

Cultural Aspect

The cultural impact athletes have on society during their life is very strong both in the past and now. Even in today we idolize our superstars in most sports. This practice was very similar back in Ancient Greece. Winners of the games were commemorated with life-size statues and would be allowed to dine for life in their home-towns on the public's expense. Athletes were treated as Greek Gods. One champion athlete, Exainetos of Akragas in Sicily, was escorted in procession by three hundred chariots drawn by white horses.



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Olympia: The Birthplace of Sports

Study 1: Sports

George Doyle
gdoyle7@gatech.edu

Tyler Wolf
twolf6@gatech.edu

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Ολυμπία



*Study 01:
COA 3114
George Doyle
Tyler Wolf*

History and Mythology of the Games



Bronze Statue of Zeus c. 460 BC

According to myths, Zeus - the father of humanity - fought, wrestled, and defeated Kronos in a struggle for the throne of the gods.

- The demigod Herakles staged games in Olympia in honor of Zeus, dedicating the games to the Olympian gods.
- Red ribbons were tied on their heads and hands as a mark of victory. The official award ceremony took place on the last day of the Games, at the temple of Zeus.
- *Hellanodikis*: heralds announce the name of the Olympic winner, his father's name, and his homeland.
- *Kotinos*: sacred olive tree wreaths were placed on the winner's head.

Background Information of the Ancient Games and its City

- The Ancient Olympics had fewer events, and only free men who spoke Greek could compete, instead of athletes from any country.
- The games were the biggest event in the world at the time and were the scene of political rivalries between people from different parts of the Greek world.
- *Hieromenia*: safe passage of each state's athletes to Olympia.



Historical Events and People

The first ancient Olympic games can be traced back to 776 BC.

- Corœbus of Elis won the first documented victory of the Ancient Olympics and was crowned with a *kotinos* for winning the *Stade*
- 98th Olympic Games: Eupholus of Thessaly and his "Zane" statue.
- The last known victor of the ancient games was boxing champion Varasdates, an Armenian prince.

Ancient Olympic Sports and Competitions

• Running

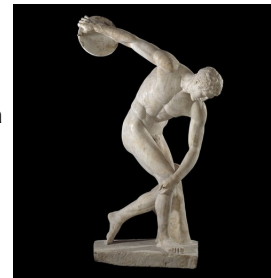
- ◇ *Stade*
- ◇ *Dioulos*
- ◇ *Dolichos*
- ◇ *Leonidas of Rhodes*
- 164 - 152 BC
- ◇ *Hoplitodromos*
- ◇ *Lampadedromia*



Circa 332-333 BC

• Pentathlon

- ◇ *Discus*
- ◇ *Jumping*
- ◇ *Javelin*
- ◇ *Running*
- ◇ *Wrestling*



Roman copy 5th Century BC Discus

• Combat

- ◇ *Wrestling*
- ◇ *Upright*
- ◇ *Ground*
- ◇ *Pankration*
- ◇ *Boxing*



Greek amphora painting, c. 500 B.C.

• Equestrian

- ◇ *Chariot Races*



Chariot Race 6th Century BC