

## Classics

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### Kyle: Sport in Homer: Contests, Prizes, and Honor

- homer's poems contain the earliest descriptions of athletic competitions in literature
- main setting for sport in epic was funeral games
- as in the contests Achilles organized for Patroklos in the 23rd book of the *Iliad*
- sport was an obvious and extended metaphor for war, they were analogous
- also describes other types of games including recreational non funeral games in Phaiakia in *Odyssey 8*
- homers audience was familiar with athletic contests as elite pastimes (from his similes and images of discus and javelin and archery)
- weaves this together with artifacts, customs, and ideas
- homer uses the medium of games to assist his characterization of heroes and his demonstration of proper age relations and social etiquette and order
- having reentered the fighting after Patroklos' death in order to kill Hector, Achilles stages funeral games, and by his actions and words in the course of the contests, he is reintegrated into society, and he completes his reconciliation with Agamemnon
  
- sport and spectacle in the Aegean Bronze Age were centered on palaces and royal contexts
- in 12th century Mycenaen society, warrior aristocrats probably displayed status through group chariot racing and social gatherings at various local centres
- early stage of early iron age (1100-900) = the dark age, evidence for greek sport is meagre
- homers testimony on athletics in general suggests not accurately remembered bronze age mycenaen reality but greek customs and developments of roughly the ninth to eighth century world
- homer and his audience were familiar with two types of games and prizes - those associated with earlier great funerals and those in religious festivals (sacrifices, footraces, lesser prizes)
- he upholds an agonistic heroic ethos, a moral order stressing honor and piety and a hierarchical social order based on elite display and non elite deference
- homer earned rewards for his art from those who could afford to hire him
- tensions and inconsistencies in the poems reflect contemporary socioeconomic changes
- homer still depicts games without the facilities, calendric coordination, crowns, or nudity of athletics in Archaic Greece, but his games reveal a period of transition and tension from aristocratic supremacy and display to the emergence of the city-state changes in the methods and participants of warfare, increased trade and commerce, marketable nonmilitary skills, moveable wealth, and meritocratic competition in athletic festivals

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- their fathers told Glaukos and Achilles 'always to be best and to be eminent beyond others' to be recognized as a good man, an agathos, a man of worth, one had to possess and demonstrate arete or special skill or excellence, most effectively in war but also in e.g. hunting and sport
- common (free) men were to be treated well provided they knew their place and showed respect
- leaders were expected to be competitive involved individuals rather than passive spectators
- many prefer a short glorious life to a long inglorious one
- heroes eager to trumpet their talents and courage especially in battle but also in situations of both direct competition and non competition in sport
- to not compete or fight or not accept an invitation to show ones excellence was unusual and possibly tantamount to renouncing ones claim to status, it demands explanation and justification
  
- the awarding and winning of prizes confirmed the status of both victor and host or games organizer
- prizes in the games for Patroklos were objects with symbolic messages, eg plundered armour of defeated for
- almost all the competitors gained materially in the games, confirming their social superiority
- homers games and prizes reveal a society rooted in aristocratic funeral games but adjusting to the emergence of non funeral, social and sacred games
- spectatorship existed on both the human and divine plane, and rivalry among the gods even led to interference
- losers feel that they cannot overcome divine influences on the outcome of events
  
- the number and value of the prizes represented for homeric athletics afforded the memory of the dead hero, they were customary but not mandatory depending on the status of the deceased and generosity of the organizer
- there are no sacred oaths, processions, or elaborate preparations of facilities
- prizes allow the peaceful redistribution of a dead mans prestige goods or the formation, renewal, or repair of social ties
- Achilles prizes make gifts as much as prizes, the games are an elaborate device whereby he can give gifts of reconciliation or recompense to the Achaean leadership from whom he had alienated himself by insulting and threatening Aamemnon for his unfair distribution of gifts and later by refusing his gifts of reconciliation
- charior race has the longest account and greatest prizes and most competitors
- emotion and etiquette make achilles a non competitor but he still demands status recognition
- with the gods playing favourites and fouling charioteers must the humans act like perfect sportsmen?
- homer reinforces the motif of tension between younger and older men in the assembly at the finish line
- also boxing, wrestling, footrace, arms, weight throw, archery, spear throw, there are prizes for second or given for pity from losing against their own control - divine interference

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- when achilles acknowledges that agamemnon is illustrious and he accepts a prize, the games, as a means of reconciliation, can and do end
- the iliad is an intense tale of rage and battle but the odyssey is an episodic romantic tale of wonders and wandering as odysseus slowly retrieves his identity and returns home
- sport in social settings involving guests, suitors or strangers but same agonistic ethic applies
- now not only for social status but also cultural disclosure and ethnic definition, also moves to the more dramatic motif of the reluctant but ultimately victorious champion
- motivation not from seeking prizes but from avenging an insult and defending his heroic greek identity
- the Phaiakians could claim excellence in sport relative to non Greeks but not relative to a Greek hero
- Odysseus is now the acknowledged champion
- iros palace beggar and stereotypical bully
- street fight between the two for food from the suitors
- climax with suitor contest for Penelope, the great wife
- put Odysseus off as a beggar and not to compete against younger men but Homer suggests that their real motive is fear of defeat

## Lecture 3

### **religion of the body the gods and greek athletics**

polytheistic anthropomorphism

humans have bodies like gods instead of vv

competition between gods is fundamentally about time, social status, respect, social value

thinking about how others think of you is a large motivation for the popularity of athletics

### **greek mythic heroes: war and greek athletics**

gods interact directly and indirectly, transition in the greek imagination, the age of heroes

our generation where the gods are almost entirely absent

think that the future is always going to get better, but for ancient greek the best time period was always in the past

after the bronze stage, living in rebuilding era after collapse

remnants of ancient civilization that they have very little memory of

nostalgia of the past and heroes of the past

ancestors of humans in the present era of the greeks

idea of devolution, gods, heroes, humans, bloodline getting thinner as they acquire less and less power from the gods themselves

### **poetic pre history of ancient athletics**

visual representations and literary representations that we reconstruct what ancient athletics were like, from fictional poetry

no actual historical blow by blow news accounts of athletic events

some of our earliest accounts of athletics

cultural logic of ancient athletics: occasion of ancient athletics, the motivations of athletes and spectators, the role of religion and the gods in athletics, the reason that athletics was so highly valued

### **homeric poetry**

long tradition of story telling

iron age

poetry itself only in the archaic age

poems eventually textualized, don't know when, homer is a persona, no knowledge of author

### **iliad synopsis**

achilles, best of the achaens (greeks) son of mortal and goddess, so half man half god

goddess forced to marry mortal, forced to give birth to someone she knows will die

patroclus achilles best friend

went to battle in trojan bar in place of achilles, killed by trojan prince

status argued

agamenon married to helen, the cause of the war

odysseus another leader of the greeks

man of many turns

after the trojan war he had 10 years to try to get home, second epic of him trying to get home

odyssey is the complications of this

nestor even stronger than the previous generation

known for knowledge and wisdom cause of his age

ajax known as second best of the achaens (achilles first),

known specifically for his strength, but purely mortal

### **story of troy**

begins towards end of trojan war

leader of greeks takes daughter of priest of apollo as war prize

apollo gets angry, cause the death of the achaens by plague

agamenon gives daughter back realizing it was bad idea, gives away the symbol of his status but he's the leader of the army so he takes the war prize of achilles

achilles angry for being deprived of his war prize, leaves the trojan war

achaens die by zeus, his own people are suffering as a function of him being disrespected by agamenon

patroclus goes to war in his place in his armour

hector kills patroclus with help of apollo

achilles angry again and rejoins war to kill hector

achilles buries his friend patroclus

here we have the funeral games for patroclus - *one of the earliest accounts for why athletics was practised*

**war**

for the sake of time, social value, respect, this same motivation happens in the iliad, is the reason for the trojan war

geras is a prize, physical marker of status, the material manifestation of the time

so when agamenon has to give back his 'war prize' he wants another prize, doesn't want to be only greek without a prize

cant be without the physical material representation of your status and respect, not enough for people just to say it

**profits of war**

profits of war are material goods but whats included? women

women are trophies

entire greek army has their marks of prize, honor, distinction

but achilles is now the only one without a prize because age took his back

**distribution of prizes**

if respect has to be represented by material goods then it becomes a limited resource

means one person has the prize another one doesn't

helens not his wife he has no reason to come

achilles has earned this prize, never mind that its a female slave, they both talk as if she's a material object

achilles prize has been taken, he leaves, causes the death of his comrade, he goes away crying, denoted as cry baby but somethings deeper in terms of his tragedy, not just disrespected, the problem of his status of a half god

**compensation for death**

look mom you're an immortal i know that zeus married you off to a mortal thats why I'm going to die

he knows hes going to die and knows that hes going to die in war or at least one of his options

knows his mothers been disrespected by zeus thinks he should have some compensation

her son would've been stronger than his father, now hes going to die

should have social status and recognition because of him going to die

everybody thinks they're going to keep living but achilles has his knowledge of his own fate and feels disrespected when he should've been ruler of the universe

so quarrel about honor in the context of war, not an actual physical battle between the two heroes

### **iliad 23**

prizes given away through these athletic contests

partly possession of host and partly of the deceased

idea of having to earn your status or power through athletic competition

fight for the body of patroclus , achilles is responsible, buries the body, ghost comes to him and achilles tries to reach out and grab the body of pastroclus, the spirit goes underground like vapour

idea that the soul is not necessarily this immortal thing, person not defined by soul but by body

celebration of the body and of life in the context of death, athletics in some sense a reaction and response to the fact of dead, one gone so everyone else exercises theirs in the memory

### **sema, mnema, present absence**

gravemakers to activate the memory of the person deceased

he wants to be buried with patroclus

interesting idea because hes saying ya hes dead, give him whats fitting, but so also when im dead you gotta make it good, also a lamentation for his own death

with the practice, as far as greek burial rights, its only a partial cremation, you burn them down to the point when only the bones are left and the bones are buried, destruction of physical body but reminder of active memory and physical part

athletics celebration of the body in honour of patroclus but achilles puts on the funeral games and takes centre stage as the person in charge of distribution and power

### **the funeral games for patroclus**

first the chariot race, prize is women faultless in her owkr and a tripod with handles

note that the war argument was over a woman and now ones a prize

next is a pregnant mare then a cauldron then gold etc etc

we do actually have some archaeological evidence

### **ability rank and expectation of result**

not just an award for first place you do for even 5th

emphasis on material representation of ones social worth

competition itself has very high stakes if were trying to establish social ranking

question of why it was that the greeks competed and was the social hierarchy actually threatened in the context of activity

in the chariot race, each rises up in response to saying ok ill compete in the chariot race

sequence of the description of the people appearing is in order of their ability

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first eumelos then diomedes and 3rd menelaus and they rise in order

also the full expectation of the outcome of the results, but they do not follow this whatsoever, major upset

### **the chariot race**

nestor to antilochus says you're slowest and work will be harder but they will not know how to plan (use deception of intelligence), basically you're not gonna win by ability so you need to cheat - how to use metis-deception, do whatever it takes to win

sometimes means plan sometimes means skill

principle of brute force versus intelligence or skill

says when you get to the turn, cut them off, you can upset the pre ranking

IMPORTANT IMAGE FOR EXAM, PORTRAYS THE FUNERAL GAME OF PATROCLUS FOR SUREZ, HAS VASE, CAULDRON,

### **anger averted fight in the stands**

fight in the crowd while the event is happening

trying to see who's in first who's in second, ajax and idomeneus

idomeneus says you might be the strongest but you're stupid, put your money where your mouth is and bet me a cauldron, degree of competition in the crowd!

betting the equivalent amount of money as is actually being given in the event, a tripod

ANOTHER GREEK VASE OF THESE FUNERAL GAMES

they want to give the position of power to agemnon but achilles takes over says if others were acting like this, you'd be angry yourself, so you better be peaceful, ironic because achilles is known for his anger, he's coming around and is sort of the sort of the show, stopping a potentially deadly conflict in the stands

### **expectation vs outcome**

eumelos crashes his chariot because the goddess athena caused him to, gods are taking part!

diomedes loses his whip and athena gives it back to him!

helping humans win omg

antilochus cuts off menelaus, not at the turn like his father, but at a narrow road he cuts him off, menelaus says im way more important what are you doing, antilochus basically threatens the life of him and his horse in the process

last place is merinos and eumelos doesn't even place because he crashed

potentially threatens the social order of the achean camp

rearrangement of abilities is rearrangement of social class

achilles solution says the best has come in last so lets give him one he deserves, second, why? because everyone knows hes the best so he cant walk away with nothing

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this recreates the problem of the iliad, what happens to the person who came in second? major quarrel  
antilochous came in 2nd and says nah ill be angry if you do this, cant take mine away, he ought to have  
prayed to the gods then he wouldn't have been last remember agem took achilles prize and now achilles  
is taking antilochous

divine involvement in the crash

### **anger averted again**

take some of your own money and give it to this guy, dont take my prize

could have whole recreation of the iliad, could leave cause more war more destruction

achilles couldve been agamen but doesnt, his gives a prize out of his own pocket

menelaus agamens brother claims the mare because antilochous cut him off, who interestingly apologizes,  
acknowledges his social status and gives him the prize 'which i won' so now hes the bigger man

### **reciprocity distorted**

so menelaus gives the prize back to antilochous

same thing ill give you the prize that i won

the three obligations of reciprocity: to give, to receive, to reciprocate

who's in possession of the gift in order to give it in the first place?

now they're competing with each other in generosity as far as who's going to get what

very telling story because it demonstrates how the levels of competition dont stop even after the race

athletics is able to over turn hierarchy and then sort of resolution to stop conflict

moral that the endings of these things are messy, continual conflict over and over again

### **wrestling match**

odysseus (metis) and ajax son of telamon (bie)

important religious concept, up to zeus to decide who wins

should be pure contact of force but odysseus uses deception to cause a blow to him, they keep going  
back and forth until achilles says stop dont wear yourselves out, just split the prizes

very contrary to the if you're not first you're last kind of thing,

extreme tragedy to this back story --war story?

### **odysseus and athena vs ajax**

this ajax is son of oilers, different one

running event

ajax slips and falls, athena tripped him

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divine intervention of athena this time in favour of odysseus

doesn't say i tripped its my own fault he says athena tripped me and thats the problem

### **second best**

dark backstory , ajax (other one) tragic event quarrel over the armour of achilles

odysseus uses deception to acquire armour of achilles and shame ajax who does eventually kill himself in funeral games story of ajax and od wrestling, achilles says you're both winners when ajax should've won

in this case, much more serious contest prize of achilles armor, ajax loses once again

athletics once again overturning expected out comes

what happens if one expects to win and loses? and when ones entire self worth is based on winning and loses?

### **agamenons victory**

given the victory in the spear throw without ever competing

had huge beef before

kind of resolve the conflict, achilles says we know you're all the best, take the cauldron ( first prize don't even throw) but lets give the spear to merinos

achilles being ironic and sarcastic of earlier complaint saying you get the best prizes and you do nothing for them

so still just gona rub it in your face that you do nothing

other interpretation is that its a reconciliation in one of the books he says hes done with all fights

beauty of literature is theres no set fixed answer, two different interpretations

### **the central question of the iliad who is best**

what happens if achilles no longer participates in the war or events?

says he wont compete in his events cause wouldn't be fair hed just win everything

who was best of "the men and their horses" so in terms of their social possessions too

idea eumelos is he best as far as horses, then ajax was best physical as long as achilles was raging

achilles best in terms of horsemanship and physical body?

ajax should win wrestling match but doenst, has to tie, never actually won first always ties, so irony

athletics itselfs overturns and disrupts social order all over the place

picture how your whole representation is on the line when you're playing a no one and you barely win anything if you do win, but if you're playing 'against only kings' different story

### **study questions**

how do the funeral games for patroclus reflect the social life of the greeks as represented in the iliad?

what do the funeral games tell us about the relationship between sport physical power religion and social status?

-phys power in some sense determined by the gods, religion always present, also social status, and sport there to determine but also disrupt social status, its a representation of anything can happen! the indeterminacy of who's going to become victorious

### **odyssey synopsis**

nostos = return home, key theme

key thing of illiad is rage

10 years after trojan war he still hasn't returned home

suitors pursuing his wife cause been forever and want his power

forced to have sex with a goddess for 7 years, and given possibility of becoming a god, never having to die

but athena intervenes and convinces zeus to have odysseus return home

wtf why he knows the goddess is better, problem is desert island?

greeks value social value and what other people think so thats a big lol

needs to return to humanity and social life

on the way he ship wrecks on island of mythical people phaeacians

doesn't make grand entrance, he slowly reveals himself and kills all penelopes suitors

athletics comes in at point 5 - ithaka

### **hospitality among the phaeacians**

odysseus has to make a decision

fame (kleos) vs homecoming (nostos) also a choice that achilles had to make

phaeacians offer lodging feasts and entertainment including athletics contest

xenia = guest host relations because zeus could be disguised as one of them

network of social cues ' you go travelling stay there then they stay with you '

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young guys are like yo you look fit lets have some comps, they have no experience with war and oleos is what you experience in war (eventually by dying) so very ironic, he has lots, he's a great warrior, they don't know how famous he is

he responds like ive been travelling for so long i dont wana compete i just want nostos

### **achilles choice**

same choice same dilema

says he cant stay ad fight beside the city of trojans but his nostos is gone but his kleos will be forever

if he returns home nostos to the land of his fathers the kleos is gone no reputation, dead in terms of his body?

immortal kleos essentially compensates for death

he ultimately chooses death at troy instead of his return

### **odysseus remains anonymous**

first turns down invite then gets mocked terribly

you're gona participate in athletics cause you have the leisure time if you're an aristocrat and its also prep for war cause you'll probe go

accusing odysseus of not being in this elite class

elitism and athletics

difference between profit and fame as capital

### **odysseus and the phaeacians**

aristocratic idea, facist, beautiful and good - kaloskagathos

outward appearance and inward appearance correspond, so you're both beautiful rich and a good person as a function of being beautiful and rich

in response to the taunting he says you're no gentleman you obviously work out a lot but you're an idiot and he's really questioning the idea, he says gods give different gifts to different people

but he throws discus anyway and obvs way better than anyone and is like yo challenge me in anything except footrace i have weak knees

this is also interesting because back in the iliad it was in the footrace that athena helped him

### **odysseus god given speed**

he gave prayer to athena for extra strength in his feet

the older you are or if from another time, you're gona be physically superior

so odysseus is superior to the current age  
old man strength  
valuing the prior time

### **odysseus bow and the final contest**

string of the bow , contest penelope puts on for who shell marriage  
she's delayed it so long  
every day shed weave it and would unweave at night but was eventually caught  
she tells odysseus disguised as a beggar her plan  
marriage rituals in form of athletic contest!!!!!!  
woman decider of outcome and also the prize whaoaa

### **pausanias/ marriage ritual and athletic contest**

marriage as a foot race  
multiple different accounts of different races for a bride as a contest  
some form of bachelorette yasss  
empowering ritual for women but at the same time they're the athletic prize

### **stringing the bow**

son also does it not to marry obvs but to get rid of the suitors  
telemachus has opportunity to surpass his father, string his bow, but odysseus tells him not to because he needs to so kind of father son tension, degeneration

### **fathers sons and physical power**

hector prays to zeus for his son Astyanax, guarder of the city  
wants his son to be strong, rule over troy, and say hes better than his father  
a paradox in terms of the notion of genealogy  
greek mindset understanding each generation getting subsequently weaker  
absolute wish is that that stops by having a son who is actually better  
ends up thrown from th walls of troy and doesn't actually make it omg

### **odysseus strings the bow**

idea of the metaphor that in that single moment he strings it like music  
ironic because its contrasted with the doom thats about to happen to the suitors  
finalyl after 20 years of travelling, heres the one sign of the favour of zeus  
zeus is finally on his side with the thunder bolt,  
athletic contest with genuinely violent end  
relationship between war and athletics key theme

### **study questions**

kleos vs nostos symbolic capital way in which achilles/od gets it all, ? not to die but gets the fame too  
-athletics contests actually creating social order, allows it to be created with the bow, one in the case of death(funeral) one in the case of marriage

### **problem of praise**

doesn't matter if you're odysseus on a dessert island having sex with goddess if no one knows  
how do you actually get recognition  
what are the modes of commemoration in early greek history  
-essentially through poetry itself, gona be epic stories told about achilles, story telling is how you acquire fame, or through material representation , statue or song

### **pindars poetry**

518-438

choral lyric poetry

epinikion in celebration of athletic victory

normally panhellenic or crown games; olympian pythian isthmian nemean

could pay pindar to write a praised poem about you , either the victor themselves or the family would

only a brief lifespan of genre, if you boast too much its gona acquire a lot of hate and jealousy

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### **contested ideologies of victory**

athletics vs war

arguing that athletics is not training for war, spartan poet

tyrataeus, anti athletic poem

saying i don't care how fast or strong you are i just care about how you fight

consequently theres this idea of the spartans actually did value athletic victories, in war they'd have different figures, the king surrounded by olympic champions,

notion of civic ideology, athlete paying pindar, you're really concerned about your own individual glory, tyrant saying thats not what matters

civic vs aristocratic ideologies

### **song vs statue**

in song case, victory singing the praises of the victorious

in state, statues of victorious athletes but doesn't even name them

'the city crowned me winning this image' - civic- just where they came from

conflict of ideas

whole point in notion of kleos is it reputation of individual or the community that the individual belongs to

## Pindar's Odes

- our main source for what we know about Pindar derives from his own poetry
- in it he often adopts a persona so what he says must be used in caution
- he came from near Thebes, in Boeotia, 40 miles north west of Athens and the birthplace of Heracles
- Thebes and Athens did not always see eye to eye during his lifetime but he still composed odes for Athenians and other poetry for Athens
- he preferred lavish hospitality especially that of Aegina, an island south of Athens and on it and still is a temple to Aphaea, an Aeginetan goddess similar to Artemis
- he composed nearly a quarter of his odes for Aeginetan victors
- he travelled to Sicily and stayed with the Hieron and composed Olympian I and Pythians I in the 470s
- he was entertained by Chromius a general in Hierons service and composed Nemean I
- he often combines himself as poet with the chorus that sang the odes on his behalf and functioned as his spokesperson playing with the roles of the chorus and himself with sometimes his own point of view uppermost as in the proud boast at the end of olympian I sometimes that of the chorus
- sometimes poet and chorus fuse together so that the viewpoint is partly that of the poet partly that of the chorus and partly an imaginary and fictitious composite one just as some of the scenarios represented in the odes are
- this is why he can readily interchange I and us and makes it difficult to attribute to Pindar with certainty what he may appear to say about himself
- the victory odes are divided into Olympians, Pythians, Nemeans, and Isthmians after the four great 'panhellenic' games that were open to all Greeks
- the olympic games were the oldest and most prestigious held in Elis in the western Peloponnese in honour of Zeus
- athletics competitions provided an additional way of honouring the god, the winner owing his victory to the help of the god and in consequence thanking the god
- the festival lasted five days and took place as nowadays every four years
- on the first day Zeus was invoked to keep the sacrificial meat fly free and on the third day a hundred oxen were sacrificed to Zeus
- in the fifth century when Pindar was writing there were three running events; the stadion (a sprint the length of the stadium), the diaks (there and back), and the dolichos (twelve laps) and boxing, wrestling, and the pancration (all power in which virtually any method of physical attack was permitted), the pentathlon (long jump, sprint, discus, javelin, and wrestling)
- most of these had separate categories for men youths and boys
- also horse and horse with chariot races held in the hippodrome
- sometimes a mule race, bred in Sicily
- the pythian games were held in honour of Apollo at Delphi, included music competitions, held every four years, the year before the Olympics

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- the Nemean games took place every two years at Nemea on the east of the Peloponnese, also in honour of Zeus
- the isthmian games always took place every two years, held in honour of the sea-god Poseidon at the Isthmus, the strip of land that then connected the Peloponnese with mainland Greece
- in his victory odes Pindar generally refers to the god presiding over the games where the victory had been gained, and sometimes the myth relates to the particular games
- in most events the athletes competed naked
- several times in his odes for victor from Aegina Pindar praises the trainer
- generally he concentrates on the implications of the victory rather than the winning itself but occasionally he provides interesting athletic details

— — — Olympian 1

## Miller: Ancient Greek Athletics p.87-95: Olympia

- the granddaddy of the games was situated on the western side of the Peloponesos, about 16km from the Ionian Sea
- The Alpheios River flows westward down from the Arkadian Mountains through rolling hills to the coastal plain at the sea
- where the land flattens out from hills to plain and the Alpheios is joined by the Kladeos River lies the prominent Hill of Kronos, the father of the god
- these three natural features defined the limits of the Altis, the Sanctuary of Zeus, and of appendages to the sanctuary such as the gymnasium, stadium, and hippodrome
- Olympia was not a city-state, it passed no laws, issued no coins, pursued no independent foreign policy
- it was administered by the city state of Elis, with which it had extremely close ties, even though 60km
  
- excavations have revealed an extensive layer of sacrificial debris including hundreds of bronze and terra cotta figurines largely of horses or chariots from 7-8 century in southwest corner of Hill of Kronos
- this black layer lies beneath the later Heraion and Pelopion and near the Altar of Zeus and the Prytaneion (home of hestia, goddess of the hearth, whose eternal flame attested to the health and welfare of Elis)
- this is the core of Olympia
- that the Eleans placed their prytaneion at Olympia shows how closely Elis was tied to Olympia, was in some sense a hearth common to all Greeks
- here the victors at the games were given a banquet and it was from this point that the sacrificial processions around the Altis began and ended
  
- adjacent to the prytaneion was the heraion the temple of the goddess Hera, wife of Zeus and queen of the gods
- its remains are among the earliest extant of a stone temple in ancient greece
- the columns were originally made of wood; the stone columns replacements for the early versions
- Pausanias tells us that there was still one wooden column in his day
- one of the greatest ironies from antiquity that the oldest large scale monument at Olympia, a bastia of male domination, was dedicated to Hera
- the temple of Zeus was constructed 150 years later, both topographically and chronologically Zeus was a later addition to Olympia
- the Altar of Zeus (the center of his worship) occupied a prominent position somewhere in or near this early core of the sanctuary, made of the ashes of previous sacrifices, the altar does not survive, but Pausanias makes its general location clear, in fact its been suggested that the Black Layer represents an early version of the Altar
- no figurines of females mixed in with the hundreds of male examples from the 8 & 7 centuries

- at core of early sanctuary lies the Pelopion, the shrine of the hero Pelops, whose story was told by a group of statues on the eastern end of the Temple of Zeus
- here Pelops was worshiped with libations and sacrifices of black rams, appropriate for a figure associated with the underworld
- Pelops is the key divinity at Olympia; the Eleians made sacrifices to him before they offered them to Zeus
- these heroes and their cults represent the enduring goal of the athlete to achieve immortality through superhuman effort and they offer encouragement to him by celebrating the actual achievement of that status by his predecessors
- the eastern pediment told the story of the first Olympic Games when the local king Oinomaos offered his daughter Hippodameia and his kingdom as the prize for anyone who could beat him in a chariot race
- Pelops won by bribing Oinomaos's stable boy Myrtilos to replace the linchpin of the king's chariot with a peg made of wax
- in the heat of the race the wax melted and the chariot wheels came off throwing Oinomaos to his death in the ensuing crash, the ancients seemed not to have been bothered by this bit of Olympic cheating
  
- the western pediment of the Temple of Zeus depicted the battle of the centaurs and the Lapiths presided over by Apollo the god of music and culture
- it is an allegory of the struggle between the centaurs' bestiality and the Lapiths' civilization between barbarianism and Hellenism and it served to unify and edify all the Greeks who came to Olympia
- the sculptural decoration of the Temple of Zeus included six stipes over the front porch and six over the back
- these portrayed the twelve Labors of Herakles beginning with his defeat of the Nemean lion and ending with his retrieval of the Apples of the Hesperides
- the labor that resonated the most powerfully in the region of Olympia was the cleaning of the stables of the local king Augeas
- to accomplish this feat Herakles actually had to divert the Kladeos River to wash away the filth
- in some ancient versions Herakles himself was credited with founding the Olympics, viewed as particularly Dorian and Peloponnesian hero hence the prominent placement of his exploits on the temple of Zeus
  
- the chryselephantine cult statue of Zeus inside the building was the most splendid of sculptural decorations in Temple of Zeus, work of Pheidias who also created the enormous cult statue of Athena for the Parthenon in Athens
- completed by 430, regarded as one of the 7 wonders of the ancient world, long gone
- Zeus (4- ancient feet) seated in a throne holding a scepter topped by his eagle in his left hand, one right hand stood Nike the personification of victory (6 ancient feet), exposed flesh of both wrought in ivory and remainder of composition in gold

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- behind temple was sacred olive tree from which Olympic victory crowns were cut and scattered throughout the Altis were dozens of altars to various gods
- hundreds and hundreds of dedications, many statues set up by athletes and horse owners after a triumph at the games but many were spoils of war, either way common element of victory
- Boulterion or council house was two apsidal buildings joined by a smaller central building, olympic council met here and the athletes came to its alter of zeus Horkios (zeus of the oath) to take the olympic oath
- some bronze statues of Zeus called Zanes, paid for by fines levied against athletes caught giving or taking bribes, placed directly on path of the athletes entering the stadium

## Lecture 4: Olympia

Olympia is the most important of the olympic contests of them all - Pindar quote - just like the sun is the most important in the sky

the track and the sacred area, almost one in the same, the place of athletics and of worship

map of different buildings as they were excavated

### **excavating at olympia**

began in 1875

too fast- just digging furiously, was just metres underground, extreme amount of good, on the other hand they moved so quickly and their techniques were so old/ beginning that there was definitely a lot of info that was lost

then they started to focus more on the history of the sanctuary

once you start an excavation, you can never go back - like interrogating a witness for information and then shooting them, you can no longer go back for more info

new excavations at time of Nazi olympics, Germany very much a part of Olympic history and excavations there German history, they also set up an archaeological museum at the site, usually at this time countries would just take whatever objects they found and bring them back to their country

### **bronze age**

3000-1100 bce earliest history of greek civilization

simply settlements not evidence for athletic activity

tumulus found in the centre of the sanctuary, in times of sacrifice, found drinking vessels - feasting, all real evidence of ancestor worship because this is at a tomb, honouring some person

inhabited as a place where people are living, later when known as religious and athletic site, inhabitants gone

### **panhellenism iron age**

1100-700 bce

greece now a religious sanctuary

not just athletic, probably meeting place for chiefs etc to come, for feasting and dedication of wealth

prestige good is anything that demonstrates status

greece did not have city states but more something like tribes

give objects built by themselves and dedicate them to the gods, metal goods, high value both socially and monetarily, honour the gods but also takes it out of circulations so demonstrates the prestige and power of the person doing it because they can afford to give it away

### **dedication of prestige goods**

in early greek history these are anything made out of metal instead of clay

rare before 700-750 bcd

before these they were only found in graves - showing status of the person buried and the family burying because they can afford to just throw them in the dirt

after this theres a shift where metal objects are found in sanctuaries so instead of to the deceased they're to the gods, but same idea of prestige and even competitive display to the gods and to the dedicator

### **votive figurines**

two types of prestige

votive figurines found in a black ash layer near the Pelopeion under the Temple of Hera, dated to 700s, votives of bulls tripods horses and chariots

why was the earth excavated black and why was this found - ash dedication for Zeus?

principle of reciprocity do ut des

votives probably manufactured at Olympia, purchase them and then dedicate to the god, thanking Zeus can you give me something else in return

### **iron age competitive dedication**

here no effort to compete with other people (from votive pic) all same size so mustve just been for the gods

but the tripods can be huge

not produced at olympia but transported by elites in their religious pilgrimage for olympia

over time increase in size elaboration and cost

think of how tripod was one of the first prizes, bulls were sacrificed, there were chariot races

### **early dedication**

image from the leg of a tripod

two figures fighting over a tripod - inception

representation of the competition that happens

think of funeral games of Patroclus when Idomeneus wants to bet something and they're just the spectators

just a representation of competitions that were prestige

### **tripods**

why cooking vessels for prizes

why stanley cup

if everybody was visiting at olympia for these meetings, they'd have giant feasts together and now just the food is important but also what its served in

tripod shows lots of wealth and prestige

idea of division that who gets what in these feasts

pic of one with cow - represents importance of meat?

### **olympia in archaic period**

650-479

sanctuary but now for many different city states in greece all to come together

start of Peloponnese, all coming together

they identified as the city states they came from but not quite yet the whole just greece thing

alter to zeus and one to hera the wife of zeus and stadion

after 650, focus on Hera and Pelops

why one of the earliest temples dedicated to Hera not zeus when the ancient olympic games were a festival of zeus - we don't quite understand

sister state of elis begins to have greater control, establish Boulouterion - city council but located in Olympia very far away, but prestige showing of elis to show that they have power and influence in greece in general because everyone is coming to olympia

large scale sacrifices that the winners would participate in

### **ash altar**

zero arch evidence anymore of this alter

alter entirely made from the ashes of animals burnt, for zeus

compact and continue to make bigger and bigger, gigantic relative even to the actual temple of zeus

but made of material that doesn't remain so were relying on literary evidence because no arch

most of our knowledge of the site of olympia comes from Pausanias

Prothesis is massive , altar is 22ft of animal remains

after they cut off the legs they go to the top and offer them to zeus

claim that during ancient olympic games, women were not allowed to attend, implication from pausanias

but gender difference in the offering of sacrifices, women allowed on first stage but once it gets to top stage like zeus only men

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animals sacrificed on the prothesis, which is the one where women allowed  
upper level only men allowed and the important part of the meats here

### **pelopeion**

area marked out that would've been sacred to Pelops, one of the major founders of the Peloponnes  
separate sacrifice, cutting the ramps throat and letting blood drip into the earth because its form of hero  
worship for Pelops a mortal who's deceased whereas sacrifices for gods is burnt animal and the smoke  
rising to the heaven

### **pindar olympian 1**

remember wrote poetry in praise of olympia athletes

myth of the foundation of the olympic games, and our earliest account of how the greeks believed they  
were established, chariot race in Pelops before the games?

so commemoration themselves of this in pelops

### **map**

entire areas in green understood to be greece

really spread throughout the entire mediterranean

though to be more greeks living outside of greece than the area we know today

### **myth of tantalus and pelops**

tantalus is half mortal son of zeus

going to become immortal even though only half a god

but tantalus kills his son and attempts to feed him to the gods

probs because hes human and doesn't want his son to be a successor, take his power

chops him up feeds to gods, gods recognizes tantalus trick but one accidentally eats a bit of his shoulder  
so he now has ivory shoulder

tantalus is punished in tartarus

tanatalized - word bc always water and food in his reach but hes always thirsty and hungry

### **pelops for dinner**

pindar actually very religious wants to change the mythology

in his olympian 1 he says that its a myth and that he wants to be in favour of the gods so he wont tell this  
nasty story of them and instead changes it

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says instead of punished for trying to feed his son to the gods its for stealing nectar and trying to give it to his friends back home

### **chariot race**

second traditional myth that he changes, has to do with olympic games

king oinomaos refused to allow anyone to marry his daughter so to prevent it he holds a chariot race for the hand of Hippodameia but he kills everyone that goes against him

Myrtilus bribes oins charioteers and then his charioteers wins and comes to get prize but oinma throws him off a cliff

after this agememnon killed after returning to troy

so kind of curse here

foundation of games basically lies in cheating, Pelop does by killing everyone and then by not following through on his promise

### **pindars version**

delightful gifts of cyprus are the gifts of aphrodite so oooo ????????

homoerotism of ancient greek athletics

pelops wins by the aid of the god poseidon

idea that athletes cant win without help of the gods

### **cult of pelops**

whether pelops cheated and lied or got the help of poseidon either way ritually he was worshipped with blood sacrifices

so primarily worshipped as the founder of the olympic games

### **pelops founder**

on the one hand the greatest good anyone can achieve is to be victorious at the olympic games

principle of kleos

but also says still the highest good of every mortal is what comes to them day by day because were not gods the good is everyday cause we dont know what the next day will bring

speaking to at tyrant who's winning so offering criticism say you have to understand that oyu are a mortal

on one hand to your best and achieve immortally through recognition and other hand be humble you will die

athletics is in response to death and a compensation for death but doesn't change the fact of death

### **contrasting modes of sacrifice**

the worship of zeus with burnt sacrifices , smoke rising up

blood sacrifices - chthonic - to the earth for Pelosp

worshipping a mortal hero and an immortal god

### **temple of hera**

first major temple around 650 bcd

built directly over black ash layer

suggested other temple burnt down ritually or suggested flood moved all the soil underneath the temple itself

monoliths one piece --- but replaced by drummed columns

monolith columns as wood

normally temple all uniform but they kept having to change parts to keep it standing

image of hera on throne and zeus standing by her, so worship of hera first again!

within temple, lots of items, found Hermes of Praxiteles nearby

### **hermes**

praxiteles greek sculpture possibly first to display female nude

attributed to this person based on Pausanias

so probably hermes carrying the baby dionysus

absolutely beautiful - waldstein

others hate because compare it to the crises kouros, transformations of body between them , feet side by side and not rigid at all, very relaxed

why temple of hera?

dionysus is the son of zeus and a mortal semele

zeus unfaithful to hera so hera drives semele insane and semele asks zeus to do it and zeus shoots semele while pregnant with dionysos

so dionysus born from thigh of zeus and heras pissed so hermes takes dionysus

but dedicated in temple of hera!!! insult? irony? reconciliation?

### **why hera earliest building**

olympia has always been a sanctuary of zeus as far as we can tell

if olympia is male only athletic festival where women cant enter then the irony is extremely strange

two possible answers

1 not originally a temple of hercules but of hercules and zeus and later when zeus got his own temple it becomes just hers

2 heracles (another founder of olympic games) his name means the glory of hercules so he himself could be a motive for a temple of hercules

### **olympia in 5th century**

construction of large temple of zeus

archaeologically speaking theres no other foundations, no older

new stadion increased capacity by 50% so had to expand

tropaia is victory statue for war or athletics

more dedicated at this time than any other

athlete could pay to dedicate a statue to yourself but if city state going to war with another you could also have a dedication in olympia so place where all of greece comes to worship but also so much competition and being represented in the stadion itself too

in part, increases in athletic statues bc of civic ideology, not just individual athletes dedicating but the city as a whole as they would be proud of this athlete so to immortalize their athlete at olympic

another motivation because temple of zeus so a whole other area for dedications

### **olympia in second half of 5th century**

intense political struggles, after 450 military tropaia stop being dedicated

because of internal conflicts mainly the Peloponnesian war, the civil war between athens and sparta

things become sensitive and seems to have been ban on military trophies as function of this

display of peace treaties between them dedicated here and also peace of nicias because thirty year peace didn't wrk

city state siding with athens and city state owning olympic siding with athens against sparta

for period of time sparta excluded from the games, decision by elis saying they violated stuff and gone to war with people they weren't supposed to

sparta wants to own olympic bc so much power for whoever in control of sanctuary

elis eventually capitulates to sparta because they won and become sparta ally

athletic contests happening at same time as political conflicts and war

### **temple of zeus**

begun in 470

construction funded by the spoils of war between elis and pisa and both at war over possession of sanctuary, elis won and use to complete temple

golden tripod dedicated by spartans after defeating athens and crowning point of temple so alllll funded from profits of war

so even actual construction represents conflict of city states

### **olympic zeus**

the olympic zeus is the most impressive of the temple, inside it

made by pheidias who did athene parthenos on acropolis

so invoking athletes in a time of the peloponasian war so political move by athenians

couldn't make in athens and transport so had his own workshop in olympia

gold and ivory panels on a wooden structure

zeus seated, nike in his hand, appropriate for representation at olympia

coins from elis, every city had their own, elis puts the statue of olympian zeus!

representaiton of close association and ownership of olympia

so tall that if zeus were to stand up his head would go through the roof

no statue anymore

### **decorative program**

pediments of the tmeple. triangular section at the top

represented with mythological scenes

the chariot race of pelops, the founding of the olympic games

instead of poseidon you have zeus

pelpos and hippodameia

west pediment has lapiths and centaurs

perithous marries a differnet hippodameia and invites centaurs to the wedding but gets rowdy and they attempt to abduct the wives of the lapiths, perithous and thesis (mythic founder of athens) stop them

battle important because this battle represented in athens and theseus important making claims in connection to athens

### **pediments**

nothing to do with athletics but violent contest that ends in marriage

other reverse a marriage ending in contest

in pelops chariot race the women are prized objects objectification in both

in both settled through divine intervention zeus/ poseidon or apollo

### **metopes**

the representations in between

the labours of heracles

labour is athla

punishment and prize have the same exact word

### **alternate foundation**

two separate foundation claims for the olympic games

heracles establishes olympic games before he becomes full god

important symbol for ancient greek athletes, hes the athlete that actually became immortal

### **birth of heracles**

glory of heracles

heracles born out of the hatred of heracles

because of heracles hatred that he achieves his immortality

heracles about to be born and zeus announces a son will be born who will be king of men

heracles is the goddess of child birth so she delays birth of heracles because zeus said this

heracles has another figure eurystheus born prematurely, also a son of zeus - and perseus

so zeus has son born but not the one he wanted

but premature so entirely weak and feeble

eurystheus becomes king of men contrary to his own intentions

heracles is pissed off and drives heracles mad and he kills his own children and wife

for his punishment he serves the king for bunch of years, this is the labours of heracles

### **labors of heracles**

12 labors

important thing mythologically most of them born from two monsters typhoon (child of hercules without zeus)

large conflict battle of the sexes

idea is he went all over the mediterranean accomplishing these labours

civilized the ancient world

heracles labors against the anger of hercules are how it is that he achieves his glory actually

### **the nemean lion**

labor 1

labor of force, bie

lion skin not supposed to be penetrated by metal spears etc so he chokes out the lion

wears the lion skin because representation of his accomplishment also armour

### **cattle of augeias**

labor 5

had to clean the stables of augeias in a single day

hundreds of cattle and stables never been cleaned - impossible

approaches augeias says give me a tenth of your cattle and ill clean

labor of metis, deception because hes trying to pull one over on augeias

diverts river to flow through stables

augeias finds out its one of his labours and denise him payment

also labour ends up not counting so he kills augeias

athena goddess born from zeus, primary one who aids heracles in all his labours

mortal achievement has to happen through divine aid

### **apples of hesperides**

has to bring back the apples

they're on someones land up north, guarded by immortal servant

heracles has atlas go and get the apples for him, hes able to do it

hell hold up the world for atlas while he does that

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gets the apples and says ill deliver them myself just keeping holding the world, trying to pull one over so hold the world while i grab a pillow and then takes apples ad walks away

pillow put in scene but never actually there, cant tell story in single shot so represents whats coming

athena again in background of this one - divine aid

### **pelops and heracles**

the two foundation myths

pausanias gives his own account creates mythic history of the olympic games

says theres a temple built in honor of cronos father of zeus

first mythic games are zeus vs croons

cosmic wrestling match as an athletic match

after this, 2 olympic games and then pelops has them in honour of zeus

then sons of pelops also have games

then augeas king of elis has olympic games

then heracles conducts games after the conquest of elis

sequence of founding and refounding of olympic games over and over

tries to reconcile by creating this refounding of the games

olympic games also became a way for ancient greeks to also record and keep track of time and history

named every 4 year cycle, rather than a year

so example were in the 4th year of usain bolt LOL LIT

### **zanes zeus statues**

after all the religious festival in the altis then a procession past them into the stadion

zanes are zeus statues beginning in 388

made of bronze built based on fines of athletes who cheated in the olympic games

line the entrance way to the stadion

showing even ancient athletes cheated - bribery?

olympic victory to be won not by money but by swiftness of feet etcccccc lalalalala