



Glossary

364BC battle in Altis	Pisa, under the protection of the Arkadians, had taken Olympia and was presiding over the Games. The Eleans attacked during the Games, and were beaten back by the Pisaians and Arkadians. Fighting reached into the Altis, disrupting the finals of the pentathlon wrestling, which Xenophon tells us were being held “in the space between the dromos [stadium] and the altar [of Zeus]” (<i>Hellenika</i> 7, 4, 28).
374BC earthquake	An earthquake struck the Peloponnese, strong enough to cause Helike in Achaia to submerge into the sea. The pedimental sculpture from the Temple of Zeus fell down, as did most of the rest of the eastern façade. The temple was rebuilt and the repaired sculpture put back into the pediments. The main temple at Delphi was also damaged in this earthquake.
Achilles	Greek warrior of Homer's <i>Iliad</i>
Acropolis	Athenian sanctuary site, dedicated to Athena, and includes the Parthenon; any high citadel in a Greek city.
Aegina	Island in the Saronic Gulf
Aegis	Shoulder and chest armour
Akroterion (pl. Akroteria)	Decoration on roof. Can be on the gutter, or on the corners, or on the gable peak, or all of the above. Akroteria were usually of terracotta, but marble ones were used on the finest buildings.
Alabastron	A small perfume jar, sometimes made of alabaster, but more often of fine clay
Alkmene	Mother of Herakles
Altis	The central, most sacred area of Olympia, where most of the temples were situated. The name derives from the sacred-grove of Olympia
Alytarches	Steward in charge of running the Games
Amazon	The Amazons were a probably mythical tribe who lived near the Black Sea. They were unusual in that women ruled the society, and trained for and conducted war as men in other societies. Their children were raised by the fathers. In order to excell as mounted archers, the Amazon women were reputed to amputate one breast so they would be able to pull on a bow more effectively.
Amphora	A two-handed jar used for storing and transporting liquids, especially wine
Angyle	A leather strap that assists in throwing a javelin
Apobates	The class of athlete who would jump from a moving chariot, run beside it, and then attempt to jump back on
Apollo	Greek god of civilisation, philosophy, music, and manly beauty; twin brother of Artemis.

Apollodoros	Apollodoros of Athens lived in the second century BC. He is most famous for his <i>Chronicle</i> of Greek history, from the Trojan Wars to his own time. His name is given as the author of the collection of Greek mythology called <i>The Library of Greek Mythology</i> , but that book was written by a different, unknown, person in the first or second century AD. The convention is to continue to call the author of the later book Apollodoros.
Archaeological periods	The first two thousand years of activity at Olympia (3000 – 1000 BC) is represented by relatively small numbers of objects, some houses and some graves. The modern terms for this time period are the Bronze Age, Helladic Period or Mycenaean Period, subdivided into shorter time periods of recognizably different cultural or political units. Following this are the Geometric (1000-660 BC), Archaic (660-480 BC), Classical (480-323 BC), and Hellenistic (323-146 BC) Periods. These names almost certainly bear little relationship to the way the ancients regarded themselves.
Archaic	Style of Greek art dated by modern scholars to 660 – 480 BC.
Arete	Greek word meaning: bravery, courage, personal excellence; later meaning: moral virtue.
Artemis	Greek goddess of the hunt, symbolized by her hunting bow, and of young girls; twin sister of Apollo.
Aryballos	A small jar with a flat top, containing the oil smeared on an athlete's body before practice or competition. The oil was often perfumed.
Astragal	Knucklebone
Athena	Goddess of wisdom, symbolized by an owl. She was the special patron of Athens. Like other gods and goddesses she had several aspects. The main temple on the Acropolis at Athens was dedicated to Athena Parthenos (the Virgin). Another epithet was Athena Promachos (In front of the battle lines), as which she acted to aid Greek soldiers.
Athens	City (<i>polis</i>) in Greece, one of the major centres of Greek cultural and political life.
Attica	The territory of Athens, in south-east central Greece
Bezel	The setting of a stone in a finger ring
Black-figure	A technique of vase painting, where figures are painted black against the natural red colour of the clay
Blood sacrifice	Normal sacrifices to the gods involved burning the offering (normally either meat or a honey & wheat cake) on an altar. The smoke wafted up into the air, where the gods lived. Heroes, who were men not gods, were thought of as being under the ground, where all mortals went when they died. Thus, offerings to heroes usually involved pouring some liquid, either the blood of the sacrificed animal, or sanctified wine, into the ground at the tomb or shrine where the hero was venerated.
Boiotia	A district of central Greece incorporating the territories of several cities, principally Thebes and Tanagra.
Bouleuterion	Meeting place for a city council. At Olympia one of the administrative buildings for officers who supervised the day-to-day matters of running the sanctuary and games. It also contained the statue of Zeus Horkios (Oath-taker) and possibly the sanctuary coin-mint.
Boys	12 to 17 years of age (subject to adjudication) inclusive. The age divisions into boys and men at Olympia seem to have applied from 632 BC when boys events were first introduced. Other athletic games had a division for youths (epheboi), who were around 18-21. Judging ages in a time without birth certificates was difficult, but we do have evidence of applicants being refused entry because they were too young.
Bull-leaping	A contest in which young men and women leapt over the horns of a bull, possibly for fertility rituals, or in honour of the gods, during the Minoan period (See Minoans)
Byzantine	This is the name modern scholars give the Roman Empire in the eastern part

	of its territory after it had become predominantly Christian. The date of the change depends on the scholar's interests. Some use ca 330 AD when the Roman emperor Constantine the Great moved the capital to the old Greek city of Byzantium, calling it New Rome, though the name changed to Constantinople shortly after his death, and is now called Istanbul. Others use 393 AD when Theodosius I banned pagan worship, others use 395 AD when the empire split permanently into the west and eastern halves on Theodosius' death. Others use 476 AD when the last Roman emperor in the west, the fifteen year old Romulus Augustulus was deposed by the Hun commander Odovacar, others use 498 AD when Anastasius reformed the coinage. Others use 610 AD when Heraclius took the throne, as he subsequently reformed the entire administration of the empire, wiping out the traces of 'Roman' rule. And there are still other dates to choose, since the rulers and inhabitants of those areas continued to describe themselves as the Romans until defeated in 1453 by Mehmet II, the Ottoman Sultan.
Caduceus	Herald's staff, held by Hermes
Centaur	Mythical half-man half-horse creature, said to have lived in the wild mountains of Thessaly or Arkadia in Greece. They were ruled by their animal passions and represented barbarism or chaos in Greek symbolism.
Chiton	Linen shift, often girdled at the waist
Chlamys	Short woollen cloak
Classical	Style of Greek art dated conventionally from 480 to 323BC.
Colonisation	Daughter colonies were established by individual Greek cities from South France to the east end of the Black Sea, and south to the Nile Delta. The main areas of colonisation were Sicily, South Italy and the Black Sea coast.
Consul	Roman civil and military magistrate
Corinth	Greek city-state in the north of the Peloponnese
Date of full moons	In 200 BC, the northern hemisphere summer solstice fell on what we would call the 26 th of June, just before midnight. The following three full moons were on 5 th July, 3 rd August and 1 st September. It is not certain which full moon was the focus of the Games, but the second full moon after the solstice would always fall between the 20 th of July and the 20 th of August. These dates have been calculated using the modern <u>Gregorian calendar</u> .
Delphi	Sanctuary site in south central Greece, home of the famous Oracle of Delphi, and place of the second-most important Panhellenic Festival.
Diadem	Small band fastened around the head, a symbol of victory
Dioulos	2 lap (ca 400m depending on venue) foot race (sprint)
Diodoros	Diodoros was born in Sicily early in the first century BC. He lived and worked in Egypt and Rome, and may have travelled elsewhere. He wrote the largest history to have survived from the first century – the <i>Bibliotheca Historica</i> in 12 volumes – which was published in around 30 BC.
Dioscuri	The twin sons of Zeus, Kastor and Polydeukes, who were reputed to be brilliant horsemen, and so are associated with the sport.
Dipylon Gate	Gateway through which the Sacred Road to Eleusis left Athens
Dodona	Site of the Oracle of Zeus in the mountains of Epirus
Dolichos	Either 12 or 24 laps (each lap ca 200m depending on venue) foot race (long-distance)
Dorian Greeks	Around 1100-1000 the Dorian Greeks moved into mainland Greece, and down into the Peloponnese. There is a basic division between Dorian and Ionian Greeks, reflected in language amongst other features. The Dorians settled in the east of the Peloponnese, and the Ionians in eastern north Greece, the Aegean islands and the west coast of modern Turkey. There were other groups of Greeks, such as the "north-west" Greeks in Elis. These movements of people are preserved in Greek myths, such as the return of the Herakleidai – the children of Herakles.
Doric order	Greek architecture had three main systems, which in chronological order of development, were the Doric, the Ionic and the Corinthian. Most of the temples at Olympia were built in the Doric order. This has

	relatively squat columns with flutes with sharp points, a plain capital shaped like a cushion and no column base. The upper section of the façade, supported on the columns, has alternating <i>triglyphs</i> (triple grooved blocks) and <i>metopes</i> (smooth blocks, often decorated).
Drachma	A standard unit of Greek silver coinage
Ekecheiria	The Sacred Truce of the Olympic Festival. No fully preserved text has survived to indicate the exact terms, or its introduction, but indications in various ancient works allow us to propose some aspects of the truce. In legend the truce was established when the festival and games were reorganized by the kings Iphitos of Elis, Kleosthenes of Pisa and Lykourgos of Sparta. Originally the truce was probably only 1 month in length, as the Festival itself only lasted 1 day. However, as the Festival grew in length to 5 days, and the requirement developed that athletes should train in Elis for 1 month before the Festival, the Truce was extended to three months. Although popularly believed to enforce a complete halt to hostilities, the truce simply allowed competitors and spectators unhindered access through any territory to reach Olympia. The significance is that normally a citizen could not travel safely through the territory of another state at war with his own state. Fighting away from Elis could, and did, continue. Although the only ban on fighting applied to the territory of Elis, even then on some occasions Elis was invaded, or took armed action herself. The invasion of the sanctuary in 364 BC by Elis during the festival is a case (see Xenophon <i>Hellenika</i> 7.4.28).
Elis	A district in the west Peloponnese in Greece, of which Olympia is a part
Ephebos/ephebe	Youth in his late teens (in Athens, aged eighteen or nineteen)
Epistyle	The architrave or decorative band immediately above the columns of a temple.
Equestrian	Horse race, either with a bare-back jockey, or in 2- or 4-horse team chariot races.
Eruption of Thera	This has become an important date for modern archaeology, fixing chronologies in the middle of the second millennium (i.e. around 1550 BC), although there is still debate over the actual date.
Exergue	Place on a coin beneath the ground-line of the design and commonly featuring an inscription.
Festival	Religious ceremony to honour a god or goddess. Such a ceremony might last for an hour or so, but generally major ones took place over several days and involved many activities. Central to such a festival were sacrifices to the god, but contests, either athletic, dramatic, musical or artistic could be involved.
Foundation myths for Olympia	There are a variety of founders of the Games, some obviously mythical, such as Zeus himself, and some which might be historical figures, such as Iphitos of Elis. There seems to be in the jumble of stories a recognition that cult practise occurred from very early times, but that organized athletic competition may have stopped and started several times at Olympia, before the festival became an institution. These foundation myths include: * Zeus, whose contest with his father Kronos inspired the Games. * Herakles of Thebes (see the metopes for his story) * Idaian Herakles, who with his brother Dactyls competed amongst themselves at Olympia, beginning the Games. * Pelops, who started chariot races there. * Pausanias tells of an alliance between Lykurgos of Sparta, Iphitos of Elis and Kleosthenes of Pisa, sanctioned by Delphi, which, after the Games had lapsed, revived the worship of Zeus at Olympia, reorganized the athletic competitions and introduced the Sacred Truce (<i>ekecheiria</i>).
Geometric	An early style of Greek art (about 1025-660 BC)
Gregorian calendar	The calendar used throughout the western world today is the Gregorian calendar. It is sometimes called a "Christian" calendar and its precursor was the Julian calendar, established by Julius Caesar.

	<p>The Gregorian calendar was adopted by Pope Gregory XIII to correct for errors in the older Julian calendar. Although it was decreed by Pope Gregory in a papal bull (instruction), <i>Inter Gravissimas</i>, on February 24, 1582, it was not adopted at the same time by all countries.</p> <p>In the Gregorian calendar, the tropical year (a year between two dates eg two summer solstices) is approximately $365 \frac{97}{400}$ days = 365.2425 days. Thus after 3300 years the tropical year will shift one day with respect to the Gregorian calendar.</p> <p>The approximation $365 \frac{97}{400}$ is achieved by having 97 leap years every 400 years.</p>
Gymnasion/ gymnasium	Lit. "Naked place," exercise ground
Gymnos	Greek for "naked"
Halteres	Hand-held weights used in long-jump, which helped throw the body further
Helladic	Mycenaean period, contemporary with the Minoan period (about 3000-1100 BC)
Hellene/Hellenic/ Greek	"Greek" is the English word for "Hellene". The terms Hellene or Hellenic are sometimes used to try and avoid confusion with the modern state of Greece. The ancient Greeks/Hellenes, who had no central political authority, but rather lived in a series of independent states, or as foreigners in other countries, identified themselves as Greeks/Hellenes because they spoke one of the Greek dialects and followed Greek/Hellenic customs. These included, amongst many things, a common religion, systems of politics, an interest in sports, theatre and philosophy.
Hellenistic	Style of Greek art of the mid-4 th to mid-2nd century B.C.
Hellenodikai	Officials of the Olympic Games, citizens of Elis, usually 10 in number
Hera	Goddess of marriage and women, wife and sister of Zeus
Heraia	Athletic Games for women, possibly only a single running race for women (five sixths the length of the stadion) and run at a different time to the mens' Olympic Games (which were held in honour of Zeus). We do not know when or how often the Heraia took place. The organising officials were a committee of the "Sixteen Wise Women of Elis."
Heraion	Temple of Hera
Herakles	Mythological Greek hero, illegitimate son of Zeus, who was prodigiously strong and brave. He became a god upon his death and married Hera's daughter Hebe, goddess of youth. His Twelve Labours, which formed a cycle of stories within the overall set of his adventures, were depicted on the Temple of Zeus at Olympia.
Hermes	Messenger god
Heruli/Herulians	Teutonic or Germanic peoples, probably originally from Scandinavia, who formed an alliance with the Goths in the 260's AD. They are first mentioned in texts in 267 AD when they captured the Greek city of Byzantium (now Istanbul), and sacked many major cities in Greece, including Athens and Sparta. Their army was defeated at the Battle of Naissus in Moesia (modern Niš in Serbia) by the Roman emperor Gallienus. The Heruli had formed a strong kingdom on the middle Danube by the mid-5 th C AD, but by the late 6 th C AD were no longer mentioned in texts.
Himantes	Leather thongs worn by a boxer to protect his hand and wrist.
Himation	A long woollen cloak
Hippodrome	Arena for equestrian events, though could also be used in a modified form for other contests, especially in the Roman era
Homer	Epic Greek poet, who is traditionally taken to be the composer of <i>The Iliad</i> and <i>The Odyssey</i> . These epics were first written down in around 750 BC, probably 50 years or more after they were composed.
Hoplite	Soldier
Hoplitodromos	'Running soldier', an athlete semi-clad in armour
Isthmian Games	Games held every two years in Isthmia near Corinth, dedicated to Poseidon, and similar to those held in Olympia.

Kalos	Greek word meaning: good, beautiful, handsome, fair, high class.
keles	horserace
Kore	Girl, or a statue of one (in Archaic period)
Koroibos of Elis	First recorded victor at Olympia, Koroibos won the stade in 776 BC. This was the only event on the programme at that time. He is recorded as being a cook. There is disagreement over whether this title simply means “cook” or whether it is a priestly title.
Kotinos	Olive-wreath of victory
Kouros	Youth, or a statue of one (in Archaic period)
Krater	A wide-mouthed bowl, made of either bronze or clay for mixing wine with water
Kylix	A shallow drinking cup
Lekythos	An oil or perfume bottle with a thin neck, so that only small amounts could be poured at a time
Leto	Mother of Apollo
Loutrophoros	A funerary vase
Minoan	Bronze Age civilization of Crete
Mount Olympus	Mountain on the border of Macedonia, the mythological home of the gods.
Mycenaean	Bronze Age civilization of Greece
Nemean Games	Panhellenic Games held every two years at Nemea near Argos and dedicated to Zeus.
Nereus	An old sea god, father of the Nereids, and often a spectator of Herakles' battles against Triton
Olympia	Site of the Ancient Olympic games, in the central Peloponnese.
Olympiad	A 4 year period, from one Olympics to just before the next, named after the winner of the stade. This calendrical system was developed by Hipparchos in the 4 th century BC, when he compiled his list of victors. The system was widely used in a world with few standardised dating methods.
Oracle/Oracles	Priest or priestess who could communicate the response of a god or goddess to a question asked by a supplicant. The most famous and respected oracle was of Apollo at Delphi. There was a minor oracle of Zeus at Olympia, who normally gave answers relating to sporting success.
Oropos	Area on the north-eastern frontier between Attica and Boeotia
Palaestra	Part of the gymnasium, where wrestling and other sports were taught
pale	wrestling
Palmette	A fan-shaped decorative motif
Panathenaic Games	Athenian festival which incorporated games and a torch race. The Greater Panathenaia was held every four years.
Panhellenic	An activity which involved all of the Hellenic world, that is, those people who considered themselves Hellenes (which is roughly translated in modern English as Greek). Hellenes spoke one of several dialects of Greek, and identified with certain cultural practises, such as a common religion, clothing, limited political systems, and an interest in sports, as well as the theatre and philosophy. The main Panhellenic events were the four premier sporting Festivals – Olympia, the Pythian Games for Apollo at Delphi, the Nemean Games for Zeus at Nemea and the Isthmian Games for Poseidon at Isthmia near Corinth.
Pankration	Competition, a combination of wrestling and boxing of which the rules are unclear.
Parian marble	Fine grained white marble from the island of Paros in the Aegean
Parthenon	Athenian temple dedicated to Athena Parthenos on the Acropolis.
Parthenos	Virgin, maiden, unmarried girl
Patroklos	Greek warrior and friend of Achilles, mentioned in Homer's <i>Iliad</i> and for whom Funerary Games were held.
Pausanias	We know little beyond the hints in his work, <i>Guide to Greece</i> , which seems to have been written between the 130's and ca 175-180 AD. Pausanias

	probably came from Magnesia ad Sipylum in Lydia, Asia Minor (modern Turkey). He clearly had access to a substantial library, very likely in Athens, where he was able to cross-check his notes from various sites. He travelled beyond Greece, for instance once mentioning that he knew the peculiar characteristics of the Dead Sea from personal experience.
Pelike	A two-handled jar, a heavier version of the amphora
Pelopeion	The sanctuary area in Olympia venerated as the tomb of the hero Pelops.
Peloponnese	The southern area of mainland Greece, named after the hero Pelops
Pentathlon	Five-event competition, which included wrestling, running, long-jump, discus and javelin
Pentelic marble	Very fine grained white marble from Mt. Pentelikon near Athens. Discovered in the 6 th century BC, it was the preferred marble for the great Athenian sculptors such as Praxiteles.
Peplos	A sleeveless woollen shift, often girdled at the waist
Periodos	"Circuit" of games, referring to the four main Games held in Greece; the Olympic, the Pythian, the Nemean and the Isthmian.
Persian wars	499 – 449 BC between the greatest empire in the old world (Persia) and a shifting alliance of Greek states. At first the Greeks lost, although they halted the advance of the Persian armies. The eventual Greek victories meant that the Persians never again attempted to move into Europe. Persia was led by a series of kings, of whom Cyrus, Xerxes and Darius (English spellings) are the most famous.
Pheidias	Famous sculptor of the fifth century BC. He was best known for the two gigantic cult statues that he made of gold and ivory. One was of Athena Parthenos for her temple on the Acropolis in Athens, the other of Zeus Olympios for his temple at Olympia.
Piraeus	Harbour city of Athens
Plataea	A city in south Boeotia
Plinth	Often square base below a column or statue
Poseidon	Greek god of the sea and earthquakes
pugme	boxing
Pylos	A Mycenaean city of the western Peloponnese
Pythian Games	Games held every four years in Delphi, dedicated to Apollo, and similar to those in Olympia
Pyxis	A cylindrical box with a lid, used for cosmetics or jewellery
Red-figure	A technique of vase painting, where the figures remain the natural red colour of the clay, and the background is painted black around them
Rhyton	A drinking horn, often in the form of an animal
Samos	Island off western Asia Minor
Sanctuary	A place which was sacred to a god or goddess, especially in a rural setting. Sacred places were often marked off with a wall, which would define the <i>temenos</i> area around a temple or group of temples.
Sarcophagus	A coffin
Sema	Sign, marker, monument
Sianna Cup	A type of kylix (cup) named after a cemetery in Rhodes where many had been found.
Sirens	Mythological half-woman, half-bird creatures, known for their enchanting voices, used to lure men to their deaths
Skyphos	A deep drinking cup with two handles
Solstice	One of the two times a year the sun is furthest from the equator. One occurs around 22 nd June and is called the summer solstice in the northern hemisphere and is the longest day of the year, and is called the winter solstice in the southern hemisphere and is the shortest day of the year. The other is around 22 nd December, when in the northern hemisphere it is the shortest day, and in the southern hemisphere it is the longest day of the year.
Sphinx	Mythological creature with a human head, and body of a lion
Spondophoroi	Heralds who travelled throughout Greece to announce the sacred truce associated with the Games

Stadion	Sprinting running race (also known as Stade)
stadion/stade	one lap (ca 200m depending on venue) foot race (sprint)
Stele	A tall, narrow stone slab; some are funerary, others bear inscriptions or religious text.
Strigil	A long metal tool, used to scrape oil and dust off the body of an athlete after exercise or competition
Strophia	Leather thongs which boxers wound around their hands, to protect them
Tanagra	A major city of Boiotia.
tethrippon	4-horse chariot
Thebes	The main Mycenaean city of Central Greece
Themistoclean Wall	Defensive walls initially reconstructed by Themistocles against the Spartans, before the Peloponnesian Wars (431-404 B.C.)
Thera	Island state of the Aegean, part of an ancient volcano, modern Santorini
Theseus	National hero of Athens, and defeater of the Minotaur
Tiryns	A Mycenaean city in the Peloponnese.
Tondo	Circular central picture in a vase or bowl
Triskeles	Symbol of three human legs radiating from centre
Triskelion	Symbol from three curved branches radiating from centre
Triton	A sea-demon or merman, who appears in various Greek myths, including those of Herakles, and Jason and the Argonauts
Troy VII	Schliemann's name for a phase excavated at the ancient city of Troy, site of the Trojan wars. The site is on the north-west coast of modern Turkey.
Tumulus	Burial mound
Vapheio	A Mycenaean city on the Peloponnese
Votive offering	Inscriptions and reliefs dedicated to the gods, designed to be more lasting than a sacrificial offering
Zeus	King of the Greek gods, also god of thunder and patron of Olympia whose temple is the focus of his sanctuary at Olympia. He had many epithets reflecting his differing aspects, or the purpose for which the worshipper was addressing the god. These include: Dodonaïos – Zeus' manifestation at his sanctuary at Dodona Horkios – Oath-taker, to whom vows were made at Olympia Meilichios – the Merciful Soter – the Saviour Olympios – Zeus as king on Mt. Olympos, home of the gods