

The Athletics of the Ancient Olympics:  
A Summary and Research Tool

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## Introduction:

The Olympic Games is a very challenging subject to study with any accuracy unless one takes time to read the literature extensively. The reason for this is that evidence on the Olympics is so scarce, difficult to interpret, and scattered throughout such a long period of time that very few accurate generalities can be made.<sup>1</sup> As a result, many books are written trying to piece together information about specific aspects of the games. The purpose of this paper is to give the reader a basic outline of the athletics of the Olympic festival (of which the main occasion was religious<sup>2</sup>) – a skeleton structure so to speak – and, after having provided it, to suggest to the reader further lines of inquiry in both the primary and secondary sources. The primary sources are only those which either the author uses extensively or which he found hard to locate (and wished to make the job easier for others). Hopefully this can serve as a resource for more in-depth research.

### 1. History of the Olympic Games:

There were four sets of athletic games held in Greece that were Pan-Hellenic, that is, contestants from all of Greece could participate. These were: the Olympic Games held in Olympia, the Pythian Games held near Delphi, the Nemean games held near Nemea, and the Isthmian Games held near Corinth (see Fig.1 below). According to Pausanias, in his Description of Greece<sup>3</sup>, the Olympic athletics were performed from time

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<sup>1</sup> As Raschke says in her Epilogue to The Archaeology of the Olympics, p.256, "Since classical archaeologists are at a greater disadvantage than many in having largely incomplete physical remains and written records at their disposal, any conclusion regarding ancient culture must be taken as a more or less provisional understanding based on the best current evidence."

<sup>2</sup> Mallwitz, in his article "Cult and Competition Locations at Olympia", does raise the question of how the games and the religious ceremonies were connected. In his words, "[t]he arrangement of the sanctuary plainly shows one peculiarity: the complete separation of the area of cult and the area of the Games (p.79)." In his conclusion, though, he suggests that the altar of Zeus was located between the games and the place of sacrifice to allow the festal participants to only have to turn around to see the games after the sacrificial ceremony (p.103). Whatever the case, it seems that the athletics originally were slowly added to the more important sacrificial nature of the Olympic festival.

<sup>3</sup> This is what Pausanias says in his Description of Greece Book 5, Chapter 8. Pausanias is not the first source for the chronology of the Olympics. For a good list of the main literary sources see Hansen's Phlegon of Tralles' Book of Marvels (pp.190-198) as well as Robinson's Sources for the History of Greek Athletics in English Translation. [Phlegon of Tralles, one of the sources Pausanias seems to have used, can be found in translation in Hansen's book above and can be found in the Greek in Jacoby's Die Fragmente der Griechischen Historiker Part 2, volume B (§ 257, F 1 and 12, pp. 1159-1164) and his

unknown. However, until they first started reckoning Olympiads, the games were not held on a regular basis. Pausanias states that **Iphitos** renewed the Olympics as a regular festival; however Lysias<sup>4</sup> asserts that it was **Herakles** who instituted the Olympic Games to bring peace among the Greeks. Originally the Olympic Games were eclipsed by those at Delphi (the Pythian Games), but by the 7th Century they had become the most prominent athletic competitions in Greece.<sup>5</sup> Since they were held every four years, we can date the first Olympics by counting backwards from an Olympic year contemporary to an event with a known date. For instance, Diodorus states that there was a solar eclipse in the third year of the 117th Olympiad, which must be the eclipse of 310 BC.<sup>6</sup> This gives us a date of (mid-summer<sup>7</sup>) 776 for the first year of the first Olympiad.<sup>8</sup> The Olympics continued through the Roman times until either AD 394 during the reign of emperor Theodosius I or AD 435 in the reign of his grandson Theodosius II.<sup>9</sup>

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commentary can be found in a separate volume of the same name. A good library will be very clear as to which volumes are which. If the reader is searching online and can't tell what volumes are at one library, look elsewhere, since there are so many volumes in Jacoby's historical work and if you are not certain you may receive the commentary to a certain text rather than the text itself. Each author listed by Jacoby has a number and so Phlegon is listed by the number 257. Ancient historical information about the author appears under the heading T, while the fragments of his writings are listed under F, the 1st and 12th dealing with the Olympics.]

<sup>4</sup> Lysias, 33.1 (Olympic Oration, pp.684-689)

<sup>5</sup> Hyde's Olympic Victor Monuments and Greek Athletic Art, pp. 14-15.

<sup>6</sup> The Math is as follows: to get back to the first Olympiad, one must count back not 117 Olympiads (which would get us to the zeroeth Olympiad) but 116. Multiply 116 by 4 (since each Olympiad was four years long). Thus we get the number 464. Add this to 310 and we get 774. Yet this is the third year of the first Olympiad. Thus we must go back two years (add 2) to get to the first year. From this we get the date 776. For more coinciding dates see Samuel's Greek and Roman Chronology, p.190.

<sup>7</sup> Although Samuel, in his Greek and Roman Chronology, says that the date cannot be fixed (pp.191-194), Miller argues convincingly in his "The Date of the Olympic Festivals" that the festival was centered at the time of the second full moon after the summer solstice (pp. 220-221).

<sup>8</sup> The first year of each Olympiad (or four year period) was the year in which the Olympic Games were held. Each Olympiad was numbered according to which set of games had begun it.

<sup>9</sup> Most books about the Olympics will mention the former date, AD 394, which is found in the Compendium Historiarum of Cedrenus Georgius, an 11<sup>th</sup> century monk (Vol. I, p.573). However two scholiasts on Lucian (in Rabe's book, Scholia in Lucianum, pp.175-76, 78), one from the 11<sup>th</sup> century and the other from the 14<sup>th</sup>, attribute the abolishment of the games to the reign of Theodosius II (mentioned by Drees in his Olympia: Gods, Artists, and Athletes p.159). The scholiasts say that this was at the same time that all the temples were abolished. According to Pharr's translation of the Theodosian Code, the date of Theodosius II's edict was November 14, 435. The Theodosian Code, a collection of laws issued from 313 until 438 and compiled by Theodosius II, gives some background legal information

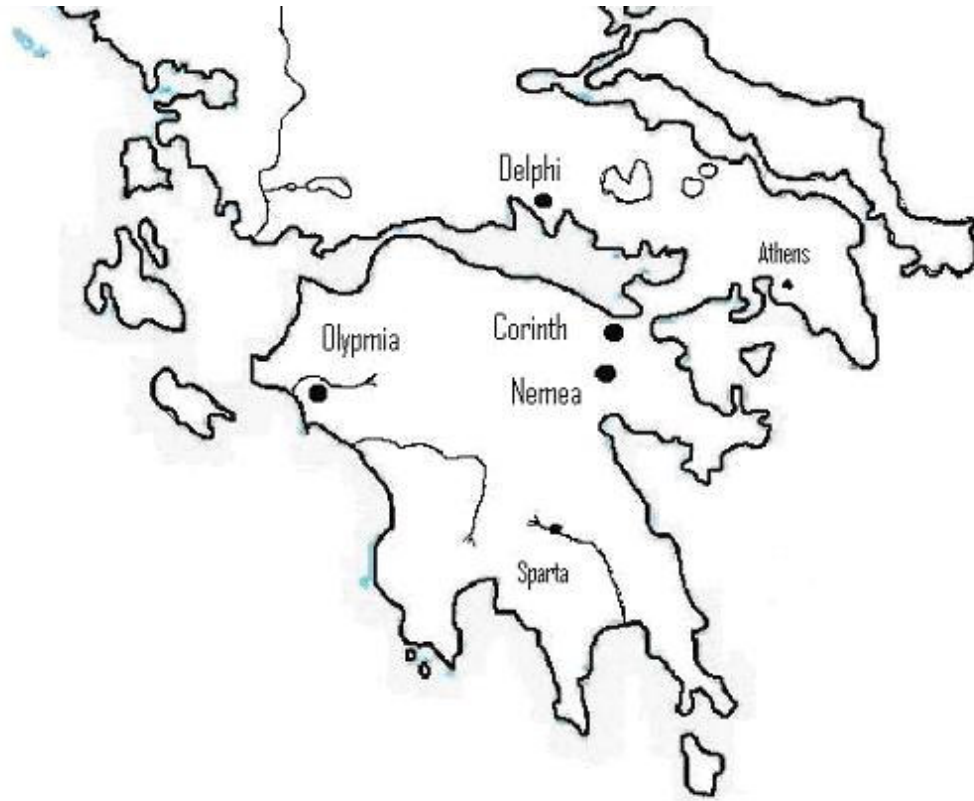


Figure 1

The following is a listing of the order in which the Olympic events were added to the games according to Pausanias:<sup>10</sup>

776 BC - First Olympiad: the **foot-race** (δρόμος)

724 BC - Fourteenth Olympiad: the **double foot-race** (δίαισλος)

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for the time when the Olympics were officially discontinued. (For background information see the following: 2.8.20 [April 17, 392] - where all games are prohibited on Sunday for religious purposes; 15.4.1 [May 5, 425] - where it clearly states that some games, if not the Olympics, were still being played c.30 years after the first date given for the banning of the Olympic games; and 16.10.25 [Nov. 14, 435] - where Theodosius II gives a decree that all pagan temples and shrines are to be destroyed. All the sections in 16.10 deal with pagan practices. If the first date for the abolishment of the Olympics is correct, 16.10.7 [381] and 16.10.12 are two important decrees by Theodosius I that can give us background.

<sup>10</sup> Pausanias in his *Description of Greece*, Book 5, Chapter 8-9. Although Pausanias states that the Olympics began this way, there is some scholarly debate on the issue. Hugh M. Lee in his essay "The 'First' Olympic Games of 776" gives an excellent summary of the positions adopted by modern scholars. An important factor in understanding the "founding" of the Olympic games is that writing had just been introduced to Greece in the 9th or 8th century. It would be impossible for records of Olympic victors to exist before writing was introduced even if they were practiced.

- 720 BC - Fifteenth Olympiad: the **long race** (δόλιχος)
- 708 BC - Eighteenth Olympiad: the **pentathlon** (πένταθλος)  
and **wrestling** (πάλη)
- 688 BC - Twenty-third Olympiad: **boxing** (πυγμαή)
- 680 BC - Twenty-fifth Olympiad: the [four horse] **chariot races**  
(δρόμος ἵππων)
- 648 BC - Thirty-third Olympiad: the **pankration** (παγκράτιον) and the **horse-race** (κέλης)
- 632 BC - Thirty-seventh Olympiad: boys' running and wrestling
- 628 BC - Thirty-eighth Olympiad: boys' pentathlon [never done again]
- 616 BC - Forty-first Olympiad: boys' boxing
- 520 BC - Sixty-fifth Olympiad: the **race of men in armor**  
(δρόμος τῶν ὀπλίτων)
- 444 BC - Eighty-fourth Olympiad: **trotting race** (κάλπη) for mares  
(θήλεια ἵππος) [later taken out of the games]
- 408 BC - Ninety-third Olympiad: **two-horse chariot race** (συνωρίς)
- 384 BC - Ninety-ninth Olympiad: [Four horse] **chariot races drawn by foals**  
(πῶλος)
- 256 BC - One hundred thirty-first Olympiad: **two-horse chariot race with foals**  
and the **horse-race on a foal**
- 200 BC - One hundred and forty-fifth Olympiad: **boys' pankration**

## 2. Qualifications:

There were several requirements for participating in the ancient Olympic Games. One had to be a male Greek freeman of over eighteen years of age. The male in question would have to swear that he had been training<sup>11</sup> for the games for a period of ten months prior to the games in question. Apparently those who were competing in the Olympic

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<sup>11</sup> Training, medicine and specific rituals involved in Athletics are not within the scope of this study. However, here are a few suggestions for further reading: Renfrew's "Food for Athletes and Gods: A Classical Diet", Swaddling's *The Ancient Olympic Games* (pp.44-52) as well as the books she recommends in her bibliography (also in my section entitled: Recommended Reading).

Games had to send notice that they would be arriving and could be fined if they arrived at the games late. In Roman times the excuses for being late were shipwreck, pirates, or sickness, which may also have been the excuses in early antiquity.<sup>12</sup> Once boys' events were introduced, only boys under eighteen could enter those events. Judgment of their age was made based upon looks, since there was no way to prove exactly when one's date of birth was. There were no divisions in ancient sport between professionals and amateurs. Many athletes while not professionals nevertheless competed along side them. However, because training generally produces a better athlete, professional athletes began to dominate the games.<sup>13</sup>

### 3. Spectators

Although the Olympic festival was religious in nature, not everyone could watch the athletics - for the participants competed naked. Married women and slaves were forbidden from watching as the Olympic Games took place. The penalty for married women who were caught watching the games was death.<sup>14</sup>

### 4. Description of each event<sup>15</sup>

Here we must give a brief definition of the events that might prove unfamiliar to the modern reader.

δρόμος - the foot-race was the length of one stade or 200 strides (these measurements were a little shorter than a meter, and were the units by which the temple of Zeus was measured.)

δίαιλος - the "double-pipe" was two stades in length or 400 strides

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<sup>12</sup> Inscription #56 from Dittenberger's book Die Inschriften von Olympia.

<sup>13</sup> The information from this paragraph was taken largely from The Ancient Olympics: Athletes, Games, & Heroes. Original sources regarding Amateurism and Professionalism can be found in Miller's book Arete: Greek Sports from Ancient Sources (pp.146-163) as well as Gardiner's book Athletics of the Ancient World (pp.99-116).

<sup>14</sup> See Miller's Arete (pp.17-20, 99-100) for translations of original sources.

<sup>15</sup> Gardiner, in his Athletics of the Ancient World, gives a good overview and citation of all the sports that involve the human body. He does not however include the horse and chariot races.

δόλιχος - the long race was either 20 or 24 stades

πένταθλος - the pentathlon consisted of five events: the discus, jumping, the javelin, running (the distance of which we do not know) and wrestling.<sup>16</sup>

πάλη - the only wrestling allowed in the Olympics was upright wrestling, where the athletes tried to throw each other down onto the ground. This resembles modern Greco-Roman wrestling. For this, the athletes needed a strong upper body.

παγκράτιον - the pankration was a combination of boxing and the kind of wrestling that was not allowed in wrestling competitions. There were two prohibitions in the rules that we know of – no gouging and no biting.<sup>17</sup> Other than that, an athlete won when his opponent admitted defeat.

A final note should be made, too, that all the horse events were done at the *hippodrome*, while all the other events commenced at the *stadion*.<sup>18</sup>

## 5. Layout of Olympia

The layout of Olympia, like the reconstruction of many other parts of the Olympic games, is very complicated. Archaeologists have found many structures, buildings, and statues – yet many of these come from different strata and cannot all be thought of as belonging together as though they were used in every century that the games were performed. What is evident though is that the facilities at Olympia grew along with both the popularity of the festival and the number of events that took place at the games. One example of this is the apparent increase in wells in Olympia as the festival became more popular.<sup>19</sup>

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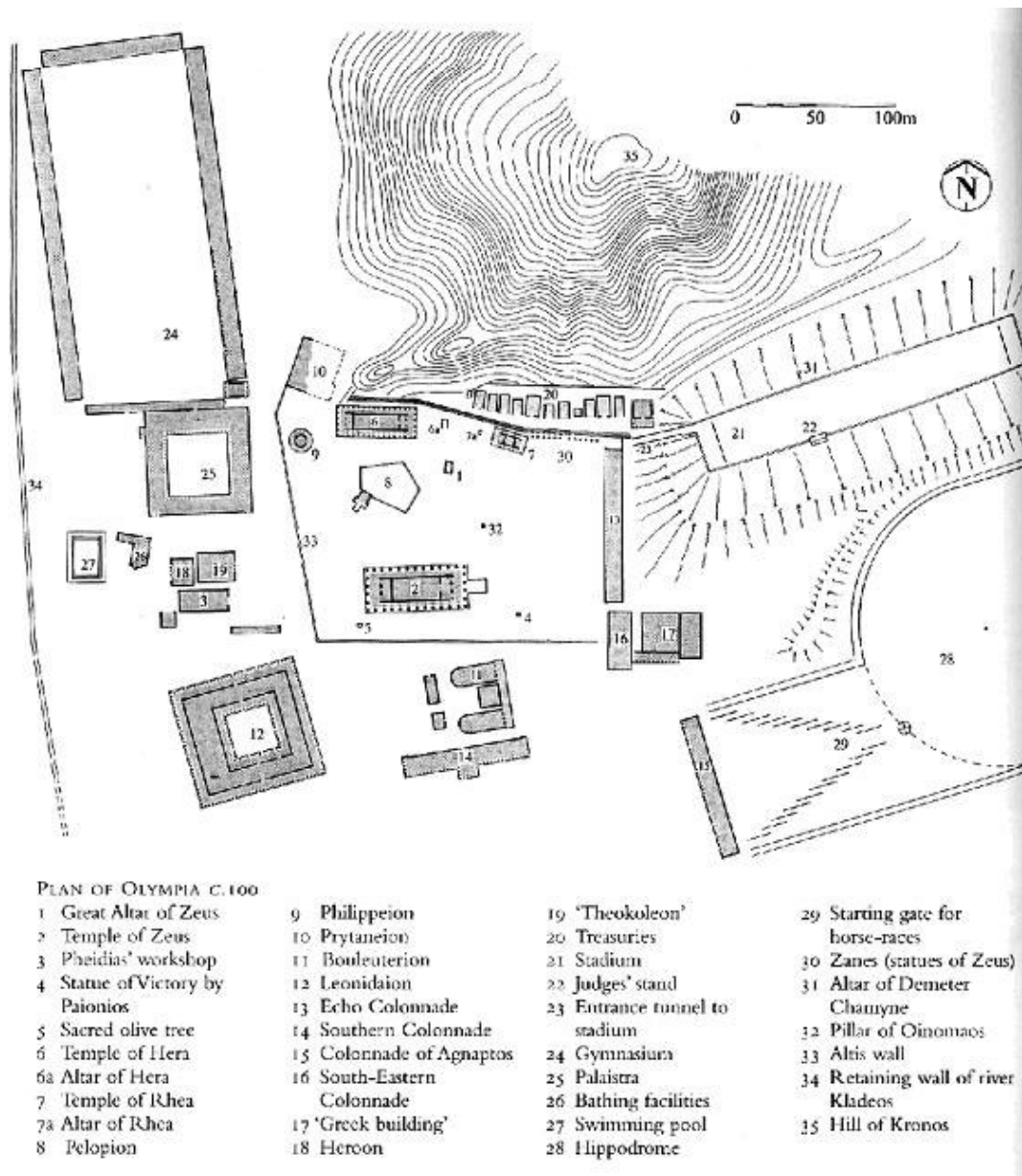
<sup>16</sup> For more information on the terminology of wrestling, boxing and pankration see Poliakov's [Studies in the Terminology of Greek Combat Sports](#).

<sup>17</sup> Gardiner, in his [Athletics of the Ancient World](#) (p. 212), shows that Aristophanes mentions this rule twice (in the *Birds* line 442 and in the *Peace* line 899).

<sup>18</sup> Romano's [Athletics and Mathematics in Archaic Corinth: The Origins of the Greek Stadion](#), pp.1-2.

<sup>19</sup> Lee's "The 'First' Olympic Games of 776 B.C.", p.114.





**Figure 2** Layout of Olympia (Swaddling, Judith. *The Ancient Olympic Games*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1999. p.14)

Because of the existence of multiple strata, no one complete representation can be given of the layout of Olympia that covers every time period.<sup>20</sup> However, **Figure 2** should give one a basic idea of the setup of Olympia in second century B.C. Notice

<sup>20</sup> For reconstructions of the times in which different buildings appeared, see Drees' *Olympia* p.6 and Finley's *Olympic Games* p.48-49 as well as an aerial photograph of the excavation of Olympia on plates 4-5. See also Mallwitz's *Olympia und seine Bauten*, p.118-119 for a good photograph.

especially how the *stadium* (21) and the *hippodrome* (28) were located in a separate part of Olympia, off to the right.

#### 6. Order of Events (including religious ceremonies)

The order of events and even the days on which events occurred is much debated in modern scholarship, though one can find reconstructions of the Olympic program in almost any book discussing the Olympics. The reasons for this are, first, that there is no complete schedule listed in the literature and, secondly, that the program changed from time to time throughout its thousand year history. For a good overview of the Olympic program and a treatment of both sources and modern scholarship, see Lee's The Program and Schedule of the Ancient Olympic Games.

What we do know is that at a certain point in the fifth century, the Olympic festival may have consisted of five days of religious and athletic activity.<sup>21</sup> The following is a brief representation of the reconstruction by Lee:<sup>22</sup>

##### Day 1:

- ~The Oaths
- ~ *Dokimasia* (the judgment between men and boys and foals and horses)
- ~ Non-Athletic contests (of Heralds and Trumpeters)

##### Day 2:

- ~ Equestrian Events
- ~ Pentathlon

##### Day 3:

- ~ Sacrifices to Pelops (The great Greek Hero)
- ~ The Great Sacrifice to Zeus (The greatest of Greek gods)
- ~ Boys' contests

##### Day 4:

- ~ Running events
- ~ Heavy Events (boxing, wrestling, pankration)
- ~ Hoplite race

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<sup>21</sup> Lee's The Program and Schedule of the Ancient Olympic Games, p.9.

<sup>22</sup> Following Lee's The Program and Schedule in his table of contents.

Day 5: (?)

~ Awards Ceremony (?)

~ Banquet (?)

This "reconstruction", especially when understood in light of the evidence from Lee's book, shows that there is far less certainty in reproductions of the Olympic program than many would like to believe.

## 7. Penalties and Prizes

Any athlete found to be cheating had to pay fines. These fines paid for bronze statues that were set up all along the road on which athletes had to travel to get down to the fields for competition in order to discourage them from cheating. These statues had inscriptions below them stating who paid the fine for the building of the statue, and what they did wrong.<sup>23</sup> Interestingly, the cheaters could keep their victories for that set of games!<sup>24</sup>

Originally the prizes given for the winners of the athletic contests were very substantive, but eventually (and it is not clear when) only a crown of olive leaves was given to the victor.<sup>25</sup> Although the official prize for victory in historic times was only a wreath, the cities to which the victors belonged gained great prestige from their winning and so would give great financial rewards to them. Often good athletes would hire themselves out to the highest bidder and so would come from "different" cities during different Olympiads.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> An example of this occurs in Pausanias' Description of Greece, Book 5, Chapter 21, Paragraph 5. For more examples see Hyde pp.33-34.

<sup>24</sup> The Ancient Olympics, Athletes, Games and Heroes.

<sup>25</sup> See Hyde's examples from Homer, Hesiod, Pindar and others in his Olympic Victor Monuments and Greek Athletic Art (pp.18-21).

<sup>26</sup> See The Ancient Olympics, Athletes, Games and Heroes. See also Miller's Arete (pp.73-76, 81-83), for original sources regarding penalties and prizes.

Conclusion: *Discovering the Ancient Olympics*

Since the Olympics is such a complicated subject, I have given the following list of sources that can help the beginner get started: The Ancient Olympics: Athletes, Games, & Heroes (a video), Woff's The Ancient Greek Olympics, and Swaddling's The Ancient Olympic Games. Selected references in the *Works Cited* and *Recommended Reading* sections are followed by bracketed annotations. Finally, texts and translation of primary sources for which there are no other existing English translations are found in the *Appendix*. Enjoy discovering the Ancient Olympics!

## Works Cited:

- The Ancient Olympics: Athletes, Games, & Heroes. Video Lecture Series Volume II. Videocassette. Institute for Mediterranean Studies, 1996. [Excellent audio-visual source about athletics in the ancient world.]
- Drees, Ludwig. Olympia: Gods, Artists, and Athletes. New York: Frederick A. Praeger, Publishers, 1968.
- Dittenberger, W. and Purgold, K. Die Inschriften von Olympia. Amsterdam: Verlag Adolf M. Hakkert, 1896. [This is a useful source to anyone who has access to it. In English the title means: The Inscriptions of Olympia.]
- Finlay, George. Greece under the Romans. London: J.M. Dent & Sons LTD., 1927. [Good resource with references to obscure original sources.]
- Gardiner, E. Norman. Athletics of the Ancient World. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1930. [Contains a good and detailed description of the Olympic events.]
- Hansen, William. Phlegon of Tralles' Book of Marvels. Exeter, Devon, UK: Exeter University Press, 1996. [A translation of Phlegon of Tralles' extant works including the Book of Marvels. His is the only English translation I know of (pp.58-62) and in his commentary (pp.190-198) he provides an excellent list of main literary sources for determining the chronology of the Olympics<sup>1</sup> (p.190).]
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- Lysias. Lysias. Trans. W.R.M. Lamb. Ed. Jeffrey Henderson. Loeb Classical Library Volume 244. London: Harvard University Press, 1930.
- Mallowitz, Alfred. "Cult and Competition Locations at Olympia". Raschke 79-109.
- Miller, Stephen Arete: Greek Sports from Ancient Sources. Berkeley and Los Angeles, California: University of California Press, 1991. [This source is great because it both categorizes the original sources of Greek athletics and puts them into translation.]

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<sup>i</sup> As Hansen lists them: "The principal accounts are Pindar *Ol.* 10, Strabo 8.3.30 and 33, Pausanias 5 *passim*, Eusebios *Chron.* 1.190-94; translations are conveniently assembled in Robinson 32-55. See in general Christoph Ulf and Ingomar Weiler, 'Der Ursprung der antiken Olympischen Spiele in der Forschung: Versuch eines kritischen Kommentars', *Stadion* 6 (1980) 1-38, and on the present fragment Jacoby's commentary (FGH 257 F 1)." (p.190) For fragment 12 "see Jacoby's commentary (FGH 257 F 12)" (p.195)

- . "The Date of Olympic Festivals". Mitteilungen: Des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts, Athenische Abteilung. Vol. 90 (1975): 215-237.
- Cedrenus, Georgius. Compendium Historiarum Tomus Prior. Trans. Immanuele Bekker. Ed. B.G. Niebuhr. Corpus Scriptorum Historiae Byzantinae Volume 34. Bonn: Impensis Ed. Weberi, 1838. [The Greek title is: Σύνοψις ἱστοριῶν]
- Pausanias. Pausanias II: Description of Greece Books III-V. Trans. W.H.S. Jones and H.A. Ormerod. Ed. Jeffrey Henderson. Loeb Classical Library Volume 188. London: Harvard University Press, 1930.
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- Rabe, Hugo. Scholias in Lucianum. Lipsiae: Typis B.G. Teubneri, 1906. [Has quite a few references to the Olympics by scholiasts on Lucian.]
- Raschke, Wendy J., ed. The Archaeology of the Olympics: the Olympics and Other Festivals in Antiquity. Madison, Wisconsin: Wisconsin University Press, 1987. [This book of essays is an excellent collection, which I recommend for those who are studying the Olympics.]
- . "Epilogue". Raschke 256-264.
- Robinson, Rachel S. Sources for the History of Greek Athletics in English Translation. Cincinnati: (published by the Author), 1955. [Excellent compilation of all the major sources for Greek Athletics in translation by category. Includes notes, an index and a bibliography.]
- Romano, David Gilman. Athletics and Mathematics in Archaic Corinth: The Origins of the Greek Stadion. Memoirs Volume 206. American Philosophical Society, 1993.
- Samuel, Alan Eduard, Greek and Roman Chronology: Calendars and Years in Classical Antiquity. Handbuch der Altertumswissenschaft Abt. I T.7. München: Beck, 1972. [Great source for understanding the complexities and intricacies of the calendar system in the ancient world.]
- Swaddling, Judith. The Ancient Olympic Games. Austin, Texas: University of Texas Press, 1999. [Very good overview of the Olympics, from how they started to how they were run to their eventual demise. However does not cite all the original sources.]

### **Recommended Reading:**

- Glass, Stephen. "The Greek Gymnasium: Some Problems." Raschke 155-173. [Excellent introduction to the problems of understanding Greek Athletic terminology. Also gives some great sources.]
- Jackson, R. Doctors and Diseases in the Roman Empire. London: British Museum Press, 1991.
- Mallwitz, Alfred. Olympia und seine Bauten. München, Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft Darmstadt, 1972. [A thorough look at the structures, statues, coins, and artifacts at Olympia. An archaeological view of Olympia.]
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- Woff, Richard. The Ancient Greek Olympics. London, British Museum Press, 1999. [Excellent overview of the Olympics, Greek Athletics, the role of women, and other issues. Written for children. Sources not cited.]

## Appendix: Primary Sources<sup>ii</sup>

Cedrenus, Georgius. Compendium Historiarum. Volume 1. *Corpus Scriptorum Historiarum Byzantinae*. 1838. (11<sup>th</sup> Century)

p.550, line 12

Γρατιανὸς ὁ υἱὸς Οὐαλεντινιανοῦ, αἰρετικός, ἐβασίλευσε μόνος ἔτη γ' καὶ μετὰ Θεοδοσίου ἕτερα γ'. ἀπὸ γὰρ τοῦ Βυζαντίου ἐπέμφθησαν πρέσβεις πρὸς Γρατιανὸν ἐν Πανονία κατερχόμενον, δοθῆναι αὐτοῖς βασιλέα, καὶ ἐδόθη αὐτοῖς ὁ μέγας Θεοδόσιος ἀναγορευθεὶς βασιλεύς, καὶ ἐκράτησεν ἔτη ιζ' μῆνας ε' ἡμέρας δ'.

“Gratian son of Valentinian, the heretic, ruled by himself for three years and with Theodosius another three years: For ambassadors were sent from Byzantium to Gratian so that he would return to Panonia to be made their king, and Theodosius the Great was publicly proclaimed and made king, and ruled for seventeen years, five months, and four days.”

**αἰρετικός** - able to choose, heretic || **γ'** = τρεῖς || **πρέσβυς, εως, ὁ** - ambassador || **κατέρχομαι** - to return, come back || **ἐν** - into || **ἀναγορεύω** - (pass) to be proclaimed publicly || **κρατέω** - to rule || **ιζ'** = ἑπτακαίδεκα - seventeen || **ε'** = πέντε || **δ'** = τέτταρες

p.573, line 1

Ἐν τούτοις ἢ τε τῶν Ὀλυμπιάδων ἀπέσβη πανήγυρις, ἣτις κατὰ τετραετῆ χρόνον ἐπετελεῖτο. ἤρξατο δὲ ἢ τοιαύτη πανήγυρις ὅτε Μανασσῆς τῶν Ἰουδαίων βασίλευσε, καὶ φυλάττετο ἕως τῆς ἀρχῆς αὐτοῦ τοῦ μεγάλου Θεοδοσίου. καὶ ἤρξαντο ἀριθμεῖσθαι αἱ ἰνδικτοὶ, ἀρξάμεναι ἀπὸ Αὐγούστου Καίσαρος ἐν ἔτει ιε' τῆς ἀρχῆς αὐτοῦ.

“Among these things even the festival of the Olympic games, which was held every four-year period, was abolished. This festival began when Manasseh ruled over Judah, and was kept until the rule of Theodosius the Great himself. And the fifteen-year cycles began to be counted, having begun by Augustus Caesar in the fifteenth year of his reign.”

**Ἐν τούτοις** - among these things || **Ὀλυμπιάς, ἄδος, ἢ** - the Olympic games || **ἀποσβέννυμι** - (2<sup>nd</sup> Aor. Act. Ind. ἀπέσβη) (2<sup>nd</sup> Aor.) to be abolished || **πανήγυρις, εως, ἢ** - festival || **κατὰ** - (acc) every || **τετραετής, ἔς** - of four years || **ἐπιτελέω** - to carry out || **τοιοῦτος** = οὗτος - this || **ἀρχή** - rule || **Μανασσῆς** - Manasseh, the king of Israel (?) || **ἰνδικτος** - fifteen-year cycle (cf. *indictio*) || **ἀριθμέω** - to count, number || **ιε'** = πεντακαίδεκα

<sup>ii</sup> All translations are made by the author of this paper.



p.573, line 20

ἐν Μεδιολάνῳ δὲ ἀρρωστήσας ἐκοιμήθη ἐν κυρίῳ, ὑπάρχων ἐτῶν ξ', βασιλεύσας ἕτη ις', καταλείψας τοὺς δύο υἱοὺς αὐτοῦ . . . μετήνεγκε δὲ τὸ σῶμα αὐτοῦ ἐν Κωνσταντινουπόλει Ἀρκάδιος, θεὸς ἐν τῷ ναῷ τῶν ἁγίων ἀποστόλων. τὴν δὲ τῆς ἀρχιερωσύνης καθέδραν κατείχε Νεκτάριος, κόσμου ἕτει ,εωπη', τῆς θείας σαρκώσεως τοδ'.

“Now when he was in Mediolanos he fell asleep in the Lord, when he was sixty years old, having ruled for sixteen years, and left behind his two sons . . . now Arcadios transferred his body to Constantinople and placed it in the temple of the holy apostles. And Nektarios had the seat of the high-priesthood in the year 5888 of the world, 394 of the divine incarnation.”

ἀρρωσέω - to be || κοιμάω - to put to sleep; (pass) to fall asleep || ὑπάρχω - to be || ξ' = ἑξάκοντα - sixty || βασιλεύω - to rule || ις' = ἕκκαίδεκα - sixteen (notice the apparent discrepancy between this and the paragraph above) || καταλείπω - to leave behind || μεταφέρω - to transfer, carry over || ἐν - into || θεὸς - (notice how this action is not prior to the action of the main verb, but rather subsequent even though it is aorist) || ἀρχιερωσύνη - high-priesthood || καθέδρα - seat, *figuratively* office, position || κατέχω - to possess || ,εωπη' = πεντάκις χιλίῳ ὀκτακοσίῳ ὀγδοήκοντα ὄκτω - 5888 || θεῖος, α, ον - divine || σάρκωσις, εως, ἡ - incarnation || τῷδ' = τριακοσίῳ ἐνενηήκοντα τέσσαρσιν - 394

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Rabe, Hugo. Scholia in Lucianum. Lipsiae: B.G. Teubneri, 1906.

Scholia on Lucian's Ῥητόρων διδάσκαλος  
Parisinus Manuscript on silk (*bomb.*) (14<sup>th</sup> Century)  
pp.175-176

πόλις ἦν ἐν Ἡλίδι Ὀλυμπία καλουμένη ἱερὸν ἔχουσα ἐπιφανέστατον Ὀλυμπίου Δίος. ἐν ταύτῃ ἀγὼν ἐπετελεῖτο παγκόσμιος τὰ Ὀλύμπια κατὰ πέντε ἕτη συγκροτούμενος· διὸ καὶ πενταετηρικὸς ἑκαλεῖτο· ὃς καὶ ἀνεγράφετο τοῖς δημοσίοις ἀεὶ εἰς δῆλωσιν τῶν ἐνιαυτῶν καὶ ἦν τοῦτο ἀκριβῆς τῶν χρόνων ἐπίγνωσις· τεσσάρων γὰρ ἐτῶν μεταξὺ διαρρεόντων τῷ πέμπτῳ συνετελεῖτο. καὶ διήρκεσεν ἀρξάμενος ἀπὸ τῶν καθ' Ἑβραίους κριτῶν μέχρι τοῦ μικροῦ Θεοδοσίου· ἐμπρησθέντος γὰρ τοῦ ἐν Ὀλυμπία ναοῦ ἐξέλιπε καὶ ἡ τῶν Ἡλείων πανήγυρις.

“There is a city in Elis called Olympia which has a temple of Olympian Zeus that is most notable. In that [city] a world-renowned gathering used to take place, the Olympics, which came together every five years: therefore it was also called the ‘coming every five years’. This gathering was also always registered by public servants in order to make clear what the cycle period was and this was the precise understanding of the times: for after the passing of four years, it took place on the fifth. And having been founded at the

time of the Hebrew judges, it endured until Theodosius the Small: For after the temple in Olympia was burned down, the gathering and the festival of Elis ceased.”

**Ἡλις, ιδος, ἡ** - Elis || **ἐπιφανής, ἐς** - notable, distinguished || **ἄγών, ὠνος, ὁ** - gathering, assembly; struggle, contest || **ἐπιτελέω** - to bring to pass || **παγκόσμιος, α, ον** - common to all the world || **Ὀλύμπια, τὰ** - the Olympic games || **κατά** - (acc) every || **συγκροτέω** - to collect, gather together || **πενταετηρικός, ἡ, ὄν** - coming every fifth year || **ἀναγράφω** - to describe || **δημόσιος, ου, ὁ** - public servant || **δήλωσις, εως, ἡ** - a pointing out, showing || **ἐνιαυτός, ου, ὁ** - period of time || **ἀκριβής, ἐς** - exact, precise || **ἐπίγνωσις, εως, ἡ** - understanding || **μεταξύ** - after || **διαρρέω** - to flow, pass by || **πέμπτος, η, ον** - fifth || **συντελέω** - to bring to end || **διαρκέω** - to endure || **κατά** - (acc) concerning, in relation to || **ἐμπρήθω** - to burn || **ἐκλείπω** - to abandon || **πανήγυρις, εως, ἡ** - festival || **Ἡλείος, ου, ὁ** - citizen of Elis, Elean

Vindobonensis Manuscript on parchment (*membr.*) (11<sup>th</sup> Century)  
p.178 (brackets show where lacunae were in the text)

ἀρξάμενος δὲ ἀπὸ τῆς [ἐποχῆς] καθ’ Ἑβραίους ἐπ’ Ἰάειρον ἕνα[ ]  
διήρκεσε μέχρι τοῦ μικροῦ [Θεοδοσίου], ὃς Ἀρκαδίου υἱὸς ἦν, τῶν χρόνων. τοῦ  
δὲ] ναοῦ τοῦ Ὀλυμπίου Διὸς ἐμπρη[σθέντος ἐξ]έλιπε καὶ ἡ τῶν Ἡλείων  
πανήγυρις [καὶ ὁ ἀγὼν] ὁ Ὀλυμπικός.

“But having begun from the Hebrew historical period at the time of Ja’ir . . . they endured until the time of Theodosius the Small, who was the son of Arcadius. And when the temple of Olympian Zeus was burned down it was abandoned as well as the festival of the Eleans and the contest of Olympia.”

**ἐποχή, ἡς, ἡ** - historical epoch || **κατά** - (acc) concerning, in relation to || **Ἰάειρον** = Septuagint **Ἰαῖρ** and Hebrew **יֵאִיר** - *Ja’ir* an Israelite judge from Gilead (cf. Judges 10:5, 1 Chronicles 2:22-23) || **διαρκέω** - to endure || **ἐμπρήθω** - to burn || **ἐκλείπω** - to abandon || **Ἡλείος, ου, ὁ** - citizen of Elis, Elean || **πανήγυρις, εως, ἡ** - festival || **ἄγών, ὠνος, ὁ** - gathering, contest || **Ὀλυμπικός, ἡ, ὄν** - Olympic

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Dittenberger, W. and Purgold, K. Die Inschriften von Olympia. Amsterdam: Verlag Adolf M. Hakkert, 1896.

Inscription #56:  
(fragments a,b, and c)  
pp.117-126

εἰ[ἄλιν] δέ τις ὑστερ[ίζη] τῆς προθε[σμί]ας, ἐπα[γγελλέτω] τὴν αἰτίαν τῆς ὑστερήσεως πρὸς τοὺς ἀγωνοθέ[τας]· ἔστωσαν δ[ὲ] ἰ νόσ]ος ἢ λησ[τα]ί ἢ ναυαγία. κα[τηγορ(ε)ίτω] δὲ [ὁ βουλόμενος] . . .

“If anyone is ever late for the appointed day, let him tell the judges of the competition the reason for his shortcoming: Let [the excuses] be sickness or robbers or shipwreck. And let the one who wishes make an accusation . . .”

**εἰάν** = **ἐάν** || **ὑστερίζω** - to be late for x (gen) || **προθεσμία, ἡ** - an appointed day ||  
**ἐπαγγέλλω** - to proclaim || **αἰτία, ἡ** - reason, excuse || **ὑστέρησις, εως, ἡ** - deficiency ||  
**ἀγωνοθέτης, ου, ὁ** - judge of a contest, umpire || **ἔστωσαν** - (Pres. Imperat. 3<sup>rd</sup> Plur.  
from εἰμί) let them be || **νόσος, ου, ἡ** - sickness || **ληστής, οὔ, ὁ** - robber, thief, pirate ||  
**ναυάγιον, τό** - shipwreck