

CLAS 0210

Sport in the Ancient Greek World



Class 33
Monday 19 April

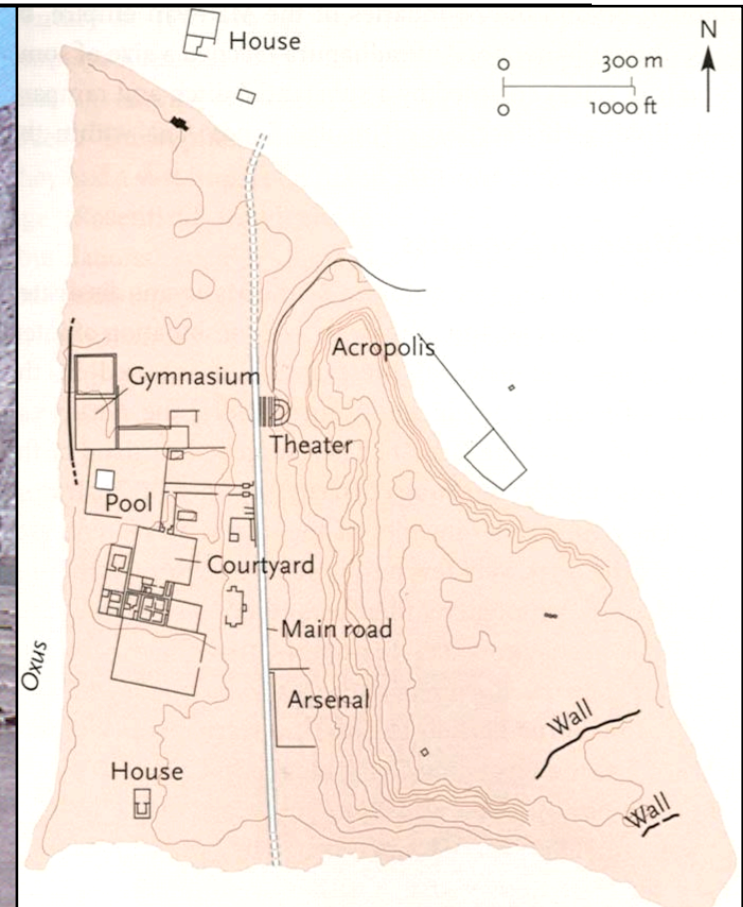
What did the Romans
do with Greek Sport?



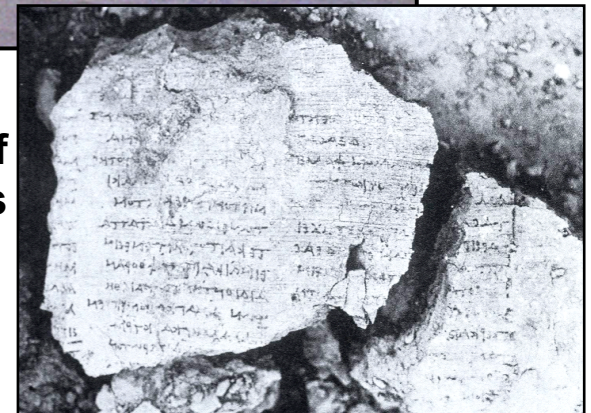
Alexander's conquests, as of 323 BC

Arrian, *Campaigns of Alexander*

Aï Khanum, Afghanistan



**Reverse imprint of
a Greek papyrus**



Arete # 192

Inscription set up at Delphi in front of the Temple of Apollo
182 B.C.

A response by the Amphiktyonic Council of Delphi to
a delegation sent by King Eumenes of Pergamon (Turkey)

The **Nikephoria** (“victory-bringing”) Games at Pergamon, to be:

- stephanitic

In terms of age categories and prizes for victors:

- isoPythian (musical contests)
- isOlympic (gymnastic and equestrian)

- Greece formally became a province (**Achaia**) of the Roman empire in 27 B.C.
- But there had been a Roman interest and presence in Greece since the 3rd century B.C.
- See Polybius (**Arete # 194**) — Romans allowed to take part in the Isthmian Games 228 B.C.
- After the 2nd Macedonian War (200-197 B.C.), Rome declares Greece free and not subject to tribute — and does so at the Isthmian Games
- Ambivalent attitude of Rome to Greece: “Greece, the captive, took her savage victor captive, and brought the arts into rustic Latium” (**Horace**)

Romans begin to take Greece back with them to Rome — both physical spoil (e.g. statues) and athletic games

Arete # 195 [186 B.C.]

Ludi = Roman games, a public spectacle (not a religious festival)

Venatio = hunting of wild animals

- bestiarii (hunters)
- venationes (hunts)



Despoliation of Greek sanctuaries in 1st century B.C.,
especially by the general Sulla
Arete # 196a, 196b

Benefactors enhance their reputation by financing new games
e.g., Herod the Great of Judaea, 10 B.C.
Arete # 198

Greece as a cultural “theme park” for the Romans —
a “living museum”, ripe for the picking

See Cicero, *Letters to Atticus* 67 B.C.
Arete # 200

Imperial games (ludi)
“*panem et circenses*”: bread and circuses to appease the masses

The Italic, Roman, Augustan isOlympic Games founded
by the Emperor Augustus at Naples, 2 B.C.
Arete # 199

Domitian 86 A.D. founds the 4-yearly Capitoline Games in Rome
— part of a 7-game cycle: the 4 Crown Games + Capitoline Games
+ Games of Hera at Argos + the Actian Games

Nero

Visited Greece in AD 67.

“Won” no less than 1,808 victory crowns at various minor and major festivals — including all four Crown Games, which were held in the same year to accommodate the emperor

Suetonius, *Life of Nero* 22-25

Arete #203



Bloodsports, the games, the arena (from Latin word for sand)

Colosseum;
Flavian
Amphitheater



Tunisia, N. Africa



France



Wales,
UK

Variety show of the games: crescendo of excitement

- **Animal vs. animal**
- **Animal vs. man**
- **Man vs. man (gladiators)**

Animal vs. animal...

- **Exotica display**
Roman control of
their world



Animal origins, animal extinction

Tradition of the Roman games lives on in the bullfights in France.



Animals vs. man

- **bestiarii (hunters)**
- **venationes (hunts)**
 - reconstructed environments

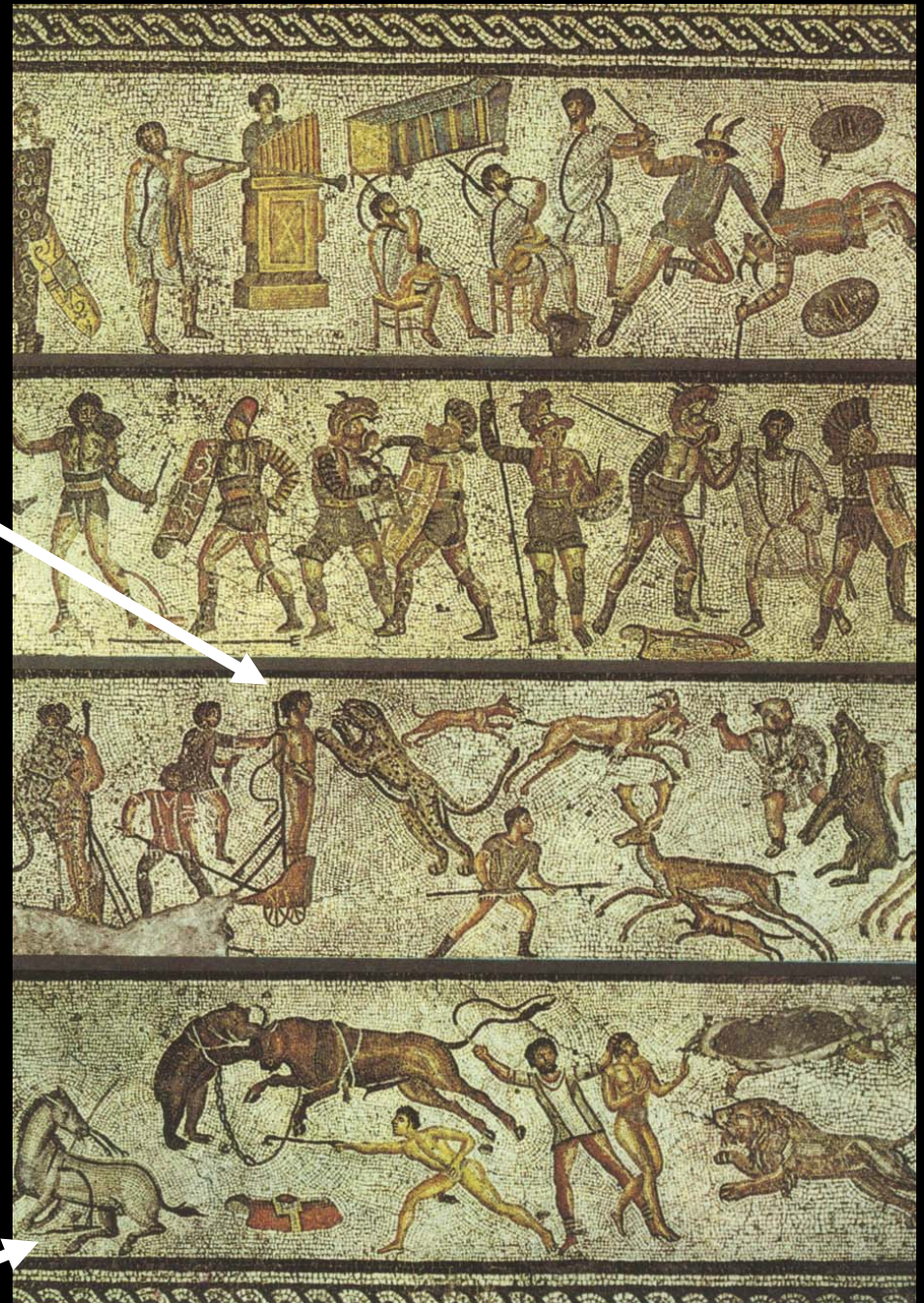


Animals vs. man

- Punishment of criminals, sent 'to the beasts'
- 'Christians to the lions!'



Zliten,
N. Africa



Man vs. man

gladiator

gladius = sword



with the solemn rites surrounding games were transferred to Rome. It usually lost their true religious meaning and pressure of the Roman social system very different purpose. That purpose of an enormous urban proletariat that it should be richly amused as bathed, and fed.

Every Roman dynasty since the last had competed with his political splendour shows. In 66 B.C., Julius C. collected so large a troop of gladiator series, we learn from Suetonius, that the Senate, obliging him to reduce it to just over two hundred paid gladiators in 46 B.C., after he had defeated a miniature holocaust the sand ordinary gladiators, sixty more elephants. Caesar, at least, had not lost the original significance of the games were called both *ludi*, or games, and *munera*. One display was offered to his second to that of his daughter.

The religious tradition died hard. days, the attendant who ran up to a gladiator established the fact of his death by a head was arrayed either as Charon, the ferryman of the dead, or as Charon, the ferryman of the dead.



Man vs. man

gladiator

gladius = sword
trident and nets



**Jean Leon Gerome,
'Thumbs Down'**



naumachia (naval, sea battles) re-enactments (Actium)



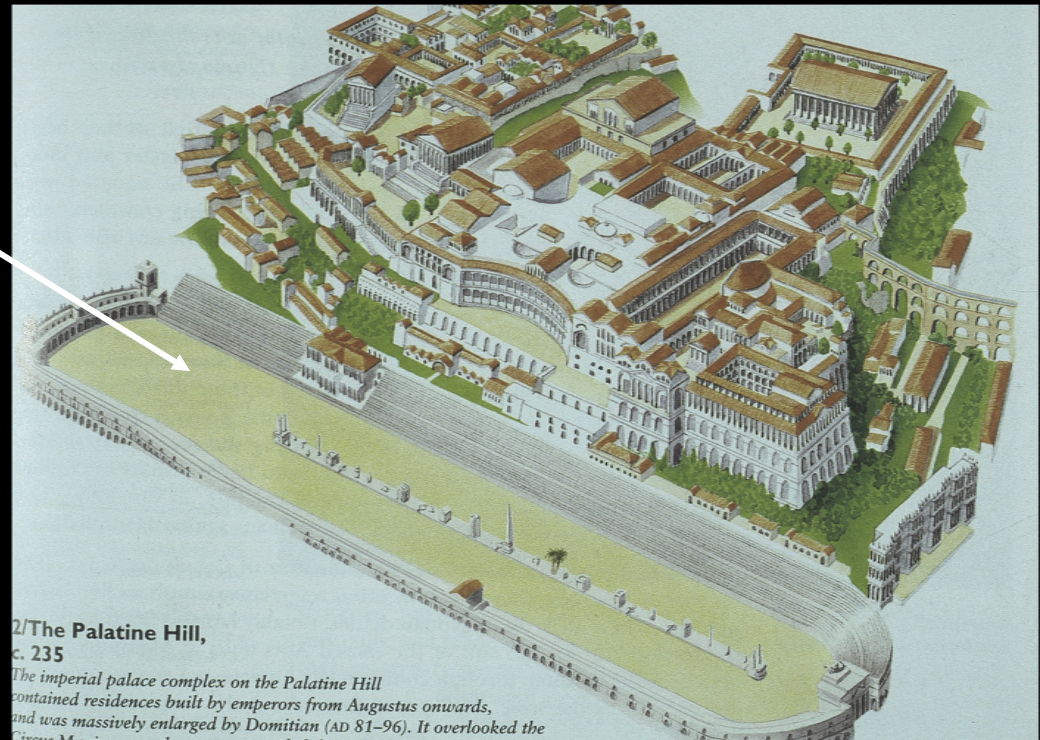
**Pompeians
vs. Nucerians
59 BC**

**(neighbors riot!
in birds-eye
perspective)**



Chariot racing: ludi circenses (games of the circus: ring/course)

Circus Maximus
(below Flavian Palace)
2000-foot-long lap;
hairpin turns



1/4 million spectators
(half Rome's free adult population)

Chariot racing: ludi circenses (games of the circus: ring/course)

- Quadriga (4-horse team),
but sometimes up to 10
horses!
- *factiones* (factions, clubs)
Whites, Greens, Reds, Blues



Chariot racing: ludi circenses

***Ben-Hur* (1959)**

**The late Charlton
Heston vs. The
Romans**



- Central seating for big-shots such as the emperor
- No expense spared!
- Excitement, passion of crowd
acclamation of victor
- Bloody violence in least violent
of the Roman games