁰ Some fifty years later, M. F. McGregor challenged Bury's thesis of tyrannical origin of the games and argued the reverse, that the three games founded early in the sixth century may well have been founded to celebrate the fall of tyranny. The first Isthmian games, if correctly dated to 582 B.C., appear well after the death of Periander (585 B.C.) and probably after the death of his successor. The Pythian games may have been founded in response to the collapsed tyranny at Corinth and the institution of the Isthmian games and the Nemean games just as easily could be characterized as celebrating the fall of Kleisthenes at Sikyon.²⁰¹

Unfortunately, McGregor does not address specifically the origin or causes of the growth of Panhellenism, but he does offer an alternative to the tyrants: are the sixth century aristocrats

200. J. B. Bury, *The Nemean Odes of Pindar* (1890), App. D: *Origin of the Great Games* 248-263. Bury (p. 248) finds three forces which promoted panhellenism: the unsuccessful struggle among the Greeks themselves to find a basis for unity, the Delphic oracle, and the Greek tyrants. He adds (p. 249): "It is well-known that the commercial and social intercourse of Greek nations was encouraged and promoted under the rule of tyrants... and that the courts of the despots were centers of Hellenic culture"; and he states that one achievement of the tyrants so far unrecognized is their founding of the Panhellenic games. The "democratic" aspects of the games is somewhat tangentially demonstrated by the Greek tradition that equestrian events came late to the games (p. 259). Bury rejects the validity for eighth century Panhellenic games at Olympia and the roles of Iphitos and Lykourgos (a later Spartan invention?), arguing that our knowledge of

demonstrable historical events begins with the seventh century. The first non-legendary figure in the early Olympic tradition, according to Bury, is Pheidon, tyrant of Argos. Bury dates him to the mid-seventh century and argues that his military intrusion into the western Peloponnese led to the conversion of local games on the banks of the Alpheios River to a Panhellenic festival made immediately significant by the influence and power of the most famous ruler of the day.

201. Malcolm F. McGregor, "Cleisthenes of Sikyon and the Panhellenic Festivals", *TAPA* 72 (1991), 266-87, and at 286: "The institution of the games, three of them in the first thirty years of the sixth century, is indicative of the growth of the Panhellenic spirit. Bury has made much of the coincidence of date and has linked the growing Panhellenism with the tyrants. But the tyrants did not create Panhellenism although they were clever enough to make capital of it and to exploit it".

responsible “as a natural accompaniment of their notorious Panhellenic policies”? The rather early willingness of members of the aristocracy in the various city-states to look beyond their own borders for social contact with the elites from other states led to marriages and the formation of guest-friendships, both fairly powerful forms of social and potential political association. The early tyrants were without exception members of the local aristocracy and marriages and guest-friendships among the social elites from various states were both not uncommon and apparently acceptable practices even into the fifth century. It is also possible threatening the stability of the individual states. In developing this thesis of aristocratic activity, Catherine Morgan has examined the archaeological evidence at Olympia and offers the following interpretation: the eighth century witnessed a two-stage transformation of Olympia from a rural cult place for local chiefs to a major festival site; the first stage beginning with ca. 800 B.C. is characterized by increasing local activity along with the appearance of social elites from a number of emerging states (the games may have begun at this point); the second stage from ca. 725 B.C. saw both local participation ensured by growing settlements in Elis and a wider involvement of the aristocracies of city-states as evidenced by the dedication of expensive tripods (the games more likely began at this time); and the growth of interest in Olympia by the city-states during the seventh and sixth centuries was the result of the necessity to “make good citizens of their aristocrats, and to focus their attention on civic interests by suppressing, or containing and marginalizing, potentially threatening areas of traditional elite action”. Thus the Panhellenic aspect of Olympia initially developed out of the city-states’ “taming of the elite” which resulted in “an institutionalized balancing act between the interests of great families and those of the state or collectivity”.²⁰² The success of this endeavor is seen in the substitution of civic or state goods, e.g. captured enemy weapons, for private dedications and is linked by Morgan to early sumptuary legislation, also thought to be directed toward diverting the expenditures of the aristocracy to the public good.²⁰³

Morgan’s analysis provides a convenient structure for tying together the many levels of archaeological data from the ninth to the sixth centuries at Olympia and permits the dating of the origin of the games either in the form of increased local activity at the beginning of the eighth century or to the wider range of dedications near the end of the eighth century – the date favored by Mallwitz, the former director of the excavations. It does not, however, easily transfer to the archaeological records at either the Isthmia or Nemea where major and broad dedicatory activity really begins practically with the institution of the athletic festivals. Here, one might argue, the institution of the games was the motivation for increased dedicatory activity. The data from Delphi is also different, as Morgan acknowl-

202. Morgan, “Pan-Hellenism”.

203. The city-state did find an excellent procedure for channeling the aristocracy’s penchant for seeking public recognition and prestige through conspicuous

expenditure by means of the liturgy system, i.e. inviting the economic elite to pay for specific public projects, including warships, in return for public thanks and adulation.

edges. There the presence of emergent states is earlier than at Olympia undoubtedly because of the exceptional development of an interstate oracle. Divination for states, Morgan argues, was an essential tool of governance during the early stages of the emerging city-states of the eighth and seventh centuries and thus Delphi naturally assumes Panhellenic significance.²⁰⁴ The one thing missing from these often acute observations is what are the factors which caused Olympia to develop as a Panhellenic sanctuary during the eighth and seventh centuries when the vast majority of others did not? Why did the oracle at Delphi assume Panhellenic significance when the vast majority of oracular sites, including Olympia and its oracle, failed to achieve this distinction? Was anything needed at Isthmia and Nemea beyond the announcement of the festivals by major powers in order to achieve Panhellenic status? Was basic isolation from large urban centers, and therefore a presumed isolation from growing interstate rivalries, a significant factor in achieving Panhellenic status? Was the Isthmia's position on major land and sea crossways sufficient to counter both its closeness to end dependence on Corinth? Questions such as these still await answers before the designation of *Panhellenic* can be fully understood. One aspect of Greek activity of the seventh and sixth centuries which must have played a role in the development of Panhellenism is colonization. These centuries were the great period of the Greek diaspora throughout the Mediterranean area and to the far reaches of the Black Sea. It would inevitably also be the period when Greeks became acutely aware of *Greekness* versus *foreignness*. The city-states, which developed slowly in the eighth century, were faced with a dual concept of foreignness during the seventh and sixth centuries: the Greeks from other city-states and the non-Greeks were both *xenoi* – foreigners – and needed local assistance in the form of *proxenoi* in order to function within a city-state other than their own; but Greeks from other Greek states were obviously different and more closely related than foreigners from non-Greek states. This latter distinction and the perception of cultural unity was celebrated at the Panhellenic sites and provides a *raison d'être* for the rise of Panhellenic festivals but it fails to explain why Olympia, Delphi, Isthmia, and Nemea were selected as the Panhellenic sites *par excellence*.²⁰⁵

204. Morgan, "Pan-Hellenism" 28: "Consideration of responses (of the Delphic oracle), as well as cross-cultural analogy, reveals that the basic role of Delphi (as most major state oracles) was to sanction already formulated solutions to difficult, often unprecedented, and potentially divisive problems of past or present community conduct, in order to enable leaders to establish a consensus of opinion for their acceptance. Responses from all periods most commonly took the form of direct answers to simple or alternative propositions, and ambiguity was rare, a last resort to protect the oracle against charges of inaccuracy, or to force a consul-

tor state to reconsider its position on an issue on which no straightforward answer could be given".

205. For a discussion of Greeks as foreigners at the Panhellenic sites and the need for resident assistance (*proxenoi*), see Christiane Sourvinou-Inwood, "What is *Polis* Religion?", in Oswyn Murray and Simon Price (eds), *The Greek City from Homer to Alexander* (1990) 295 ff. For the construction of treasuries at Olympia by a number of Greek states in Italy and Sicily as a declaration of their Greekness, but placed at a Panhellenic site rather than within the boundaries of their founding city-states, see Morgan, "Pan-Hellenism"

Apart from the reveling in the shared language, religious beliefs, and passion for competitive athletics, the Panhellenic sanctuaries and festivals provided other substantial benefits. The sacred truces proclaimed by all four crown games were remarkably successful given the fact that they had to compete generally with the summer warring season. This safe passage to and from the sanctuaries allowed the various states to send official delegations both to participate and sacrifice in their behalf and to conduct negotiations. These could be of a diplomatic or commercial nature and probably carried on the time-honored practice of local chiefs resorting to a significant shared, and therefore neutral, sanctuary to resolve differences and exchange goods.²⁰⁶ The availability of neutral sites with basically guaranteed access was of immense value to the Greek states in the conduct of their “international” affairs.

In addition to negotiations, the Panhellenic festivals also attracted the leading scholarly and artistic figures of the day who shared and displayed their work. Herodotos, for instance, reportedly read his history of the Persian wars at Olympia. The leading poets and sculptors were attracted not only to share recent developments in their fields but also very likely to solicit business because the crown games became a gold mine for both the poet, such as Pindar, who wrote epinician odes and for the sculptors who sought contracts to commemorate the victor by means of the statues which could be placed both within the sanctuary of the games and in the athlete’s home town. These very important commercial aspects, plus the significant revenues to be made by the purveyors of food and other living accommodations, the sellers of items for dedication and souvenirs, and the other practitioners of various arts and skills which a large gathering naturally attracts, should not be overlooked.²⁰⁷

N. Marinatos provides a summary of the multi-faceted nature of the crown festivals:²⁰⁸

“They were the places where Greeks could meet other Greeks on equal grounds to compete and to argue, to establish superiority in athletics, to read each other’s propaganda in the form of dedicatory inscriptions, to sound each other out. It may not be an exaggeration to state that, without pan-Hellenic sanctuaries, Greek culture would not have achieved the kind of richness which is due to constant exposure to stimuli and regional variation. Greeks could share with other Greeks the latest technology and trends in art which they picked up from different parts of the world.”

20. Morgan (*ibid.*) also identifies two possible reasons for this practice: Olympia was selected over the mother-city to avoid the closeness with the founder which might compromise independence; and the Greeks failed to develop any shared sanctuaries in Italy to affirm their common heritage.

206. See Morgan, “Pan-Hellenism” 24, for Olympia as the site for the negotiation and recording of agreements among the various communities in Elis before the development in the early fifth century of the city

of Elis as the dominant and unifying force, citing W. Dittenberger and K. Purgold, *Inscriptionen von Olympia* (1896) nos. 10 and 16, and Pausanias 5.13.10, 5.14.4 and 5.15.10-12.

207. These various non athletic aspects of the festivals, as well as the cultural significance of competitive athletics, will be discussed in context to the appropriate athletic activities.

208. See above n. 189.

THE GAMES OF ATHENS AND ATTICA

THE GREAT PANATHENAIA

By far the best known non-crown athletic festival in ancient Greece was the Great Panathenaia at Athens. The fact that Athens, in addition to being a major commercial and military power, was also the literary capital among the various independent Greek city-states and has left us the greatest bulk of extant literature, plus the intensive archaeological investigations of Athens and environs has given us far more information about its history and activities than any other ancient Greek urban center. The absence of similar information from elsewhere, however, does not necessarily support the conclusion that the Athenian experience was unique. Athens mounted an annual celebration of the birthday of its patron deity, the goddess Athena, and at least from the mid-sixth century B.C. expanded the program every fourth year to include athletic, equestrian, and ultimately musical contests. The annual festival generally is referred to in ancient sources as the Panathenaia, while the quadrennial festival with competitions was known as the Great Panathenaia. Modern scholars tend to distinguish the two by the titles the Lesser and Greater Panathenaia. The Panathenaia, or Lesser Panathenaia, included at least a procession and sacrifice to Athena and probably existed in some form as early as the eighth century B.C.²⁰⁹

As with practically all significant events the Athenians provided legendary origins for the Panathenaia which combine figures of suitable antiquity and local or patriotic importance. In this case the tradition goes well back into the dim reaches of mythology to identify the strange figure of Erichthonios as the first to harness the chariot, presumably to conduct a chariot race, in honor of Athena's role in the victory of the Olympians over the race of the giants. In particular, her defeat of the giant Asterios was commemorated and this provided a recurring art motif used throughout at least the Classical period in connection with this festival. Erichthonios' association with Athens and Athena was dated to several centuries before the Trojan War and therefore takes us into a world of increasingly fantastic

209. Convenient discussions of the Panathenaia may be found in: Deubner, *Attische Feste* 22-35; J. A. Davison, "Notes on the Panathenaia", *JHS* 87 (1967), 23-42; Kyle 32-39 Parke, *Festivals* 33-50; and Erika Simon, *Festivals of Athens. An Archaeological Commentary* (1983) 55-72. An inscription dated to 335/34 (*IG* II² 334) records a reorganization of the annual Panathenaia and indicates the festival included at least a sacrifice, a

pannychis, all-night festival, and a procession. For this see D. M. Lewis, "Law on the Lesser Panathenaia", *Hesperia* 28 (1959), 239-47. Choruses, pyrrhic dances, and possibly torch races were also part of the annual festival by the late fifth century (see Kyle 36). Jenifer Neils, *Goddess and Polis, The Panathenaia Festival in Ancient Athens* (1992).

happenings. Erichthonios' birth, although unusual, is within acceptable mythical story patterns. Hephaistos, the lame god of fire and smithery, who was prominently worshipped in historical Athens, was rejected as a suitor by the virgin goddess Athena and finally resorted to sexual assault. He was, however, no match for the warrior goddess and his semen fell to the ground, but this failed effort was not without result because Mother Earth was impregnated and ultimately bore Erichthonios, described as "snake-footed" (usually interpreted to mean that he had the form of a snake from the waist down) and *autochthonos*. Erichthonios, the son of Hephaistos and Mother Earth, was in this way connected with Athena; in fact, Mother Earth held Athena responsible and insisted that she take the infant.

The second major legendary figure involved with the development of the Panathenaia was the hero Theseus, who along with Athena, provided Athens and Attika with symbols of unity and rallying points for local pride and patriotism. Mythically he is dated to just before the Trojan War and in addition to the typical collection of heroic deeds he is credited with uniting the surrounding districts of Attika under the political control of the city-state of Athens. He celebrated this momentous achievement by bringing all of the newly united territory into the festival in honor of Athena and renaming it the Panathenaia, apparently replacing the earlier title of Athenaia.²¹⁰ Such are the mythical origins of what became the most important religious and civic festival of Athens.

A plausible theory of historical origin can be put together from the data provided by excavations in the agora of ancient Athens and from literary and artistic evidence. The archaeological evidence indicates that the area later known as the agora contained in the seventh century, and earlier, tombs and some houses; there are tombs which date back into the Mycenaean period. The votive offerings from the seventh century include terracotta chariot groups, horsemen, and shields which point to offerings to the dead, possibly even to hero-cults. Vases have been found which may depict chariot races and which may also indicate the practice of funeral games and/or games in honor of the heroized dead. It is logically assumed that these games took place in the vicinity of the tombs, or presumed tombs, of those being honored and were held either sporadically in the death of an aristocrat whose family possessed the means and the reputation necessary to support such games or in some recurring pattern in honor of a person who in death enjoyed a status sufficient to merit continued commemoration in the form of games. In addition to this admittedly sparse archaeological data supporting the general literary and archaeological evidence for funeral games (and therefore of athletic competition), there is also the information from the list of Olympic victors which includes five Athenians among those crowned with the olive wreath during the seventh century B.C.: Pantakles (stadion in 696 B.C. and stadion and diaulos on

210. For the unification of Attika with Athens (*synoikismos*) by Theseus, see Plutarch, *Theseus* 24.3. The scholia on Plato, *Parmenides* 127c reports the re-

naming of Erichthonios' festival, the Athenaia, as the Panathenaia by Theseus, thus uniting the two legends of origin.

692 B.C.), Eurybates (stadion in 672 B.C.), Stomas (stadion in 644 B.C.), Kylon (diaulos in 640 B.C.), and Phrynon (pankration in 636 B.C.). It is reasonable to assume that even at this early period victory at Olympia necessarily presupposed sufficient training and contests to prepare for the developing international competition, i.e. athletes from throughout the Greek-speaking areas of the Mediterranean area. This precondition to successful participation in the Olympic games could have been at least partially, if not wholly, met by local contests provided by funeral games and games in honor of the heroized dead. Such activity probably took place at Athens in the area later known as the agora.²¹¹

Excavations in this area indicate that at ca. 600 B.C. whatever tombs and buildings existed were removed and fairly extensive leveling of the ground took place. This is arguably the first major step in the creation of what was to become the civic center of Athens. Major events are commonly attached by historians to identifiable and important figures who were approximately contemporaneous with them. Solon provides just such a figure for the agora of Athens: his activity as a lawgiver was critical to the change of Athens from a group of loosely knit, often feuding baronial families to a sense of community which transcended aristocratic and regional factionalism; and the date of his legal reforms and innovations is traditionally 594 B.C. Solon also is directly connected with athletics by two laws later attributed to him: the award of 500 drachmas by Athens to Athenian victors at Olympia and the award of 100 drachmas to Athenian victors at the Isthmia; and the death penalty for those stealing cloaks from the gymnasia of Athens. The law concerning cash prizes is widely accepted either as a codification of existing practice or, more importantly, as a step toward bringing one further aspect of the agonistic inclinations of the noble families and clans under civic sponsorship and therefore under some measure of civic control. The law concerning gymnasia generally is dismissed as anachronistic on the grounds that archaeological evidence is lacking for the existence of gymnasia at this early period.²¹² One argument in favor of some early form of training ground is the introduction of the hoplite warrior and the phalanx, a change in military tactics which was probably completed at least by the beginning of the sixth century. This form of warfare which relied on the heavily armed hoplite required rigorous physical training. A facility for this would at a minimum need sufficient space both for the athletic training to ensure an appropriate level of physical

211. For a brief discussion of the progression from funeral games to the Panathenaia, see Thompson, "Panathenaic Festival" 231. For the existence of some form of civic festival before 566/65 B.C. which may have offered at least equestrian events, see S. Karouzou, "A Proto-Panathenaic Amphora", *AJA* 42 (1938), 494-505, and Kyle 22-23 and 34-35 (the Burgon amphora).

212. For the leveling activity in the area which became the agora, see H. A. Thompson, "Activity in the

Athenian Agora, 1960-65", *Hesperia* 35 (1966), 45; for Solon and the monetary rewards to Olympian and Isthmian victors, see Kyle 21-22 ("The amount of the award was less important than the official, civic nature of the honor.... Solon's reforms ... laid the groundwork for civic consciousness and civic unity".); for the argument that public gymnasia were post-Solonian, see S. C. Humphreys, "The Nothoi of Kynosarges", *JHS* 94 (1974), 88-95.

strength and agility. This type of training probably accounts ultimately for the introduction of the hoplitodromos at the Olympic games in 540 B.C.

The next important event in the athletic history of Athens was the addition of athletic and equestrian competitions every fourth year to the Panathenaia, thus creating the so-called Great Panathenaia. The quadrennial pattern was influenced by Olympia and Delphi. This Athenian entry in the list of major festivals was scheduled in the third year of the Olympiad (in July?), i.e. during the same summer as the Pythian and Isthmian games, thereby providing the athlete with at least three major sets of competition within a few months' time. A combination of mid-sixth century B.C. archaeological evidence and rather late literary evidence has established the year 566/65 B.C. as the date of the first celebration of the Great Panathenaia. The literary sources identify Olympiad 53.3-4 (i.e. 566/65 B.C.) and the archonship of Hippokleides (also placed at 566/65 B.C.) as the year of the founding of the Great Panathenaia.²¹³ Occasionally the name of Peisistratos is associated with the institution of the Great Panathenaia, but his first attempt at tyranny in Athens is dated to 561/60 B.C. and he did not fully establish his control of Athens until 546/45 B.C. Certainly there is little doubt that he lavished both attention and funds upon the festival once his position was secure. He faced major problems in creating a sense of unity within Attica, a unity focused upon the city of Athens and major festivals are excellent vehicles for rallying public enthusiasm and for glorifying a ruler. He is generally credited with introducing the competition for Homeric rhapsodies, an event crucial for the establishment and preservation of the texts of both the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. This should be sufficient credit for the Athenian tyrant.²¹⁴

The archaeological data are more complex and less specific but also point toward the mid-sixth century. First are three inscriptions from the acropolis of Athens, which are unfortunately somewhat battered and in need of extensive restoration. Raubitschek's reading of the first two includes two significant statements: "they made (constructed?) the *dromos*" (followed by a list of names) and "the hieropoioi, a group who supervised a number of sacrifices and other religious activity, first put on the contest, *agon* for the bright-eyed maiden, a common epithet for Athena". The second repeats the reference to the *dromos* and the putting on of the *agon* for the bright-eyed maiden but without the indication of "first".

213. Eusebius, *Chronicon* (Jerome's Latin version) lists the founding of the Great Panathenaia to Olympiad 53.3-4 (566-65 B.C.), and Marcellinus, *Vita Thuc.* 2-4 adds the name of Hippokleides to this event.

214. See Kyle 26-7 for discussion of the interpretations of the acropolis inscriptions; for Peisistratos as founder of the festival, see scholion on Aelius Aristides, *Panathenaicus* 13.189.4-5 and Kyle 28-9. H. A. Thompson offers the following observation on the importance of the Panathenaia: "Of all the many festivals

of Athens none was so closely linked as the Panathenaia with the history of the city. Tradition related the name of the festival to the unification of Attica under Theseus. Expanded and systematized by the Peisistratids, the Panathenaia became one of the principal manifestations of the growing national consciousness and cultural maturity of Athens in the second half of the sixth century" (see his "The Panathenaic Festival").

Raubitschek is convinced that these dedicatory inscriptions refer to the founding of the Great Panathenaia and commemorate the role of the *hieropoioi*. He accordingly dates the one inscription which includes the word “first” with reference to putting on the *agon* to 566 B.C. and the other inscription, which merely states that the *hieropoioi* put on the *agon* to 562 or 558 B.C. Apparently the form of the letters in these inscriptions does permit a date of ca. mid-sixth century B.C. Happily between the two inscriptions the words *dromos* and *agon* are clearly seen and “for the bright-eyed maiden” is fairly certain in both. The assertion that these do in fact refer to the Great Panathenaia is attractive and not unreasonable. The words *dromos* and *agon* are, however, somewhat ambiguous. *Dromos* could refer to the race track (the *hieropoioi* constructed the race track), to the competition on the race track (the *hieropoioi* put on the contests), or even to the Panathenaic Way or processional road for the parade through the agora (the *hieropoioi* constructed the Panathenaic Way). *Agon* commonly refers to athletic competition but also has other and broader meanings. Even after taking the ambiguities and fragmentary nature of the stones into consideration, these inscriptions legitimately may be used to support a mid-sixth century B.C. date for the introduction of athletic competition into the Panathenaia.²¹⁵

The second bit of evidence comes from the Panathenaic amphorae, the jars containing the olive oil given as prizes at these games. One vase, the Burgon amphora, may be dated to the 560's B.C., or even earlier, and also presents the statement “I am from the games of Athens”. This is the earliest of the prize vases and is occasionally argued to have come from the very first Great Panathenaia in 566/565 B.C.²¹⁶

The other evidence from archaeology is more complex, less precise in date, but probably more important for understanding the religious, political, and financial commitment necessary for enlarging the Panathenaia into the major civic festival of Athens: the first major stone temple was constructed in the Acropolis, the Hekatompedon; a sanctuary to Athena Nike was established above the entryway to the Acropolis; and a stone ramp was built to provide easier access to the Acropolis. All this is dated to ca. the second quarter of the sixth century B.C. Vanderpool persuasively argues that this activity amounts to a completely “de-militarized” acropolis, presupposes a defensive circuit wall surrounding the lower city, and should be associated with the establishment of the Great Panathenaia. While the date of the second quarter of the sixth century (i.e. 575-550 B.C.) may not be as precise as the date some wish to assign to the Burgon vase, it must be born in mind that these building projects could not have been completed within one year; in fact, a decade or more is likely.

215. For the inscriptions from the Acropolis, see A. E. Raubitschek, *Dedications from the Athenian Acropolis* (1949) nos. 326-328. Kyle 26 ff. conveniently provides the texts of these two inscriptions, plus a third one, with discussion of various interpretations.

216. For a brief discussion of Panathenaic amphorai, see J. Boardman, *Athenian Black Figure Vases* (1974) 167-177 (with illustrations 296.1 and 2 for the Burgon vase). See also Diana Zafiropoulou (ed.), *Games and Sports in Ancient Thessaly* (Athens 2004) 139-141.

Thus the effort that went into enhancing the celebration of the Panathenaia generally and specifically for establishing the Great Panathenaia must have begun well in advance of 556/65 B.C. and certainly demanded fairly broad support among the leading families of Athens and Attika. If the Great Panathenaia began with a significant number of contests, and if the prizes from the beginning were large numbers of jars filled with sacred oil, the preparation of the necessary athletic facilities and of the prizes could not have been done within a few weeks or even months; therefore, minimal emphasis should be placed upon the coincidence that Hippokleides possibly was archon in 566/65 B.C. or that Peisistratos became tyrant of Athens in 561 B.C. Hippokleides' role as founder of the Great Panathenaia has been challenged on at least two grounds: the position of archon may not have been that of the dominant or even major political leader in any given year but merely the means whereby relatively young men from distinguished families attained membership in the Areopagos, a council composed of those who had held an archonship and whose members served for life, and who therefore arguably were the real controlling power in the state; and his character has been somewhat tainted by his unseemly behavior at a banquet while he was one of a number of suitors for the hand of the daughter of Kleisthenes, tyrant of Sikyon. Peisistratos is often put forward either as founder of the Great Panathenaia or as the main force in its development as a major festival. Tyrants throughout the ages have been identified with athletic festivals and justifiably so: sustained political control, fairly substantial financial resources, the desire for self-glorification, and the need to control the masses through entertainment, all traditional hallmarks of the successful tyrant, also provide reasonable grounds for the establishment of large-scale public celebrations. Peisistratos may indeed have participated in the extended effort necessary to enlarge the Panathenaia and he very probably made significant contributions to the further development of the Great Panathenaia during his tyranny, but to credit him or any other single person with the role of founder exceeds both our present evidence and reasonable assumption. Unless the first Great Panathenaia was a minimal affair with few events and very modest prizes, in the absence of an Athenian tyrant we must look to a sustained community effort, probably among the social and economic elite of the city, for the institution of this festival.²¹⁷

Apart from the questions of "who" and "when", the "why" of the Great Panathenaia should be addressed. The traditional date of 566/65 B.C. has something to do with this problem. Within the preceding two decades the athletic festivals at Delphi, the Isthmia, and Nemea had been elevated to Panhellenic status. The possible reasons for this have already been explored. The attachment of a program of competitive events on a recurring basis to

217. For the date of the construction on the Acropolis, see E. Vanderpool, "The Date of the Pre-Persian City Wall of Athens", D.W. Bradeen and M.F. McGregor (eds), in *Phoros. Tribute to Benjamin Meritt* (Lo-

cust Valley, N.Y.) 156-160; for the necessity of funding during the 6th century B.C. from the aristocratic families, see J. S. Boersma, *Athenian Building Policy from 561/0 to 405 B.C.* (1970) 8, 14, 18.

the cult worship of an important Hellenic deity must have provided a compelling paradigm. The development of a carefully structured *periodos* or circuit of crown games either presupposed an increase in athletic activity among the various Greek city-states or, failing that, certainly would have encouraged such increase. Our very fragmentary evidence for successful Athenian athletes, alas, preserves only one Olympic victor during the first three decades of the sixth century: Alkmeon, the son of Megakles, who won the four-horse chariot race in 592 B.C. No negative inference about Athenian athletics should be drawn from this, however, because we have but rare and haphazard glimpses of the activities of specific individuals from this time period. Whatever the record of Athenian crown victories may have been, the presence of three more sets of games, all of them geographically closer – especially those at the Isthmia, must have increased Athenian interest in preparing for “international” competition. This occurrence would naturally heighten support for an athletic component at the Panathenaia among the aristocratic clans who are usually presumed to have sought increased prestige through athletic victories. Athens also, within the preceding several decades, had enjoyed military success outside its immediate boundaries, had enlarged its territory, and had become sufficiently wealthy and populous to embark on the construction of an elaborate civic center, the *agora*, protective walls, and an imposing temple on the Acropolis for its patron deity, Athena. The presentation of a more grandiose Panathenaia and the creation of the Great Panathenaia very probably were designed to express the increasing sense of special identity and local pride that would naturally accompany these achievements. This development at Athens should not be regarded as unusual or in any way as peculiarly Athenian. Our evidence, though frustratingly limited, does too often stress the Athenian experience and can lead to claims of unparalleled achievement. What little literary and archaeological data we have points to similar activity in conjunction with the process of urbanization and increased wealth elsewhere. Athens, like Troy, has been blest with its own Homers.

It is fairly certain that both the Panathenaia and the Great Panathenaia employed the 28th of Hekatombaion as the central day of either festival. Scholars working to decipher the complex and irregular measurements of time within the various Athenian calendars now generally agree that the first day of Hekatombaion began with the first sighting of the moon’s crescent following the summer solstice. This means that the day spanned from evening to evening. By the fourth century B.C. the lunar calendar, the so-called “regulatory” calendar, the festival calendar, the archon’s calendar controlling all religious functions, and the prytany calendar, the political calendar controlling the meeting dates of the *boule* and the *ekklesia*, all began with the first of Hekatombaion, i.e. the first visibility after the summer solstice. Unfortunately the three calendars could and did diverge thereafter, making it extremely difficult to convert to the Julian or Gregorian calendars most dates from either the festival or prytany calendars. The assumption that the beginning of the festival or archon’s calendar is attractive but by no means easily defended; certainly this coincidence would assist non-Athenian athletes and visitors to plan their travel to Athens by providing

them with a uniformly and easily recognized time reference. The 28th of Hekatombaion would then fall from mid to late July by our calendar and almost certainly was the day of the chief cultic aspect of the festival, the procession and sacrifice. The number of days devoted to the Great Panathenaia is unknown. Late ancient comment and modern speculation range from three to four days and up to as many as nine days. The parade and sacrifice easily filled one day. By the fifth century at the latest, this was a display of Athenian cavalry and hoplite forces in addition to groups of acceptably vigorous older men from the various demes of Athens and Attika. The strictly religious trappings were provided by the presence either in the procession or at the terminal point on the Acropolis of men and women who functioned in a priestly or sacral capacity. The climax was the presentation to Athena of a new gown or peplos and the sacrifice of from one to several hundred animals. This was followed by the distribution of practically all of the sacrificial meat to the various districts in shares prorated in accordance with their participation in the parade. A general feast apparently concluded this aspect of the festival. Obviously a full day was needed for these activities. The competitive athletic events would fill another two or three days at a minimum unless more than one event were scheduled simultaneously, a practice rarely used at such festivals. The musical and rhapsodic competitions would take another day as would the tribal and military events. Mikalson's recent study of the festival and prytany calendars of Athens has demonstrated that within the limits of current knowledge there were no public (governmental) meetings recorded from the 23rd to the 30th of Hekatombaion, thus freeing the last eight days of the month for the Panathenaic celebration.²¹⁸ Possibly the number of days varied from one festival to another depending upon the events scheduled for a given year; certainly over the ca. 900 year history of the Great Panathenaia some fluctuation is to be expected.

We possess no document from classical Athens which lists all the competitive events of any given Great Panathenaia but a fairly good, though admittedly general, impression may be gained from a variety of sources. For the sixth century B.C. these are primarily the depiction of specific events painted on the vases containing olive oil from Athena's sacred trees given as prizes in most contests. The survival of these vases – or of sufficiently large fragments to permit secure identification – through ca. twenty-five centuries is largely a matter of luck and chance and the current extant group presents only occasional, sporadic glimpses. However, the vases do indicate that the basic Olympic program of athletic competitions and more were included in the Panathenaic games before the end of the sixth century. With respect to footraces, the men's stadion appears as early as ca. 560 and the diaulos, dolichos and hoplitodromos are also attested by 500 B.C. The hippios, apparently a men's event by the fourth century, may even be dated to the mid-sixth century but the evidence is merely suggestive. The stadion for boys appears on vases from the mid-fifth century. Scenes from the pentathlon are found on vases from the last quarter of the sixth century with again suggestive evidence

218. Mikalson, *Calendar* 33-34.

for ca. 550 B.C. The heavy events are all documented on vases dated from 530 to 500 B.C. With respect to equestrian events, the tethrippon appears as early as 550 and the keles by the last quarter of the sixth century. The synoris and apene present a problem in that debate is possible about the animals depicted on the prize vases: are they horses or mules? Was a cart used occasionally in the synoris or only a chariot? Both these events may well have been part of the Panathenaic program during the early years of the festival. It must be stressed that the survival of Panathenaic prize amphorae is quite sporadic, especially from ca. 566/65 to ca. 530 B.C., and the first appearance of an event on a preserved amphora or fragment cannot be used to date the adoption of that event at the Great Panathenaia. With the paradigm of Olympia and the other crown games immediately at hand, the Athenians probably mounted an extensive program of events even during the early years of their festival.²¹⁹

As was true at some of the crown games the Great Panathenaia invited competition in other than the traditional athletic and equestrian events. There were contests for rhapsodies presenting scenes from the official Athenian texts of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, for singers accompanied by the harp, for singers accompanied by the diaulos, and for instrumental soloists for both the harp and the diaulos. It is fairly certain that some form of age-grouping was used in these musical events. The prizes during the fourth century at least often consisted of gold and silver and were of sufficient value to attract distinguished performers. There were also some contests, usually for teams, which probably were restricted for the most part to Athenian citizens.

We do have one partially preserved text, an inscription unfortunately fragmentary and damaged, which lists some of the events, plus their prizes, for a Great Panathenaia celebrated during the first half of the fourth century B.C. The preserved and restored text is worth quoting because it is our most specific evidence for Panathenaic events. The stone is broken and extensive parts of it are missing, including the opening section. The text begins somewhere in the section relating the musical events, and the awarding of second, and even third, fourth and fifth place prizes should be noted:

Singers accompanied by the harp

First Prize: an olive crown of gold (gilded?) worth 1,000 drachmai and 500 drachmai²²⁰

Second Prize: 1,200 silver drachmai

219. Extensive discussion of Panathenaic prize amphorai may be found in the following: J. Beazley, "Panathenaia", *AJA* 47 (1943), 441-465; J. Frel, *Panathenaic Prize Amphorae*, *Kerameikos* 2 (1973) (limited to amphorae found in the Kerameikos cemetery); Legakis, *Contests* and Πάνος Δ. Βαλαβάνης, *Παναθηναϊκοί ἀμφορείς ἀπὸ τὴν Ἑρέρια* (1991).

220. The value of the ancient drachma in today's currency is difficult to determine. One simple way of analysis is wage-earning: a skilled laborer in late fifth

century B.C. Athens received one drachma a day. First prize for the winning singer accompanied by the harp was 1,500 drachmas (a crown worth 1,000 drachmai, plus 500 drachmai in silver coins), or the equivalent of 1,500 days' wages for a skilled laborer. 1,500 drachmas had to be a very significant sum – houses and slaves could be purchased for less. The Great Panathenaia must have attracted a number of the leading musical artists in Greece.

Third Prize: 600 drachmai

Fourth Prize: 400 drachmai

Fifth Prize: 300 drachmai

Adult male singers accompanied by the diaulos

First Prize: a crown and 300 drachmai (or a crown worth 300 drachmai?)

Second Prize: 100 drachmai

Adult male harpists

First Prize: a crown worth 300 drachmai and 500 drachmai

Second Prize: (text is not preserved but probably listed 300 or 400 drachmai)

Third Prize: 100 drachmai

After listing the contest for diaulos players, with the winner receiving a crown of undeterminable value, there is a section of a half dozen or so unrecoverable lines. The text then lists a number of athletic competitions:

Boys' stadion

First Prize: 50 amphorai of olive oil

Second Prize: 10 amphorai of olive oil

Boys' pentathlon

First Prize: 30 amphorai of olive oil

Second prize: 6 amphorai of olive oil

Boys' wrestling

First Prize: 30 amphorai of olive oil

Second Prize: 6 amphorai of olive oil

Boys' boxing

First Prize: 30 amphorai of olive oil

Second Prize: 6 amphorai of olive oil

Boys' pankration

First Prize: 40 amphorai of olive oil

Second Prize: 8 amphorai of olive oil

Youth's stadion

First Prize: 60 amphorai of olive oil

Second Prize: 12 amphorai of olive oil

Youth's pentathlon

First Prize: 40 amphorai of olive oil

Second Prize: 8 amphorai of olive oil

Youth's wrestling

First Prize: 40 amphorai of olive oil

Second Prize: 8 amphorai of olive oil

Youth's boxing

First Prize: 40 amphorai of olive oil

Second prize: 8 amphorai of olive oil

Youth's pankration

First Prize: 50 amphorai of olive oil

Second Prize: 10 amphorai of olive oil

There is again a section of several lines which cannot be read. Where legibility is recovered the text is addressing equestrian events:

Two-horse chariot race for foals (?)

First Prize: 40 amphorai of olive oil

Second Prize: 8 amphorai of olive oil

Two-horse chariot race with mature horses

First Prize: 140 amphorai of olive oil

Second Prize: 40 amphorai of olive oil

The section immediately following has a special heading "For The Warriors" and lists a series of events usually thought to have been limited to Athenians:

Horse with jockey (keles)

First Prize: 16 amphorai of olive oil

Second Prize: 4 amphorai of olive oil

Two-horse chariot

First Prize: 30 amphorai of olive oil

Second Prize: 6 amphorai of olive oil

Two-horse processional chariot

First Prize: 4 amphorai of olive oil

Second Prize: 1 amphora of olive oil

Throwing a javelin from horseback

First Prize: 5 amphorai of olive oil

Second Prize: 1 amphora of olive oil

The next unit of text is introduced by the word "Prizes" and presents a group of team events with only one prize:

Boys' war dance: 100 drachmai and a bull

Youths' war dance: 100 drachmai and a bull

Men's war dance: 100 drachmai and a bull

Tribal competition in manliness (*euandria*): 100 drachmai and a bull

The war dance, or pyrrhic dance, was performed by tribal teams equipped at least with the hoplite's shield and very likely was a rather vigorous exercise involving rhythmic movement, possibly including leaping and dodging of imaginary missiles. A somewhat similar dance from Thrace also involved mock battle, but the little evidence from Athens does not permit elaboration.²²¹ The one indisputable contribution to military training made by this dance is the development of synchronized movement, a necessity for the successful functioning of the phalanx, the battle formation of hoplites which required in its initial phases at least controlled group movement. Physical exercise, agility training, and the increased ability to use the large, heavy shield, all helpful in battle, are further benefits of the pyrrhic dance. The athletic nature of this competition is obvious and further confirmed by the probability that the paidotribes, a specialist in athletic training, became the instructor or coach for this event.²²²

The last two items in this section present a problem. The first reads simply "to the winning tribe: 100 drachmai and a bull" – with no specific event named. The second states "to the winning torch-bearer: 30 drachmai and a water pitcher", or possibly "thirty water pitchers" with no drachmai. The two have been taken together in the sense of a tribal team torch race and an individual winner (or team captain?). There was a torch race as part of the cult sacrifice: fire was brought to an altar of Athena in the acropolis from the altar of Eros in the Akademy – a distance of nearly two miles. It is often thought that individual runners competed for the honor of lighting the fire for the sacrifice; if so, a tribal team torch race would have been a different, separate event. The wording on the stone is sufficiently ambiguous and indefinite so as to prevent final resolution of the number and types of torch races.²²³

221. See the relief sculpture from the Acropolis of Athens and Jean-Claude Poursat's extensive study of scenes of pyrrhic dance painted on Athenian pottery, "Les représentations de danse armée dans la céramique attique", *BCH* 92 (1968), 550-615 (with many excellent illustrations). See also Euripides, *Andromache* 1129-36; Lysias 24.4; and Isokrates 5.6.

222. Everett L. Wheeler, "Hoplomachia and Greek Dance in Arms, *GRBS* 23 (1982), 223-233: pyrrhic dance was not only a major aspect of the training for battle but also for the conduct of the battle itself; P. Scarpi, "La pyrrhiche o le armi della persuasione," *D.Arch* (1979), 78-97: Pyrrhic dance antedates the Panathenaic and was an initiation ritual for Athenian

youth (cited by Wheeler, *Der Sport* 231); Plutarch, *Moralia* 747B: paidotribes a teacher of pyrrhic dance in the palaistra; Aelianus, *Varia Historia* 3.18. Phrynichos, the early fifth century Athenian tragedian, was allegedly elected strategos because he staged such good pyrrhic dances; see also E. Kerr Borthwick, *CQ* (1968), 44-45.

223. Erica Simon, *Festival of Athens. An Archaeological Commentary* 64, suggests that the four hydriaphoroi (male water carriers) located on the north frieze represent the winning relay team in the torch race, here probably the race to light the sacrificial fire in the altar of Athena.

The final section of the inscription is introduced by the rubric “Prizes for the Boat Race” and lists as first prize 300 drachmai, three bulls, and 200 meals, and as second prize 200 drachmai and two bulls. This event probably was held in the vicinity of Piraeus, the port city of Athens, and provided another component of the Athenian military an opportunity for public display. This event, as with all team events, involved units organized and trained on a tribal basis. The combination of money plus cattle as prizes in these team events is generally thought to have provided the winning tribe, i.e. those most directly involved in bringing about the winning effort, with the means for a substantial victory celebration.

Missing from the preserved and legible parts of the stone are the men’s events. As already discussed, the evidence from prize vases points toward a richer program of track events for this age group; in addition to the stadion listed for boys and youths, men most probably also competed in the diaulos, the dolichos, the hoplitodromos, and quite possibly the hippios. The pentathlon and the three heavy events were available to all three age groups. Another source reports that the prize for winning the men’s pentathlon was 60 amphorai of olive oil – twice that awarded the boys’ winner.²²⁴ If the doubling of the boys’ prizes was consistently applied, then the awards for those events which were also boys’ events are recoverable:

Men’s stadion

First Prize: 100 amphorai of olive oil

Second Prize: 20 amphorai of olive oil

Men’s pentathlon

First Prize: 60 amphorai of olive oil

Second Prize: 12 amphorai of olive oil

Men’s wrestling

First Prize: 60 amphorai of olive oil

Second Prize: 12 amphorai of olive oil

Men’s boxing

First Prize: 60 amphorai of olive oil

Second Prize: 12 amphorai of olive oil

Men’s pankration

First Prize: 80 amphorai of olive oil

Second Prize: 16 amphorai of olive oil

Prizes for the diaulos, hippios, dolichos, and hoplitodromos probably were not less than the 60 and 12 amphorai awarded in the pentathlon, wrestling, and boxing.²²⁵ The consistent

224. Possibly by Simonides but this is questionable.

225. A.W. Johnston “*IG II²* 2311 and the Number of Panathenaic Amphorae”, *ABSA* 82 (1987), 125-129,

suggests 80, 16 for the men’s stadion, 50, 10 for the diaulos and dolichos, 30, 6 for the hoplitodromos, 60, 12 for the pentathlon, wrestling, and boxing, and 70, 14

ratio of five-to-one for first and second prizes in the boys' and youth's events is presumed to apply also to the men's category; however, it should be noted that this ratio was not applied throughout all parts of the Panathenaic program.

There were other events in addition to the men's athletic contests which are not listed in the inscription, but which we know were part of the Panathenaic games. A four-horse chariot race was probably the spectator favorite and certainly brought a prize at least equal to, if not exceeding, the 140 jars of oil for the two-horse chariot winner. Also missing from the fragments of the inscription is the horse with jockey race which was obviously part of the competitive equestrian program with a prize of at least 100 jars of oil. A speech preserved in the Demosthenic corpus (1xi 23-9) provides an extensive discussion of this curiously archaic event, the *apobates*, which involved a chariot with team, a charioteer, and an armed hoplite. The hoplite apparently had to leap periodically from the moving chariot, hence probably the name of the event: *apobates*, run beside or behind it, and then jump back into the chariot. In addition to this maneuver, the event apparently was a chariot race although no ancient source provides a clear description of it.²²⁶

The prizes for the athletic and equestrian contests, as noted, were amphorai filled with olive oil. Apart from the fact that olive oil is a versatile and valuable commodity and was even more so in antiquity, the Athenians claimed a special relationship with the olive. According to local legend the Athenians had decided to elect a patron deity and invited any of the gods interested to present themselves as candidates – a rather remarkable conceit! Two of the most powerful of the Olympians, Athena and Poseidon, vigorously pursued this honor, campaigning apparently in person and even offering inducements. Poseidon struck the ground with his trident, or with his hoof in a version in which he appeared in the form of a horse, and a spring of water came forth. This should have earned him few votes because the water was salty. Athena's gift proved far more useful, an olive tree growing on the top of the Acropolis. In spite of the pre-election efforts of the two deities, the votes seemingly were gender oriented: the men voted for Poseidon and the women for Athena. Another peculiarity was that the votes were counted as they were cast. As a strong sense of drama demanded, the last voter would break a tie and decide the election. This privilege fell to a woman who, of course, cast her ballot for Athena. Hence Athena became the patron deity of Athens and this particular olive tree and its fruit assumed an important role in the Athenian worship of Athena.

or 15 for the pankration. Johnston is presenting a minimal schedule of awards in order to ascertain the minimum number of Panathenaic amphorai given as prizes. He agrees that the *hippios* was probably included but does not offer a suggested number of vases as prize in keeping with his minimalist approach.

226. For an extensive study of the references to the *apobates*, see E. Reisch, *RE* I 2 (1894) 2814-17. For the Demosthenic passage, see Crowther, "The *Apo-bates* Reconsidered (Demosthenes 1xi 23-9)", *JHS* 111 (1991), 174-176.

Over the centuries offshoots from the tree presumably given by Athena gave rise to other olive trees in Athens and vicinity which, as descendants of Athena's gift, were also regarded as sacred, and Athens for some time claimed right to at least part of the oil produced from them. The trees were protected: anyone cutting down a "sacred" tree, or even uprooting an apparently dead stump, was liable to the death penalty. The Council of the Areopagus, an august body of former chief magistrates, was charged with the protection of these trees. The owners on whose land such trees grew were also required to give to the state one and one-half *kotylai* of oil from each designated sacred tree. The burden attached to these trees was somewhat modified by Aristotle's time: exile and confiscation of property replaced the death penalty for those convicted of destroying protected trees or stumps; and a general levy of oil on those whose land contained any of the sacred trees replaced the collection of oil from specific trees. This was the source of the oil given to winners at the Great Panathenaia. The importance of the task of collecting the oil is emphasized by the fact that the eponymous archon had to demonstrate successful completion of this chore before he was granted membership in the Areopagos at the end of his annual term. The local sacral character of this oil was further stressed by the prohibition against its export except by victors at the Great Panathenaia.

The winning athlete received his allotted oil in rather large amphorai, containing ca. 38 liters of oil. They were decorated in the black figure style. The two main panels of decoration were from an early date canonical in motif: on one side was an armed Athena striding toward the left with upraised spear; on the reverse was a depiction of the event for which that particular vase was to be part of the prize. The prize vases also carried the official inscription "from the games at Athens". The number of vases required for any Great Panathenaia was impressive. The amphorai listed as prizes on the fourth century inscription discussed above exceed 700. The projects men's prizes and the prizes for other events known to have been contested would bring the number to at least 1,500. Johnston's minimalist total is 1,423.²²⁷ Our best evidence for the bureaucratic procedures which governed the production of the large quantity of Panathenaic amphorai comes from the fourth century B.C. The Constitution of Athens, the *Athenaion politeia*, attributed either to Aristotle or the school of Aristotle and compiled near the end of the second third of the fourth century B.C., reports that both the *athlothetai* and the *boule* shared responsibility for selecting potters and commissioning the production of the required number of vases. Apparently this contract was let through competition among the potters/artists wishing to submit designs or sample pots. There is some evidence to indicate that a single workshop may have provided all the vases for a single Great Panathenaia. Furthermore the amphorai probably were made and painted over several years, thus making it more feasible for a single shop to bid for the full number of vases needed. Some prize vases preserved from the fourth century carried the name of

227. Johnston op. cit. 225.

the eponymous archon, the annually selected official who gave his name to the year of the civic calendar. The name and year of office of each of the fourth century B.C. archons is known from other sources. Therefore, the vases with these signatures can be precisely dated and a recurring pattern is evident: vases have the names only of those archons from the second, third, and fourth year of the four-year Panathenaia cycle. Based on the extant amphorai the archon of the year in which the Great Panathenaia was held, i.e. the first year of the cycle, was not involved with the process of collecting sacred oil for the prize vases. There are two good reasons for this: the festival itself took place during his first month in office and he therefore did not have time to participate in the process; and there probably was no way to preserve the oil collected somewhat later during his term for the next festival.²²⁸

The production of the Great Panathenaia required the energy and talents of a number of segments of the government of the city-state of Athens. The earliest inscription, dated possibly to the first celebration of this festival in 566/65 B.C., identifies the *hiropoioi* as the ones who made the *dromos* and first put on the *agon* for the bright-eyed goddess. Precisely who these officials were and how they were selected in the mid-sixth century is not known. Certainly they came from the upper economic and social levels. By the late fifth and fourth centuries B.C., this body, now spelled *hieropoioi*, was composed of ten citizens chosen by lottery, one from each of the ten Attic tribes. They continued to be associated with the Panathenaia throughout the Classical period, but sometime in the course of the fifth century another committee, the *athlothetai*, assumed general responsibility for practically all aspects of the Great Panathenaia, while the *hieropoioi* continued to manage the annual Panathenaia. The *athlothetai* numbered ten and were chosen by lottery, one from each of the ten tribes. Their term of office, however, was for four years; this clearly indicates that producing the Great Panathenaia was a complex and time-consuming assignment. This body may earlier have assisted the *hieropoioi* with jurisdiction limited to the contests – their name means “those who put on the contests”. The Aristotelian document on the constitution of Athens lists their duties as follows: the conduct of the procession which culminated in the presentation of the peplos and the sacrifice of animals; the supervision of the making of the peplos, along with a *dikastery*, a jury of probably 500 Athenians selected from the jury panel of 6,000, which chose the design, the acquisition of the prize amphorai, assisted by the *boule*; and the awarding of prizes to victorious contestants. Implicit in this list is their authority over the program of competitions. During the few weeks immediately preceding the festival, the *athlothetai* must have devoted most of their time to final preparations. Athens recog-

228. Two and one-half to three years are the maximum period of time that oil stored in the types of vessels available in antiquity will remain usable as oil

(oral communication from olive growers from villages in Greece who still use clay jars for storing their oil).

nized this by granting them the right to dine free at the state-maintained dining room during this period.²²⁹

In addition to the individuals, committees, and units already mentioned, others also contributed. The treasurers of Athena apparently received the oil collected under the aegis of the archon and probably saw to its proper storage. The state-cattle buyers procured the sacrificial animals. The group which administered state contracts provided some of the needed revenues by their leasing of state lands dedicated to supporting this festival. The preparation of the gilded crowns for some of the musical contests required other state agencies. The various military commanders, both for the city-state as a whole and for the various tribal contingents, were obviously involved. Some part of the administrative structure of the ten Attic tribes had to prepare each tribe's participation in the various team events. Some of these tribal events involved liturgies, i.e. the selection of wealthy Athenians to pay the expenses for the training of teams – e.g. each team of pyrrhic dancers required a choregus who provided the music necessary for their event. The teams competing in the torch races were also probably supported and trained under the aegis and expense of a wealthy Athenian. And by the end of the Classical period the Athenian mint was producing silver coins commemorating the Great Panathenaia.

The success of this festival in achieving national even “international” by ancient Greek standards, status among the many local athletic games is easily documented. Pindar, the most famous of the writers of victory odes for crown-game champions, refers to Athens' games with a frequency sufficient to indicate that the Great Panathenaia had achieved this status by the first half of the fifth century B.C. Continued popularity among the athletes of the Greek world is also demonstrated by later inscriptions listing Panathenaic victors which show that non-Athenians could dominate the awards ceremony. The wide-spread distribution of Panathenaic amphorai throughout much of the Mediterranean area may partially support the claim of widespread participation, but even the Athenian winners may have sold most of their prize vases of oil for export. Certainly the fame of the city of Athens and the value of the prizes would further insure this result. Further, the scheduling of the

229. See the extensive commentary on *Athenaion Politeia* 60 in P. J. Rhodes, *A Commentary on the Athenaion Politeia* (1981) 668-676. For a discussion of the evidence of the long history of the athlothetai, see B. Nagy, “The Athenian Athlothetai,” *GRBS* 307-313. The Pompeion, the building facility which was located between the Dipylon and the Sacred Gate and used as the location for mounting the Panathenaic procession, also apparently provided storage space for the prize amphorai as they were collected from the pottery workshops. See Robert L. Pounder, “A Hel-

lenistic Arsenal in Athens”, *Hesperia* 52 (1983), 250-51, for a discussion of the masses of Panathenaic vase fragments found at the Pompeion. Most of the fragments are from vases which had not held oil (see J. Frel, *Kerameikos* X 238) which might indicate that the vases were stored at the Pompeion and then filled with oil somewhere else before the festival began. The location of the storage facility for the oil has yet to be firmly identified. As noted in n. 228, preservation of the oil in usable condition involved some care.

festival to coincide conveniently with an athlete's travel to Delphi and the Isthmus might have assisted.

THE THESEIA

The Theseia was an annual festival in honor of Theseus and probably had its origin in a perceived need by the Athenians to possess a hero-cult similar to those derived either from Homer and the epic cycle or to those based upon legends independent of Homer such as Herakles and Perseus. Athens did have hero-cults of a greater antiquity than Homer, such as Akademos (Hekademos) or Kekrops, but these were more in the nature of progenitors and founding fathers and had few of the characteristics of a Herakles or an Achilles and apparently therefore offered little of military or international value to Athens. This deficiency may have been embarrassingly emphasized at the battle of Salamis in 480 B.C. when, before the battle, prayers were offered to the gods, the aid of Telemon and Ajax was invoked, and a boat was dispatched to Aegina to bring the bones of Aeakos and his other sons to insure their presence and help during the coming conflict. The ship arrived with their bones just before the battle was joined and the Aeginetans claimed that this very ship was the first in action that fateful day.²³⁰ A few years following the defeat and expulsion of the Persians from Greece, an Athenian fleet commanded by Kimon and supported by a Delphic oracle to return the bones of Theseus, seized the island of Skyros, then a pirate stronghold. A search of the island, the reputed place of death of Theseus, produced suitable skeletal remains and armor which Kimon brought back to Athens. A very sizeable *sekos*, or sacred precinct, was established in the southwest section of the agora to receive these relics.²³¹ The legends of Theseus and his connection with Athens were probably stressed, and possibly mostly created, first during the Peisistratid tyranny to provide suitable heroic sanctions to both domestic and international activities. These legends were further elaborated and undoubtedly enlarged during the fifth century as part of Athens' continued use of myth and

230. Aiakos in legend married the nymph Aegina who gave her name to the island. Their three sons were Telamon, Peleus, and Phocus. Telamon and Peleus became famous both for their exploits and for their sons, the Greater Ajax (Aias) son of Telamon, and Achilles son of Peleus. Salamis maintained hero cults for Telamon and Ajax, while Aegina celebrated their father and his other sons. Herodotos 8.64 ff. tells of the appeal to Salamis' heroes and the fetching of the bones of Aiakos and his other sons.

231. Homer A. Thompson, "Activities in the Athenian Agora 1960-65", *Hesperia* 35 (1966), 45 f. As to the size, date, and usage of this sanctuary, Thompson

states (pp. 46-47): "The Theseion... was also admirably situated and amply large to have served the various other uses of which we know from literary testimonia: for an assembly of the citizens in the time of Peisistratos, as a place of bivouac in the panic after the mutilation of the herms in 415 B.C., for occasional meetings of the Boule and of law courts, for election of certain civic offices, and has a place of asylum for runaway slaves and other suppliants". The reference in fourth century B.C. sources to assembly meetings in the time of Peisistratos, if historical accurate, indicates that the agora contained a sanctuary for Theseus long before Kimon's return from Skyros with the bones of Theseus.

legend to enhance its image at home and abroad.²³² The physical presence of the bones of the deceased hero seemed essential for a fully developed hero cult and Kimon's "discovery" of them occasioned the establishment of an official state cult, the construction of a walled sanctuary decorated with paintings of Theseus' major exploits, the composition of an epic poem, which has not survived, and the institution of an annual festival which included a procession, sacrifice, feast, and athletic competitions. Ca. 475 B.C. is a generally accepted date for the founding of this cult. The relative modernity of the cults and legends of Theseus is undoubtedly reflected in the paucity of cult centers outside the city of Athens and in the absence of aristocratic families in Athens claiming descent from Theseus. It can be argued that Athens, having previously failed to find or create the substance of heroic legend, "borrowed" a son of Poseidon (god or hero?), created a legendary king of Athens, Aegeus, deriving his name from one of the traditional epithets of Poseidon, Poseidon Aegeus, and had him sire a son, Theseus while visiting in Troizen. Poseidon's probable role as the father of Theseus may be indicated by the nature of his involvement in the legends of Theseus and by the fact that Poseidon and Theseus shared a festival observance on the eighth day of most Athenian months.²³³

There is, unfortunately, very little fifth century B.C. evidence for this festival. A fourth century B.C. source comments that the numerous sacrificial animals provided a good feast for the people and that a special milk porridge called *athara* also was served. Such publicity funded feasts would certainly contribute to the developing fifth century view of Theseus as a democratic hero. This festival, however, remained primarily a domestic affair, celebrating Athenian unity and traditions, probably with a strong emphasis both upon the athletic prowess of its youth and upon its military strength. The major sacrifice of the Theseia was on the eighth of Pyanopsion, which equates roughly with early to mid-October. A number of consecutive days devoted to Theseus seemed to have been clustered early in this month: the Oschophoria, probably an early agricultural rite converted to some aspect of the worship of Theseus, was held ca. the sixth and seventh of Pyanopsion; a sacrifice to the Amazons, who were part of the legend of Theseus, took place near the eighth; and a festival called the Kybernesia, allegedly established by Theseus himself to honor his ship's pilot on the Cretan voyage, also came early in this month. The Theseia itself undoubtedly developed quickly

232. W. R. Connor, "Theseus in Classical Athens", in Anne G. Ward (ed.), *The Quest for Theseus* (London 1970) 143-174, for a perceptive study of the development of the Theseus legend in sixth century Athens and its usefulness to the Peisistratid tyranny. For a somewhat contrary view that the legend of Theseus was anti-Peisistratid and fostered by the Alcmaeonid opponents of the tyranny, see C. Sourvinou-Inwood, *Theseus as Son and Stepson. A Tentative Illustration*

of Greek Mythological Mentality (London 1979) 27 (and sources cited).

233. For a discussion of the dual legends, Athenian and Troizenian, of Theseus, see Sourvinou-Inwood op. cit. 18-28. For the rejection of the creation of Aegeus from a cult epithet of Poseidon, see Herter, *RE Suppl.* 13, 1054. For the day in the Athenian calendar shared jointly by Poseidon and Theseus, see Mikalson, *Calendar* 69 f.

into a multi-day celebration with a number of agonistic and other events, but we have no early information about its program. The earliest secure information is from several inscriptions from the second century B.C. (ca. 161/160 to 155/54 B.C.), more than four hundred years after its founding. A number of changes certainly occurred during these intervening centuries, especially the growth of the ephebic military, academic, and athletic training. This late evidence, occasionally defended on the grounds of religious conservatism as legitimate for evaluating the fifth century Theseia, must be looked at – albeit with caution – simply in default of other sources. It points toward what was very likely true from the beginning: the Theseia was essentially a local, Athenian affair with its gymnastic and other competitions primarily, but not exclusively limited to citizens of Athens. The October date also puts it outside the late spring and summer months, i.e. the good travel months, during which the crown games and other “international” festivals were held. A strong military bias may have been present from the beginning, especially in view of the circumstances surrounding the founding of the cult.

The series of second century inscriptions depict an elaborate festival of pageantry, parades, and a wide variety of competitions. Each inscription begins with a decree of thanks to the elected *agonothetes* who organized, and apparently paid for, the various contests. The decrees generally praise the following accomplishments of the *agonothetes*: that he had conducted an elegant parade; that he had completed (or contributed to?) the sacrifice in accordance with ancestral custom; that he had taken care that everything went well with respect to the torch races and other competitions; that he had provided zealously in accordance with the decrees of the Athenian people prizes, unspecified, for the competitors both for individual and group or team events; that he had set up a *stele* listing the winners; and that he had paid the members of the Athenian *boule* an honorarium (to insure their attendance?).

There are three inscriptions with extensive lists of events and victors. They cannot be precisely dated but are assigned approximate dates within a six-year span: ca. 161/60 B.C., ca. 158/57 B.C., and ca. 155/54 B.C.²³⁴ The texts carved on the stones have not survived undamaged and there are sections of varying lengths which are no longer legible. Variation in events is found among these inscriptions but the traditional core of individual competitions is consistently represented, i.e. the dolichos, stadion, diaulos, wrestling, boxing, and the pankration. Missing is the pentathlon. Probably the hoplitodromos is labelled in the inscriptions as hopletes, an event for men. For all the others, except the dolichos, there are five different age classifications: boys of the first age group, boys of the second age group, boys of the third age group, an “open” *ekpanton*, event for boys – Athenian and non-Athenian, and an open event for men. The dolichos, probably because of its physical demands, had only three classifications: boys of the third age group, open event for boys, and an open

234. *IG* II² 956 (ca. 161/0).

event for men. This core program of Olympic events provided with its multiple age grouping a total of twenty-nine contests. A reasonable surmise is that the initial program included all these events but the full elaboration of the age-groupings may have taken some time.

In addition to these individual events, there were the torch-relay races, team competitions much enjoyed at Athens. The three inscriptions do not present a uniform pattern. At the Theseia of ca. 161/60 B.C. there were three races: a torch race for boys, without further definition, won by a team from the palaistra of Timeas; a torch race for epheboi with the team's identity not preserved. But the *lampadarchon* – captain (or sponsor?) was from the Akaman-tis tribe; and a torch race for *neaniskoi* won by a team trained at the Lykeion. The Theseia of ca. 158/57 B.C. also had three torch races but with a change: a race for boys, again won by a team from Timeas' palaistra, one for epheboi, and instead of *neaniskoi*, one for men won by a team from the Lykeion. The Theseia for ca. 155/54 B.C. had four torch races: for boys, this time won by a team from the palaistra of Antigenes, for second-year epheboi, for *neaniskoi*, won by a team from the Lykeion, and for cavalrymen, won by a team from the Pandionid tribe and very probably conducted on horseback. It would be unreasonable to project back into the early fifth century competition among teams from private palaistrai and the great public gymnasia, especially since the units from the palaistrai have no tribal identification. This runs counter to the presumed strong tribal orientation of earlier team sports. Also the usual assumption is that the system of private palaistrai developed later in the fifth century. The concept of age-grouping was, however, firmly established by the end of the fifth or early fourth century B.C. with men's, youths', and boys' competitions at the Great Panathenaia. There is no earlier evidence for the *neaniskoi* category and the creation of the ephebeia is usually dated to the fourth century and rarely to the early fifth century B.C.

A commonly proposed division by age for the various groups is that boys 14 to 15 years of age comprised the first group, those 16 to 17 the second group, and those 18 to 19 the third group. The epheboi and the *neaniskoi* would also come from the 18 to 19 year old age group, as would generally the winner of the boys' open events. There are some problems with this explanation both on organizational and athletic grounds. In the first place, the 18 to 19 year old group would have an overly rich program; secondly, one athlete on occasion should have won the same event within two or three of groups available to the 18 to 19 year olds, unless multiple entries were not allowed. The inscriptional evidence is too limited to be conclusive, but there is no evidence for the same person winning the same event or any other event in both the third age group and the boys' open category. Double winners, however, do appear within the same group classification: in ca. 161/60 B.C. Kairios, an Athenian, won both the stadion and diaulos in the boys' open category; and Apollonios, the son of Apollonios of the Aegeid tribe, won both the wrestling and pankration in the third age group. It should be noted that Kairios, the winner of open events, is identified simply as an Athenian, whereas Apollonios, the winner in events restricted specifically by age, is identified by his father's name and by his Attic tribe. This should indicate that the age-group

events were limited to Athenian citizens. Other divisions by groups are possible, e.g. the third age group as younger than 18, while the 18 and 19 year olds competed in the individual events in the open category and in the team events either in the ephebic category or that of *neaniskoi*. Two categories for team events is reasonable simply because ephebic training during the Hellenistic period ceased to be a broadly based military training program and became an elitist educational, military, and athletic program. Those youths not participating in the ephebeia would have had some other organizational structure for preparing for team competitions and private palaestrai and public gymnasia are logical sources for this. If a two-year span per age group is to be maintained, it would begin with those 12 and 13 years of age and conclude with those 16 and 17 years of age as the third group. Those 18 and 19 competed in individual events open to athletes of similar age from other Greek cities; hence the open winners were identified only by city-state, whereas the age group and team winners were identified by family and tribe or by club or training facility. Competition for those 12 and 13 years of age may be doubted but, when limited to a local festival, is a reasonable extension of the athletic training most certainly offered in this group. It is also possible that the age groups were limited to a single age, e.g. those 15 years of age comprised the first age group, those 16 the second, and those 17 the third; and those 18 and 19 competed in the boys' open events. Or the first age group could have been those of 14 and 15 years of age, the second age group those competing in the open events both coming primarily from the 18 and 19 year olds. The very limited inscriptional evidence does not fully resolve the problem. In ca. 155/54 B.C. Euarkhides won the same event in the boys' open competition. He could have been 15 years of age, in 158/57 B.C. when he won in the first age group; he would then have been 18 years of age in 155/54 B.C. when he won in the open category. Unfortunately, Euarkhides' recorded victories fit either the single age categories with the open events available primarily to those 18 and 19 or the two year categories with the third age group and the open category comprising basically the 18 and 19 year olds.

There is one further problem with Euarkhides' career as preserved: he is also listed in ca. 155/54 B.C. as a winner in the ephebic torch race, but with the specific designation of "second year epheboi". Since epheboi served for two years, their 18th and 19th years, Euarkhides, as a second year ephebos, should have been 19 rather than 18 as figured above.²³⁵ It is possible to securely identify his age in the two inscriptions simply because the two inscriptions are not firmly dated; a one year variation for either the earlier or the later inscription will salvage either approach to the age-group question.

Two of the inscriptions include torch races for the *neaniskoi*, while the third has a torch race for men. This is one further indication that some variation in the program was possible. In the games of ca. 161/60 B.C. Kairios won two boys' open events, which should have made

235. All three inscriptions list torch races for epheboi, but only that of ca. 155/54 B.C. limits the contest to second year epheboi.

him either 18 or 19 years of age. At the same festival a Kairios is also listed as *lampadar-chon* of the winning team of *neaniskoi* from the Lykeion. If this is the same Kairios, it is good evidence that the *neaniskoi* were 18 and 19 years of age. There are problems with this identification: *lampadarchon* “leader or supervisor of the torch race”. This function was usually performed by a wealthy adult whose duty it was to organize and pay for the training of the team. In Kairios’ case it may mean simply that he was the team captain, or even that he both competed on and paid the expenses for the team from the Lykeion. An 18 or 19 year old from a wealthy family might have served as the financial backer for his team. This might indicate that Kairios was from a wealthy family and raises the further issue: the *epheboi* came from the economic and social upper classes; why then was Kairios competing as a *neaniskos* rather than as an *ephebos*? Again, there is ample evidence both for torch races, and for their popularity, and for age group competitions at Athens during the fifth and fourth centuries B.C. There is no reason not to assume that some similar pattern, with or without *ephebic* participation, developed fairly early in the Theseia.

In addition to the traditional athletic program, the Theseia of the second century B.C. presented a number of other contests, two of which were within the Olympic program of the late fifth, early fourth centuries B.C. Competition for trumpeters and heralds are listed first on two of the three inscriptions and immediately after what are possibly parade-style events on the third inscription. As at Olympia these events were held early or at the beginning undoubtedly to allow the winners to serve as official trumpeter and herald throughout the rest of the program. A major festival with large crowds in attendance would soon need some means of public communication and the Olympic practice may have been adopted at Athens fairly early.

The “parade-style” events listed on the three inscriptions involved the Athenian military and possibly some non-Athenian contingents. The Athenian competitions were on a tribal basis, reflecting the organizational structure of the Athenian hoplite and cavalry forces, and the victorious units are therefore identified by tribal names and by the names of their *taxiarchos*, commander of a tribe’s hoplite force, or *phylarchos*, commander of a tribe’s cavalry unit. The contests are listed as *euandria* of a selection of hoplites, *euandria* of cavalry, and *euoplia* of both hoplite and cavalry units. In none of the three inscriptions did the same tribe win both the *euandria* and *euoplia* in either the hoplite and or cavalry divisions. The more difficult entry is for contests of *euandria* and *euoplia* for those “among the nations” – usually thought to mean non-Athenians. These are designated by the term *tagma*, “a body of soldiers”, and apparently by the name of a commander or organizer, but not with any statement of origin. There were many foreigners living in Athens and Piraeus by the fifth century B.C. and possibly groups of them could enter these contests. A lesser possibility is that military contingents from outside Attica could enter – but in this case the name of their home state should have been included. Tribal military competitions were certainly part of the Great Panathenaia during the fifth century and very likely were included by an early

date in the annual festival dedicated to fostering local identity and patriotism. The possible participation of alien-residents may have been a somewhat later development.

All three inscriptions stress participation by the Athenian cavalry but the one dated to ca. 161/60 B.C. preserves only nine equestrian events. The first three were limited to *phylarchontes* or tribal commanders: a diaulos with rider in full armor, a diaulos without armor, and an akampion (one length sprint?). Aration, son of Simos, cavalry commander of the Aegeid tribe, won all three events. The next two contests were for members of the cavalry: a diaulos with horse in war gear and a simple diaulos, neither horse nor rider with any armor. The next contest may have been more a horse-judging contest as it is describe merely as “with magnificent horse” and no distance is specified. The next two events on the inscription are a diaulos and an *ek panton*, i.e. an open event – both won by Athenians. The last event preserved on the stone is restored as a javelin-throwing contest from horse-back, at a target, an activity which became especially associated with ephebic training. The inscriptions from the other two Theseia are basically variations of the events listed for 161/60 B.C.

Of greater interest is the appearance immediately after the hoplite competition (race in armor?) in the Theseia of ca. 158/57 B.C. and 155/54 B.C. of hoplite-fighting by age groups. These events are missing from the inscription of ca. 161/60 B.C., but may have been included elsewhere on the stone. In ca. 158/57 B.C. there were two different contests for four age-groups: hoplite-fighting with shield and spear for age-groups one, two, three, and the epheboi, and hoplite-fighting with shield and spear for age-groups one, two, three, and the epheboi, and hoplite-fighting with large oblong shield for the same groups. The inscription for 155/54 B.C. adds that those with the large oblong shield also had a sword, which was undoubtedly true for 158/57 B.C. as the two weapons normally used by hoplites were the spear and the sword. By the latter third of the fourth century B.C. the state provided training in certain military skills: hoplite - fighting, archery, javelin throwing, and the use of catapults. Certainly this training continued as part of the ephebic program and, as these inscriptions prove, hoplite-training was provided and encouraged even for boys in the middle teens. This form of hoplite competition certainly did not even approximate the bloody spectacle of the Roman arena but were sham battles render somewhat harmless by blunted weapons – e.g. some device securely covering the pint of the spear. Plato describes hoplite competition for one against one, pairs against pairs, and teams of ten against ten, with rules for determining the winners set by a *hoplomachos*.²³⁶ Something of this sort must have taken place at the Theseia. One somewhat startling aspect of Athenian military training is that state-sponsored training in the techniques of hoplite-fighting was introduced after Athens ceased to be a major military power. Xenophon, writing in the early fourth century B.C., specifi-

236. Plato, *Leges* 833E.

cally states that no formal state training was available for hoplites.²³⁷ Both Xenophon and Plato²³⁸ refer to specialists in hoplite warfare offering both free public demonstrations of their skills and lessons for a fee. The Athenian hoplite had not only to provide his own armor and weapons but also to acquire at his own expense the necessary skills. Rigorous training and conditioning was essential to the success of hoplite warfare; however, it seems probable that Athens during the fifth and early fourth century B.C. provided only training in group maneuvers under the aegis of the tribal commanders after the individual hoplite had achieved some command of his weapons and of hand-to-hand fighting.²³⁹ Instruction was offered for a fee by itinerant specialists, called *hoplomachoi*, who staged public exhibitions of their skills and offered classes. Those liable to hoplite service possessed sufficient resources to acquire these skills at their own expense.²⁴⁰ It is also possible, even probable, that public training and the public show element increased as the actual necessity for military prowess decreased; its major role in ephebic training and its appearance in the program of the Theseia during the second century does not reflect the increased need for hoplite forces. A hearkening back to former military glory as an ongoing aspect of fostering civic pride and as an essential aspect of a “gentleman’s” education may have been the motivating factors in this elaborate and stylized display of military skills.

The Theseia of the mid-second century B.C. was a multi-day festival. The parade-type events, the *euandria* and *euoplia* must have been time-consuming and, if the order of events in the three inscriptions is that actually followed, they opened the program. It is possible that the trumpeter and herald competitions preceded them. The torch races might have taken place at night to increase the spectacle. The sacrifice, if it was to provide a free public meal – as it apparently did during the fifth and fourth centuries B.C. – would have been a lengthy affair. The extensive age-group competition, even if elimination contests were not necessary, would also have been time-consuming. When the equestrian and hoplite-fighting events are added, a festival of four-to-five days is not an unreasonable assumption, unless more than one event were held simultaneously – e.g. age-group athletics in the stadion at the time as the equestrian events in the hippodrome. This did not seem, however, to be normal procedure at a Greek festival. It is probable that the Theseia witnessed some increase in the number of events, especially if ephebic and other youth programs developed along parallel lines. Also, comparison of the early fourth century B.C. Panathenaic inscription with those from the second century B.C. indicate a possible increase in the number of contests for the Athenian cavalry. Thus the program as outlined in these three second century B.C. inscriptions

237. Xenophon, *Memorabilia* 3.12.5.

238. *Laches* V 182.

239. J. K. Anderson, *Military Theory and Practice in the Age of Xenophon* 84-87; Xenophon, *Memorabilia* 3.1; see also the discussion of the pyrrhic dance,

op. cit. p. 324.

240. Plato, *Laches* V 182, and *Laws* 833E for competition one vs. one, pairs’ competition, teams of ten, and rules for judging.

probably exceeded that of the earlier Classical period. However, the mid fifth century B.C. Theseia must have been a major public event lasting several days.

The Theseia is an excellent example of a local agonistic festival. It was closely tied to a major, albeit recent cult, was redolent with patriotism and civic pride, and provided an opportunity for the military and athletic programs of the city-state to show the results of the year's efforts. The central role of athletic training and competition is apparent from the many age-group events. The sacrifice and feast should not be overlooked. It added a very popular event, in fact a form of welfare, which along with several other festivals provided occasional opportunities for the lower economic classes to eat at public expense – or the expense of some wealthier citizen. Along with the popular agonistic elements, the Theseia provided a holiday atmosphere with the appropriate components of feasting, spectacle, participation, and self-praise.

THE ELEUSINIA

The city of Eleusis, located about twelve miles from Athens along the way to Corinth, offered to the Greek-speaking world initiation into the Great Mysteries, a religious cult devoted to Demeter and her daughter Persephone which has obstinately refused to reveal its secrets to the modern scholar. Its importance is unquestioned and its history as the preeminent mystery cult of the ancient Greek world spanned more than a thousand years. Another cult celebrating these goddesses of fertility, but infrequently referred to in ancient sources, was the Eleusinia. This paucity of information is unfortunate because the cult worship included athletic and equestrian competitions with valuable prizes and attracted competitors from the crown circuit. The Eleusinia claimed a great antiquity, possibly even exceeding that of the Great Mysteries and the Panathenaia, and sought a panhellenic status. In origin it was probably a local harvest festival centering on the offering of the first fruits, *aparchai*, to the two goddesses. There is, however, no unambiguous reference to this cult in the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter* which dates probably at least to the seventh century B.C. and is the earliest extant piece of literature concerned with the worship of Demeter at Eleusis. Athens seized control of Eleusis and its cults in about 600 B.C. and may have been responsible for elevating a minor aspect of local worship into national prominence. If so, this would fit the pattern of Athenian actions with respect to other local or even clan-dominated cults. G. Mylonas, in his careful reexamination and study of the site, determined that major construction took place early in the sixth century which he associated with Solon. More extensive architectural activity was evident from the mid sixth century B.C., including fortification walls and a major cult building, the telesterion. The sanctuary and its major entrance was also reoriented away from the sea and towards Athens, thereby stressing the affiliation with its new mistress. This massive new construction and symbolic assertion of Athenian control Mylonas attributes to the Peisistratid tyranny. The sanctuary was destroyed, along with many other buildings in

Athens and Attica, during the Persian war of 480 B.C. Fairly immediate reconstruction was undertaken, probably under the aegis of Kimon, who was also largely responsible for the introduction of the cult of Theseus. Pericles continued to direct Athenian attention toward Eleusis, including major fortifications and a new telesterion designed by Iktinos, the major architect of the rebuilding of the Acropolis during the mid to late fifth century B.C. This constant Athenian concern with the sanctuary at Eleusis indicates its value as the easternmost outpost of Attica and stresses the political and cultural significance to Athens of control of the celebration of the Mysteries and the Eleusinian games.²⁴¹

The earliest mention of the Eleusinia is found in Pindar. His ninth Olympian ode, celebrating the crown of olive for wrestling won by Epharmostos from Eastern Lokrian Opus, mentions among his previous victories of note that “the shores of Eleusis tell of his glorious prowess”. This is a fairly clear reference to an athletic victory at Eleusis and almost certainly to the agonistic component of the Eleusinia. The date of Epharmostos’ victory at Olympia, 468 B.C., would indicate that the Eleusinia was a well-known athletic festival by the first quarter of the fifth century B.C., if not even earlier.²⁴²

Another informative reference is found in the *Constitution of Athens*, written in the last third of the fourth century B.C. In a listing of the major penteteric, i.e. quadrennial, festivals sponsored by Athens, the Eleusinia appears as the fourth one. J. D. Mikalson’s study of the sacred and civil calendar suggests that what evidence we possess places the Eleusinia in the month of Metageitnion, the second month in the Athenian year coinciding roughly with the end of July and much of August.²⁴³ Athens expanded the rite of the first fruits by requiring the demes of Attika and its allies, during the late fifth century B.C., to contribute and by inviting all Greek states to participate in sending offerings. An inscription dated to 422 B.C. reports the construction of three new underground containers for the storage of grains and adds that the various demarchs of communities in Attika were to collect 1/600th of the barley harvest and 1/120th of the wheat harvest within their respective districts and forward these amounts to the *hieropoioi*, the Athenian officials selected by lot to supervise this and other festivals. The same percentages were expected from the allied states, and

241. G. Mylonas, *Eleusis and the Eleusinian Mysteries* (1961) 63 for Solonian, 77 f. for Peisistratian, and 106 f. for Kimonian and Periclean activity.

242. Pindar, *Olympian* 9.99. *Olympian* 13.110, celebrating dual victories in the stadion sprint and the pentathlon by Xenophon of Corinth in 464 B.C., also mentions his previous victory at Eleusis. *Isthmian* 1.57 offers a more cryptic reference to “Eleusis, the famous sacred grove, *alsos* of Demeter, and Euboea among the curved race tracks (*dromoi*)”. This ode addressed an Isthmian victory in chariot racing ca. 458

B.C. by Herodotos of Thebes and may refer to a similar victory at Eleusis.

243. Aristotle, *The Constitution of the Athenians* 54.7 for the Eleusinia as one of five quadrennial festivals administered by a board of ten annual *hieropoioi* selected by lottery. Mommsen, *Feste der Stadt Athen im Altertum* (Leipzig 1898) 179-190, in his discussion of the Eleusinia concludes that four days were needed for the agonistic and ritual schedule. Mikalson, *Calendar* 46, finds that a four-day festival could be placed between the 13th to 20th of Metageitnion.

other Greek city-states were also invited to contribute their first fruits.²⁴⁴ This grain undoubtedly was put to several uses: the *aparchai*, the prizes, the purchase of cattle for sacrifice, and allotments to the priestly groups involved with the Eleusinia. A series of inscriptions found at Eleusis provides some details about this distribution. Offerings are reported for trieteric, biennial, and penteteric, quadrennial, celebrations of this festival, both of which included athletic, musical, and equestrian contests and an undefined *patrios agon* or ancestral competition. For the biennial festival 70 medimnoi of grain were allotted. Unfortunately the use to be made of this grain is not stated. Possibly this was the source of the prizes. The amount is not insignificant as the medimnos was a ca. twelve gallon dry measure or forty-eight days' supply for one man. For the quadrennial festival, for which the same four categories of competition are listed, the amount of grain allotted is not preserved on the inscription; there is, however, reference to a special equestrian event at this festival for which an additional 70 medimnoi are granted.

The references to quadrennial and biennial celebrations with agonistic aspects, plus the attested annual Eleusinia, have caused confusion as to how many of the festivals in a four-year cycle included athletic completion and how many merely presented the first fruits. The view most generous with athletics argues that once during an Olympiad the quadrennial festival was held with special magnificence and possibly an increase in the number of contests, while the biennial festivals were held with less splendor every other year. Such a system might have had the major celebration in the second year of the Olympiad, the two lesser agonistic festivals during the first and third year of the Olympiad, and the simple offering of *aparchai* during the fourth year. Another acceptable interpretation of the inscriptional evidence is that there was only one of each type of agonistic festival, e.g. the quadrennial during the second, the biennial during the fourth, and the simple annual offering of the first fruits during the first and third years of the Olympiad. The term biennial in this case means only that there was a two-year interval between the two festivals. This strains the normal meaning of biennial but does account for the singular form used both for quadrennial and biennial in the inscription.²⁴⁵ One inscription notes that the total amount of grain allotted for the priests, priestesses, biennial, and quadrennial festivals was 400 medimnoi of grain. This figure cannot be matched with the known needs: the priests and priestesses received 61 medimnoi annually or 244 in an Olympiad; the biennial received at least 70, the quadrennial received 70 for the special horse race and at least 70 for the regular athletic events; plus some grain was sold for the purchase of cattle for sacrifice. Thus the presumed four-

244. *IG I² 76* and discussion by R. M. Simms, "The Eleusinia in the Sixth to Fourth Centuries B.C.", *GRBS* 16 (1975), 270.

245. For two biennial and one quadrennial festival, see Simms, *op.cit.* 269; for a single biennial and one

quadrennial festival, see K. Clinton, "*IG I²*, the Eleusinia, and the Eleusinians", *AJPh* 100 (1979), 9-10, and P. J. Rhodes, *A Commentary on the Aristotelian Athenaion Politeia* (Oxford 1981) 608.

year requirements exceed 400 medimnoi. There is room on the stone for more numerical figures. Another source of grain for these games was the Rharian field near Eleusis where Demeter first revealed to humans how to grow grain. This field was planted each year in a separate ritual and its yield must have been particularly honored; there is no clue, however, as to the size of this field or the amount of its sacred crop.

The competitive events at the biennial and quadrennial festivals cannot be identified beyond the following broad categories: *gymnikos agon*, probably the traditional track and field and heavy events, *hippodromia*, *mousike*, the *patrios agon*, the undefined “ancestral contest”, and the special equestrian event in the quadrennial festival, which received the very large sum of 70 medimnoi. Pindar attests to wrestling, if Epharmostos, his Olympic wrestling champion, also competed at Eleusis in the same event, and to the stadion and pentathlon, if Xenophon of Corinth won the same events at Eleusis as at Olympia.²⁴⁶ Two dedicatory inscriptions at Eleusis from the first half of the fourth century B.C. were for wrestling and the *synoris*. A lead jumping weight dedicated at Eleusis by Epainetos, the Athenian, for his victory in the jump, is dated to 580-570 B.C. and raises the possibility that the Eleusinia offered athletic competition at the latest by the beginning of the sixth century B.C. The victory could have been in the pentathlon but possibly the jump was a separate event.²⁴⁷ Even more tantalizing are the very late sources which assert that Euripides, the famous Athenian tragedian, won either the pankration or the boxing at Eleusis, but these are seldom believed.²⁴⁸ What little evidence there is indicates that the Eleusinia attracted quality athletes and continued to function into the period of Roman domination of Greece. The prizes given must have been significant amounts of sacred grain, which had both religious importance and a fair and immediate commercial value for the winning ath-

246. See fn. 240 above.

247. *IG* II² 3124 and Kyle 206, for the dedicatory inscription of Kydeides, son of Kydistratos, from Piraeus, for a wrestling victory at the Great Eleusinia ca. 400-350 BC; *IG* II¹ 3126 and Kyle 214 for an extensively damaged inscription recording victories in the *synoris* apparently both at the Great Panathenaia and the Eleusinia in the first half of the fourth century B.C. by someone whose name is legible only to the extent of his father, Promachos, and his home-town, Eleusis; and *IG* I² 802 and discussions in Moretti, *IAG* 1-4, no. 1, and Kyle 113 and 201 for the lead halter with the dedicatory inscription, dated to 580-70 B.C., indicating the Epainetos won “jumping.” There is no indication beyond the words “jumping” and “halter” as to the event nor is there specific mention of the

Eleusinia. Conservative assumptions would identify the event as the pentathlon (a jumping weight symbolizing the five-part contest) and the festival as the Eleusinia, the find-spot of the halter.

248. The anonymous *Vita Euripidis* (5-7 in the preface to Nauck’s Teubner edition) and Aulus Gellius, *Noctes Atticae* 15.20 recount that a prophecy was given to Euripides’ father that his son would win a crown, that Euripides trained as a boxer and pankratiast, and that he won a victory (*Vita*) or that he won victories at the Theseia and the Eleusinia (*Aulus Gellius*, who adds the further elaboration that Euripides tried to compete at the Olympics but was rejected as too young). See discussions in M. R. Lefkowitz, “The Euripides Vita”, *GRBS* 20 (1979), 187-209, and Kyle 218.

lete. There is no literary or inscriptional record of the amounts given for various event and no archaeological evidence for jars or other vessels used to hold the prize grain.

Furthermore, archaeologists have found nothing yet at the site of Eleusis which assists in reconstructing the agonistic aspects of the Eleusinia. No stadion has been found, although topographical and epigraphical researches conducted by John Travlos in the late 1940's point toward the existence of one. A fourth century B.C. inscription listing repairs to the major gates of the sanctuary mentions specifically a stadion gate. Travlos argues that the most reasonable location for a stadion is on the relatively flat plain stretching toward the sea coast from the south side of the acropolis of Eleusis. The space available, ca. 225 meters, is adequate, and the slope would provide the elevated area needed for spectators. Excavations conducted during the late nineteenth century noted a stone retaining wall suitable for supporting a dirt embankment at a modest distance across from the acropolis. If Travlos' analysis of the limited data is correct, there was a stadion of the traditional early type using a natural slope and built-up dirt embankment to accommodate spectators on at least two sides. This location for the stadion, i.e. facing toward the sea, accords well with Pindar's reference to "the shores of Eleusis". The presumed area of the stadion also contained an early cemetery with pottery dating down to the seventh century B.C. Burials then seem to have stopped, thus indicating the early 600's as a *terminus post quem* for the possible introduction of athletic activity at Eleusis.²⁴⁹ Probably little further information will ever be recovered because of modern quarrying on the south side of the acropolis. A further, probably insurmountable difficulty in establishing the existence of athletic activity at Eleusis during the seventh and sixth centuries B.C. is that even formal athletic and equestrian competitions can be conducted with temporary facilities leaving little or no trace for the archaeologist.

As already noted, the sixth century was a period of dramatic change and of increased activity at Eleusis. At the beginning of this century Eleusis came under Athenian control and major construction was undertaken both early in this century (Solonian?) and more extensively during the tyranny of Peisistratos. If the lead jumping weight of Epainetos is correctly identified as a victory offering in games at Eleusis between 580-70 B.C., the Eleusinia, or its precursor, antedates the formal institution of the Great Panathenaia.²⁵⁰ If the major construction of the mid-sixth century marked the institution of an agonistic festival in honor of Demeter and Kore, the very recent establishment of the Great Panathenaia

249. John Travlos, "The Topography of Eleusis," *Hesperia*, Vol. 18, No. 1, The Thirty-sixth Report of the American Excavations in the Athenian Agora (Jan-Mar. 1949), 138-147.

250. Some scholars date the Burgon vase, often considered the earliest of the Panathenaic prizes, twenty

to thirty years before 566 B.C., thus indicating possible games at Athens in honor of Athena before the traditional for the founding of the Great Panathenaia. That some form of festival, possibly sporadic in schedule, existed in the first half of the sixth century is a reasonable hypothesis.

would have provided a suitable paradigm. The next period of major Athenian building activity at the sanctuary was immediately after the Greek victory over the Persian invaders in the battles of Salamis and Plataia in 480 and 479 B.C. If the Athenians used this occasion to found or enhance the Eleusinia as an athletic festival, their creation at the same time of the Theseian and Marathonian games would indicate a decade of intense activity in cultic agonism. The Eleusinian games could not have been founded any later simply because Pindar was soon celebrating in song and dance the victors at Eleusis.

Some form of fertility ritual must have existed at or near this sanctuary from a very early period, but whether it focused on the introduction of cultivated wheat – as it apparently did later on – is debatable. The introduction of agriculture should commemorate a very significant change in human social organization. Legend, at least in fifth century sources, identified the Rharian field near Eleusis as the first field planted by Triptolemos under the tutelage of Demeter herself. One would expect this momentous occasion to be much celebrated in traditional lore. Although this field and its grain were indeed regarded as sacred and as an integral aspect of the cult, there is no mention of the solving of the mystery of sowing and reaping in the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter*, dated as already noted to the seventh century.

A curious statement in the *Hymn* may refer to a cultic aspect of the Eleusinia which was both athletic and dangerous: the children of the Eleusinians will constantly wage war for Demophon, the infant child of King Keleos for whom Demeter had acted as nurse during her first period of mourning for Persephone.²⁵¹ Explanation for this prediction is often found in an offer made 900 years later in a literary work describing a banquet devoted to learned and convivial discussion (the *Deipnosophistai* by Athenaeus – fl. ca. 200 A.D.): one speaker volunteers to describe a festival at Eleusis if the others are willing to pay him. Unfortunately no money is forthcoming. The immediate context of this offer is the practice of throwing stones at people and it is therefore often assumed that stone-throwing took place at Eleusis. A reference in Hesychius to a festival at Athens (Eleusis?) in honor of Demophon, son of Keleos, called the *balletys*, may also refer to this perpetual war waged by the children of the Eleusinians. *Balletys* probably refers to the act of throwing something, and *lithobolia*, a rather common type of bloody, ritual combat, frequently accompanied by abusive language, may explain the prediction. *Lithobolia* does appear in a number of ritual contexts, e.g. funerary, marriage, seasonal, and the ritual of purifying and preparing a field for planting by the shedding of blood may have been appropriate for an agricultural festival. Richardson points out that the foretelling of Demophon's death, and the possibility that he died an infant, suggest an analogy with Opheltēs-Archēmoros and Melikertes, both child-heroes whose deaths were celebrated by the games at Nemea and the Isthmia. Unfortunately, we

251. "And in due season, for him, as the years revolve, the children of the Eleusinians will always wage war and bitter strife with one another for ever (lines 265-7, Richardson's translation)".

have no other evidence for such a ritual at the Eleusinia or any other cult at Eleusis. It might possibly be connected with the *patrios agon* referred to in the inscriptions.²⁵²

Another late second century A.D. writer, Artemidoros of Ephesos, reports what he regards as a strange phenomenon: the boys of Ephesos, the youths of Athens at Eleusis, and the most noble inhabitants of Larissa contest with bulls, a practice Artemidoros asserts is usually limited to those condemned to death. The fame of the Thessalian bull-fighters brought them later even to Rome and its amphitheatre, first allegedly by Julius Caesar and later by Claudius. Descriptions of them from two Latin writers, Pliny the Elder and Suetonius, are strikingly similar to the bull-dogging of the cowboys of the American west: Thessalian horsemen riding beside wild bulls leapt from their horses onto the bulls, grabbing them by their horns and twisting until either they killed the bulls or threw them to the ground. Probably the reference to contesting with bulls at Eleusis involved a different type of confrontation between youth and bull. At the *Proerosia* at Eleusis, a cult including offerings of first fruits, a group of young men undergoing their ephebic training were charged with raising the bulls to be sacrificed onto the altar. This practice was common with the cults of Herakles and was also part of the *Hephaisteia*, a cult in honor of *Hephaistos* at Athens. The danger to a team of epheboi could be substantial and is often thought to have been minimized either by having the bulls tied up or by stunning them with a blow to the head. It is probable, however, that at this and other cults in Athens teams had physically to subdue bulls before lifting them onto the altar for sacrifice. Cultic practice which involved danger to the participants was not uncommon in antiquity.²⁵³

A third century B.C. inscription from Gonnoi in Thessaly gives rather late evidence for the “international” status claimed by Athens for its main festivals; it reports that the city of Athens dispatched *spondophoroi*, officials to announce the dates of the Eleusinia, the Panathenaia, and the Mysteries. There is no indication as to how often they came to Gonnoi and what Eleusinia was announced – the penteteric only, the penteteric and trieteric, or all celebrations of the festival. It is possible that, along with the Great Panathenaia, only those

252. For texts of the comments in Athenaeus, *Deipnosophistai* 406d and Hesychius (s.v. *Balletys*) and a discussion of various interpretations of this perpetual wars among the children of Eleusis, see Richardson, pp. 245-47.

253. Artemidoros, *Oneirocritica* 1.8. An ephebic inscription, *IG* II 467-71, refers to lifting the bull for sacrifice at Eleusis. Parke, *Festivals* 52: “A number of references in classical literature make the reality of this practice (lifting live bulls onto the altar) reasonably certain, though some classical scholars have boggled at the feasibility of the ceremony. The struggling

bull would certainly present a problem, but it may first have been stunned with a blow of a mallet or thrown and roped. At a feast of Hephaestus as many as 200 Athenians were elected to lift the bulls. The number of victims is not stated, but evidently such a large contingent could be divided into a number of teams to deal with them in turn. This dangerous activity of youths and men in various Athenian cults may be descended from the Minoan and Mycenaean bull-leaping, if this earlier activity grew out of capturing and sacrificing bulls.

with agonistic components were included; however the Mysteries were an annual event and it is therefore possible that *spondophoroi* were dispatched every year. The date of this inscription, ca. 230 B.C., possibly reflects Athens attempt to resurrect some of its ancient glory by reorganizing and refurbishing its three major festivals after a century of Macedonian rule. The use of *spondophoroi*, “those who bring a proposal for truce or a treaty of peace”, implies that Athens claimed a religious truce for all who wished to travel to Athens and Eleusis to attend and/or participate in any of these three festivals.²⁵⁴

254. See B. Helly, *Gonnoi* II (Amsterdam 1973) 121-22, no. 109.

OTHER ATHENIAN AGONISTIC FESTIVALS

STATE FUNERAL GAMES (EPITAPHIOS AGON)

Funeral games for distinguished individuals existed in Greece from before the time of Homer; their history and significance has already been discussed. Various Greek city-states offered publicly sponsored games as part of the ceremony of the burial of those killed in war. The development of this type of agonistic celebration was dependent upon the rise of a civic government sufficiently well-established to supplant the role of aristocratic families and clans who traditionally buried their own dead with whatever pomp and display they could muster. There are references to the group burial of Athenian war casualties from the early fifth century; Pausanias specifically mentions monuments in the public cemetery at Athens for those who died in battle against Aigina “before the Medes marched into Greece”²⁵⁵ and those who died at Eurymedon²⁵⁶. In addition the Athenian and Plataian dead at Marathon were given public burials at the battlefield, as were those who died in the battles of Salamis and Plataiai. Literary sources beginning with Thucydides refer to a *patrios nomos* or “ancestral law” governing the state burial of war casualties. Unfortunately Thucydides does not comment on the origin or date of this law and discusses only the burial and the oration, *patrios logos*, delivered by a political leader without mentioning the patrios agon. Fourth century and later sources do include references to the patrios agon but there is debate as to the occasion and date for the formal institution at Athens of public burial in the demotion sema, accompanied by an appropriate oration and athletic competition. Candidates range from the battle of Marathon to the battle at Drabeskos (465 B.C.). W. Kendrick Pritchett, in his multi volume study *The Greek State at War*, surveys the evidence and concludes that the public burial of those who fell at Drabeskos was the first conducted under a law establishing a formal ceremony for such occasions (and creating the demotion sema?). He argues that Kimon’s bringing of the ashes of the Athenian dead from the battle at Eurymedon for a public burial and games provided the needed precedent for formal legislation. He also cites the dating of the earliest fragments of the official lists of war casualties to the time of the battle of Drabeskos and Kimon’s extensive building and beautification projects as supporting this date. The earlier public burials in Athens and on battle fields would, under this reasonable hypothesis, be individual acts under the aegis of distinguished generals and not the product of a legislative act.

The existence of public funeral games at Athens is further attested by several bronze vases dated to the first half of the fifth century and bearing an inscription identifying them

255. Pausanias 1.29.7.

256. Pausanias 1.29.14.

as coming from contests at Athens for those who died in battle. Attempts to attach them to regular agonistic festivals such as the games at Marathon or the Theseia are probably wrong simply because the inscriptions fail to mention these festivals but stress simply their relation to the war dead. Vanderpool has published three bronze vases, two lebes and one hydria, all bearing the same inscription: *Athenaioi: athla epi tois en toi polemoi*: Athenians; games for those (who fell) in war. He dates the letter form of one to ca. 480 B.C. and surmises that the vessel may have in fact been a prize at games held after the Persian wars – e.g. after Salamis and Plataiai and quotes a late Greek author, Diodorous Siculus²⁵⁷: “The people of Athens adorned the tombs of those who fell in the Persian War and held the funeral games then for the first time and passed a law that chosen orators should make speeches in praise of those who were given public burials”. Vanderpool dates the second vessel somewhat later and the third one, the hydria, to the second half of the fifth century. All three were found in cemeteries and the two older ones apparently contained the charred bones and ashes of a burial. Use of prize vases as burial urns was rather common and may be one further indication of the special value placed upon athletic victories – i.e. the victor keeping one of his prizes for his burial. It is possible that there is no real conflict between Pritchett’s and Vanderpool’s dating of the institution of the patrios agon: Athens most probably conducted especially splendid public funerals after the great victories at Marathon, Salamis, and Plataiai. These three were battlefield burials and probably included speeches and games. The creation of demosion sema probably came later along with the ritual of public burial there with games held in the gymnasium area, in the Akademeia. Either of Kimon’s victories during the 460’s B.C., at Eurymedon in 468 or Drabeskos in 464 B.C., may have been the occasion for instituting a burial ritual centered in a special section of the public cemetery.²⁵⁸ The oldest lebes is in the collection of Paul Kanellopoulos in Athens, the second is in the Louvre, found at Ambelokipi, and the third in the museum in Thessalonike.

No record has survived of the types of competition offered at the epitaphios agon but it is reasonable to assume that traditional events provided the core of any funeral games. A late source, often discredited, mentions victories in two common running events by presumed sons of the famous Athenian Themistokles. Although there are good reasons for rejecting the accuracy of the report with respect to Themistokles’ alleged sons, there is no compelling reason to reject the authenticity of the events as part of a public funeral.

During the fifth and fourth centuries state funerals accompanied by games probably were held as needed. Throughout much of this time period this meant that games were organized almost every year since Athens was frequently fighting somewhere until the last quarter of the fourth century. The fact that they were held somewhat irregularly, i.e. not as a regularly scheduled festival, probably meant that non-Athenian competitors could not be expected to

257. XI.33.3.

258. E. Vanderpool, “Three Prize Vases”, *AD* 24, 1969, 1-5.

participate unless they either happened to be in Athens or were close enough to respond to a public announcement which certainly was not sent throughout the Hellenic world. However, one of the three prize vases from the early fifth was found in Thessalonike which is several hundred miles north of Athens. Did it arrive there in the possession of a local winner or through commerce? Was there one vase per winner? Was this sufficient to attract wide participation? The admitted frequency of these games would have contributed to the availability to the Athenian athlete of training through completion and attested to the firm and ongoing connection between funerals and athletics. The continuation of this practice even after Athens ceased to be involved with frequent military campaigns may have resulted in converting the ceremony into one of commemoration or memorial, which may also have permitted scheduling in fixed days during the year rather than as needed.²⁵⁹

There are two festivals which have no occasion been described as “agonistic” or have been equated with the state’s ceremony of burial for the war dead. They are the *Genesia* and the *Epitaphia*. The *Genesia* has been identified as a festival honoring the clan founders and ancestors and as a cult of the dead it is likely to have included athletic competitions. There is unfortunately no evidence whatsoever for this type of agonistic festival in Athens, even though Herodotos uses the term *genesia* specifically to denominate the general Greek custom of commemorating their ancestors. The extant evidence for the Classical period better supports state burial with funeral games after specific military campaigns rather than as a regularly scheduled event within the religious calendar of Athens.²⁶⁰

The term *epitaphia* has also been applied to the state’s funeral games and has the attraction of obviously relating to funerals and of being the same adjective (in the neuter plural) as that applied (in the masculine singular) to the funeral oration (*epitaphios logos*) and to the funeral games (*epitaphios agon*). Again, no classical author or inscription specifically refers to these state ceremonies as the *Epitaphia* and the temptation to use this term as the official designation in Classical Athens should be resisted as should be any effort to assume a regularly scheduled festival recurring on an annual basis. The specific references to the *Epitaphia* are late, second century B.C. and are associated with, but distinct from, the The-

259. W. Kendrick Pritchett, *The Greek State at War*, Part IV (1985) 106-124 – 4. *THE ATHENIAN AGON EPITAPHIOS AND LOGOS EPITAPHIOS*. J. K. Davies, *Athenian Propertied Families* (1971) 217. “Neokles, presumably the eldest, died as a child. Phylochoros’ resuscitation of him, and invention of a brother Demophilos (Plutarchos, *Themistokles* xxxii.4) can be ignored. – Soudas under *Themistokleous paidēs* has Neokles winning the *dolichos* and Demophilos winning the *stadion* – refers to them as being crowned.

260. Herodotos 4.26. Jacoby, “GENESIA, A forgotten Festival of the Dead,” *CQ* 38 (1944), 65-75 argues that Solon substituted a state festival of the dead to replace or limit earlier clan festivals – possibly to limit sumptuousness of clan burials (Ruschenbusch, *Solonos Nomoi* F72a-c – Jacoby: also to further develop Athens from “the clan state into a citizen’s state”. Kyle discusses this problem on p. 42. Parke, “Festivals” 53-54 and Deubner, *Attische Feste* 229.

seia. The term Epitaphia may have been eventually adopted to designate the annually scheduled festival commemorating Athenian war dead after the frequent need for actual burials ceased.²⁶¹

TORCH RACES

A number of religious festivals included one competitive event, a torch race. These were usually designed to transport fire from one altar to another, the destination usually being the altar of the deity or cult being honored. Torch races generally were relay races and therefore involve teams prepared by the tribes, the expenses for which were usually provided by a wealthy person who carried the title of *lampadarchos* and performed this task as a liturgy. The cults of Prometheus, the Prometheia and Hephaistos, the Hephaisteia, both featured such races – appropriately so because Prometheus was worshipped as the “Fire-Bringer” and Hephaistos as a god of fire. A festival to the Thracian goddess Bendis was instituted at the end of the fifth century and offered an interesting variation: the race was conducted by riders on horseback. The evidence points to nighttime as the normal time for such races – this obviously increased the spectacle. As noted, the presence of torch races at the Great Panathenaia and the Theseia indicates a fondness for this event among the Athenians and the Greeks in general. The *Oschophoria* (or the skira) presented a race from a sanctuary of Dionysos in Athens to that of Athena Skiras at Phaleron. The prize was a drink called *pentaploa*.²⁶²

Pindar on three occasions in his epinician odes²⁶³ refers to victories at games held at Marathon, where a fairly major cult of the hero-god Herakles was located. Herakles has an obvious connection with athletics and his sacred precinct at Marathon, the Herakleion, may have been the site of a local festival with an athletic component before the fifth century; certainly it was well-enough established early in that century to attract athletes preparing for the crown circuit. A valuable prize, a silver cup, was awarded to the winners.²⁶⁴ An

261. Deubner, *Attische Feste* 230-31; A Brueckner, “Kerameikos-Studien, Der epitaphios agon im fünften Jahrhundert,” *MDAI* (A) 35 (1910), 200-10; F. Jacoby, “Patrios Nomos, State Burial in Athens and the Public Cemetery,” *JHS* 64 (1944), 37-66; Parke, *Festivals* 54-55; Pritchett, *The Greek State of War*, Part 3 Religion (1979) 183-84, and Part IV 106-124; Burkert, *Homo Necans* 53-58; Roller, “Funeral Games” 1-18.

262. E. Kadletz, “The Race and Procession of the Athenian Oschophoroi,” *GRBS* 21 (1980), 363-71; Parke, *Festivals* 77, 81, 156-61; Deubner, *Attische Feste* 40-50, 142-47; Simon 89-91; Burkert, *Homo Necans* 143-49, *FGrH* 328 F14, 3b (Suppl.), Vol 1, 286-305.

Aristodemos the Theban, *FGrH* 383 F9 (=Ath.11.495f) who creates the problem by assigning the race to the Skira = Kyle 48 and n. 88. See also Βασίλειος Χ. Πετράκος, *Τὸ Ἀμφιάρειο τοῦ Ὀρωποῦ* (1992) 31-36 and Richard Hamilton, *Choes and Anthesteria: Athenian Iconography and Ritual* (1992). Λυδία Παλαιοκρασσά, *Τὸ Ἱερὸ τῆς Ἀρτέμιδος Μουνιχίας* (1991). In the above studies are indicated aspects of athletic activities, at the sites in discussion.

263. 01.9.88f, with scholia, 01.13.110, and *Pyth.* 8.79.

264. *Schol. Pindar* 01.9.134.

inscription dated to shortly after 490 B.C., which concerns these games, probably has reference to the athlothetai (the reading requires some restoration) who supervised these games. Vanderpool,²⁶⁵ in his discussion of this stone presents a very plausible sequence of events: a local festival to Herakles was celebrated at Marathon prior to 500 B.C.; after the battle at Marathon in 490 B.C., where the Persians were repulsed in the most celebrated of Athenian military victories, the Athenians reorganized the festival and elevated it to pan-Attic status. The festival prospered for some time, undoubtedly through Athenian promotion, a constant reminder of her having saved Greece from the Persian hordes, and the natural attraction of the commemoration of this critical historical event. Further information about this festival is lacking. “At the end of the sixth century Kleisthenes organized the citizens of Athens and Attika into ten tribes – reflected in this inscription: three men selected from each of ten tribes provides thirty men to assist the athlothetai. The athlothetai are not identified but are usually thought to be from the Marathonian district; however, if Athens is assuming control of the festival, it is possible that the athlothetai were selected from a broader base of citizens. Ten athlothetai assisted by thirty men indicates a festival of significant proportions. The stone preserves only about eleven lines of the text. Was an epistates also to be selected? Or were the thirty to supervise the games?

265. Eugene Vanderpool, “An Inscribed Stele from Marathon”, *Hesperia* II, 4 (Oct.-Dec. 1942), 329-337.

COACHES AND TRAINERS

Coaches and trainers are rather shadowy figures in the Archaic and early Classical periods. Those who support the thesis that in these early times competitive athletics were dominated by the aristocratic gentleman-athlete assert that there was no need for coaches, especially professional coaches or trainers. What little evidence we possess has been variously interpreted: either a formerly successful aristocratic athlete coached, part-time to be sure, younger aristocratic athletes as a matter of personal favor to their families; or a fully professional coach provided his services for a fee. Early references to what was probably some form of coaching assistance are found in the epinician ode of Pindar, dating to as early as 489 B.C. Five involve, as might be expected, victors in boys' competition, but the sixth was composed for Melissos of Thebes, winner of the adult pankration at the Isthmian games of ca. 478 B.C. The terms used by Pindar to describe Orseas, the coach or trainer of Melissos, are quite general and have no necessary connection to athletics, i.e. "helmsman" and "steersman", words obviously nautical in origin. Meander of Athens, the one who assisted Pythias of Aigina prepare successfully for the boys' pankration at the Nemean games of ca. 489 B.C., is described as a "craftsman" of athletes. The question of the background of these early coaches cannot be fully answered because of the nature of the information available, although the mere fact that they are mentioned in Pindar's poems possibly – or even probably – support the assertion that they were members of noble families who had distinguished themselves athletically and who then made available their expertise to selected aristocratic scions, even from other city-states. Pindar specifically mentions that Melesias, a very successful coach with thirty crown victors to his credit, had won the boys' wrestling crown at Nemea and also adult pankration victories at festivals not named. The basis for the relationship between coach and pupil is not indicated anywhere but may have been simply personal friendship between families or the feeling of class solidarity.²⁶⁶ Pindar also provides the pedagogical basis for a former athlete's service as a coach: teaching is easier for the one who knows.²⁶⁷

266. References to assistance given athletes in their training are found in Pindar, *Nemean* 5.48f (mentioning Menander the Athenian as "craftsman" or "skilled artisan" for athletes and as assisting Pytheas of Aegina in winning the pankration for boys at the Nemean games of 489 B.C. or as late as 485 B.C.), *Isthmian* 4.75f (celebrating Melissos' of Thebes victory in the pankration at the Isthmian games of ca. 478 B.C., and mentioning three prior victories at the annual games in Thebes achieved by following the "very wise judgment" of Orseas), *Olympian* 10.16f (celebrating Hagesidamos' victory in the boys' boxing at the Olympic

games of 476 B.C. and stating the Hagesidamos should "offer thanks to Ilas," presumably his coach or trainer), *Nemean* 4.93 (praising Melesias, the coach of Timasarchos who won the boys' wrestling at Nemea in 473 B.C.), *Nemean* 6.66 (again praising Melesias as coach of Alkimidas who won the boys' wrestling at Nemea in ca. 463 B.C.), and finally *Olympian* 8.54 (also glorifying Melesias as coach of Alkimidon of Aigina who won the boys' wrestling at Olympia in 460 B.C. – the 30th win for Melesias as a coach).

267. *Olympian* 8.59-60.

There is one myth which relates to the teaching of athletics but in reality provides no additional information: Prometheus, often depicted as the creator of the human race, purportedly designed the human body specifically for athletics and also devised the appropriate exercises; he then taught these to Hermes who subsequently instructed the human race. Reflected in this myth is the fact that Hermes, with the epithet *agonios* or *enagonios*, was the god of the gymnasium, although other deities and heroes frequently had sanctuaries or shrines within the same structure. By the end of the fifth century, several terms related to coaching were in use: the *paidotribes* frequently was involved with the palaestra and the physical education of young boys; the *aleiptes*, “anointer”, was also associated with the palaestra; and the *gymnastes* had the broadest involvement with athletics, including training, diet, massage, and medical gymnastics. Plato complains about a *paidotribes*, Herodikos of Selymbria, who discovered the art of a lingering death by managing to control somewhat a fatal disease through diet and exercise and to achieve, in Plato’s view, an old age useless to himself and to society.²⁶⁸ The story of Kallipatira of Rhodes who accompanied her son to the Olympic games near the end of the fifth century disguised as his trainer, if true, indicates both that this profession was well established and that it was not uncommon for athletes to bring their coaches to Olympia even if the athletes were under the direct supervision of the Hellanodikai both during the games and the month preceding the games.

We unfortunately know little about actual training techniques. Running is a fairly natural activity probably needing less coaching than the long jump or the discus-throw. It is commonly said that sprinters are born and not made. There is some evidence that coaches rode on horseback accompanying their runners while they trained, probably in this case distance runners. Proper starting and turning techniques, whether around a single pole or around individual poles, certainly would benefit from expert guidance. For all athletes general physical conditioning and the development of strength and stamina are also amenable to experienced advice.

The combat sports without doubt profited from coaching and advances in techniques were even attributed to major heroes of legend such as Theseus and his invention of scientific wrestling. Pythagoras of Samos reputedly revolutionized boxing early in the sixth century

268. Plato refers several times to Herodikos, the most extensive in *Republic* 406: the development of a carefully controlled valetudinarian regimen, mixing physical training with medicine, which allowed Herodikos to live to advanced years in spite of an incurable disease is contrasted unfavorably with the treatment of the wounded Eurypylos in Homer’s *Iliad* in which he was given pramnian wine garnished with barley and grated cheese; Herodikos could not tolerate the slightest variation from his established routine and

therefore could not fully function as a member of society, whereas the Homeric approach relied upon inherent good health which, if not readily restores, accepted death rather than prolonged treatment and disability. *Protagoras* 316c refers to Herodikos as a sophist disguised as a gymnastic specialist, and *Phaedrus* 227d recounts Herodikos’ approval of long walks – even to the walls of Megara and back to Athens, easily more than a day’s hike.

when, after the Hellanodikai rejected his entry in the boys' division, he won the men's crown through skillful technique. Since wrestling was widely practiced and was a part of the school curriculum, coaching in this sport was undoubtedly well advanced. With a great number of holds and maneuvers attested, a wrestler must have spent some years in practice under expert coaching in order to achieve success at the major festivals. We know that boxers trained with the bag, both the smaller and the larger body bag, the *korykos*, and also indulged in shadow boxing. Some became so adept at this latter that they would draw large crowds to watch their workouts. One vase painting shows two boxers practicing footwork, while keeping both hands held high, to music provided by a diaulos-player. In an event with no rest periods, stamina, good footwork, and the ability to keep one's guard up for extended periods were necessary abilities for a successful boxer and were enhanced by appropriate coaching. During training actual boxing with the himantes was probably kept to a minimum simply because of the damaging effect of the himantes, whether soft or hard. Pankratiasts trained with wrestlers and also followed much of the regimen of boxers. Because of the probable combination of boxing and wrestling with other forms of attack, the pankratiast also must have devoted some years of supervised training to mastering his sport. It should not be surprising that Melissos, before winning at the Isthmian games, had won the pankration three times (once in the boys' division) in the major annual games in his home city of Thebes.²⁶⁹ The early heavies allegedly toughened themselves with rugged outdoor activity, weight lifting and swimming in the sea, although this latter drew some fire from later coaches because of the fear of chills. Very likely under the direction of trainers and coaches high intake of food, with an emphasis upon proteins, became standard for the heavy athlete before the end of the fifth century B.C.

The most complicated system of training must have been claimed by the field events – the long jump, discus, and javelin. The skills needed for these are especially subject to coaching. The coordination required for the proper use of the halteres in the jump exceeds that of the modern jumper and undoubtedly required extensive practice and coaching. Appropriate techniques for the discus and javelin throws must also have been learned under careful tutelage. For all events it is safe to assume that most coaches were then, as today, former athletes.

Unfortunately, the most extensive discussion of coaches and coaching is provided by a very late source, Philostratos of Lemnos (second or third century A.D.), a rhetorician with little real knowledge of athletics. He wrote a treatise entitled *On Gymnastics* which addresses issues of diet, physiognomy, and the techniques of training apparently popular in his day. Some of what he reports is valid in principal if not in detail even for the fifth century B.C. but much represents later developments and possibly idiosyncratic views of the author. The

269. See above fn. 266. Also Christian Wacker, 10 (1997), 103-117.
"Wo trainierten die Athleten in Olympia?", *Nikephoros*

value of a high protein intake was recognized and, in a quite modern way, there was concern for what the animal or fish intended for the athlete's plate had consumed. The elaborate system of selecting and preparing food for the training table certainly contributed to setting athletes apart from ordinary citizens who survived on a rather simple fare based upon vegetables, oil, and cheese. Plutarch reports a further refinement of the training table: intelligent conversation should be banned because it spoils the meal and gives athletes headaches! Philostratos' discussion of physiognomy – i.e. which body types are best suited for which events – has modern parallels on twentieth century sports pages and are often acceptable as statements based upon valid experience; however, his defense of a protruding stomach for a boxer because it helps in warding off blows to the head is more than laughable.

Philostratos also recounts a fairly involved medical and philosophical theory and its application to coaching and athletic training. The philosophic theory, which certainly goes back at least to the Classical period, holds that there are two pairs of opposing first principles: hot and cold, and wet and dry. The various mixtures of these pairs account for all natural phenomena. Medically, this theory was related to the four humors of the body (humor here means a fluid or semi-fluid present in the body): *blood* which is hot and wet; (*yellow*) *bile* (*chole* in Greek = choleric) which is hot and dry; *phlegm* which is cold and dry; and *black bile* (*melaina chole* in Greek = melancholic) which is cold and wet. Both the health and character of the individual depend upon the proper balance of these humors. However, no one enjoys the perfect balance of these four and each has an excess of one or another. The excess of one will produce a certain medical condition, i.e., too much blood (too much hot and moist) will produce a fever accompanied by sweating. The obvious cure, therefore, is to remove the excess blood by bleeding the patient, an acceptable medical practice which survived well into the modern era. A more modest excess of one of the humors will influence character and therefore becomes important for the coach. The ideal athletic type, according to this theory, was a person with a modest excess of blood because he was basically healthy, capable of hard work, enjoyed a good appetite, and more importantly was easily trained. He was also cheerful, optimistic, and “good-humored”, this latter phrase rather directly related to its origin in this very early medical and philosophic theory. Our word *sanguine* is derived via Latin from this same theory – *sanguis*, blood in Latin. Those experiencing a modest excess of yellow bile, who are therefore choleric, are coachable but often not winners because they tend to be impetuous and unrestrained. The coach needs to prevent them from burning themselves out early in both training and competition. Those who have a modest excess of phlegm, who are therefore phlegmatic, are slow to get going but are coachable and need to be pushed all the time. Those with a modest excess of black bile, who are therefore melancholic, moody and depressed, are untrainable and a coach is well advised not to waste his time on this type. Although this particular medical and psychological theory is no longer in favor, all coaches are aware that certain identifiable personality traits are critical for the successful competitive athlete.

Philostratos also describes the tetrad, a highly structured system of workouts prevalent in his day. This involved a four-day training cycle repeated *ad nauseam*: the first day was devoted to preparation of the athlete by short, brisk exercise deigned to arouse him physically and mentally; the second day was given over to concentration of effort, an all-out effort to the point of total exhaustion; the third day was one of *relaxation* and recovery from the second day; and the fourth day was one of moderation and training in the more technical aspects of the athlete's event. Philostratos reports the unfortunate results of the rigid application of this system. Gerenus, a wrestler, had spent the one month training period in Elis under the direction of the Hellanodikai, had won the Olympic crown, and as victor had been feasted by the Eleans followed by an all-night celebration with his friends. Unfortunately, his coach had been keeping a careful count of the days. At dawn, shortly after Gerenus had fallen asleep, he dragged him from his recently entered bed, announced that it was the second day of the tetrad, and then worked his athlete literally to death. Philostratos refers approvingly to another coach at Olympia who killed one of his athletes with a strigil because he was not competing with sufficient vigor. Coaches of this choleric temperament are still with us today.

GREEK ATHLETES: A SELECTION OF LEGENDARY AND BIOGRAPHICAL DATA

Greek writers of later periods, when looking back at the famous athletes of the sixth and early fifth centuries B.C., either found their biographies already encrusted with legendary trappings or embellished with events modelled upon those of a Herakles or some other hero of legend. In the simplest adaptation, men of presumed large size doing deeds involving great strength and exhibiting a fierce, often frightening spirit are easily accorded larger-than-life status approaching that even of the great figures of epic and folktale. Fontenrose has identified another motif, that of the demonic, vengeful hero who is also guilty of some transgression, which he finds incorporated in the biographies of at least four early athletes: Kleomedes, Oibotas, Euthykles, and Theogenes. Kleomedes is probably the most transparent and will be discussed below.²⁷⁰ It becomes, therefore, somewhat difficult to reconstruct plausible biographies free of the contamination of legend. For the earlier athletic heroes I shall present the traditional stories with modest commentary.

MILO OF KROTON

Milo's Olympic career spanned twenty-four years (540-516 B.C.). Kroton was famous for her athletes even before Milo. During the sixth century B.C., six different sprinters from Kroton won the single stadion race at Olympia and legend claims that at one Olympiad the first seven finishers in the stadion sprint were from Kroton. Milo began his spectacular career with a victory in the boys' wrestling at Olympia in 540 B.C. This was followed by five consecutive victories in the men's wrestling at Olympia (536-520 B.C.). In addition he is credited with one victory in boys' wrestling at the Pythian games, plus six in men's wrestling, his record at Delphi even exceeding his Olympic performance. Ten victories in men's wrestling at the Isthmian games and nine at the Nemean games are also reported. Milo was reputedly a *periodonikes* five times, although there is one too few victories at Nemea for this. In addition to these remarkable athletic achievements, a series of stories are attached to his biography, stories obviously enlarged in the constant retelling and probably influenced by heroic legend, especially that of Herakles. One has him carrying a four-year old bull around the stadion at Olympia and then eating all of it within one day. Both parts of this story are highly improbable, although picking up a weight equivalent to a four-year old bull is possible, and are apparently modelled after Herakles' fabled strength and prodigious appetite. Heraklean echoes are also found in Milo's daily diet: twenty pounds of meat,

270. Fontenrose, "The Hero" 73-104.

the same of bread, and ca. eighteen pints of wine. His victories at Olympia earned him the right to place a commemorative life-sized bronze statue in the Altis; allegedly he carried it in and set it up by himself, a deed later copied by a very young Theogenes. Milo apparently had a bit of the showman in him because during lulls in the competitive program, he reportedly entertained the crowds by standing on a greased discus and challenging any and all to push him off, by holding a pomegranate so firmly in his hand that none could take it from him yet so delicately as not to bruise it, or by tying ribbons around his head and then breaking them merely by holding his breath and forcing his veins to expand. Milo's later career featured service in the army of Kroton in 510 B.C. when it attacked and destroyed the neighboring and rival city of Sybaris. He is described as entering battle wearing all his Olympic crowns, a lion skin, and a club – the latter two part of the traditional garb of Herakles. Milo is also linked with the famous philosopher Pythagoras, the founder of a religious-philosophical community in Kroton which exercised an oligarchic control of the city-state. He may have been married to Pythagoras' daughter and the great philosopher may have died in Milo's house. The account of Milo's own death is unusual and smacks of legend: while walking in the woods he came upon a felled tree which the woodmen had attempted to split with wedges; they apparently abandoned the task and left their wedges driven into the trunk; Milo attempted to split the trunk open with his bare hands but succeeded only to the point of causing the wedges to fall out; the trunk then closed on his hands and he could not extricate them or carry the large tree out of the forest; finally wolves came upon him and ate him.²⁷¹

A twenty-plus year career as a wrestler is within the realm of possibility for a large, powerful, superbly conditioned athlete-wrestler. His defeat at Olympia in 516 B.C. is credited to a much younger wrestler from Kroton who kept his distance somewhat, refusing to grapple with him, and eventually wore him down sufficiently so as to be able to throw him. Milo's fame in a community noted for its athletes would be sufficient grounds for his consorting with distinguished residents regardless of his social background. His strength and the necessary consumption of food to maintain it could easily be enlarged to near Heraklean standards. Milo, in spite of the layers of heroic fiction attached to him, certainly merits the reputation as one of the world's all-time great athletes.

PHAYLLOS OF KROTON

As already noted a highly suspect and late epigram, allegedly quoted from a status base at Delphi, credits this athlete with a jump of fifty-five (Delphic) feet and a discus throw of

271. Harris, *GAA* (reprint published by Greenwood Press, 1979), 110-135, presents a convenient discussion of a number of famous and infamous athletes. For seven

sprinters from Kroton in the finals of the single stadion sprint, see Strabo 6.1.2. Pausanias 6.14,5-8 reports tell many of the traditional stories about Milo.

ninety-five feet. He is also credited with two victories in the pentathlon and one in the stadion sprint at the Pythian games – a fairly natural combination for a sprinter with some talent in the field events. There is no known Olympic victory. Herodotos reports that a Phayllos commanded a ship in the Battle of Salamis in 480 B.C. which was a stirring victory for a combined Greek naval force over an invading Persian armada. The Pythian victories of Phayllos the athlete are not dated but if Herodotos' Phayllos is the same person as the athlete, these victories probably antedate 480 B.C. A Phayllos, possibly the athlete, appears in two later contexts. Aristophanes mentions the running prowess and speed of a Phayllos; this accords well with the fact that the Pythian victor was a sprinter. Alexander the Great, later in the fourth century B.C., sent a share of the battle spoils from his capture of Issos from the Persians both to the city of Plataia for assisting in the defeat of the Persians at Marathon and to Kroton in memory and honor of Phayllos. The gift to Kroton probably, as with the Plataians, was to commemorate a defeat of Persia and therefore honored Phayllos' participation in the Battle of Salamis. The gift from Alexander certainly connects Herodotos' Phayllos at Salamis with Kroton and thereby strengthens somewhat the possibility that Phayllos the Pythian victor was also the ship's captain at Salamis. The reference in Aristophanes indicates that a sprinter named Phayllos was sufficiently well known to an Athenian audience late in the fifth century to be used as a recognizable symbol of speed. If this was the same person as the early fifth century athlete, his reputation was still current two generations later, a possibility enhanced by the prospect of his participation in the Battle of Salamis – one of the great events in fifth century Athens. If they are all the same individual, his service as a ship's captain raises the interesting question of social and economic background, since naval commanders at this time often bore a major burden of the expense for the ship. Phayllos might have been rather wealthy and possibly a member of the aristocracy of Kroton, and his athletic achievements would then support the common assertion that competitive athletics during this early period were dominated by the wealthy.²⁷²

THEOGENES OF THE ISLAND OF THASOS

This athlete was a boxer and pankratiast with an extended career and a staggering number of victories. Plutarch reports 1,200 victories, while Pausanias records 1,400. His first major exploit was at age eight and obviously portended great strength and a distinguished athletic

272. A fragmentary inscription on a piece of a statue base found on the Acropolis in Athens records Phayllos' three victories at the Pythian games and his participation in the Battle of Salamis. This is reproduced with commentary in Moretti, *IAG* 25-29 (along with the epigram reporting his fifty-five foot jump and

ninety-five foot discus throw). Pausanias 10.9,2 also mentions his three Pythian victories and his participation at Salamis with his own ship manned by a crew from Kroton. The other important references are found in Herodotos 8.47, in Aristophanes, *Acharnians* 214 and *Wasps* 1206, and in Plutarch, *Alexander* 34.

career: he allegedly carried home from the village square a full-sized bronze statue and escaped punishment for this theft only by restoring it to its proper place. An inscription from Delphi records what he regarded as his major achievements: two victories at Olympia (boxing in 480 B.C. and pankration in 476 B.C.), three victories in boxing at the Pythian games, nine boxing crowns and one in the pankration at the Isthmian games, and nine crowns at Nemea. The inscription also records one unusual feat, a victory in the dolichos at games in Argos, the only non-crown game triumph included with the major festivals. Theogenes obviously was especially proud of this achievement and indeed it is unusual to find a heavy athlete competing successfully in a distance race at games which could claim more than average fame. Some seven centuries later Pausanias presents an interesting change and elaboration which reveals what can be done to further enhance the record: "At Pythia in Thessaly he gave up training for boxing and the pankration. He devoted himself to winning fame among the Hellenes for running also, and beat those who entered the dolichos. This ambition was, I think, to rival Achilles by winning a prize for running in the fatherland of the swiftest of those who are called heroes". Thus a triumph at fairly well known games in a major urban setting was transferred to a lesser completion in order to gain association with Homer's swift-footed Achilles. Plutarch adds that many of these 1,200 victories were not worth much since they were gained *akoniti*, i.e. apparently no one was willing to face him at a number of local festivals.

His single Olympic victory in boxing is described by Pausanias as follows. In 480 B.C. Theogenes reached the finals both in boxing and the pankration. After defeating Euthymos, the defending champion, in boxing, he was too tired and battered to appear for the finals of the pankration. The Hellanodikai took a dim view of scratching, especially in the finals, and fined Theogenes one talent (a very large sum of money) for the god (Zeus) and one talent to be paid to Euthymos – apparently on the assumption that Theogenes had insulted the defending champion by appearing in the finals for the boxing but not contesting the pankration. Theogenes paid the fine to the god but made a deal with Euthymos: in return for not paying him the fine, Theogenes agreed not to oppose Euthymos in boxing at future Olympics. Thus, in 476 B.C. Euthymos regained the boxing crown, while Theogenes won the pankration.

After a long and very lucrative career Theogenes then resided on his native island of Thasos. He apparently had made some bitter enemies. The story told by Pausanias is that after his death one of these enemies came nightly to flog Theogenes' statue in the village square. One night the statue toppled onto the flogger and killed him. In accord with custom and law, the statue was tried and convicted of murder and, to avoid the pollution attendant upon homicide, was tossed beyond the boundaries of the state, in this case into the sea. Shortly thereafter a famine struck the island and in reply to a query as to how to end it, Apollo at Delphi ordered the return of all exiles. This was done by the Thasians but the famine continued. Upon further inquiry Apollo reminded them of Theogenes. Fortunately, and as legend usually functions, at this critical juncture some fishermen netted the statue of Theogenes and returned it to Thasos. Needless-to-say, when the statue was back in the village square, the famine ended.

Theogenes exhibits another facet of the ancient athletic tradition: statues of former great athletes occasionally were thought to have curative powers, i.e. their fabled strength and abundant good health could help lesser mortals, and healing shrines therefore developed. One of the most famous of such shrines was that of Theogenes on the island of Thasos. Its popularity led to the spread of healing shrines of Theogenes elsewhere in the Greek world. The efficacy of these is somewhat cynically explained by Harris as follows: “Yet the curative cult of the dead Greek athlete was merely a form of faith healing, probably as well founded as much of modern psychiatry and doing little more harm”.

The name Theogenes, “born from a god”, was either Theogenes or later writers who developed the claim that Theogenes was not the son of his presumed father, a priest for a cult of Herakles on Thasos, but was in fact the son of the divine Herakles himself.

In addition to the religious aspects of Theogenes’ career, the number of victories, as many as 1,400, present grounds for speculation. In a ten-year career, possibly lengthy for a boxer in antiquity, this averages 140 wins per year or one in less than every three days. A twenty-year career would reduce it to a victory every five days. Even if the number is somewhat exaggerated, it points to the existence of very many athletic festivals each year. With value prizes offered at most of them, the potential for earning a significant income must have been present. After Milo, Theogenes is our best evidence for a superior athlete deciding to devote a major portion of his life to traveling the countryside, entering local, regional and panhellenic festivals year after year. Were these the first bona fide professional athletes or were they pursuing some other goal such as their version of heroic status or were they early examples of athletic “bums” more or less addicted to the sporting scene? Theogenes’ social background is also a matter of scholarly debate. Was he a scion of a noble, or at least a well-to-do family, as possibly evidenced by his father’s priesthood? Or was he a good early example of a gifted athlete from lower social and economic levels who made a fortune through athletics and achieved thereby a distinguished status in his home community?²⁷³

EUTHYMOS OF LOKROI IN ITALY

Euthymos was a three-time winner in boxing at Olympia, gaining the crown in 484, 476, and 472 B.C. while losing to Theogenes in 480 B.C. He was thus one of the premier heavy athletes for a period of at least twelve years. Two stories of transparent legendary or folklore origin have been attached to his name. The first involved a ghost. Euthymos arrived in

273. The extensive inscription from Delphi listing Theogenes’ major victories is reproduced in Moretti, *IAG* 21. Pausanias 6.11,2-9 provides much of the biographical data about his youth, presumed descent from Herakles, his major victories (including the dolichos

at Phthia), the famine at Thasos, and the healing cults. J. Pouilloux, *Recherches sur l’histoire and les cultes de Thasos* (1954) vol. 1, Ch. 2, presents an extensive discussion of the evidence relating to Theogenes.

Temesa, a Greek city on the west coast of Italy's toe, on the day a maiden was to be sacrificed to the ghost of Polites, a companion of Odysseus who purportedly had been killed centuries earlier by the Temesans for raping a local maiden. Polites' ghost in anger had been demanding a maiden a year in sacrifice. Euthymos fell in love with the maiden chosen for the rite, defeated the ghost, and freed Temesa from the annual grim ritual. Euthymos' end is also characteristically unusual: he did not die but was taken from sight by the river god Kaikinos, whom he allegedly claimed as father, and was therefore heroized in the religious and cultic sense. Overcoming supernatural beings, freeing damsels in distress, and a mysterious conclusion to life on earth are the common trappings of legend and folktale. The great athlete of an earlier period seems a natural recipient of such activity and accomplishment.²⁷⁴

KLEOMEDES OF ASTYPALAIA

Kleomedes was a boxer and older contemporary of Euthymos. He apparently did not win an Olympic crown but once reached the finals (in 496 or 492 B.C.) where he accidentally killed his opponent, Ikkos of Epidauros. He was disqualified by the Hellanodikai and went home disgraced and embittered. At home he suffered a fit of madness and pulled down the roof of a school building killing a number of children. He was pursued by angry townspeople and fled into a temple of Athena where he hid inside a chest, holding the lid from the inside so tightly that it could not be opened. Finally the townspeople smashed the chest only to discover that it was empty. Greatly puzzled they sent to Delphi for an explanation. Apollo's reply reportedly was: "Kleomedes of Astypalaia is the last (i.e. most recent?) of the heroes. Honor him with sacrifices who is no longer mortal". According to Pausanias, the people of Astypalaia worshipped Kleomedes as a cultic hero at least into the second century A.D. This story is indicative of the tendency to honor in a religious sense famous or infamous early athletes and also of the propensity of Greek religion to heroize even the most negative use of power. Although curious and unacceptable to modern inclination, heroization was an attempt to pacify great power, especially when linked with anger, and the cult accorded Kleomedes is not unparalleled within the Greek tradition.²⁷⁵

THE DIAGORIDAI OF THE ISLAND OF RHODES

We possess a fair amount of information about three generations of the Diagoridai, a family from Rhodes, each of which produced from one to three Olympic victors in the heavy

274. Pausanias 6.6,4-11 recounts the athletic career of Euthymos, his loss to Theogenes, his defeat of the ghost, and mentions his presumed descent from the river Kaikinos and strange departure from life. The inscription from his statue base at Olympia is repro-

duced in Moretti, *IAG* 13.

275. Plutarch 6.9,6-8 briefly tells the story of Kleomedes' defeat at Olympia and the strange conclusion of his life.

events. The first was Diagoras in boxing at the Olympics of 464 B.C. Diagoras enjoyed other major successes, including being a *periodonikes* at least once. Pindar celebrated his Olympic victory in his seventh Olympian ode and according to comment on this poem (called *scholía*), this epinician was inscribed in gold letters on the temple of Athena Lindos on Rhodes. Pindar refers to many other victories: two at the games for Tlepolemos in Rhodes, four at the Isthmian games, “again and again” at Nemea, six in the Aiakeia, and possibly the Delphinia in honor of Apollo Delphinios and Artemis Delphinia, on the island of Aegina, and unspecified numbers of victories at the Panathenaia at Athens, the Hekatombaia in honor of Hera at Argos, the Lykaia in honor of Zeus on Mt. Lykaian in Arkadia, the Ioleia in Thebes and other games in Boeotia, the games in honor of Hermes at Pellana in Achaia, and the Alkathoeia at Megara. This clearly illustrates that Diagoras committed a significant amount of time to the training and travel necessary to win these many victories. He competed at the highest level, earning a number of crown victories but succeeding only once at Olympia and apparently failing to win at Delphi. His family was obviously wealthy, aristocratic (possibly even descended from royalty), and also politically active.

Diagoras’ eldest son, Damagetos, won the pankration at Olympia in 462 and 448 B.C., and his second son, Akousilaos, won the boxing in 448 B.C. To celebrate their joint victories achieved on the same day, the two sons carried their father around the stadion to a shower of flowers and enthusiastic applause from the spectators. A third and much younger son, Dorieus, seems to have been the most successful athlete of his generation. He won the pankration at Olympia three times (432, 428, and 424 B.C.), and is credited with four victories (one *akoniti* according to Pausanias) at the Pythian games, eight at the Isthmian games, and seven at the Nemean games. He should have been a *periodonikes* at least twice. An inscription from a statue base at Delphi which possibly supported a statue dedicated by or for Dorieus adds four victories at the Panathenaia, four at the Asklepieia in Epidauros, three at the Hekatombaia in Argos, and three at the Lykaia in Arkadia. He was also active in other festivals: four victories in the pankration at the Panathenaic games, four in the Asklepiian games, three in Argos, and three in the Lykian games in Arcadia. Dorieus managed to achieve this sterling record in spite of the Peloponnesian War, a rather continual and widespread warfare between the two most powerful Greek states and their allies, Athens and Sparta. If nothing else, his record indicates that the sacred truces attached to crown festivals seemed to work. This war, however, ultimately was his undoing. Dorieus was a member of the anti-Athenian party on Rhodes which led to his exile to Thurii in Italy. Later he commanded a fleet against Athens in 410 B.C., was captured by the Athenians and condemned to death. However, the Athenians pardoned and freed him because of his athletic achievements. Later, his home state in Rhodes joined the Athenian side in the war but Dorieus refused to fight for Athens. Unfortunately, he was caught by the Spartans while in the Peloponnesos and executed as an enemy. The Spartans were doubly ungracious: they refused to recognize his athletic record and they chose to ignore that he had fought only on the Spartan side.

At the end of the fifth century B.C., the sons of two of Diagoras' daughters won crowns in boxing at Olympia: Peisirodes, son of Pherenike, in the boys' division, and Eukles, son of Kallipatira, in the mens' division. The names of the daughters are somewhat interchangeable in the story of the mother who disguised herself as her son's trainer and violated the ban against married women at the Olympic games.

The Diagoridai represent success in athletics at the highest level through several generations. The family, wealthy, politically involved, and probably aristocratic, devoted extensive energy and time to competition in two of the most dangerous combat sports. This fact at the least demonstrates the high regard in which athletics were held. The pardon granted Dorieus by Athens adds further corroboration.²⁷⁶

ALCIBIADES OF ATHENS

Scion of a wealthy, aristocratic family, brilliant but erratic general, impressive orator, often undisciplined in his public conduct, Alcibiades also claimed a record unmatched in Olympic equestrian competition. He entered the staggering number of seven four-horse chariots in the Olympic games of 416 B.C., finishing first, second, and fourth according to Thucydides who was a contemporary. A generation later, the fourth place finish was moved up to third for a clean sweep. He also may have had wins at the Pythian and Nemean games and recent studies of the forced public auction of his possessions indicates the likelihood that he won also at the Panathenaia. Plato associated him with Socrates as a favorite disciple and as a wrestling companion in the palaistra. His son later accounts for Alcibiades' interest in horse racing as the result of the massive incursion of the lower classes into athletic competition, forcing him to abandon this avenue of public display because of a natural distaste for associating with the lowly born and the uneducated. The breeding and training of horses remained the bastion of those wealthy who scorned rubbing shoulders with the poor but who still wished to compete at the great festivals.²⁷⁷

276. A convenient summary of the careers of the three generations of the Diagoridal can be found in Pausanias 6.7,1-4. Pindar, *Olympian* 7 celebrates Diagoras' Olympic victory and mentions victories at other games. Moretti, *IAG* 23 reproduces an inscription from a statue base at Delphi which may be that of Dorieus.

277. Thucydides 6.16.2 presents a speech purportedly delivered by Alcibiades in which he stresses as one compelling reason for electing him general his winning of the four-horse chariot race at the Olympics

of 416 B.C. (having entered seven chariots – a number unsurpassed by previous private entrants). Plutarch in his life of Alcibiades recounts a story in which Alcibiades allegedly purchased in Argos one of these seven teams of four horses for another person but then entered them as his own. Isokrates 16, delivered by Alcibiades' son, also named Alcibiades, in ca. 397 B.C., is a defense both against this charge and of his father's political career and includes the statement that Alcibiades the father abandoned the combat events because of the low social class of most of combat athletes.

WOMEN'S ATHLETICS

Any attempt to discuss women's athletics in ancient Greece immediately encounters the problem of the paucity of information preserved in written or artistic sources. The first major problem is that there are fairly numerous references to and discussions of the athletic activity of males in literature from Homer through the fourth century B.C. This is in sharp contrast to the almost total silence with respect to similar activity of women. Men's education and athletic activity were both directed toward the fulfillment of important civic duties and therefore were frequently commented upon. In Athens during the fifth and fourth centuries B.C. the common use of athletic references from Aeschylus to Plato, from the theatre to philosophic discourse, apparently assumed an easy comprehension by audiences. There is also a fair amount of archaeological and artistic evidence to accompany and help interpret the literary references. Apart from references to the physical beauty and prowess of Spartan women, infrequent and ambiguous references in lyric poetry, and Plato's discussions of the education of women of the guardian class in his ideal state, the extant literature is almost totally silent about women's athletics. This state of the evidence counsels extreme caution because arguments *ex silentio* are too easily molded to the desired point of view.

A second major problem is that archaeology has produced some evidence, primarily in the form of vase paintings and statuettes, from the sixth through the fourth centuries of what may be athletic activity by women. Unfortunately, with depictions in art without an accompanying text to explain what precisely is being depicted their interpretation is limited only by the viewer's ingenuity in recreating the intention of the artists.

A third major problem is that we finally possess several bits of literary and inscriptional evidence from the first and second centuries A.D., some 400 to 600 years later than the period of interest. A difficult question is how far back toward the Classical period may one push this evidence? Equally difficult is how to interpret this evidence within its own time frame? Was there a sufficiently significant change in the status of women to encourage women's athletics? Some have argued that the spread of Christianity throughout the Mediterranean area somehow brought about some relief to the restrictions traditionally placed upon women's public behavior. This is not too persuasive because what may be feminine participation in athletics is firmly placed by these late sources within the context of pagan cults. A somewhat more acceptable hypothesis is that the stress placed upon Greek culture as it was diffused over vast areas somehow brought about a weakening of traditional values and attitudes sufficient to permit women a modest entry into athletics, one of the major bastions of male activity. The narrowest interpretation of this late evidence argues that the activities depicted or described are either ritual and therefore not truly athletic or are *sui generis* for which neither we are able nor the ancient Greeks were able to offer an explanation.

There is one fortunate coincidence among the sparsely preserved bits of evidence for female athletics. Pausanias, writing in the third quarter of the second century A.D., describes a foot race for three age groups of girls held at Olympia in honor of the goddess Hera:

[2] Every fourth year 16 women weave a peplos (gown) for Hera, and the same women conduct a competition in honor of this goddess. This competition consists of a race for maidens. They are not all of the same age, but the first (to race) are the youngest, and after these the second group in age, and finally those of the maidens who are the oldest. [3] They race in the following manner. Their hair is loose, their garment comes down to a little above the knee, and they expose the right shoulder as far as the breast. The stadion at Olympia is assigned for the contest and for them, but they reduce the length of the running track of the stadion by one-sixth at most. They award crowns of olive to the victors and a portion of the cow sacrificed to Hera. And the victors are allowed to set up inscribed statues (images). Those who assist the sixteen who supervise the competition are also married (mature) women. [4] They also refer the contest of maidens back to antiquity, saying that Hippodameia offered it to Hera in thanks for her marriage to Pelops; she gathered together the sixteen women, and with them first established the Heraian games.²⁷⁸

This version of the foundation legend for the Heraian games gives them great antiquity, equal with the foundation legend for the men's Olympic games which involves Pelops. The age-grouping and the youthfulness of the participants in the races generally are interpreted as indicating a form of initiatory rites for girls preceding their assumption of the status of married women. In addition to being a pentatelic festival, there are several other points of contact with the male Olympic games: a single stadion sprint (minus ca. 1/6th) which was the only race at the Olympic games for ca. a half century; the victors' sharing in the meat sacrificed to Hera, and the victors' right to put up a statue or image of themselves. Unfortunately, there is no extant reference to this ritual and completion in honor of Hera in Greek literature of the Classical period. However, the privilege of commissioning a statue or image and Pausanias' description of the racing garb of the contestants have been emphasized in discussions of two art works, one of which is dated to the early or mid-sixth century B.C. This is a small statuette (0.11m. in height) in the collection of the British Museum (pl. XXVIII, fig. 1) which seems to fit fairly well Pausanias' description of the runners at the Heraian games: the hair is hanging down in back, the right shoulder (and breast) are exposed, and the chiton (dress) extends to just above the knees. The museum's records list Yugoslavia as provenience and the statuette is frequently attributed to a Laconian or Spartan workshop. There are problems in identifying this figure as a representation of a Heraian competitor. Because of its find spot (Yugoslavia, or some argue for Albania), one must either assume that statuettes of Elean victors at the Heraian games were created by Laconian

278. Pausanias 5.16,2-4.

artists and managed to find their way to places fairly distant from Elis²⁷⁹, or that the Heraian games were eventually opened to competitors from other areas of Greece. Neither assumption is easily made. A third possibility, which removes this statuette from the context of the Heraian festival, is that the short chiton, the loosened hair, and even the bared right shoulder and breast were somewhat common features of girls' races at other initiatory rituals in Greece, and that therefore this particular sixth century B.C. statuette represents a common iconographic tradition for running females.

A second art work, the so-called Vatican runner, is a near life-size (1.54 m. in height) marble statue depicting a running female in a short chiton which also exposes the right shoulder and breast (pl. XXVIII, fig. 2). It has been heavily restored in the late eighteenth century, and the positioning of the new arms has raised questions as to the activity depicted: running or dancing. A different and very likely correct placement of the arms would better accommodate the actions of a runner.²⁸⁰ The date and origin of this statue are debated. It has been identified as a Roman copy of a Greek original bronze dated to the first half of the fifth century B.C. If this is correct, it can be connected with the British Museum's small bronze statuette and be used to argue for a consistent 6th-5th century B.C. iconographic tradition for depicting participants at the Heraian games.²⁸¹ One other possible source for this particular costume, especially the exposed breast, is the depiction of Amazons, occasionally with no breast exposed. Although the Amazon warriors became popular figures in Attic art, their appearance, especially with the right breast bared, dates to the mid-fifth century B.C. and is therefore too late to account for the sixth century bronze statuette.²⁸²

There are several other artistic representations of female runners, one of which from Dodona depicts a runner in a short chiton, holding the hem up slightly with her left hand. However, the dress covers both shoulders and both breasts. This arguably represents a fairly general iconographic tradition for running females: a short chiton with the runner holding up one hem of the dress, presumably to assist in the vigorous leg movement necessary for runners (pl. XXIX, fig. 1). If this in fact depicts a common style of running for females, it is a style which certainly impeded the free arm movement a runner needs for good balance. This action of holding up the hem of the dress is more understandable for other movements such as dancing. Somewhat puzzling also is the fact that the chiton worn by most females

279. C. Morgan, *Athletes and Oracles: The Transformation of Olympia and Delphi in the Eighth Century B.C.* (1990) 37, argues that Laconian artists were working at Olympia because of the large number of Laconian bronzes found there.

280. Nancy Serwint, "The Female Athletic Costume at the Heraia and Prenuptial Initiation Rites", *AJA* 97.3 (1993), 403-422, espec. 406-410 (hereafter cited as Serwint), discusses this statue and the British

Museum statuette.

281. This statue has also been identified as a first century B.C. work of the school of Pasiteles which did, however, adapt works from the early fifth century B.C. For fuller discussion of the problem, see Serwint 409 and 410, with ftn. 30 and 31.

282. See Serwint 411-416, where she also discusses and dismisses Artemis and Atalanta as possible sources for the short chiton and bared breast iconography.

thought to be running is above the knee and therefore less likely to impede the legs. It is also possible that these female runners, if they were participating in some type of initiatory rite, were not competing in a race in order to win but were participating in some type of ritual which involved running but not a competitive footrace. Possible evidence for this is found in another artistic medium, paintings on vases.

Excavations during the 1950's at the site of ancient Brauron within Attica brought to light substantial remains of a cult center of Artemis and some vases with paintings possibly depicting aspects of the rites practiced by women and girls in honor of the goddess (pl. XXIX, fig. 2). Prior to these excavations our direct information about this cult was limited to a single reference in Aristophanes' play *Lysistrata* (641-47). The lines are spoken by the chorus of women:

*"When I was seven
I bore the unspeakable things;
and then when I was ten
I ground the barley for Athena;
and then wearing the saffron gown (krokotos) I was a bear at the Brauronia;
and then being a fair maiden I was a Basket-bearer
wearing a string (necklace) of dried figs."*

These lines refer to four different rituals, the majority of which were available only to a small, select number of girls. Carrying the unspeakable things (to be an *arrephoros*) refers to the four young girls chosen annually who performed two tasks: two of them participated in the ritual of beginning the weaving for the gown (*peplos*) presented to Athena during the Panathenaia, the major celebration held by the city-state of Athens in honor of its patron deity; the other two carried the "unspeakable things" – i.e. secret objects – from the Acropolis to a sanctuary of Aphrodite via a natural underground passageway. "Grinding the barley" (being an *aletris*) refers to those girls who prepared the sacred cakes for Athena. The Basket-bearers (being a *kanephoros*) participated in several religious festivals.²⁸³ In these three festivals the number of girls or maidens participating was quite limited and according to later scholiast comment they came from the noble families.

The ritual involving "being the bear" at the Brauronia, known as the *arkteia* celebrated in honor of Artemis at Brauron, is generally connected with the goddess's concern for animals and for the young of all species and also thought to fit the pattern of a rite of passage, i.e. in this case the passage from maiden to married women.²⁸⁴ The scholiast's comment on

283. See Parke, *Festivals* 140-143 for a convenient discussion of these three rituals, being an *arrephoros*, an *aletris*, and a *kanephoros*.

284. For discussions of the *arkteia* as a form of feminine initiation and rite of maturation see: P. A.

Bernardini, "Aspects Ludiques, Rituels et Sportifs de la Course Feminine dans la Grèce Antique," *Stadion* 12/13 (1986/87), 17-23, especially 21f; S. G. Cole, "Social Function of Rituals of Maturation," *ZPE* 55 (1984), 233-244; Lily Kahil, "Artémis Attique," *Académie*

the Brauronia preserves a foundation legend: a girl angered a sacred and tamed bear at the sanctuary and was scratched in return; her brothers retaliated by killing the bear; a plague or famine then befell the area; Apollo ordered that a father must sacrifice his daughter; an animal was substituted for the girl at the sacrifice; and ultimately girls imitated the bear to atone for the original killing.²⁸⁵ The fragments from two vases found at Brauron stress both the importance of bears and the presence of Artemis. The first series of fragments depict the figures to the left of the handle: one is obviously Artemis the hunter, drawing an arrow in her bow and presumably aiming at a deer leaping just above the handle; facing Artemis is a nude male generally thought to be her brother, Apollo; and standing behind Artemis is a female whose head is fully covered with a veil-like material and who is thought to be either Leto, the mother of Artemis and Apollo, or Hera, the goddess of marriage. Either of the latter choices is defensible: the mother with her two offspring or Hera, a deity concerned with female initiations and marriage and therefore easily accommodated at Brauron. To the right of the handle are two other figures human in form (a nude male to the left and a clothed female to the right), both of whom apparently wear over their heads the mask of a bear. The fragments of a second vase has what appears to be a real bear standing just above the handle and beneath a palm tree, traditionally sacred to Artemis. To the left of the bear are preserved in varying degree five running figures. They are all nude and probably female, although the first two on the extreme left are minimally preserved. Four are of similar size but the farthest to the right appears much smaller and therefore younger than the others. The activity depicted is almost certainly running but the second and third from the right are carrying a wreath with both arms and hands extended forward. Unfortunately, the smaller girl at the right is not fully preserved and her extended right hand is missing so that it is impossible to ascertain whether she is carrying a wreath in that hand. To the right side of the bear, two fragments present two fairly complete figures of nude females running and holding both hands forward, the left hand carrying a wreath (pl. XXIX, fig. 3). The figure closest to the bear is mostly missing with only the head (looking back at the bear) and the left hand extended. The figure at the

des Inscriptions Comptes Rendues des Séances (1976) 126-130; Kahil, "L'Artémis de Brauron: Rites et Mystère," *Antike Kunst* 20 (1977), 86-98; Kahil, "Le 'Craterisque' d'Artémis et le Brauronion de l'Acropole," *Hesperia* 50 (1981), 253-263; Kahil, "Mythological Repertoire of Brauron," in ed. Warren G. Moon, *Ancient Greek Art and Iconography* (1983) 231-244; Paula Perlman, "Plato Laws 833C-834D and the Bears of Brauron," *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies* 24 (1983), 115-130. Thomas F. Scanlon, "Race or Chase at the Arkteia of Attica?," *Nikephoros* 3 (1990), 73-120. Inge Nielsen, "The Sanctuary of Artemis Brauronia:

Can Architecture and Iconography Help to Locate the Setting of the Rituals?," in T. Fischer-Hansen and B. Poulsen, *Artemis to Diana, the Goddess of Man and Beast* (2009) 77-109.

285. See Cole 241-42. Why the bear? Artemis was the goddess of wild animals generally, but the ancient Greeks seemed to have an especially high regard for bears because of their presumed strong maternal instincts (witness the stories of Atalanta and Kallisto) and possibly their size and gross similarity to humans when standing upright.

extreme right has only one leg preserved. Several fragments of a third vase also depict running activity. This one also has a palm tree above the handle and the corner of an altar somewhat to the left. Near the altar are three fully clothed mature women, one missing a head and standing just to the right of the altar holds containers in each hand, the second just to the left of the altar holds a palm branch in each hand, and the third seems to be adjusting the short dress of a young girl. The three are apparently supervising whatever ritual is underway. The section to the left of the handle presents, in addition to the girl in close contact with the woman to the left, three other girls, one larger and two smaller. The girl to the left of the woman with the palm branches is dressed in a short chiton and is running with both hands extended forward. There is a smaller girl behind the altar who looks behind and may be running. There is not enough preserved to be sure. Just before the handle a small girl is running with normal hand motion and probably dressed in a short chiton. To the right of the handle, three girls dressed in short chitons are running, two with normal arm movements for runners, while the middle one has both arms extended and may be holding a wreath. At the extreme right, one arm and the lower torso of another running figure is preserved.

Interpreting the scenes on these three fragmentary vases without the benefit of some description of the ritual is difficult. The one aspect critical for a history of women's athletics is the activity of the running girls. Is this a race, a chase, a dance or some other choreographed series of movements? Is there any significance to the fact that on one vase the girls are dressed in short chitons and on the other they are nude? Does this merely represent different phases of the ceremony? How old are the girls? There is certainly some significant difference in physical size in both running scenes. The festival was probably pentateric, i.e. every four years, which may account for the size discrepancy in that a pentateric celebration may have had to accommodate several age groups. Some of the girls seem to be rather small, in the eight to ten age group, while others appear rather mature physically, in the fourteen to fifteen age group. If an actual race is intended in which the girls are running from a formal starting position to a designated finish line, either the race is fairly long which would explain the fact that the runners form a line rather than being bunched together as in a sprint race or the painter wished for artistic reasons to fill the panel with runners. If it is a race, why carry a wreath, often with both arms stretched forward at the same time? This certainly will impede the balance needed for running as fast as possible. On the vase with nude runners, where the figure has been sufficiently preserved to show both arms, the girls are holding both arms forward and to be carrying a wreath either with one or both hands. On the vase where the girls are wearing a short chiton, of the three fairly fully depicted girls to the right of the handle only one has both arms held forward, possibly carrying a wreath which is not preserved. To the left of the handle, there is one girl to the left of the woman with the palm branches who also seems to be running with both arms extended. The others appear to be running with normal arm movement. In the nude scene, if it is a race is the point of the contest to be the first to reach the goal (an altar?) with the wreath?

If it is a chase, who is chasing whom? Does the bear play a role in such a chase scene? On the vase with the clothed runners, are the two running with both arms outstretched playing the bear and chasing the girls who are running in a normal fashion? The evidence does not easily support the conclusion that the girls or maidens were indulging in a competitive race. Artists certainly had experience in depicting male runners in competition, and although some of the runners show the traditional form of serious and competitive races, there are too many anomalies in the Brauronian vases. Ritual apparently dominated and possibly the girls were indulging in something like a ritual chase. That still leaves unanswered the garb or lack thereof of the runners. Nudity very probably was an aspect of the ritual. The majority of nude runners seem to be relatively mature and, if this festival did involve some form of initiation or maturation rite, the beginning of menstruation (menarche), the critical step toward assuming the status of a mature woman capable of bearing children, then the nude running scene may fit in here. If the Brauronian festival recognized and assisted girls entering their teens and becoming candidates for marriage, the last phase of the rite may have provided something like a last expression of untamed wildness associated with playing the bear and running in the nude in the primeval ritual of pursuit and capture.

It has been argued that all girls had to participate in the Arkteia before marriage. If competitive running was involved this ritual would have offered a broad opportunity to participate in athletics to Athenian girls entering their teens. Such a festival also might have encouraged at least modest training. Even if it were only a ritual chase, a certain amount of physical activity was demanded.

It is doubtful, however, that all girls in Attica had to play the bear at Brauron before marriage simply because it was a pentatelic festival and the space available at the sanctuary does not seem to have been able to accommodate some thousands of girls at a single festival. The availability of participation in this rite of passage was undoubtedly broadened by several other festivals of Artemis in Attica which probably served a similar function. The type of pottery found at Brauron, the *krateriskoi*, have been found elsewhere in Attica: at the sanctuary of Artemis at Mounichia, on the Acropolis in Athens and in the Athenian Agora, at Halai Araphenides, and in the sanctuary of Artemis Aristoboule in Melite. Some fragments from Mounichia (in Peiraeus) reveal scenes of females running which are similar to those found at Brauron. One of these probably displays nude girls carrying wreaths but running with a natural arm movement.²⁸⁶ It is quite possible that other sanctuaries of Artemis in and near

286. For a lengthy recent discussion of the evidence for and modern scholarship on the Brauronia and for the conclusion that it was a ritual chase, see Thomas F. Scanlon, "Race or Chase at the Arkteia of Attika", *Nikephoros* 3 (1990), 73-120. See the extensive discussion with plates in Lydia Palaiochrassa, *Tò*

Ἐρὸς τῆς Ἀρτέμιδος Μουνιχίας (1991), and the discussion of the foundation legends for the cult at Mounichia (again involving the killing of a bear and the need for a sacrifice) in Scanlon, "Race or Chase", 95 f. Also, Nielsen op.cit. (n. 284).

Athens offered maturation rituals like those at Brauron. If so, the ability to take part was open to many more females as they reached their teens and approached marriage. Similar rites were undoubtedly held throughout Greece, thus providing occasions to significant numbers of young females to indulge in vigorous physical activities, if not in competitive events.

Athletic activities for women are mentioned in two other contexts: the physical training of girls/maidens in Sparta and the philosopher Plato's discussion of the education of the female members of the guardian class in his ideal state. In Sparta under the so-called Lykourgan constitution, girls exercised vigorously and reportedly nude in public beginning at age six. The fact that Spartan boys were removed from home at age six, subjected to a severe physical and military regime, and lived apart from home until retirement from the military, seemed to have given the women of Sparta greater freedom in public action than was tolerated in most other areas of Greece. This condition led to a public perception outside Sparta of a certain oral looseness coupled with physical vigor among Spartan women. Euripides, in his play *Andromache* presented sometime between 430-424 B.C., is one of the first writers to comment upon this. The critical scene is placed after the Trojan War in Phthia, the country of King Peleus, the father of Achilles. A bitter debate between Peleus and Menelaos over the fate of Andromache, widow of Hector, produces the following comment by Peleus on Spartan women directed toward Menelaos' wife, Helen, a Spartan and the immediate cause of the Trojan War:

*As though you had a chaste wife in your home,
but she was the worst. Not even if she wished
could any daughter of the Spartans become chaste.
Having abandoned the home with naked thighs and loose
dresses they share the running tracks and wrestling
arenas with young men (lines 595-599)*

This attitude that Spartan women are noticeably different from other Greek women is repeated by the comic playwright Aristophanes. He expressly comments upon the physical vigor and beauty of Spartan women in his play *Lysistrata* (413 B.C.) which features a sex-strike by the Athenian and Spartan women as a device to force their men to stop a war between two city-states which has been dragging on for some years. When the Athenian leader, Lysistrata, meets the leader of the Spartan women, Lampito, their exchange indicates at the least a comic presentation of Spartan beauty:

*Lys. O dearest Laconian woman, greetings Lampito.
What beauty and great sweetness you display!
What a good complexion you have! How strong is your body!
You would even be able to strangle a bull!*
*Lamp. By the two gods. I need think so.
Because I exercise and I kick up my heels at my buttocks.*
Lys. What marvelous breasts you have!

CONCLUSIONS

Athletics and the great athletic festivals performed a number of useful functions for ancient Greek society.

The Crown Games provided:

1. a forum for “international” diplomacy, especially through the truces and the fact that major states sent sizeable official delegations to these festivals.
2. a stimulation of “nationalism” and unity among the various independent city-states by stressing symbols of Hellenism: common language, common gods, and a common passion for athletics.
3. a cultural attitude to “always be the best” – possibly a continuation of Homeric arete as it especially applied to athletics. Also to be remembered is the so-called “zero-sum” aspect of ancient competition: the winner takes all the glory leaving only disgrace and shame for all the others; there was nothing like the more modern attitude that “it is not whether you win or lose that counts but how you played the game”.

Athletics contributed significantly to military preparedness both of the Homeric aristocratic warrior and of the later heavily armed infantry hoplite. The physical demands of both types of combat – often hand-to-hand – required excellent physical conditioning. A good example is the Battle at Marathon where the Athenian forces advanced on the run to engage the Persian forces, very likely with the purpose of clearing the danger zone of the ca. 400 yard range of the Persian archers. The hoplitodromos reflects this aspect of combat. The state-sponsored gymnasia provided the arena both for physical training and hoplite training. There is a debate as to the date of origin of the gymnasium: archaeological evidence does not begin until the fifth century but tradition places them even early in the sixth century B.C. The very early gymnasia probably contained few permanent structures, therefore leaving minimal physical trace. Socrates, in a Platonic dialogue with a dramatic date late in the fifth century chides, a youth for his non-participation in athletic training on the basis that the freedom of Athens depended upon his military services and the proper performance of these services depended upon his physical conditioning – as does his own survival in combat. Plato further elaborates on the connection between athletics and the military in his ideal state by restructuring the athletic events to more closely reflect military needs: the heavy events are to be replaced by mock combat events; all races are to be run in military uniform; the military javelin is to replace the athletic javelin; archery is to be reintroduced (i.e. it was part of the funeral games of Patroklos in Homer’s *Iliad*); and stone throwing is to replace the diskos.

One frequently supported thesis is that athletics provides a release for aggression and competitive drives. The ancient Greek male is usually depicted as being very competitive to the

point of social destructiveness; hence the intense development of competitive athletics in ancient Greek society as an escape valve. Increasing incidence of violence in contemporary athletics casts some doubt on the total validity of this thesis. Also the question of spectatorism and its relationship with violence is difficult, especially in light of modern experience.

Socrates, in the same dialogue referred to above, also discusses the beauty of the human body when well trained, and the very unfortunate circumstance of never knowing this pleasure. Plato, in his discussions of educational programs, states that music and gymnastics comprise the essential elements of pedagogy, the one to train the philosophic part of the soul and the other the spirited part. Both aspect of education should be carefully monitored in order to insure a proper harmony in the soul; both aspects are dangerous because they can disrupt the proper harmony of the soul. Aristotle stresses the connection between physical training and health, including the health of women which is necessary for the production of healthy children. He would separate the times of study and physical training on the grounds that one cannot successfully do both at the same time. He opposed the rigorous training program of the contemporary athlete as degrading to the free person.

One rather curious aspect of ancient athletic tradition is the resort to famous poets to compose songs, including music and dance, celebrating victors at the crown games, the epinician odes. The most famous composer of epinician odes was Pindar, whose writings have survived in four so-called books: the *Olympian* odes, the *Pythian* odes, the *Isthmian* odes, and the *Nemean* odes. These songs were usually presented at a victory celebration in the winner's home community. The typical pattern included the identification of the winner and his family, the retelling of a myth usually having some connection with the winner or his city-state, and a fair amount of moralizing – all in ornate language.

One of the privileges of the winner was that of erecting a statue commemorating his victory, either at the sanctuary or his home town or both. These commissions provided one of the major sources of income for the ancient sculptor and undoubtedly influenced the development of this art form. Several important sculptors are the following:

Myron (fl. 480 B.C.), an Athenian who specialized in very dramatic poses, catching the athlete at some critical stage of his event. Later copies of his *diskobolos* (the discus-throwing) are extant.

Polykleitos (fl. 450 B.C.), an Argive sculptor who developed a set of mathematical proportions for the perfect athletic body (the Argive kanon). Copies of his works included the *doryphoros* and the *diadoumenos*.

Lysippos (fl. 330 B.C.), a sculptor from Sikyon, who developed a somewhat more slender kanon of perfect proportion. One later copy of his work is the *apoxyomenos*.

The gymnasia and palaestrai provided the artist with a studio for the study of the human body in motion. The sixth, fifth, and fourth centuries have produced great numbers of vases

with athletic scenes. The Panathenaia ordered hundred of very sizable prize vases, the famous *panathenaic amphorai*, every four years. The market also encouraged souvenir vases from the major games at Athens. Furthermore, private patrons would commission the production of drinking cups, etc. with athletic scenes commemorating victories to be used at parties celebrating these victories. As with sculpture, the athletic enterprise provided a steady income for the vase-maker and painter.

The great athletic festivals provided not only a venue for economic negotiations but also the opportunity for direct sales to tens of thousands of tourists and visitors. The festivals also must have stimulated local businesses providing housing, food, entertainment, etc. The immense wealth awaiting the successful athlete also has an overall economic significance.

Without doubt the reputation gained both by state and individual through athletics had significant political ramifications. Successful athletic festivals and successful local athletes contributed to the prestige of a city-state. Self-glorification is always an important aspect of political activity. Individual careers in politics were undoubtedly enhanced by victories at major festivals.

ABBREVIATIONS

AAA	<i>Athens Annals of Archaeology</i>
AD	<i>Archaeologikon Deltion</i>
Arch.Anz.	<i>Archäologischer Anzeiger</i>
ABSA	<i>The Annual of the British School at Athens</i>
AJA	<i>American Journal of Archaeology</i>
AJPh	<i>American Journal of Philology</i>
BCH	<i>Bulletin de Correspondance Hellénique</i>
BE	<i>Bulletin épigraphique</i>
CAH	<i>The Cambridge Ancient History</i>
CJ	<i>The Classical Journal</i>
CQ	<i>Classical Quarterly</i>
CSCA	<i>California Studies in Classical Antiquity</i>
CW	<i>Classical World</i>
D.Arch	<i>Dossiers d'Archéologie</i>
G&R	<i>Greece and Rome</i>
GRBS	<i>Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies</i>
HSCP	<i>Harvard Studies in Classical Philology</i>
JHS	<i>The Journal of Hellenic Studies</i>
JSH	<i>Journal of Sports History</i>
MDAI	<i>Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Institut. Abteilung Kairo</i>
OpAth	<i>Opuscula Atheniensia</i>
RE	<i>Realencyclopädie des classischen Altertumswissenschaft</i>
REA	<i>Revue de l'Égypte ancienne</i>
TAPA	<i>Transactions of the American Philological Association</i>
ZPE	<i>Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik</i>

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Bean, "Victory"	G. E. Bean, "Victory in the Pentathlon", <i>AJA</i> 60 (1956), 361-368
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Boutros, <i>Phoenician Sport</i>	Labib Boutros, <i>Phoenician Sport. Its Influence on the Origin of the Olympic Games</i> (Amsterdam 1981)
Brophy, "Deaths"	R. H. Brophy, "Deaths in the Pan-Hellenic Games. Arrichion and Creugas", <i>AJPh</i> 99 (1978), 363-390
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Coldstream, <i>GG</i>	G. W. Azoy, <i>Buzkashi, Game and Power in Afganistan</i> (Philadelphia 1982)
Cornford, "Origin"	Coldstream, <i>Geometric Greece</i> (New York 1977)
	F. M. Cornford, "The Origin of the Olympic Games", in J. E. Harrison, <i>Themis. A Study of the Social Origins of Greek Religion</i> (1912) 212-259
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Crowther, "The Evidence"	N. B. Crowther, "The Evidence for Kicking in Greek Boxing", <i>AJPh</i> 11 (1990), 176-181
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Decker, <i>Quellentexte</i>	Wolfgang Decker, <i>Quellentexte zu Sport und Körperkultur im alten Ägypten</i> (1975)
Decker, "Zum Ursprung"	Wolfgang Decker, "Zum Ursprung des Diskuswerfens", <i>Stadion</i> 2 (1976), 196-212
Decker, <i>Annotierte Bibliographie</i>	Wolfgang Decker, <i>Annotierte Bibliographie zum Sport in alten Ägypten</i> (1978)
Decker, <i>Sports</i>	Wolfgang Decker, <i>Sports and Games of Ancient Egypt</i> (1992)
Decker, Herb	Wolfgang Decker, Michael Herb, <i>Bild Atlas zum Sport in alten Ägypten I-II</i> (1994)
Deubner, <i>Attische Feste</i>	L. Deubner, <i>Attische Feste</i> (Darmstadt 1966)
Doblhofer, Mauritson	Georg Doblhofer, Peter Mauritson, <i>Pankration</i> (1996)
Dörpfeld, <i>Alt Olympia</i>	W. Dörpfeld, <i>Alt-Olympia. Untersuchungen und Ausgrabungen I-II</i> (1935)
Drees, <i>Olympia</i>	L. Drees, <i>Olympia. Gods, Artists and Athletes</i> (1967)
Drees, <i>Ursprung</i>	L. Drees, <i>Der Ursprung der olympischen Spiele</i> (Stuttgart 1962)
Ebert, <i>Pentathlon</i>	J. Ebert, <i>Zum Pentathlon der Antike. Untersuchungen über das System der Siegerermittlung und der Ausführung des Halterensprunges</i> , <i>Abh. der Akad. Wiss. zu Leipzig</i> 56, 1 (1963)
Ebert "Noch einmal"	Ebert, "Noch einmal zum Sieg im Pentathlon", <i>ZPE</i> 13 (1974) 257-262
Evjen, "Semetic Origin"	Harold D. Evjen, "Semetic Origin of the Olympic Games. A Phoenix rises again", <i>Ἑπετηρίς Ἐταιρείας Ἑλλιακῶν Μελετῶν</i> 2, 1983, 271-278
Evjen, "Competitive Athletics"	Harold D. Evjen, "Competitive Athletics in Ancient Greece. The Search for Origins and Influences", <i>OpAth</i> XVI 5 (1986), 51-56
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Gardiner, <i>Olympia</i>	E. N. Gardiner, <i>Olympia: its History and Remains</i> (1925)
Gardiner, AAW	E. Norman Gardiner, <i>Athletics of the Ancient World</i> (Oxford 1930, reprint 1979)
Gebhard, <i>Mind and Body</i>	Elizabeth R. Gebhard, "The Sanctuary of Poseidon on the Isthmus of Corinth and the Isthmian Games", in <i>Mind and Body. Athletic Contests in Ancient Greece</i> (1989)
Gebhard, <i>Sanctuaries</i>	Elizabeth R. Gebhard, "The Evolution of a Pan-Hellenic sanctuary: from archaeology towards history at Isthmia", in Nanno Marinatos, Robin Hägg (ed.), <i>Greek Sanctuaries, New Approaches</i> (London and New York 1993) 154-177
Gebhard, Hemans	Elizabeth R. Gebhard, Frederick P. Hemans, "University of Chicago Excavations at Isthmia, 1989", <i>Hesperia</i> 61 (1992), 1-77
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Harris, <i>GAA</i>	H. A. Harris, <i>Greek Athletes and Athletics</i> (London 1964)
Harris, <i>SGR</i>	H. A. Harris, <i>Sport in Greece and Rome. Aspects of Greek and Roman Life</i> (London and Ithaca 1972)
Harrison	J. Harrison, <i>Themis. A Study of the Social Origins of Greek Religion</i> (Cleveland 1962)
Holmberg, <i>Delphi</i>	Erik J. Holmberg, <i>Delphi and Olympia</i> (1979)
Jeffery, <i>Archaic Greece</i>	L. H. Jeffery, <i>Archaic Greece. The City-States c. 700-500 B.C.</i> (New York 1976)
Jüthner, "Pentathlon"	J. Jüthner, "Pentathlon", <i>RE</i> 19, 1 (1937) col. 524-28
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Lee, "Ultra-long"	H. M. Lee, "Modern Ultra-long Distance Running and Phidippides' Run from Athens to Sparta", <i>Ancient World</i> 9 (1984), 107-113
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Mallwitz, "Cult"	A. Mallwitz, "Cult and Competition Locations at Olympia", in W. J. Raschke, <i>The Archaeology of the Olympics</i> (1988) 93-99
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Meuli, "Die Ursprung"	Karl Meuli, "Die Ursprung der Olympischen Spiele", in <i>Gesammelte Schriften</i> II (1975) 881-906
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Mikalson, <i>Calendar</i>	John D. Mikalson, <i>The Sacred and Civil Calendar of the Athenian Year</i> (1975)
Miller, "The Pentathlon"	S. Miller, "The Pentathlon for Boys at Nemea", <i>CSCA</i> 8 (1976), 199-202
Miller, "The date"	Steven G. Miller, "The date of the first Pythiad", <i>CSCA</i> 11 (1978) 127-158
Miller, "Turns"	S. G. Miller, "Turns and Lanes in the Ancient Stadium", <i>AJA</i> 84 (1980), 159-166
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Miller, <i>Guide</i>	S. Miller, <i>Nemea. A Guide to the Site and Museum</i> (1990)
<i>Mind and Body</i>	O. Tzachou-Alexandri (ed.), <i>Mind and Body. Athletic Contests in Ancient Greece</i> (Athens 1989)
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Mosshammer, "The Date"	A. A. Mosshammer, "The Date of the First Pythiad – Again", <i>GRBS</i> 23 (1982), 15-30
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Poliakoff, "Asynexostos"	M. Poliakoff, "Asynexostos", <i>ZPE</i> 44 (1981), 78-80
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Rose, <i>Mythology</i>	H. J. Rose, <i>Handbook of Greek Mythology</i> (London 1953)
Rystedt, "The Foot-Race"	E. Rystedt, "The Foot-Race and other Athletic Contests in the Mycenaean World. The Evidence of the Pictorial Vases", <i>OpAth</i> 16 (1986), 103-116
Scanlon, "Greek Boxing"	Thomas Scanlon, "Greek Boxing Gloves: Terminology and Evolution", <i>Stadion</i> VIII, IX (1982-83), 31-45
Sweet, "A New Proposal"	Waldo E. Sweet, "A New Proposal for Scoring the Greek Pentathlon", <i>ZPE</i> 50 (1983), 287-290
Sweet, <i>Sourcebook</i>	Waldo E. Sweet, <i>Sport and Recreation in Ancient Greece. A Sourcebook with Translations</i> (1987)
Thompson, "Panathenaic Festival"	H. A. Thompson, "Panathenaic Festival", <i>Arch. Anz.</i> 76 (1961), 224-231
Thompson, "The Location"	J. G. Thompson, "The Location of Minoan Bull-sports: A Consideration of the Problem", <i>JSH</i> (1986), 5-13
Vallois, "Les origines" I	R. Vallois, "Les origines des jeux olympiques", <i>Mythes et réalités</i> I. La course des Dactyles et Déméter Chamyné, <i>REA</i> 28 (1926), 305 ff.
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Vermeule, Karageorghis	E. Vermeule, V. Karageorghis, <i>Mycenaean Pictorial Vase Painting</i> (1982)
Vogt, <i>Sport</i>	M. Vogt, <i>Der Antike Sport. Seine Geschichte und Technik</i> (1934)
Weiler, <i>Der Sport</i>	I. Weiler, <i>Der Sport bei den Völkern der alten Welt. Eine Einführung</i> (1981)
Yalouris, "Olympia"	N. Yalouris, "Olympia", in the <i>Princeton Encyclopedia of Classical Sites</i> (ed. R. Stillwell, Princeton 1970)
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APPENDICES

THE FUNERAL GAMES FOR PATROKLOS

In Book 23 of the *Iliad*, the games offered by Achilles at the funeral of his friend and comrade Patroklos are described. The Homeric poems, dated to ca. 800 B.C., provide the first accounts of competitive athletics in Greek literature. The earliness of the date is significant as is the fact that a long tradition of athletic competition is assumed in these poems. How far beyond this date athletics may be pushed is debatable, and the question of Mycenaean origins for any part of the Homeric poems is unresolved. The following is R. Lattimor's translation.

So he spoke, and they did as swift-footed Peleion told them.
250 *First with gleaming wine they put out the pyre that was burning,*
as much as was still aflame, and the ashes dropped deep from it.
Then they gathered up the white bones of their gentle companion,
weeping, and put them into a golden jar with a double
fold of fat, and laid it away in his shelter, and covered it
255 *with a thin veil; then laid out the tomb and cast down the holding walls*
around the funeral pyre, then heaped the loose earth over them
and piled the tomb, and turned to go away. But Achilles
held the people there, and made them sit down in a wide assembly,
260 *and brought prizes for games out of his ships, cauldrons and tripods,*
and horses and mules and the powerful high heads of cattle
and fair-girdled women and grey iron. First of all
he set forth the glorious prizes for speed of foot for the horsemen:
a woman faultless in the work of her hands to lead away
and a tripod with ears and holding twenty-two measures
265 *for the first prize; and for the second he set forth a six-year-old*
unbroken mare who carried a mule foal within her.
Then for the third prize he set forth a splendid unfired
cauldron, which held four measures, with its natural gloss still upon it.
For the fourth place he set out two talents' weight of gold, and for
270 *the fifth place set forth an unfired jar with two handles.*
He stood upright and spoke his word out among the Argives:
"Son of Atreus and all you other strong-greaved Achaians,
these prizes are in the place of games and wait for the horsemen.

Now if we Achaians were contending for the sake of some other
275 hero, I myself should take the first prize away to my shelter.
You know how much my horses surpass in their speed all others;
yes, for they are immortal horses, and Poseidon gave them
to Peleus my father, who in turn gave them into my hands.
But I stay here at the side, and my single-foot horses stay with me;
280 such is the high glory of the charioteer they have lost,
the gentle one, who so many times anointed their manes with
soft olive oil, after he had washed them in shining water.
Therefore these two horses stand here and grieve, and their manes
are swept along the ground as they stand with hearts full of sorrow.
285 But take, the rest of you, places in the field, whichever Achaian
has confidence in his horses and his compacted chariot.”
So spoke the son of Peleus, and the swift riders gathered.
Far the first to rise up was the lord of men Eumelos,
own son of Admetos, who surpassed in horsemanship. After
290 him rose up the son of Tydeus, strong Diomedes,
and led under the yoke the Trojan horses whom he had taken
by force from Aineias, but Aineias himself was saved by Apollo.
After him rose the son of Atreus, fair-haired Menelaos
the sky-descended, and led beneath the yoke the swift horses,
295 Aithe, Agamemnon’s mare, and his own Podargos.
Echepolos, son of Anchises, gave her to Agamemnon
as a gift, so as not to have to go with him to windy Ilion
but stay where he was and enjoy himself, since Zeus had given him
great wealth, and he made his home in the wide spaces of Sikyon.
300 This mare, who was straining hard for the race, Menelaos harnessed.
Fourth to order his horses with flowing manes was Antilochos,
the glorious son of Nestor, Neleus’ son, the high-hearted
lord, and fast-running horses out of the breed of Pylos
pulled his chariot, and his father standing close beside him
305 gave well-intentioned advice to his own good understanding:
“Antilochos, you are young indeed, but Zeus and Poseidon
have loved you and taught you horsemanship in all of its aspects.
Therefore there is no great need to instruct you; you yourself
know well how to double the turning-post. Yet in this race your horses
310 should run slowest. Therefore I think your work will be heavy.
The horses of these men are faster, but they themselves do not
understand any more than you of the science of racing.

Remember then, dear son, to have your mind full of every
 resource of skill, so that the prizes may not elude you.

315 The woodcutter is far better for skill than he is for brute strength.
 It is by skill that the sea captain holds his rapid ship
 on its course, though torn by winds, over the wine-blue water.
 By skill charioteer outpaces charioteer. He
 who has put all his confidence in his horses and chariot

320 and recklessly makes a turn that is loose one way or another
 finds his horses drifting out of the course and does not control them.
 But the man, though he drives the slower horses, who takes his advantage,
 keeps his eye always on the post and turns tight, ever watchful,
 pulled with the ox-hide reins on the course, as in the beginning,

325 and holds his horses steady in hand, and watches the leader.
 I will give you a clear mark and you cannot fail to notice it.
 There is a dry stump standing up from the ground about six feet,
 oak, it may be, or pine, and not rotted away by rain-water,
 and two white stones are leaned against it, one on either side,

330 at the joining place of the ways, and there is smooth driving around it.
 Either it is the grave-mark of someone who died long ago,
 or was set as a racing goal by men who lived before our time.
 Now swift-footed brilliant Achilles has made it the turning-post.
 You must drive your chariot and horses so as to hug this,

335 and yourself, in the strong-fabricated chariot, lean over
 a little to the left of the course, and as for your right horse, whip him
 and urge him along, slackening your hands to give him his full rein,
 but make your left-hand horse keep hard against the turning-post
 so that the hub's edge of your fashioned wheel will seem to be

340 touching it, yet take care not really to brush against it,
 for, if so, you might damage your horses and break your chariot,
 and that will be a thing of joy for the others, and a failure
 for you. So, dear son, drive thoughtfully and be watchful.
 For if you follow the others but get first by the turning-post,

345 there is none who could sprint to make it up, nor close you, nor pass you,
 not if the man behind you were driving the great Arion,
 the swift horse of Adrestos, whose birth is from the immortals,
 or Laomedon's horses, who were the pride of those raised in this country.”
 So spoke Nestor the son of Neleus, and turned back to his place

350 and sat down, having talked to his son of each stage in the contest.
 Fifth to order his horses with flowing manes was Meriones.

*They climbed to the chariots and deposited the lots. Achilleus
shook them, and the first to fall out was that of Antilochos,
Nestor's son, and strong Eumelos drew next after him,
355 and after him the son of Atreus, Menelaos the spear-famed.
Meriones drew the next lane to drive, and the last for the driving
of horses was drawn by far the best of them all, Diomedes.
They stood in line for the start, and Achilleus showed them the turn-post
far away on the level plain, and beside it he stationed
360 a judge, Phoinix the godlike, the follower of his father,
to mark and remember the running and bring back a true story.
Then all held their whips high-lifted above their horses,
then struck with the whip thongs and in words urged their horses onward
into speed. Rapidly they made their way over the flat land
365 and presently were far away from the ships. The dust lifting
clung beneath the horses' chests like cloud or a stormwhirl.
Their manes streamed along the blast of the wind, the chariots
rocking now would dip to the earth who fosters so many
and now again would spring up clear of the ground, and the drivers
370 stood in the chariots, with the spirit beating in each man
with the strain to win, and each was calling aloud upon his own
horses, and the horses flew through the dust of the flat land.
But as the rapid horses were running the last of the race-course
back, and toward the grey sea, then the mettle of each began to
375 show itself, and the field of horses strung out, and before long
out in front was the swift-stepping team of the son of Pheres,
Eumelos, and after him the stallions of Diomedes,
the Trojan horses, not far behind at all, but close on him,
for they seemed forever on the point of climbing his chariot
380 and the wind of them was hot on the back and on the broad shoulders
of Eumelos. They lowered their heads and flew close after him.
And now he might have passed him or run to a doubtful decision,
had not Phoibos Apollo been angry with Diomedes,
Tydeus' son, and dashed the shining whip from his hands, so
385 that the tears began to stream from his eyes, for his anger
as he watched how the mares of Eumelos drew far ahead of him
while his own horses ran without the whip and were slowed.
Yet Athene did not fail to see the foul play of Apollo
on Tydeus' son. She swept in speed to the shepherd of the people
390 and gave him back his whip, and inspired strength into his horses.*

Then in her wrath she went on after the son of Admetos
 and she, a goddess, smashed his chariot yoke, and his horses
 ran on either side of the way, the pole dragged, and Eumelos
 himself was sent spinning out beside the wheel of the chariot
 395 so that his elbows were all torn, and his mouth, and his nostrils,
 and his forehead was lacerated about the brows, and his eyes
 filled with tears, and the springing voice was held fast within him.
 Then the son of Tydeus, turning his single-foot horses to pass him,
 went far out in front of the others, seeing that Athene
 400 had inspired strength in his horses and to himself gave the glory.
 After him came the son of Atreus, fair-haired Menelaos.
 But Antilochos cried out aloud to his father's horses:
 "Come on, you two. Pull, as fast as you can! I am not
 trying to make you match your speed with the speed of those others,
 405 the horses of Tydeus' valiant son, to whom now Athene
 has granted speed and to their rider has given the glory.
 But make your burst to catch the horses of the son of Atreus
 nor let them leave you behind, for fear Aithe who is female
 may shower you in mockery. Are you falling back, my brave horses?
 410 For I will tell you this, and it will be a thing accomplished.
 There will be no more care for you from the shepherd of the people,
 Nestor, but he will slaughter you out of hand with the edge
 of bronze, if we win the meaner prize because you are unwilling.
 Keep on close after him and make all the speed you are able.
 415 I myself shall know what to do and contrive it, so that
 we get by in the narrow place of the way. He will not escape me."
 So he spoke, and they fearing the angry voice of their master
 ran harder for a little while, and presently after this
 battle-stubborn Antilochos saw where the hollow way narrowed.
 420 There was a break in the ground where winter water had gathered
 and broken out of the road, and made a sunken place all about.
 Menelaos shrinking from a collision of chariots steered there,
 but Antilochos also turned out his single-foot horses
 from the road, and bore a little way aside, and went after him;
 425 and the son of Atreus was frightened and called out aloud to Antilochos:
 "Antilochos, this is reckless horsemanship. Hold in your horses.
 The way is narrow here, it will soon be wider for passing.
 Be careful not to crash your chariot and wreck both of us."
 So he spoke, but Antilochos drove on all the harder

- 430 *with a whiplash for greater speed, as if he had never heard him.*
As far as is the range of a discus swung from the shoulder
and thrown by a stripling who tries out the strength of his young manhood,
so far they ran even, but then the mares of Atreides gave way
and fell back, for he of his own will slackened his driving
435 *for fear that in the road the single-foot horses might crash*
and overturn the strong-fabricated chariots, and the men
themselves go down in the dust through their hard striving for victory.
But Menelaos of the fair hair called to him in anger:
“Antilochos, there is no other man more cursed than you are.
440 *Damn you. We Achaians lied when we said you had good sense.*
Even so, you will not get this prize without having to take oath.”
He spoke, and lifted his voice and called aloud to his horses:
“Never hold back now, never stop, for all your hearts are
sorrowful. The feet of these and their knees will weary
445 *before yours do, seeing that the youth is gone from those horses”.*
So he spoke, and they fearing the angry voice of their master
ran the harder, and soon were close up behind the others.
Now the Argives who sat in their assembly were watching
the horses, and the horses flew through the dust of the flat land.
450 *Idomeneus, lord of the Kretans, was first to make out the horses,*
for he sat apart from the others assembled, and higher up, where
he could see all ways, and from far off he heard Diomedes
calling, and knew him, and made out one horse ahead of the others
who was conspicuous, all red, except on his forehead
455 *there was a white mark, round, like the full moon. Idomeneus*
rose to his feet upright and spoke his word out to the Argives:
“Friends, who are leaders of the Argives and keep their counsel:
am I the only one who can see the horses, or can you
also? It seems to me there are other horses leading
460 *and I make out another charioteer. The mares of Eumelos*
must have come to grief somewhere in the plain, who led on the way out,
for those I saw running out in front as they made the turn-post
I can see no longer anywhere, though I watch and though my eyes
look everywhere about the plain of Troy. But it must be
465 *that the reins got away from the charioteer, or he could not hold them*
well in hand at the goal and failed to double the turn-post.
There I think he must have been thrown out and his chariot broken,
and the mares bolted away with the wildness upon their spirit.

But you also stand up and look for yourselves; I cannot
 470 well make out, but it seems to me the man who is leading
 is an Aitolian by birth, but lord of the Argives,
 the son of Tydeus, breaker of horses, strong Diomedes.”
 Swift Aias, son of Oïleus, spoke shamefully to him in anger:
 “Idomeneus, what was all this windy talk? The light-footed
 475 horses are still far where the sweep over the great plain.
 You are not by so much the youngest among the Argives,
 nor do the eyes in your head see so much sharper than others.
 But forever you are windy with your words, and should not
 be a windy speaker. There are others here better than you are.
 480 The horses who are in front are the same as before, and they are
 those of Eumelos, and he stands holding the reins behind them.”
 The lord of the Kretans answered him to his face in anger:
 “Aias, surpassing in abuse, yet stupid, in all else
 you are worst of the Argives with that stubborn mind of yours. Come then,
 485 let us put up a wager of a tripod of cauldron
 and make Agamemnon, son of Atreus, witness between us
 as to which horses lead. And when you pay, you will find out.”
 So he spoke, and swift Aias, son of Oïleus, was rising
 up, angry in turn, to trade hard words with him. And now
 490 the quarrel between the two of them would have gone still further,
 had not Achilles risen up and spoken between them:
 “No longer now, Aias and Idomeneus, continue
 to exchange this bitter and evil talk. It is not becoming.
 If another acted so, you yourselves would be angry.
 495 Rather sit down again among those assembled and watch for
 the horses, and they in their strain for victory will before long
 be here. Then you each can see for himself, and learn which
 of the Argives horses have run first and which have run second.”
 He spoke, and now Tydeus’ son in his rapid course was close on them
 500 and he lashed them always with the whipstroke from the shoulder. His horses
 still lifted their feet and high as they made their swift passage.
 Dust flying splashed always the charioteer, and the chariot
 that was overlaid with gold and tin still rolled hard after
 the flying feet of the horses, and in their wake there was not much
 505 trace from the running rims of the wheels left in the thin dust.
 The horses came in running hard. Diomedes stopped them
 in the middle of where the men were assembled, with the dense sweat starting

and dripping to the ground from neck and chest of his horses.
He himself vaulted down to the ground from his shining chariot
510 and leaned his whip against the yoke. Nor did strong Sthenelos
delay, but made haste to take up the prizes, and gave the woman
to his high-hearted companions to lead away and the tripod
with ears to carry, while Diomedes set free the horses.
After him Neleian Antilochos drove in his horses,
515 having passed Menelaos, not by speed but by taking advantage.
But even so Menelaos held his fast horses close on him.
As far as from the wheel stands the horse who is straining
to pull his master with the chariot over the flat land;
the extreme hairs in the tail of the horse brush against the running
520 rim of the wheel, and he courses very close, there is not much
space between as he runs a great way over the flat land;
by so much Menelaos was left behind by Antilochos
the blameless. At first he was left behind the length of a discus
thrown, but was overhauling him fast, with Aithe
525 of the fair mane, Agamemnon's mare, putting on a strong burst.
If both of them had had to run the course any further,
Menelaos would have passed him, and there could have been no argument.
But Meriones, strong henchman of Idomeneus, was left
a spearcast's length behind by glorious Menelaos.
530 For his horses with splendid manes were slowest of all, and likewise
he himself was of least account for the racing of chariots.
Last and behind them all came in the son of Admetos
dragging his fine chariot and driving his horses before him,
and seeing this, brilliant swift-footed Achilles took pity upon him
535 and stood forth among the Argives and spoke to them all in winged words:
"The best man is driving his single-foot horses in last.
Come then, we must give some kind of prize, and well he deserves it;
second prize; let first place go to the son of Tydeus."
So he spoke, and all gave approval to what he was urging,
540 and he would have given him the horse, since all the Achaians
approved, had not Antilochos, son of great-hearted Nestor,
stood up to answer Peleid Achilles, and argue:
"Achilleus, I shall be very angry with you if you accomplish
what you have said. You mean to take my prize away from me,
545 with the thought in mind that his chariot fouled and his running horses
but he himself is great. He should have prayed to the immortal

gods. That is why he came in last of all in the running.
 But if you are sorry for him and he is dear to your liking,
 there is abundant gold in your shelter, and there is bronze there
 550 and animals, and there are handmaidens and single-foot horses.
 You can take from these, and give him afterwards a prize still greater
 than mine, or now at once, and have the Achaians applaud you.
 But the mare I will not give up, and the man who wants her
 must fight me for her with his hands before he can take her.”
 555 So he spoke, but brilliant swift-footed Achilleus, favouring
 Antilochos, smiled, since he was his beloved companion,
 and answered him and addressed him in winged words: “Antilochos,
 if you would have me bring some other thing out of my dwelling
 as special gift for Eumelos, then for your sake I will do it.
 560 I will give him that corselet I stripped from Asteropaios;
 it is bronze, but there is an overlay circled about it
 in shining tin. It will be a gift that will mean much to him.”
 He spoke, and told Automedon, his beloved companion,
 to bring it out of the shelter, and he went away, and brought it back,
 565 and put it in Eumelos’ hands. And he accepted it joyfully.
 But now Menelaos, heart full of bitterness, stood up among them
 in relentless anger against Antilochos, and the herald
 put the staff into his hand and gave the call for the Argives
 to be silent. And he stood forth, a man like a god, and spoke to them:
 570 “Antilochos, you had good sense once. See what you have done.
 You have defiled my horsemanship, you have fouled my horses
 by throwing your horses in their way, though yours were far slower.
 Come then, o leaders of the Argives and their men of counsel:
 judge between the two of us now; and without favour;
 575 so that no man of the bronze-armoured Achaians shall say of us:
 “Menelaos using lies and force against Antilochos
 went off with the mare he won, for his horses were far slower
 but he himself was greater in power and degree.” Or rather
 come, I myself will give the judgment, and I think no other
 580 man of the Danaans can call it in question, for it will be right.
 Antilochos, beloved of Zeus, come here. This is justice.
 Stand in front of your horses and chariot, and in your hand take
 up the narrow whip with which you drove them before, then
 lay your hand on the horses and swear by him who encircles
 585 the earth and shakes it you used no guile to baffle my chariot.”

Then in turn Antilochos of the good counsel answered him:
“Enough now. For I, my lord Menelaos, am younger
by far than you, and you are the greater and go before me.
You know how greedy transgressions flower in a young man, seeing
590 that his mind is the more active but his judgment is lightweight. Therefore
I would have your heart be patient with me. I myself will give you
the mare I won, and if there were something still greater you asked for
out of my house, I should still be willing at once to give it
to you, beloved of Zeus, rather than all my days
595 fall from your favour and be in the wrong before the divinities.”
He spoke, the son of Nestor the great-hearted, and leading
the mare up gave her to Menelaos’ hands. But his anger
was softened, as with dew the ears of corn are softened
in the standing corn growth of a shuddering field. For you also
600 the heart, o Menelaos, was thus softened within you.
He spoke to him aloud and addressed him in winged’ words: “Antilochos,
I myself, who was angry, now will give way before you,
since you were not formerly loose-minded or vain. It is only
that this time your youth got the better of your intelligence.
605 Beware another time of playing tricks on your betters.
Any other man of the Achaians might not have appeased me.
But you have suffered much for me, and done much hard work,
and your noble father, too, and your brother for my sake. Therefore
I will be ruled by your supplication. I will even give you
610 the mare, though she is mine, so that these men too may be witnesses
that the heart is never arrogant nor stubborn within me.”
He spoke, and gave Antilochos’ companion, Noëmon,
the mare to lead away, and himself took the glittering cauldron.
Fourth, in the order he had driven, Meriones took up
615 the two talents’ weight of gold. But the fifth prize, the two-handled
jar, was left. Achilles carried it through the assembly
of the Argives, and gave it to Nestor, and stood by and spoke to him:
“This, aged sir, is yours to lay away as a treasure
in memory of the burial of Patroklos; since never
620 again will you see him among the Argives. I give you this prize
for the giving; since never again will you fight with your fists nor wrestle,
nor enter again the field for the spear-throwing, nor race
on your feet; since now the hardship of old age is upon you.”
He spoke, and put it in the hands of Nestor, who took it

625 joyfully and spoke in answer and addressed him in winged words:
*“Yes, child: all this you said to me was true as you said it.
 My limbs are no longer steady, dear friend; not my feet, neither
 do my arms, as once they did, swing light from my shoulders.
 I wish I were young again and the strength still unshaken within me*
 630 *as once, when great Amaryngkeus was buried by the Epeians
 at Bouprasion, and his sons gave games for a king’s funeral.
 There there was no man like me, not among the Epeians
 nor yet of the Pylians themselves or great-hearted Aitolians.
 At boxing I won against Klytomedes, the son of Enops,*
 635 *at wrestling against Angkaïos of Pleuron, who stood up against me.
 In the foot-race, for all his speed, I outran Iphiklos,
 and with the spear I out-threw Polydoros and Phyleus.
 It was only in the chariot-race that the sons of Aktor
 defeated me, crossing me in the crowd, so intent on winning*
 640 *were they, for the biggest prizes had been left of the horse-race.
 Now these sons of Aktor were twins; One held the reins at his leisure,
 held the reins at his leisure while the other lashed on the horses.
 This was I, once. Now it is for the young men to encounter
 in such actions, and for me to give way to the persuasion*
 645 *of gloomy old age. But once I shone among the young heroes.
 Go now, and honour the death of your companion with contests.
 I accept this from you gratefully, and my heart is happy
 that you have remembered me and my kindness, that I am not forgotten
 for the honour that should be my honour among the Achaïans.*
 650 *May the gods, for what you have done for me, give you great happiness.”
 He spoke, and Peleïdes went back among the great numbers
 of Achaïans assembled, when he had listened to all the praise spoken
 by Neleus’ son, and set forth the prizes for the painful boxing.
 He led out into the field and tethered there a hard-working*
 655 *six-year-old unbroken jenny, the kind that is hardest
 to break; and for the loser set out a two-handled goblet.
 He stood upright and spoke his word out among the Argives:
 “Son of Atreus, and all you other strong-greaved-Achaïans,
 we invite two men, the best among you, to contend for these prizes*
 660 *with their hands up for the blows of boxing. He whom Apollo
 grants to outlast the other, and all the Achaïans witness it,
 let him lead away the hard-working jenny to his own shelter.
 The beaten man shall take away the two-handled goblet.”*

He spoke, and a man huge and powerful, well skilled in boxing,
665 rose up among them; the son of Panopeus, Epeios.
He laid his hand on the hard-working jenny, and spoke out:
“Let the man come up who will carry off the two-handled goblet.
I say no other of the Achaians will beat me at boxing
and lead off the jenny. I claim I am the champion. Is it not
670 enough that I fall short in battle? Since it could not be
ever, that a man could be a master in every endeavour.
For I tell you this straight out, and it will be a thing accomplished.
I will smash his skin apart and break his bones on each other.
Let those who care for him wait nearby in a huddle about him
675 to carry him out, after my fists have beaten him under”.
So he spoke, and all of them stayed stricken to silence.
Alone Euryalos stood up to face him, a godlike
man, son of lord Mekisteus of the seed of Talaos;
of him who came once to Thebes and the tomb of Oidipous after
680 his downfall, and there in boxing defeated all the Kadmeians.
The spear-famed son of Tydeus was his second, and talked to him
in encouragement, and much desired the victory for him.
First he pulled on the boxing belt about his waist, and then
gave him the thongs carefully cut from the hide of a ranging
685 ox. The two men, girt up, strode into the midst of the circle
and faced each other, and put up their ponderous hands at the same time
and closed, so that their heavy arms were crossing each other,
and there was a fierce grinding of teeth, the sweat began to run
everywhere from their bodies. Great Epeios came in, and hit him
690 as he peered out from his guard, on the cheek, and he could no longer
keep his feet, but where he stood the glorious limbs gave.
As in the water roughened by the north wind a fish jumps
in the weeds of the beach-break, then the dark water closes above him,
so Euryalos left the ground from the blow, but great-hearted Epeios
695 took him in his arms and set him upright, and his true companions
stood about him, and led him out of the circle, feet dragging
as he spat up the thick blood and rolled his head over on one side.
He was dizzy when they brought him back and set him among them.
But they themselves went and carried off the two-handled goblet.
700 Now Peleides set forth the prizes for the third contest,
for the painful wrestling, at once, and displayed them before the Danaans.
There was a great tripod, to set over fire, for the winner.

The Achaians among themselves valued it at the worth of twelve oxen.
 But for the beaten man he set in their midst a woman
 705 skilled in much work of her hands, and they rated her at four oxen.
 He stood upright and spoke his word out among the Argives:
 "Rise up, two who would endeavour this prize." So he spoke
 and presently there rose up huge Telamonian Aias,
 and resourceful Odysseus rose, who was versed in every advantage.
 710 The two men, girt up, strode out into the midst of the circle,
 and grappled each other in the hook of their heavy arms, as when
 rafters lock, when a renowned architect has fitted them
 in the roof of a high house to keep out the force of the winds' spite.
 Their backs creaked under stress of violent hands that tugged them
 715 stubbornly, and the running sweat broke out, and raw places
 frequent all along their ribs and their shoulders broke out
 bright red with blood, as both of them kept up their hard efforts
 for success and the prize of the wrought tripod. Neither Odysseus
 was able to bring Aias down or throw him to the ground, nor
 720 could Aias, but the great strength of Odysseus held out against him.
 But now as they made the strong-greaved Achaians begin to be restless,
 at last great Telamonian Aias said to the other:
 "Son of Laertes and seed of Zeus, resourceful Odysseus:
 lift me, or I will lift you. All success shall be as Zeus gives it."
 725 He spoke, and heaved; but not forgetting his craft Odysseus
 caught him with a stroke behind the hollow of the knee, and unnerved
 the tendons, and threw him over backward, so that Odysseus
 fell on his chest as the people gazed upon them and wondered.
 Next, brilliant much-enduring Odysseus endeavoured to lift him
 730 and budged him a little from the ground, but still could not raise him
 clear, then hooked a knee behind, so that both of them went down
 together to the ground, and lay close, and were soiled in the dust. Then
 they would have sprung to their feet once more and wrestled a third fall,
 had not Achilles himself stood up and spoken to stop them:
 735 "Wrestle no more now; do not wear yourselves out and get hurt.
 You have both won. Therefore take the prizes in equal division
 and retire, so the rest of the Achaians can have their contests."
 So he spoke, and they listened close to him and obeyed him
 and wiped the dust away from their bodies, and put on their tunics.
 740 At once the son of Peleus set out prizes for the foot-race:
 a mixing-bowl of silver, a work of art, which held only

*six measures, but for its loveliness it surpassed all others
on earth by far, since skilled Sidonian craftsmen had wrought it
well, and Phoenicians carried it over the misty face of the water*
745 *and set it in the harbour, and gave it for a present to Thoas.
Euneos, son of Jason, gave it to the hero Patroklos
to buy Lykaon, Priam's son, out of slavery, and now
Achilleus made it a prize in memory of his companion,
for that man who should prove in the speed of his feet to run lightest.*
750 *For second place he set out a great ox with fat deep upon him,
and for the last runner half a talent's weight of gold. He stood
upright then and spoke his word out among the Argives:
"Rise up, you who would endeavour this prize." So he spoke
and presently there rose up swift Aias, the son of Oileus,*
755 *and Odysseus the resourceful rose up, and after him Nestor's
son, Antilochos, the best runner among all the young men.
They stood in line for the start, and Achilleus showed them the turn-post.
The field was strung out from the scratch, and not long afterwards
Oileus' son was out in front, but brilliant Odysseus*
760 *overhauled him close, as near as to the breast of a woman
fair-girdled is the rod she pulls in her hands carefully
as she draws the spool out and along the warp, and holds it
close to her chest. So Odysseus ran close up, but behind him,
and his feet were hitting the other's tracks before the dust settled.*
765 *Great Odysseus was breathing on the back of the head of Aias
as he ran and held his speed, and all the Achaians were shouting
for his effort to win, and hallooed him hard along in his running.
But as they were running the last part of the race, then Odysseus
said a prayer inside his own mind to grey-eyed Athene:*
770 *"Hear me, goddess; be kind; and come with strength for my footsteps."
So he spoke in prayer, and Pallas Athene heard him.
She made his limbs light, both his feet and the hands above them.
Now as they were for making their final sprint for the trophy,
there Aias slipped in his running, for Athene unbalanced him,*
775 *where dung was scattered on the ground from the bellowing oxen slaughtered
by swift-footed Achilleus, those he slew to honour Patroklos;
and his mouth and nose were filled with the cow dung, so that Odysseus
the great and much enduring took off the mixing-bowl, seeing
he had passed him and come in first, and the ox went to glorious Aias.*
780 *He stood there holding in his hands the horn of the field-ox,*

spitting the dung from his mouth, and spoke his word to the Argives:

“Ah, now! That goddess made me slip on my feet, who has always stood over Odysseus like a mother, and taken good care of him.”

He spoke, and all the rest of them laughed happily at him.

785 *In turn Antilochos took up prize for last place, and carried it off, and grinning spoke his word out among the Argives:*

“Friends, you all know well what I tell you, that still the immortals continue to favour the elder men. For see now, Aias is elder than I, if only by a little, but this man

790 *is out of another age than ours and one of the ancients.*

But his, they say, is a green old age. It would be a hard thing for any Achaian to match his speed. Except for Achilles.”

So he spoke, and glorified the swift-footed Peleion.

And Achilles gave him an answer for what he said, and spoke to him:

795 *“Antilochos, your good word for me shall not have been spoken in vain. I shall give you another half-talent of gold in addition.”*

He spoke, and put it in Antilochos’ hands, who received it joyfully.

Then the son of Peleus carried into the circle and set down a far-shadowing spear, and set down beside it a shield and a helmet:

800 *the armour of Sarpedon, that Patroklos stripped from his body.*

He stood upright and spoke his word out among the Argives:

“We invite two men, the best among you, to contend for these prizes.

Let them draw their armour upon them and take up the rending bronze spears and stand up to each other in the trial of close combat. The fighter

805 *who is first of the two to get in a stroke at the other’s fair body, to get through armour and dark blood and reach to the vitals, to that man I will give this magnificent silver-nailed sword of Thrace I stripped from the body of Asteropaios.*

But let both men carry off this armour and have it in common;

810 *and we shall set out a brave dinner before them both in our shelters.”*

So he spoke, and there rose up huge Telamonian Aias, and next the son of Tydeus rose up, strong Diomedes.

When these were in their armour on either side of the assembly, they came together in the middle space, furious for the combat,

815 *with dangerous looks, and wonder settled on all the Achaians.*

Then as, moving forward, the two were closing in on each other, there were three charges, three times they swept in close. Then Aias stabbed at Diomedes’ shield on its perfect circle

but did not get through to the skin, for the corselet inside it guarded him.

- 820 *The son of Tydeus, over the top of the huge shield, was always
menacing the neck of Aias with the point of the shining
spear, but when the Achaians saw it in fear for Aias
they called for them to stop and divide the prizes evenly.
But the hero Achilles carried the great sword, with its scabbard*
- 825 *and carefully cut sword belt, and gave it to Diomedes.
Now the son of Peleus set in place a lump of pig-iron,
which had once been the throwing-weight of Eëtion in his great strength;
but now swift-footed brilliant Achilles had slain him and taken
the weight away in the ships along with the other possessions.*
- 830 *He stood upright and spoke his word out among the Argives:
“Rise up, you who would endeavour to win this prize also.
For although the rich demesnes of him who wins it lie far off
indeed, yet for the succession of five years he will have it
to use; for his shepherd for want of iron will not have to go in*
- 835 *to the city for it, nor his ploughman either. This will supply them.”
So he spoke, and up stood Polypoites the stubborn in battle,
and Leonteus in his great strength, a godlike man, and there rose up
Aias, the son of Telamon, and brilliant Epeios.
They stood in order to throw, and great Epeios took up the weight*
- 840 *and whirled and threw it, and all the Achaians laughed when they saw him.
Second to throw in turn was Leonteus, scion of Ares,
and third in turn huge Telamonian Aias threw it
from his ponderous hand, and overpassed the marks of all others.
But when Polypoites stubborn in battle caught up the iron,*
- 845 *he overthrew the entire field by as far as an ox-herd
can cast with his throwing stick which spins through the air and comes down
where the cattle graze in their herds, and all the Achaians applauded,
and the companions of powerfull Polypoites uprising
carried the prize of the king away to the hollow vessels.*
- 850 *But Achilles set gloomy iron forth once more, for the archers.
He set ten double-bladed axes forth, ten with single
blades, and planted far away on the sands the mast pole
of a dark-prowed ship, and tethered a tremulous wild pigeon to it
by a thin string attached to her foot, then challenged the archers*
- 855 *to shoot at her: “Now let the man who hits the wild pigeon
take up and carry away home with him all the full axes.
But if one should miss the bird and still hit the string, that man,
seeing that he is the loser, still shall have the half-axes.”*

So he spoke, and there rose up in his strength the lord Teukros,
860 and Meriones rose up, Idomeneus' powerful henchman.
They chose their lots, and shook them up in a brazen helmet,
and Teukros was allotted first place to shoot. He let fly
a strong-shot arrow, but did not promise the lord of archery
that he would accomplish for him a grand sacrifice of lambs first born.
865 He missed the bird, for Apollo begrudged him that, but he did hit
the string beside the foot where the bird was tied, and the tearing
arrow went straight through and cut the string, and the pigeon
soared swift up toward the sky, while the string dropped and dangled
toward the ground. But still the Achaians thundered approval.
870 Memories in a fury of haste caught the bow from his hand,
but had had out an arrow before, while Teukros was aiming,
and forthwith promised to the one who strikes from afar, Apollo,
that he would accomplish for him a grand sacrifice of lambs first born.
Way up under the clouds he saw the tremulous wild dove
875 and as she circled struck her under the wing in the body
and the shaft passed clean through and out of her, so that it dropped back
and stuck in the ground beside the foot of Meriones, but the bird
dropped and fell on top of the mast of the dark-prowed vessel
and drooped her neck and the beating wings went slack, and the spirit
880 of life fled swift away from the limbs. Fat down from the mast peak
she dropped to earth. And the people gazed upon it and wondered.
Then Meriones gathered up all ten double axes,
but Teukros carried the half-axes back to the hollow ships.
Then the son of Peleus carried into the circle and set down
885 a far-shadowing spear and an unfired cauldron with patterns
of flowers on it, the worth of an ox. And the spear-throwers rose up.
The son of Atreus rose, wide-powerful Agamemnon,
and Meriones rose up, Idomeneus' powerful henchman.
But now among them spoke swift-footed brilliant Achilles:
890 "Son of Atreus, for we know how much you surpass all others,
by how much you are greatest for strength among the spear-throwers,
therefore take this prize and keep it and go back to your hollow
ships; but let us give the spear to the hero Meriones;
if your own heart would have it this way, for so I invite you."
895 He spoke, nor did Agamemnon lord of men disobey him.
The hero gave the bronze spear to Meriones, and thereafter
handed his prize, surpassingly lovely, to the herald Talthybios.

THE GAMES AMONG THE PHAEACIANS

In Book 8 of the *Odyssey*, Odysseus is feasted by king Alkinoos of the Phaeacians. Following the banquet, the king invites all to leave the great hall to make trial of athletic contests. This passage adds the long jump and the discus throw to the competitions offered at the funeral games for Patroklos. It also clearly presents athletics as an aristocratic activity. The following is R. Lattimore's translation.

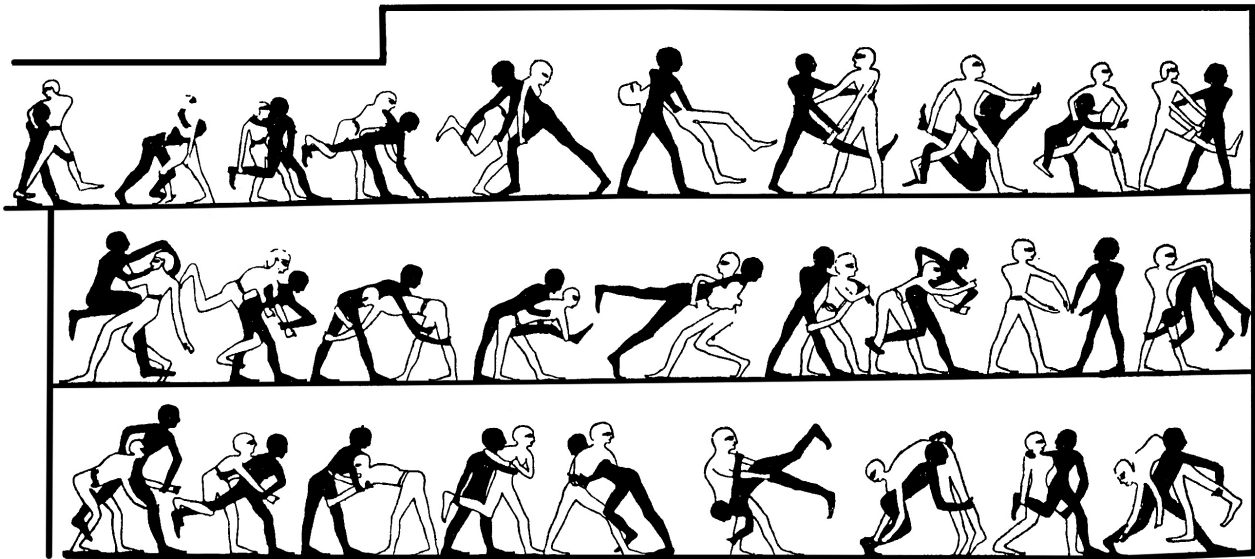
*"Hear me, you leaders of the Phaiakians and men of counsel.
By this time we have filled our desire for the equal feasting
and for the lyre, which is the companion to the generous
100 feast. Now let us go outside and make our endeavor
in all contests, so that our stranger can tell his friends, after
he reaches his home, by how much we surpass all others
in boxing, wrestling, leaping and speed of our feet for running."
So he spoke, and led the way, and the rest went with him,
105 and the herald hung up the clear lyre on its peg, and taking
Demodokos by the hand he led him out of the palace
and set him on the start of the way, where all the other
best men of the Phaiakians went, to gaze at the contests.
They went to the place of assembly, with an endless multitude
110 following, and many and excellent young men stood forth.
Akroneos stood up, and Okyalos and Elatreus,
Nauteus and Prymneus, Anchialos and Eretmeus,
Ponteus and Proteus, Thoön and Anabesineos,
Amphialos, son of Polyneos, the son of Tekton,
105 and Euryalos stood up, Naubolos' son, a man like murderous
Ares himself, and he was best of all the Phaiakians
in build and beauty, only except for stately Laodamas.
Also there stood forth three sons of stately Alkinoös,
Laodamas and Halios and godlike Klytoneos.
110 First of all they held a contest for speed in running.
The field strung out from the starting scratch, yet all at the same time
flew on together, turning up the dust of the plain. Of these
stately Klytoneos was far the best in the running,
and was out in front by the length of a furrow for mules plowing
125 a field, and came back first to the crowd, with the rest behind him.*

Next these tried each other out in the painful wrestling,
and in this Euryalos surpassed all the best among them.
In the jump it was Amphialos who outdid all others,
while with the discus far the best of them was Elatreus,
130 and in boxing it was Alkinoös' fine son, Laodamas.
But after all had enjoyed their hearts with athletic contests,
Laodamas the son of Alkinoös spoke forth among them:
"Come, friends, let us ask the stranger if he has skill and knowledge
for any kind of contest. In his build he is no mean man,
135 for the lower legs and thighs he has, and both arms above them,
for the massive neck and the great strength, nor is it that he lacks
youth, but the crush of many misfortunes has used him hardly.
For I say there is no other thing that is worse than the sea is
for breaking a man, even though he may be a very strong one."
140 Then in turn Euryalos spoke forth and answered:
Laodamas, this word you spoke was fair and orderly.
Go yourself then, and say it to him, and invite him to try it."
Then when the excellent son of Alkinoös heard this answer,
he went and stood in the midst of them and spoke to Odysseus:
145 Come you also now, father stranger, and try these contests,
if you have skill in any. It beseems you to know athletics,
for there is no greater glory that can befall a man living
than what he achieves by speed of his feet or strength of his hands. So
come then and try it, and scatter those cares that are on your spirit.
150 Your voyage will not be put off for long, but now already
your ship is hauled down to the sea, and your companions are ready."
Then resourceful Odysseus spoke in turn and answered him:
"Laodamas, why do you all urge me on in mockery
to do these things? Cares are more in my mind than games are,
155 who before this have suffered much and had many hardships,
and sit here now in the middle of your assembly, longing
to go home, entreating your king for this, and all of his people."
Euryalos answered him to his face and spoke to him roughly:
"No, stranger, for I do not see that you are like one versed
160 in contests, such as now are practiced much among people,
but rather to one who plies his ways in his many-locked vessel,
master over mariners who also are men of business,
a man who, careful of his cargo and grasping for profits,
goes carefully on his way. You do not resemble an athlete."

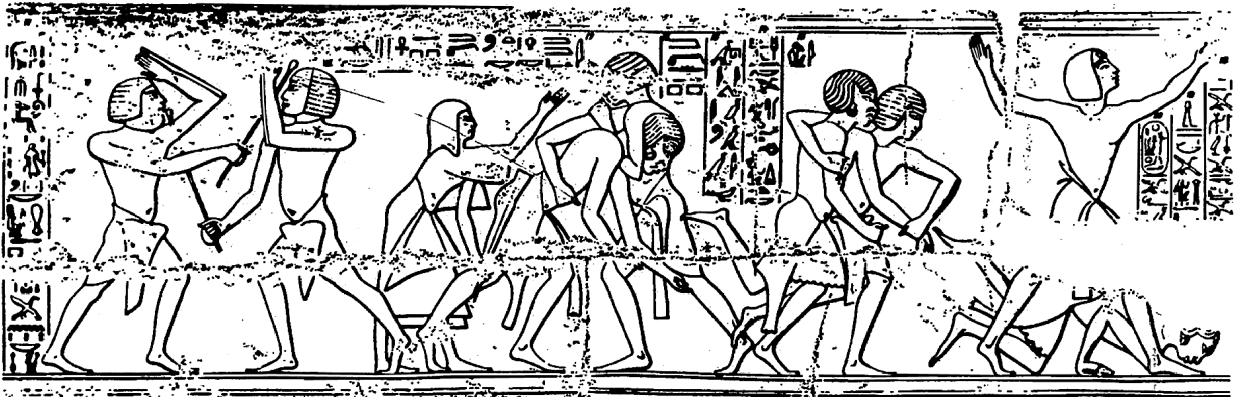
- 165 Then looking at him darkly resourceful Odysseus answered:
“Friend, that was not well spoken; you seem like one who is reckless.
So it is that the gods do not bestow graces in all ways
on men, neither in stature nor yet in brains or eloquence;
for there is a certain kind of man, less noted for beauty,
170 but the god puts comeliness on his words, and they who look toward him
are filled with joy at the sight, and he speaks to them without faltering
in winning modesty, and shines among those who are gathered,
and people look on him as on a god when he walks in the city.
Another again in his appearance is like the immortals,
175 but upon his words there is no grace distilled, as in your case
the appearance is conspicuous, and not a god even
would make it otherwise, and yet the mind there is worthless.
Now you have stirred up anger deep in the breast within me
by this disorderly speaking, and I am not such a new hand
180 at games as you say, but always, as I think, I have been
among the best when I still had trust in youth and hands’ strength.
Now I am held in evil condition and pain; for I had much
to suffer: the wars of men;
hard crossing of the big waters.
185 But even so for all my troubles I will try your contests,
for your word bit in the heart, and you have stirred me by speaking.”
He spoke, and with mantle still on sprang up and laid hold of a discus
that was a bigger and thicker one, heavier not by a little
than the one the Phaiakians had used for their sport in throwing.
190 He spun, and let this fly from his ponderous hand. The stone
hummed in the air, and the Phaiakians, men of long oars
and famed for seafaring, shrank down against the ground, ducking
under the flight of the stone which, speeding from his hand lightly, overflowed the marks
of all others, and Athene, likening
herself to a man, marked down the cast and spoke and addressed him:
195 “Even a blind man, friend, would be able to distinguish your mark
by feeling for it, since it is not mingled with the common
lot, but far before. Have no fear over this contest.
No one of the Phaiakians will come up to this mark or pass it.”
She spoke, and much-enduring great Odysseus rejoiced, happy
200 to find one friendly companion in the assembled company.
Again he spoke to the Phaiakians, in language more blithe:
“Now reach me that mark, young men, and then I will make another

throw, as great as this, I think, or one even better.
Let any of the rest, whose heart and spirit are urgent for it,
205 *come up and try me, since you have irritated me so, either*
at boxing or wrestling or in a foot race, I begrudge nothing;
any of the Phaiakians, that is, except Laodamas
himself, for he is my host; who would fight with his friend? Surely
any man can be called insensate and good for nothing
210 *who in an alien community offers to challenge*
his friend and host in the games. He damages what is his. No,
but I refuse not one of the rest, nor do I scorn him,
but I am willing to look in his eyes and be tested against him.
I am not bad in any of the contests where men strive.
215 *I know well how to handle the polished bow, and would be*
first to strike my man with an arrow aimed at a company
of hostile men, even though many companions were standing
close beside me, and all shooting with bows at the enemies.
There was Philoktetes alone who surpassed me in archery
220 *when we Achaians shot with bows in the Trojan country.*
But I will say that I stand far out ahead of all others
such as are living mortals now and feed on the earth. Only
I will not set myself against men of the generations
before, not with Herakles nor Eurytos of Oichalia,
225 *who set themselves against the immortals with the bow, and therefore*
great Eurytos died suddenly nor came to an old age
in his own mansions, since Apollo in anger against him
killed him, because he had challenged Apollo in archery. I can
throw with the spear as far as another casts with an arrow.
230 *Only in a foot race I fear one of the Phaiakians*
might outpass me; I have been through too much and shamefully battered on many
rough seas, since there could be no orderly training
on shipboard; because of this my legs have lost their condition.”
So he spoke, and all of them stayed stricken to silence.

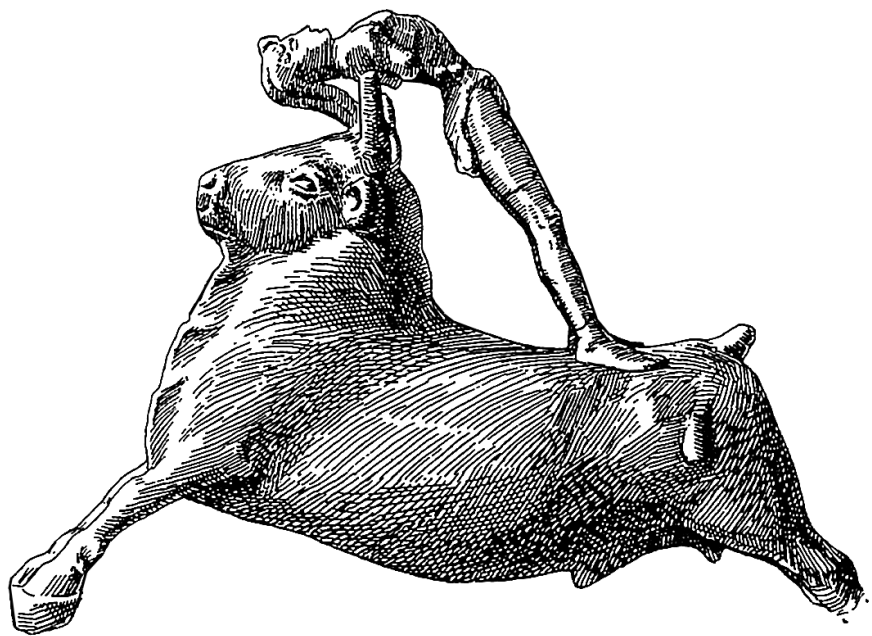
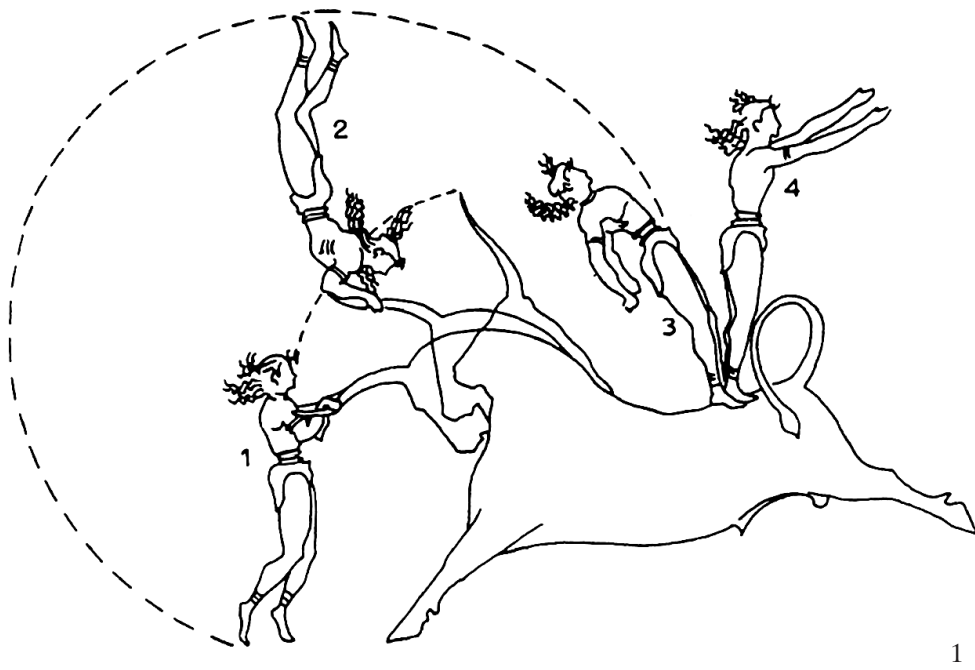
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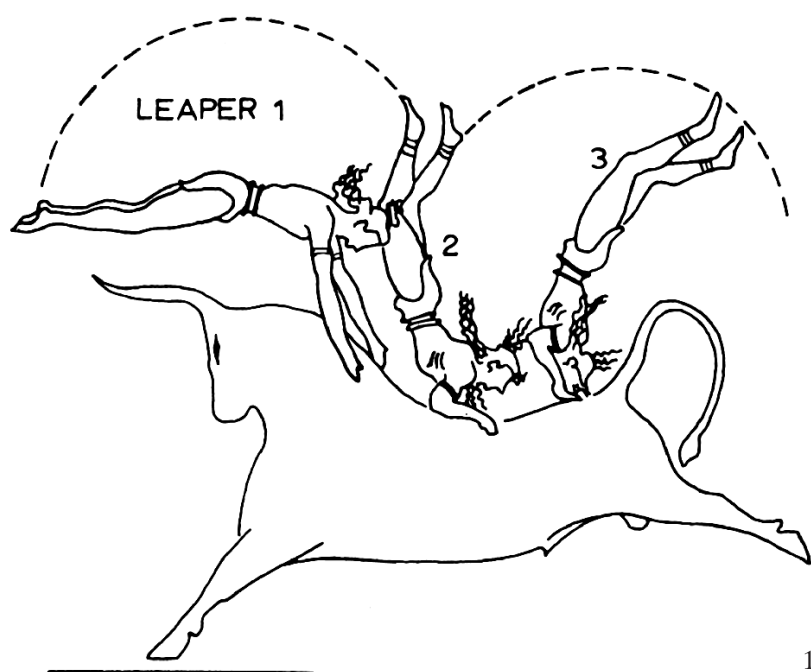


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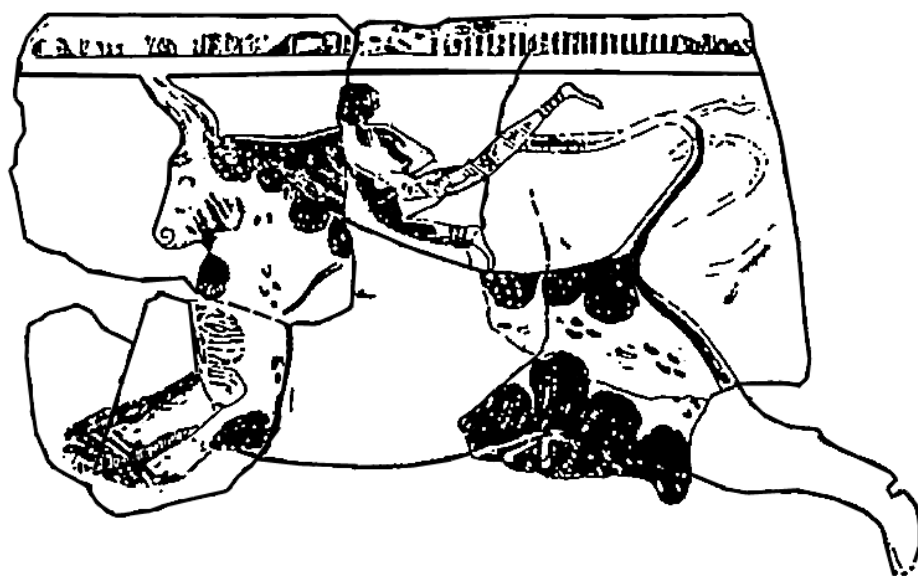


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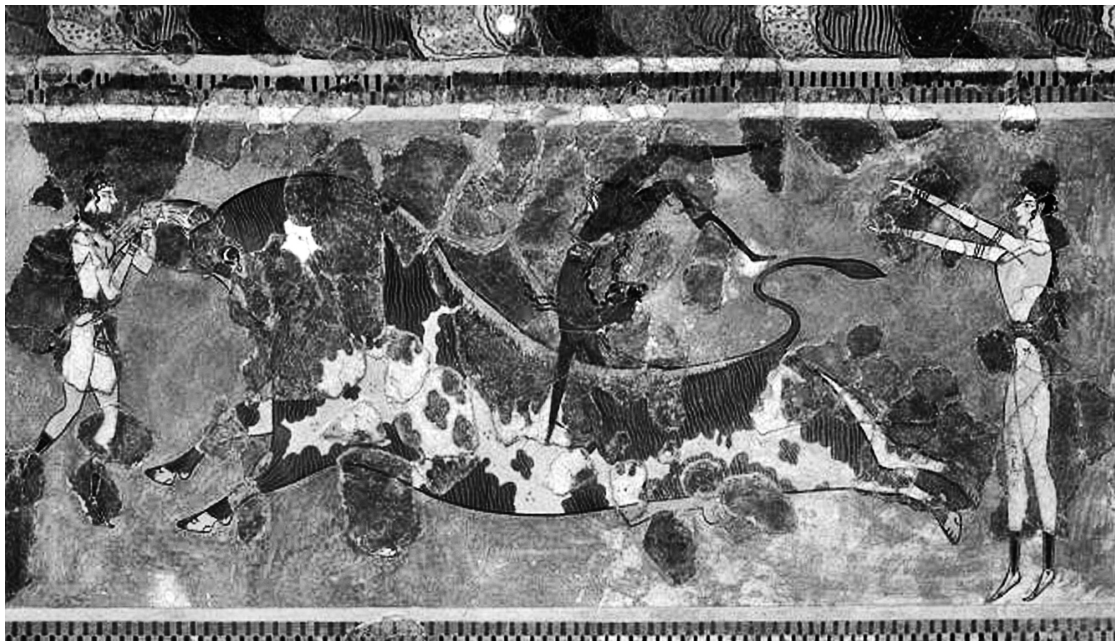




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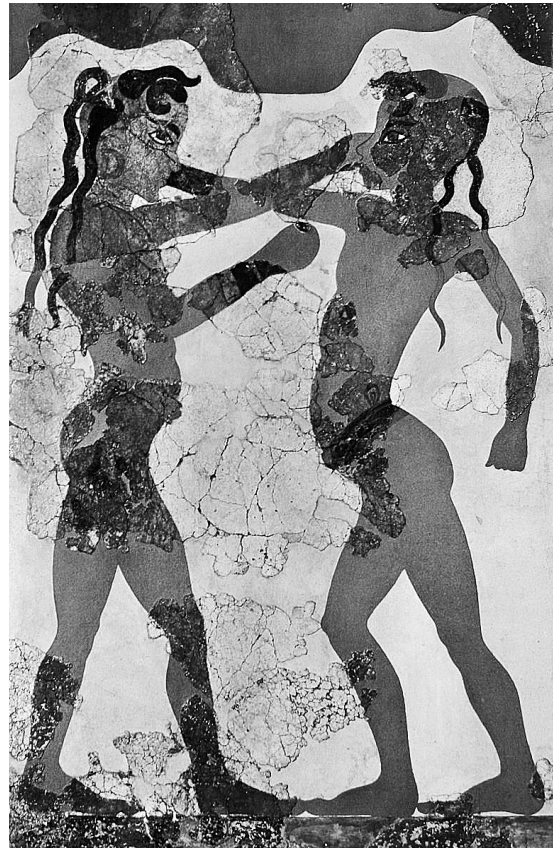
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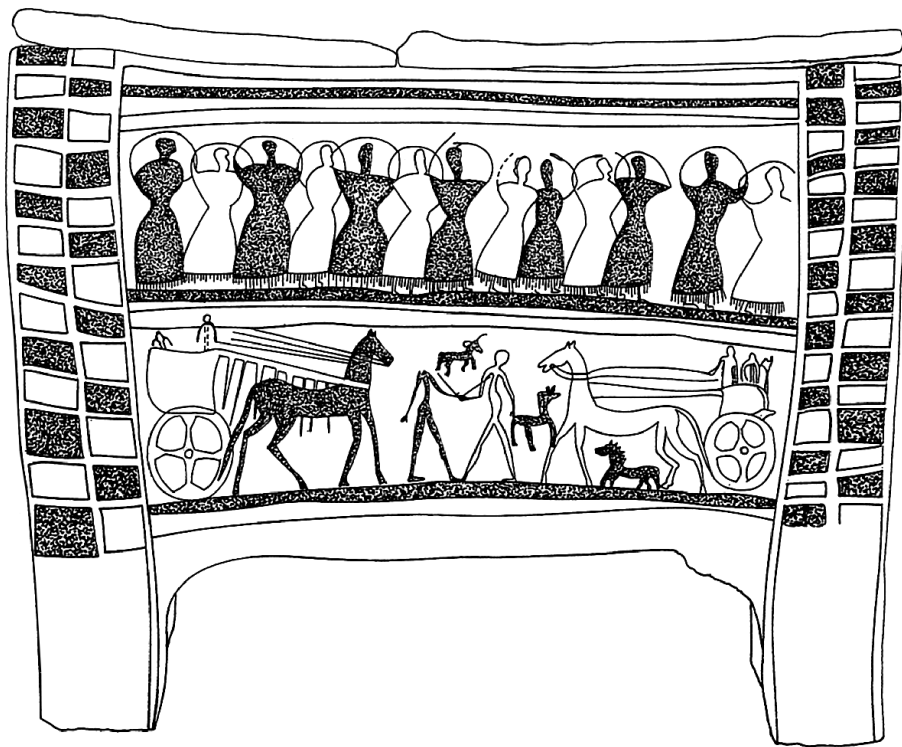
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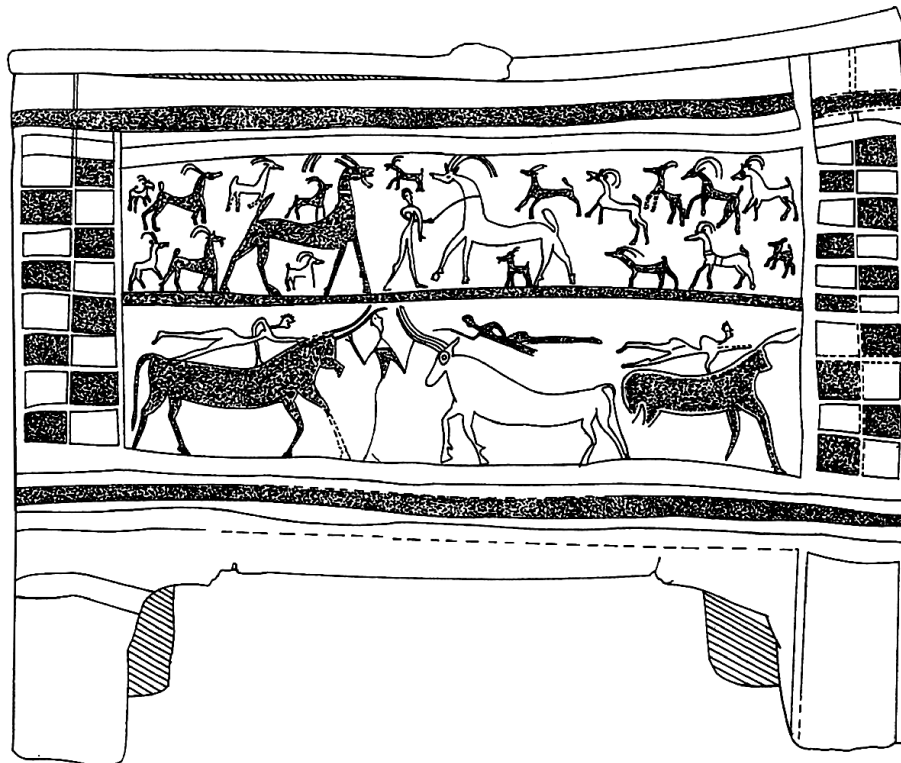
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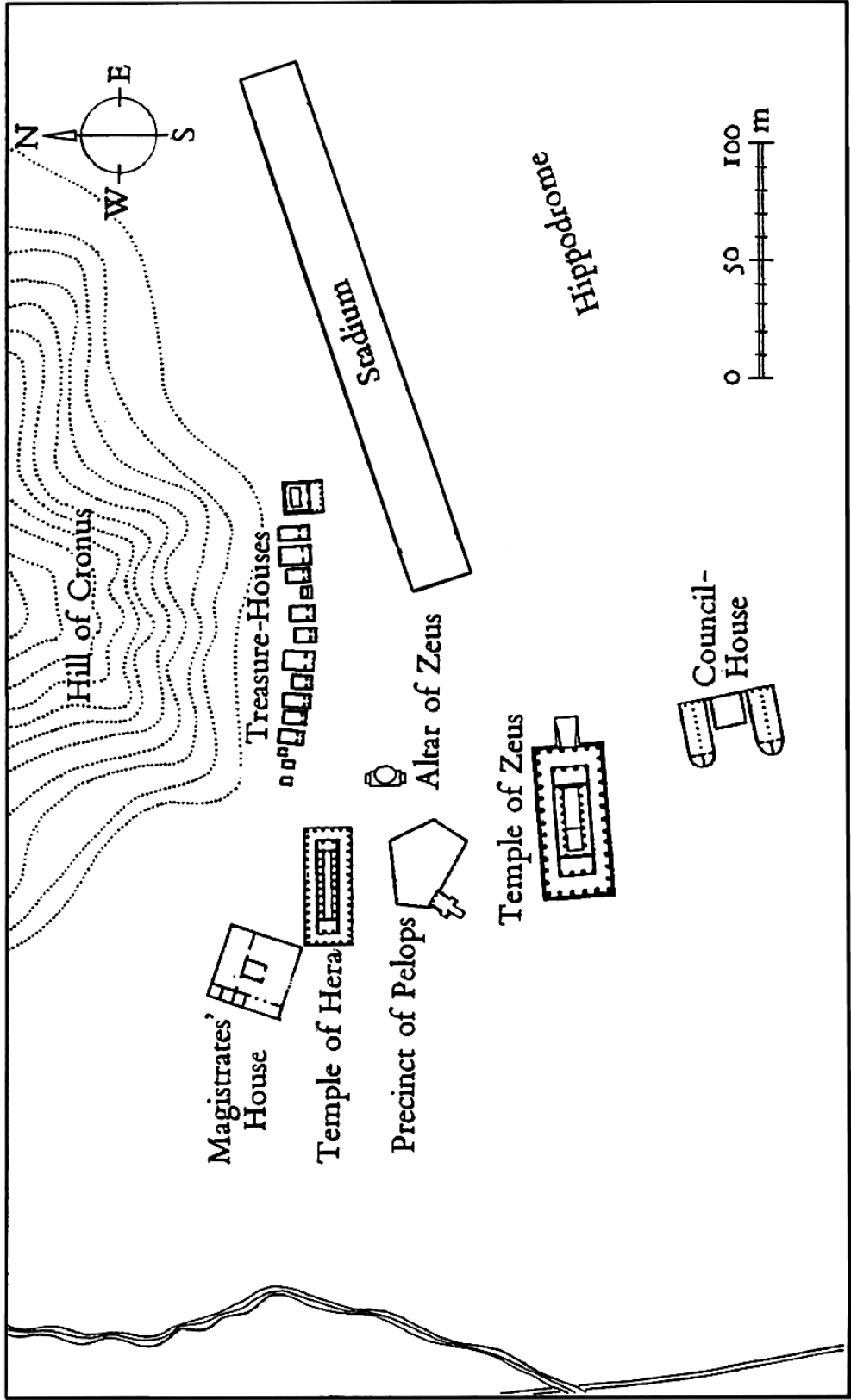


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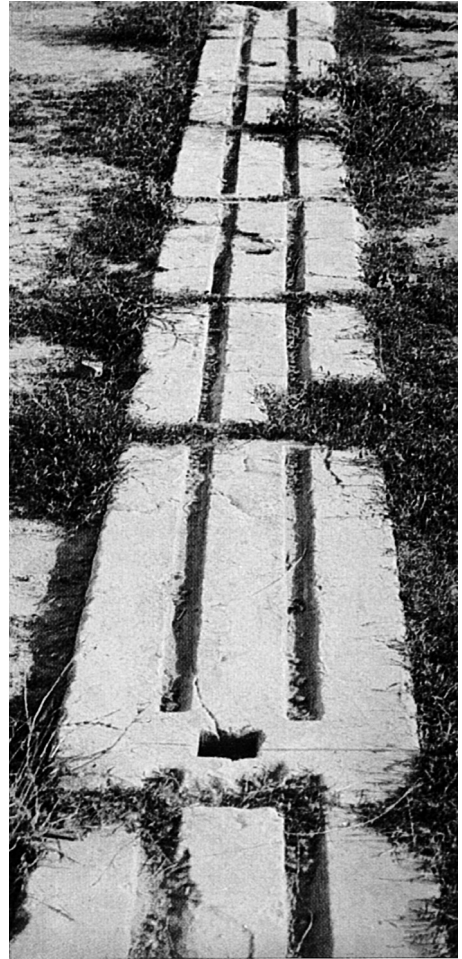
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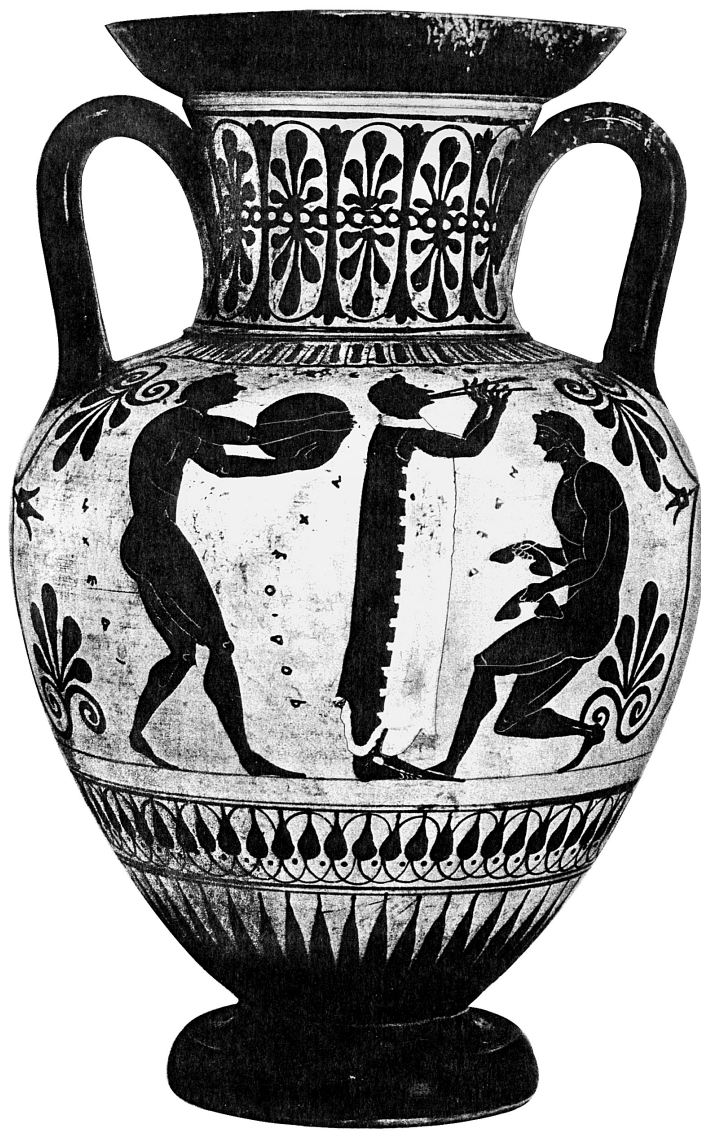
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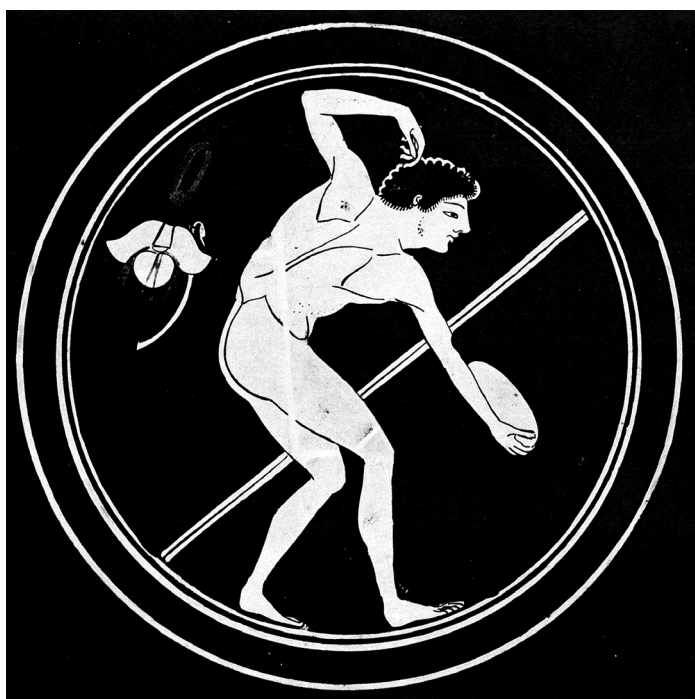


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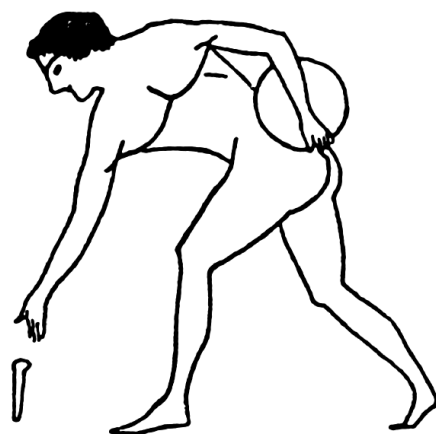


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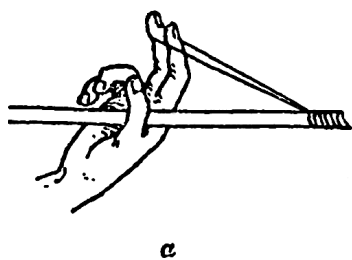




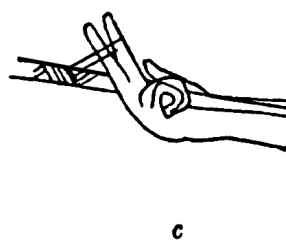
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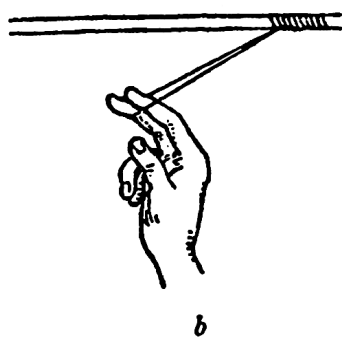
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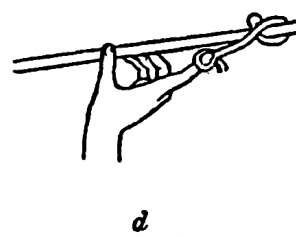
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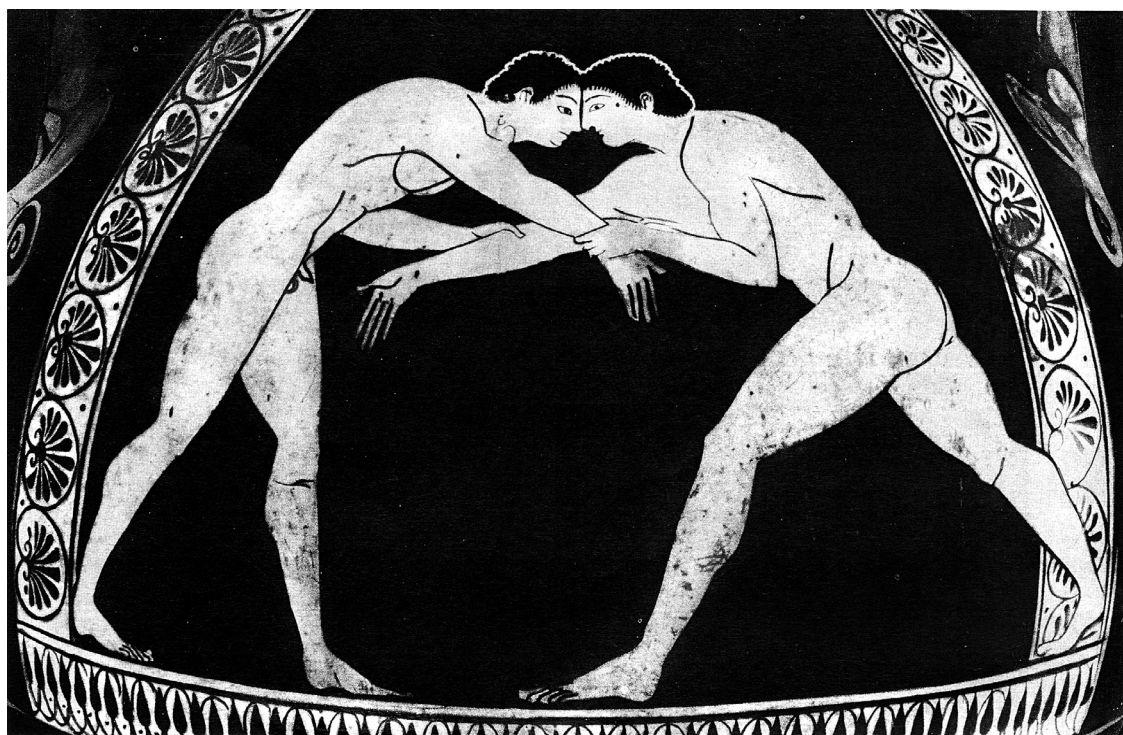


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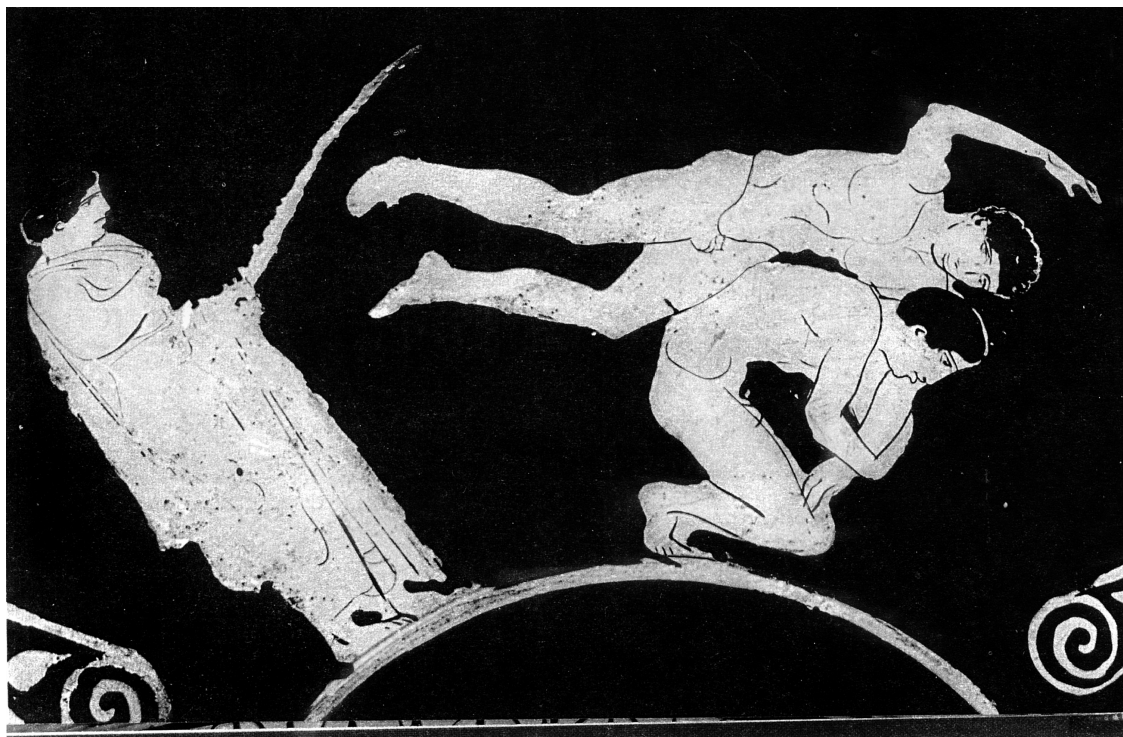


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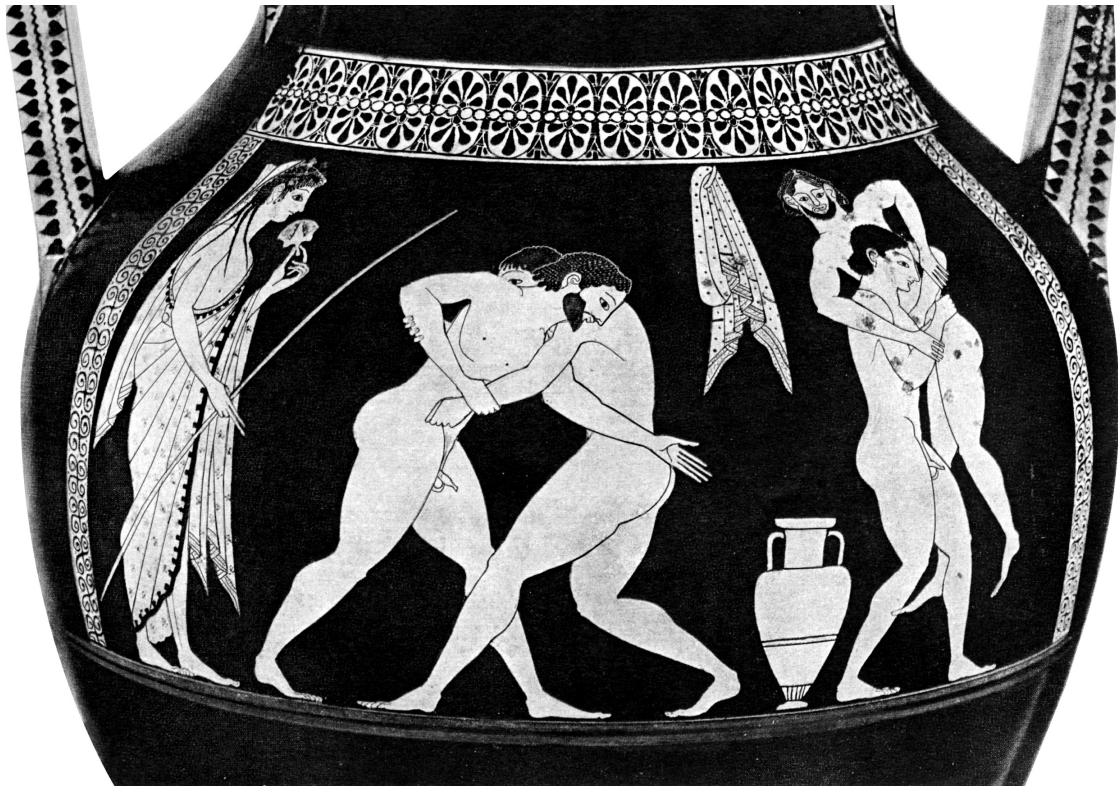
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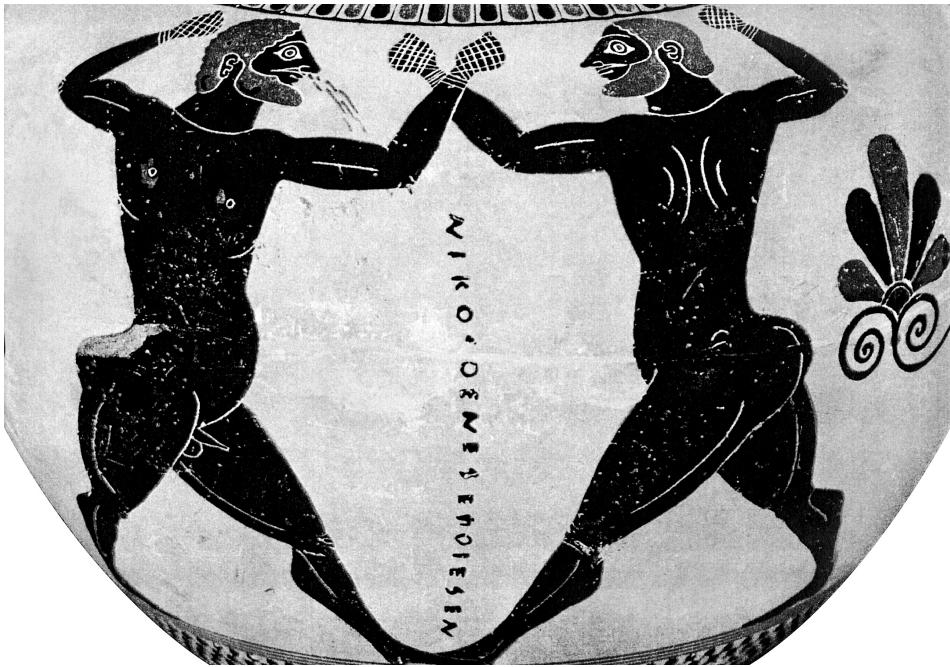
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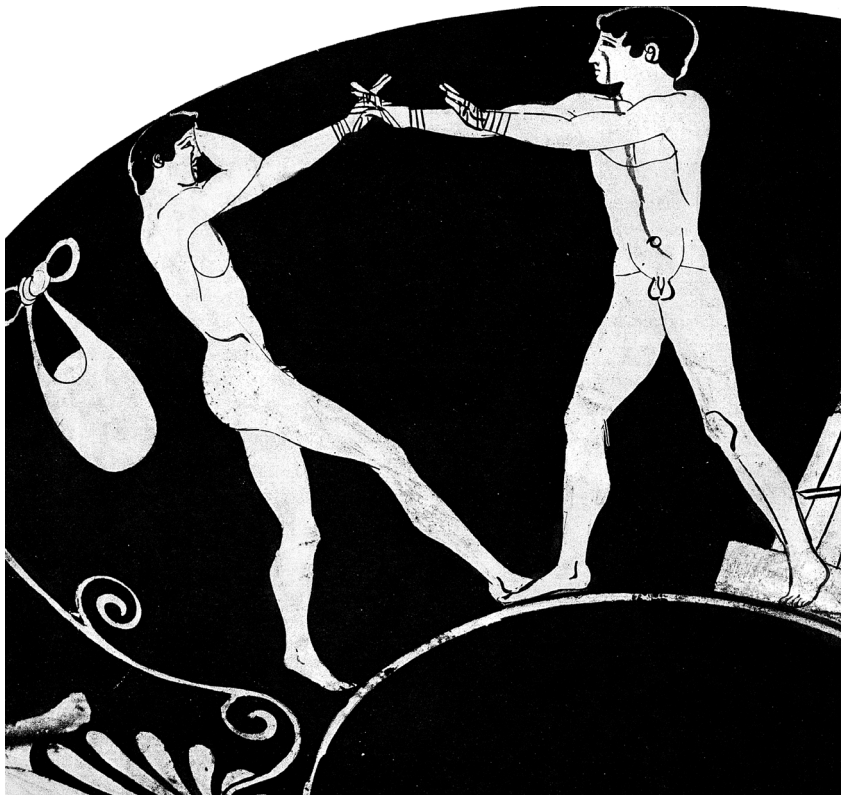
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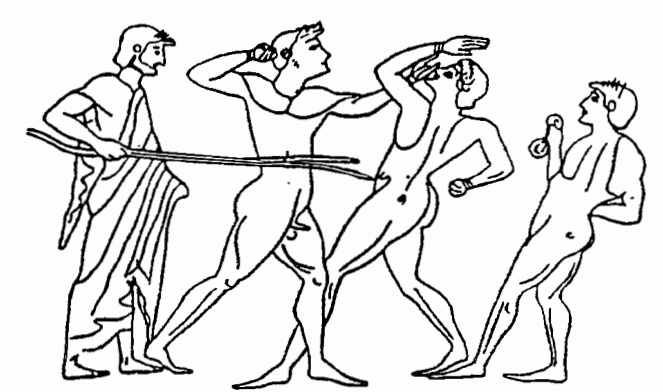
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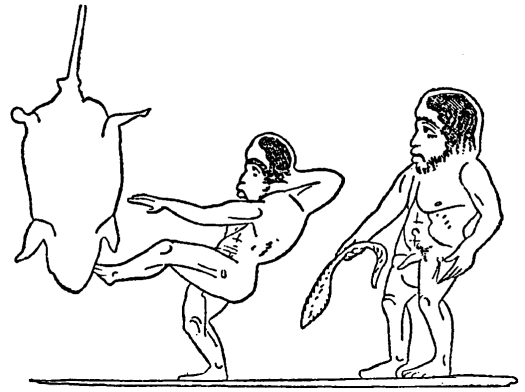
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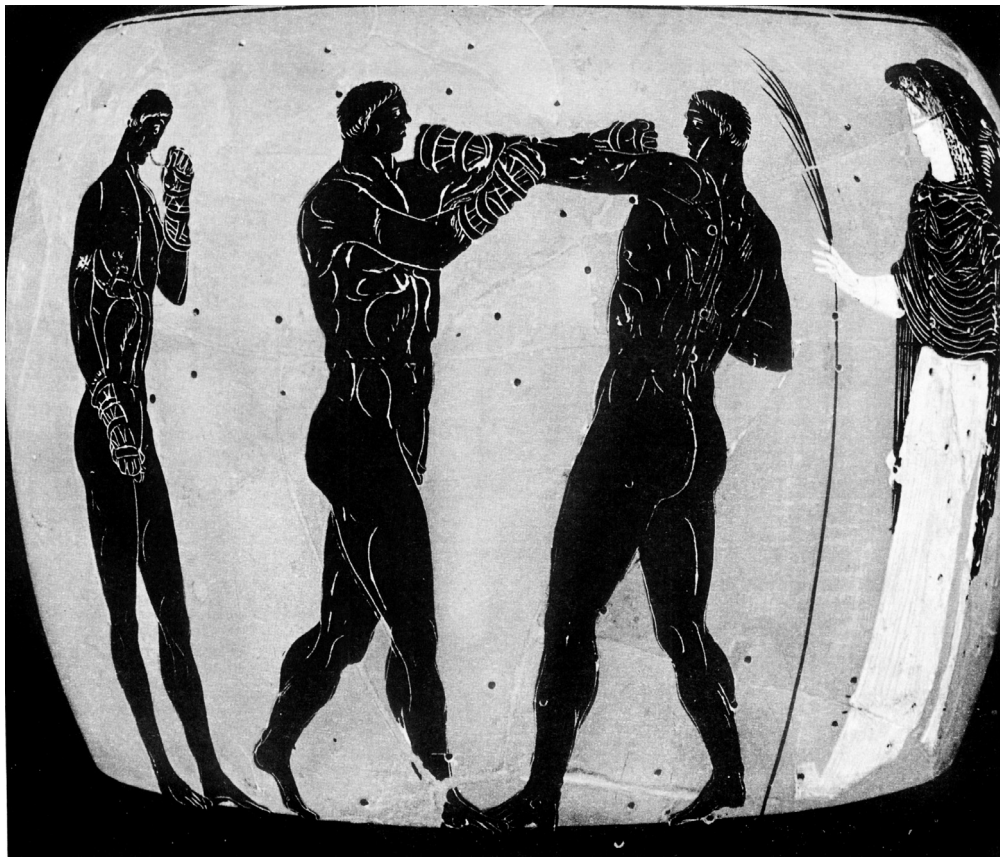
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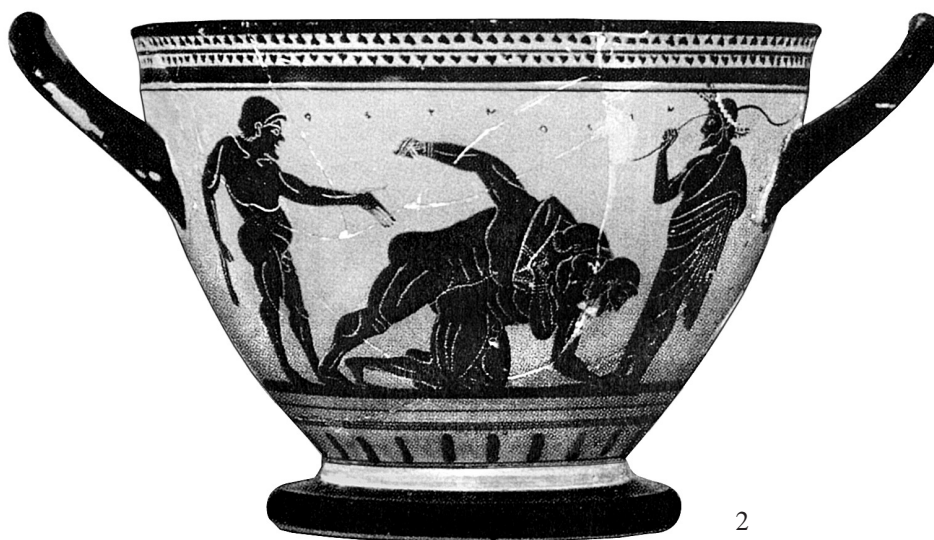
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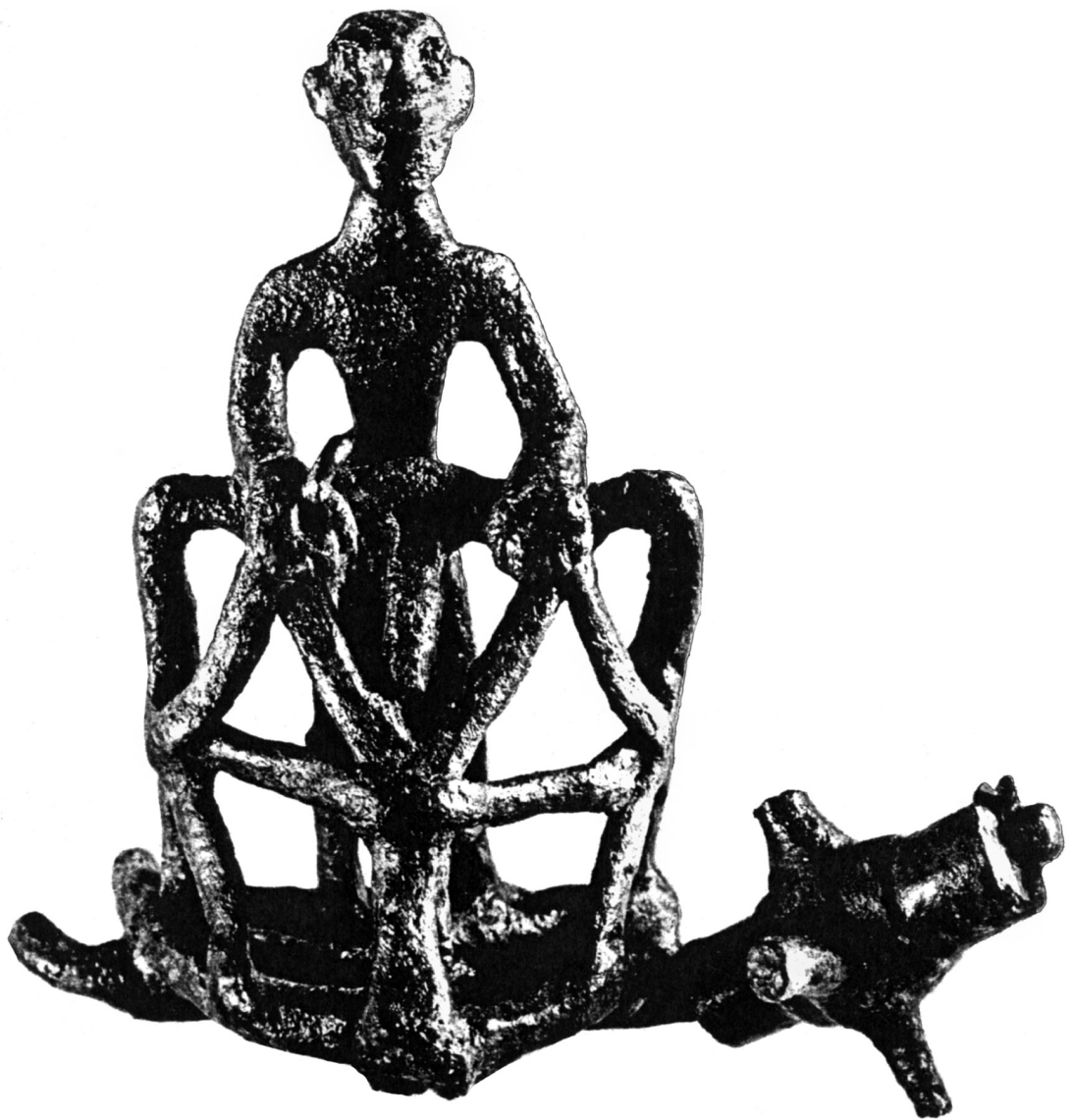
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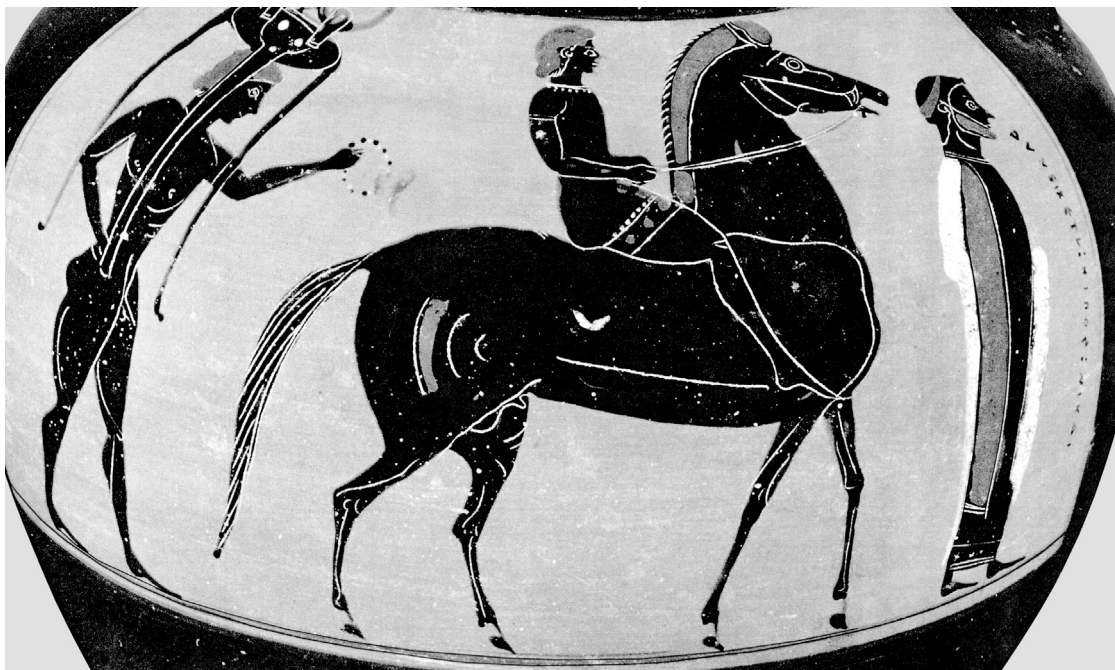
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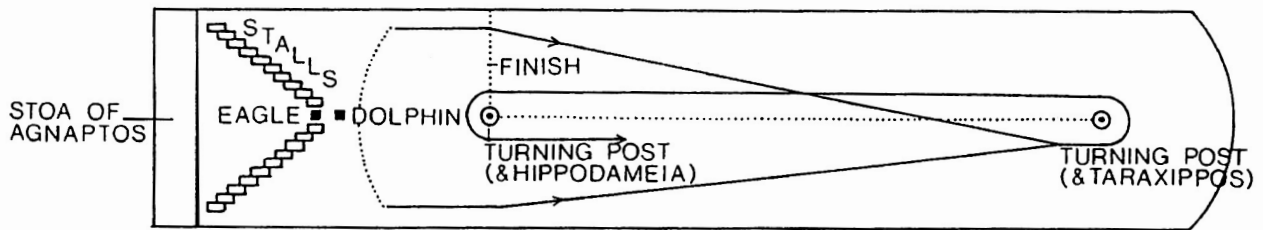
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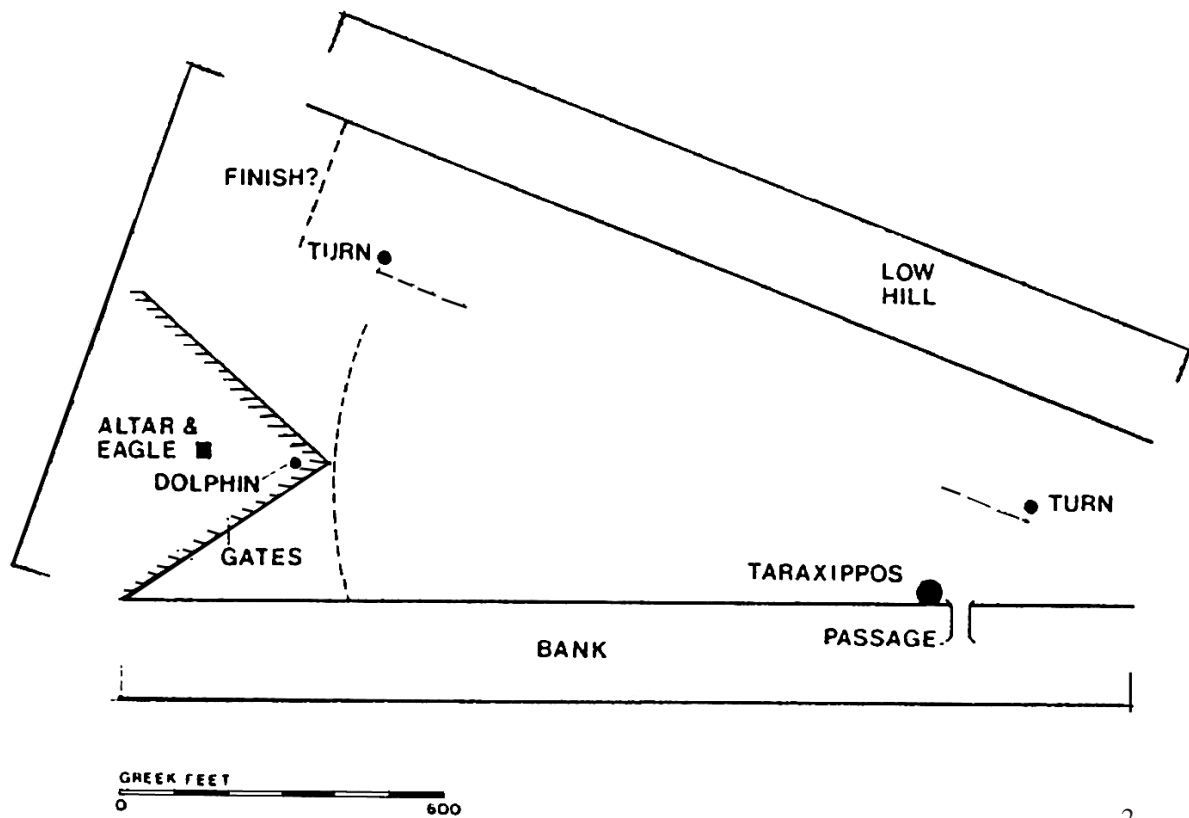
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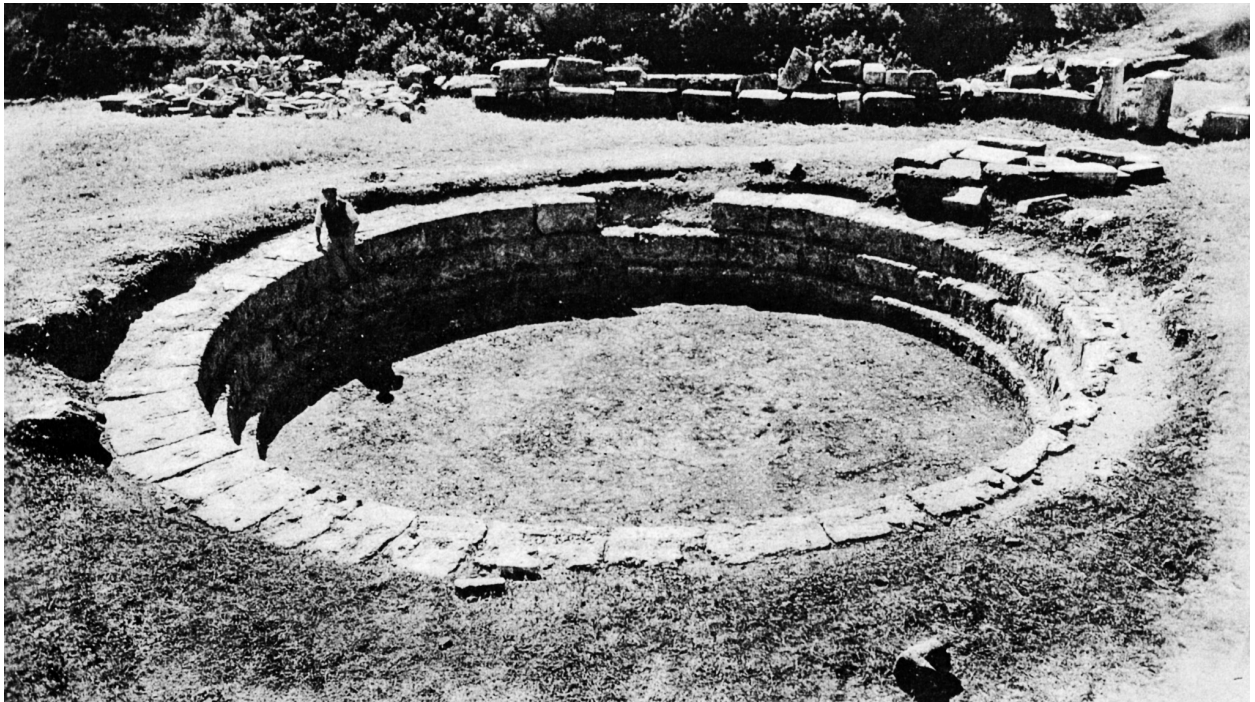
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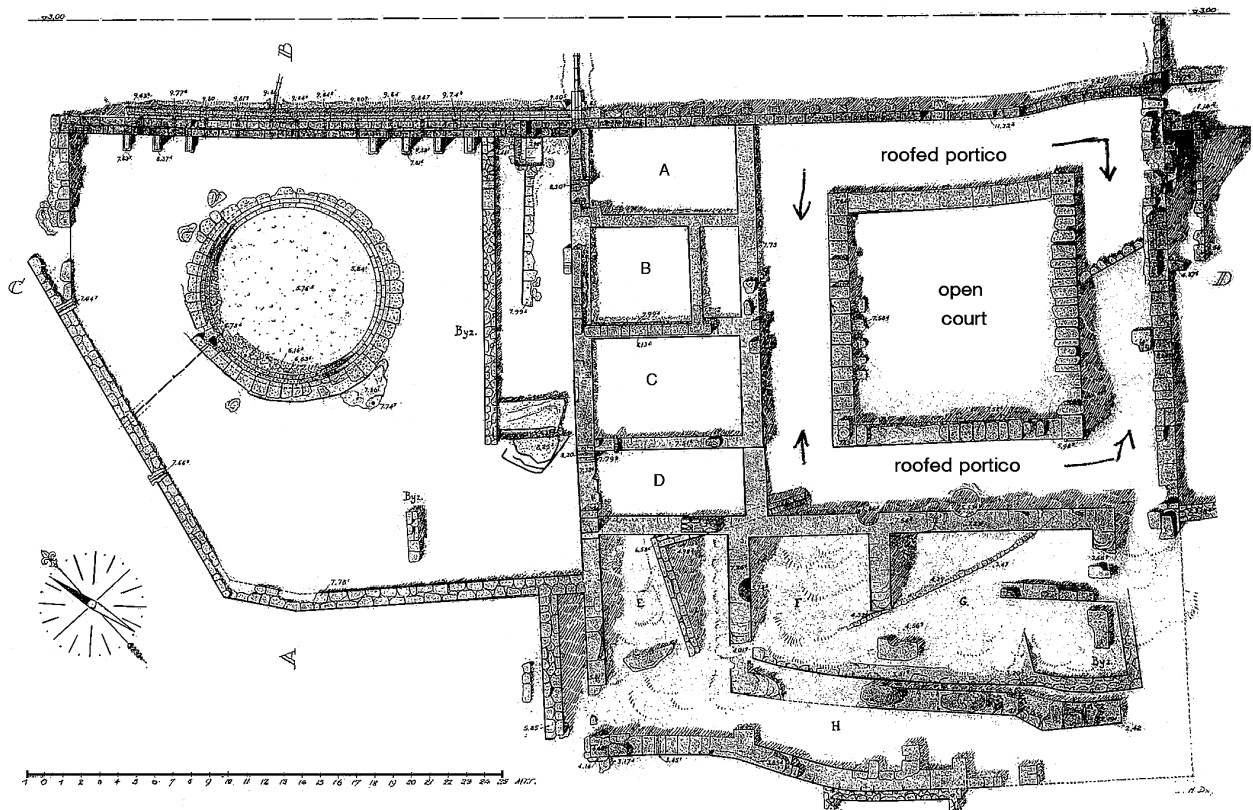
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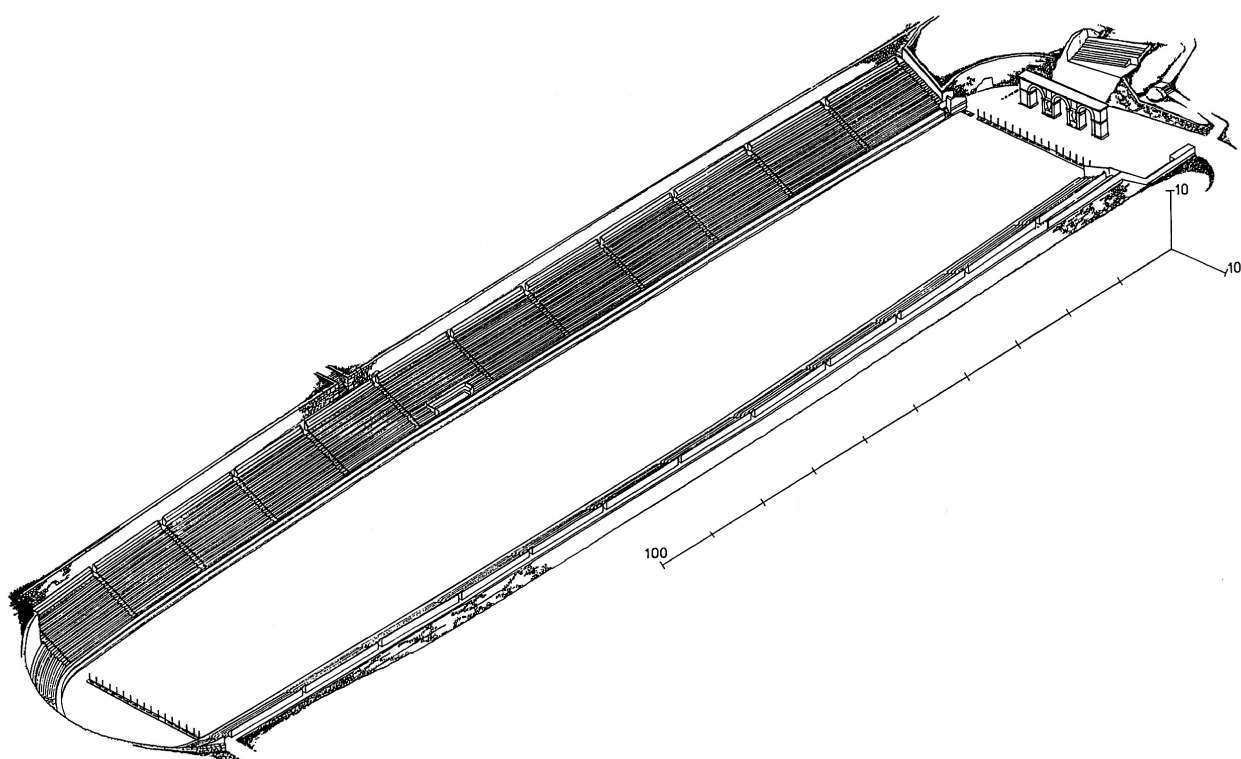
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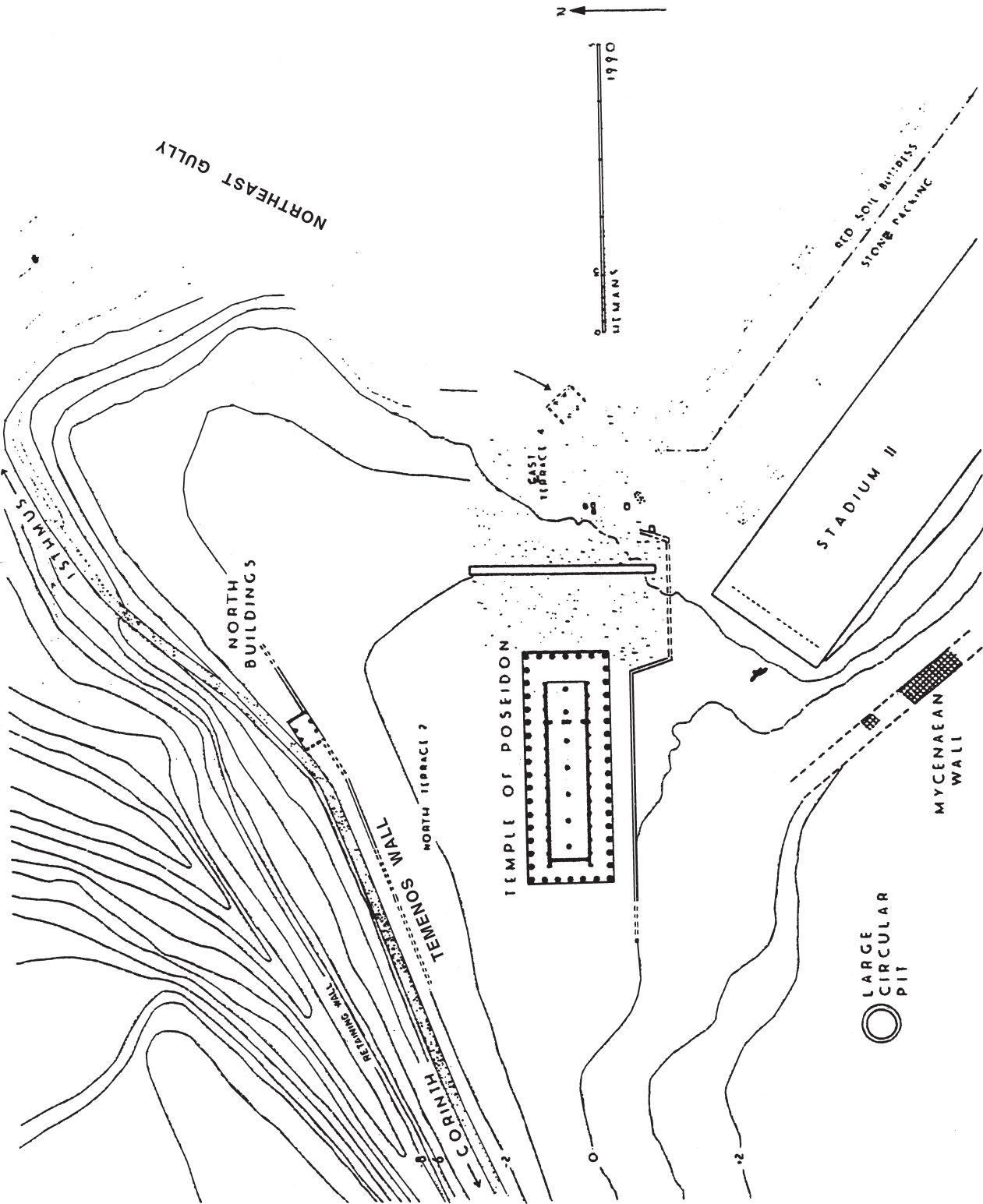


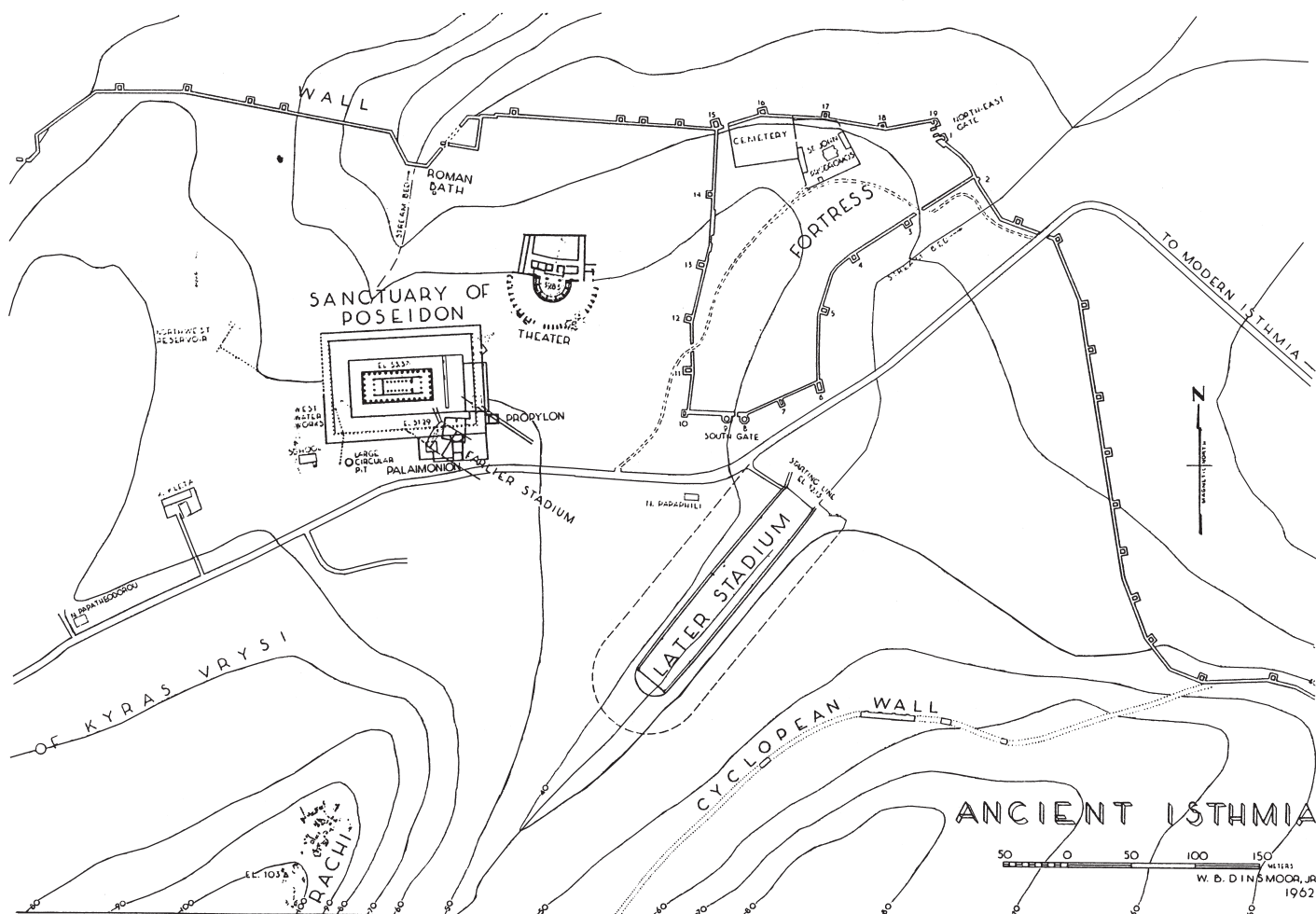
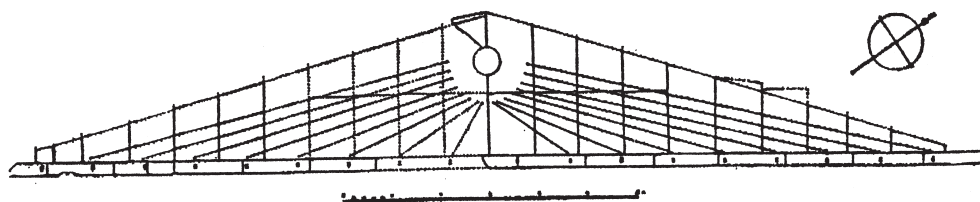
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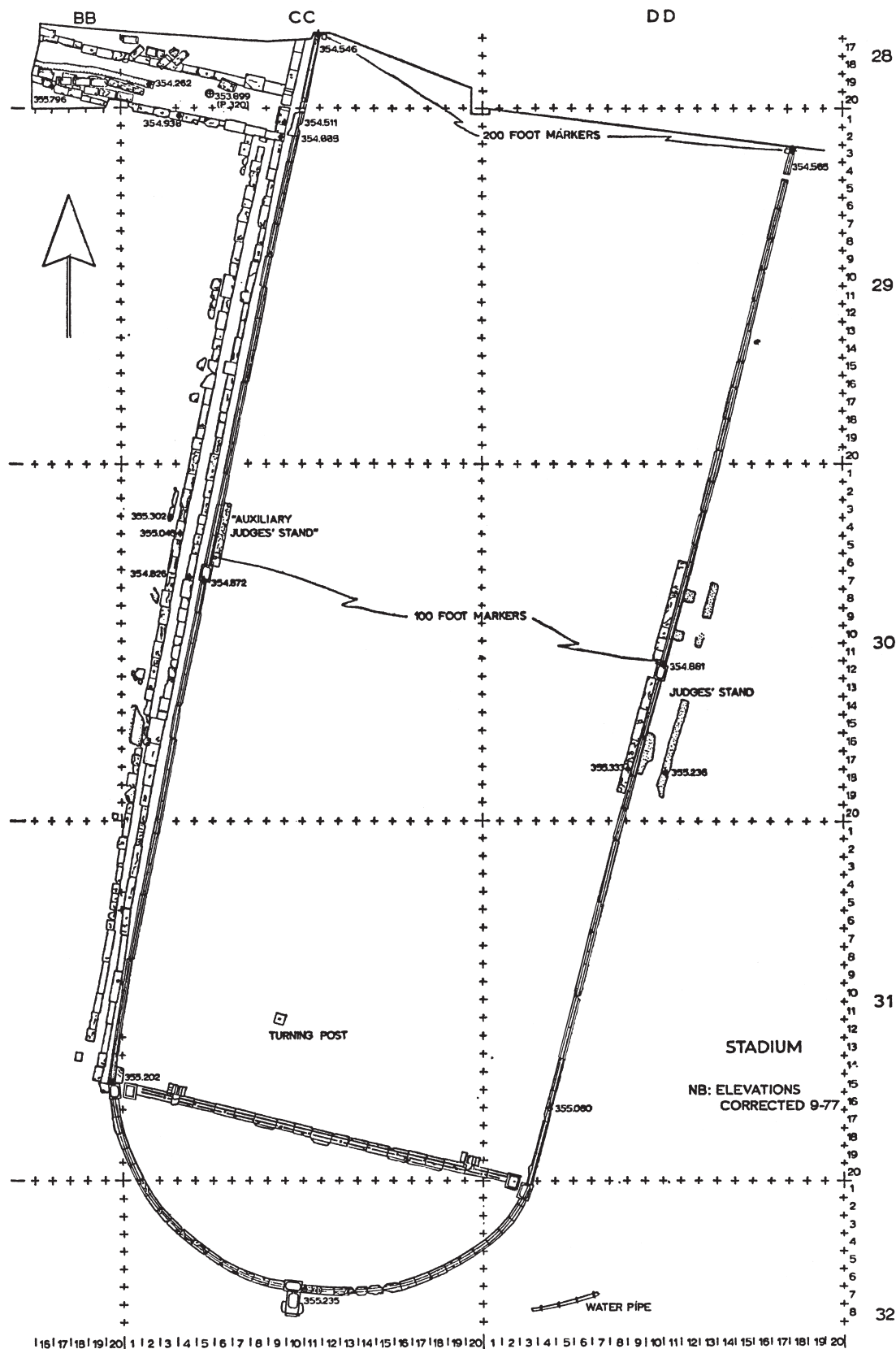


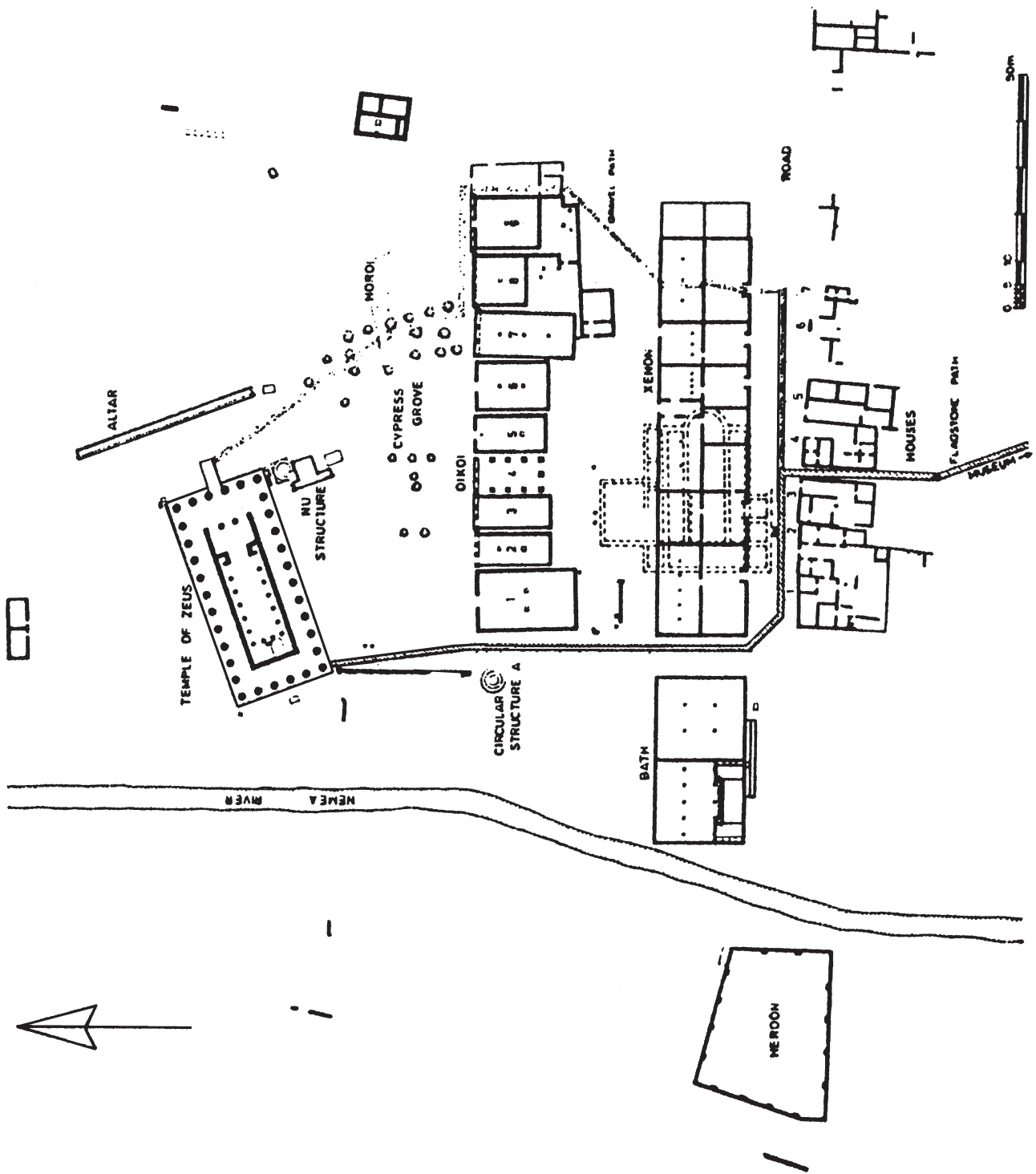
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