



0. Ancient Olympics - Story Preface

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Vaulted entrance to the ancient stadium at Olympia, Greece. Image online courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

*Water is best,
while gold gleams like blazing fire in the night,
brightest amid a rich man's wealth;
but, my heart, if it is of games that you wish to sing,
look no further than the sun; as there is no star
that shines with more warmth by day from a clear sky,
so we can speak of no greater contest than Olympia.*

Ode by Pindar, a Greek Poet
Celebrating the Olympic victory of Hieron of Syracuse Horse-race winner, 476 B.C.

Since 1896, the world's leading athletes compete in the Olympics. Baron Pierre de Coubertin (father of the modern Olympics), believed that athletic competition between amateur athletes would help improve international relations. He faced strong initial opposition to his idea that sports could temper politics. Athens, the capital of Greece, hosted the first modern games. For more than a thousand years, another place in Greece - a sacred area called Olympia - hosted the ancient games.

What do we know of those ancient games? How did they start? Why were they always held in Olympia?
To learn the answers to those - and more - questions, we need to take a trip back in time to the Archaic Period of ancient Greece.

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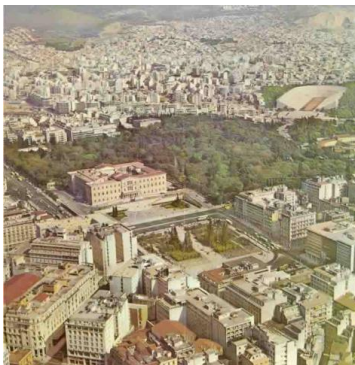
Media Stream



Baron Pierre de Coubertin

Image online, courtesy Olympic-legacy.com website.

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Aerial View of Athens

Image online, courtesy imagezone.com website.

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Ancient Olympics

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Minoan Civilization - The Monster and the Labyrinth

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Acoustic Perfection - Amphitheater at Epidaurus

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Colossus of Rhodes

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Atlantis, the Lost City

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Parthenon at the Acropolis in Athens

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