

CLAS 0210

Sport in the Ancient Greek World



Class 5

Friday 5 February

The origins of Greek
athletic festivals

Relative valuation of prizes

Value

- cauldrons
 - tripods
 - horses
 - mules
 - cattle
 - women
 - iron
- more
- less



1 tripod = 12 oxen



1 woman = 4 oxen



<i>Event</i>	<i>Bronze age</i>	<i>Homer</i>	<i>Historical era</i>	
footrace	-	x	x	776
wrestling	-	x	x	708
pentathlon	-	-	x	708
javelin	-	x	x	
diskos	-	x	x	
jump	-	x	x	
boxing	x	x	x	688
chariot	?	x	x	680
archery	x	x	-	
single combat	x	x	-	
bull-leaping	x	-	-	
acrobatics	x	-	-	

[from S.G. Miller, *Ancient Greek Athletics*, p. 23]



Chariot races at the funeral games of Patroklos



Patroklos athla
(the games of
Patroklos)

the symposium

Sophilos me graphsen (Sophilos painted me [the vase])

- Euryalos to Odysseus:

“You’re no athlete” (a big insult!)

This is the first recorded use of the word
athletes

- *ARETE*
- Excellence, goodness, valor, nobility, virtue

Koroibos of Elis

first recorded stade race winner, in 776 BC

According to Pausanias (2nd c. AD)...

diaulos (double-stade race) added only at the 14th Olympiad, in 724 BC

See Swaddling, *The Ancient Olympic Games*,
p. 54

or

Arete, p. 201

THE INTRODUCTION OF NEW EVENTS IN THE OLYMPIC GAMES

[Source: Pausanias V.8,5 - 9,2]

<u>Olympiad</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Event</u>	<u>First Victor</u>
1	776	Stadion (1-length foot-race)	Koroibos of Elis
14	724	Diaulos (2-length foot-race)	Hypenos of Pisa
15	720	Dolichos (long-distance foot-race)	Akanthos of Sparta
18	708	Pentathlon (5-event medley)	Lampis of Sparta
18	708	Pale (wrestling)	Eurybates of Sparta
23	688	Pyx (boxing)	Onomastos of Smyrna
25	680	Tethrippos (four-horse chariot race)	Pagondas of Thebes
33	648	Pankration (all-in wrestling)	Lygdamis of Syracuse
33	648	Keles (horse race)	Krauxidas of Krannon
37	632	Boys' stadion	Polynikes of Elis

PINDAR

5th century B.C.

Epinician poetry (“a poem about victory [*nike*])

Composed in honor of winners in specific events
at the games at

- Olympia (*Olympians*)
- Delphi (*Pythians*)
- Nemea (*Nemeans*)
- Isthmia (*Isthmians*)

His account of the mythical founding of the Olympic Games by Herakles talks of:

- the stade footrace, discus, javelin, boxing, wrestling, and the 4-horse chariot race

Foot race



Athenian black-figure vase, 6th century BC

Bronze Age writing



Linear B tablet
(in Greek)

Bronze tripod-cauldron in Olympia Museum, 8th century BC



Horse-race victor and his tripod prize



- Attic black-figure vase, 6th century BC

Bronze tripods



8th-century bronze
tripod leg, showing
tripod prize and
scene of boxing

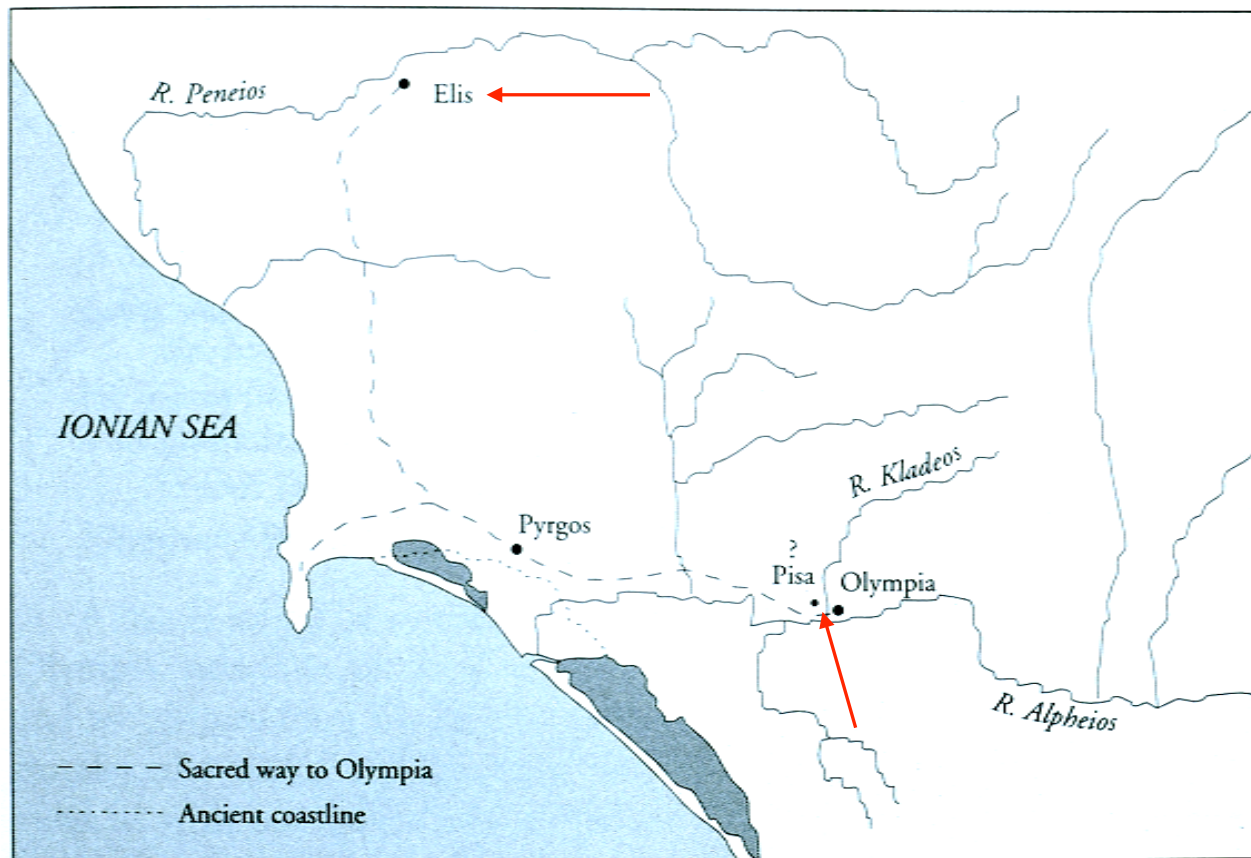
According to **Phlegon of Tralles** (c. 135 AD):

- Olive wreaths not awarded at Olympia until the 7th Olympiad in 752 BC.
- At Delphi, prizes awarded at the first games in 586 BC, but replaced by laurel wreaths at the second Pythian Games.
- Koroibos not the first victor, but the first *recorded* victor: there had (allegedly) been 27 previous earlier Olympiads

<i>Event</i>	<i>Bronze age</i>	<i>Homer</i>	<i>Historical era</i>	
footrace	-	x	x	776
wrestling	-	x	x	708
pentathlon	-	-	x	708
javelin	-	x	x	
diskos	-	x	x	
jump	-	x	x	
boxing	x	x	x	688
chariot	?	x	x	680
archery	x	x	-	
single combat	x	x	-	
bull-leaping	x	-	-	
acrobatics	x	-	-	

[from S.G. Miller, *Ancient Greek Athletics*, p. 23]

Location of Olympia, Elis, River Alpheios



Map 9

The athletes' route from Elis to Olympia. Two days before the Olympics began, the judges, athletes, and their trainers began their 36-mile journey along the sacred way to Olympia.

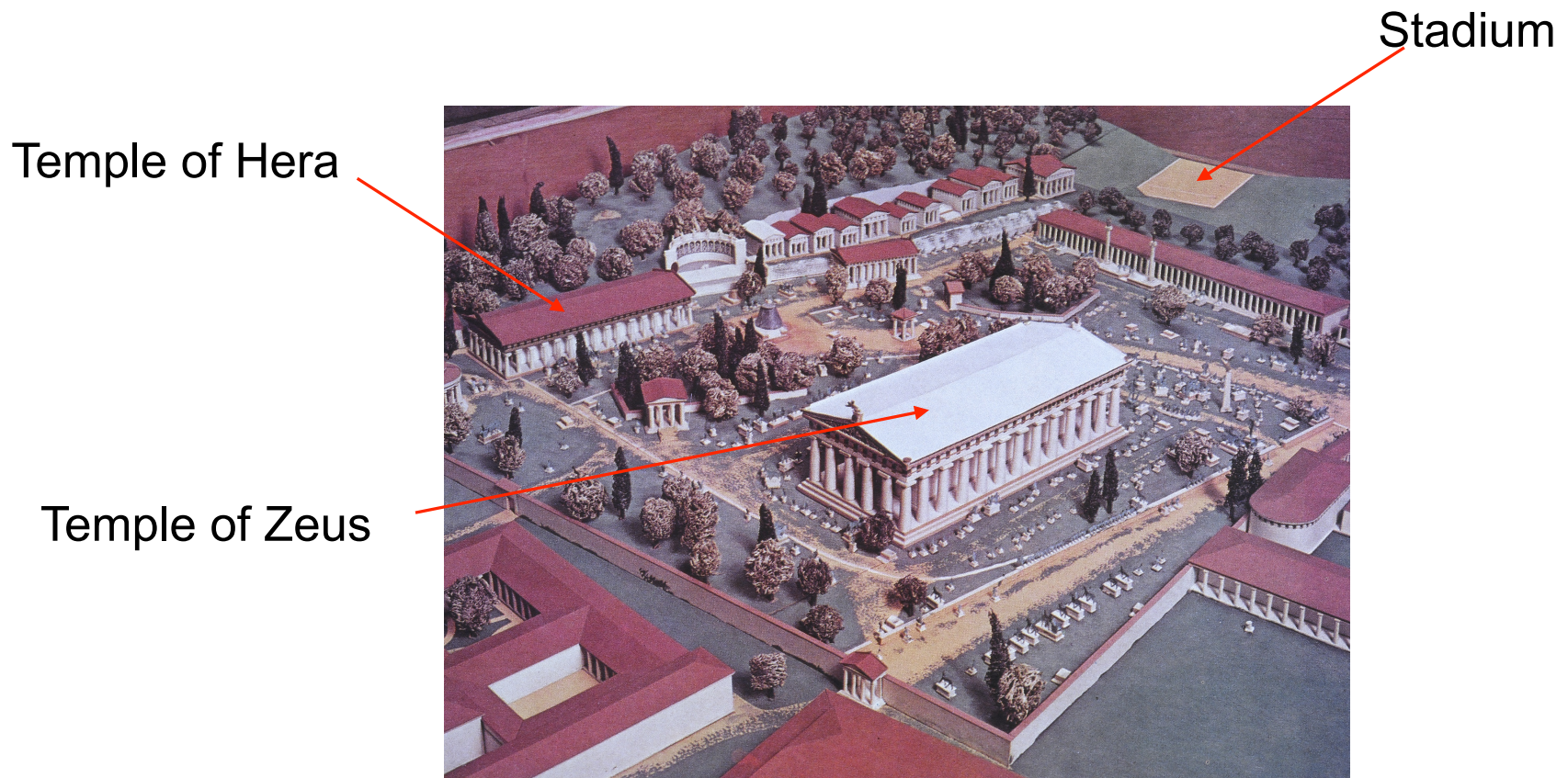
Lampadedromia (torch race)



Female runner in stade race in honor of the goddess Hera



Olympia



Oenomaus, King of Pisa
Hippodameia, his daughter
Pelops [Peloponnese]
Myrtilus [the charioteer]

