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Lecture Name

History of Physical Education in Roman Empire

Script:

For approximately one thousand years from C.A 1800 B.C. until ca. 700 B.C northern European tribes periodically migrated to the Italian peninsula. Somewhere between 1000 and 800 B.C the Etruscans settled about the Tiber and Arno rivers. According to Herodotus these people came from Lydia in Asia Minor; other hypothesize that they were a part of the pre-italic Mediterranean race which had kindred shoots in Spain, Asia minor, and the Caucasus. Sensuous and cruel, they enjoyed brutal spectacles in the arena. Their religion, unlike the cheerful and imaginative indo-european creeds, featured the worship of demon gods. The Etruscans undoubtedly traded with the Greeks; they adopted a modified greek alphabet and greek weapons and equipment. They also knew something about greek athletics and even borrowed the greek funeral celebration, to which they added bizarre variations.

The Etruscan aristocrat luxurious life, his banqueting, hunting, and love-making, is pictured on tomb walls (the most famous is the Tomba Della bighe of corneto). Sports, wall paintings reveal, figured prominently, especially wrestling and chariot racing. But aristocrats were spectators; apparently boxers, wrestlers and charioteers were drawn only from the lower class and slaves, as were dancers and other entertainers. Famous for their ability to handle and breed horses, the Etruscans probably introduced cavalry drills and chariot races to the peninsula.

Gladiatorial combat may have originated with the sacrificial offering of a human being, usually a prisoner of war, at the funeral of a distinguished chieftain. In time, captives were given a sporting chance for survival they were armed and loosed on each other at the burial tomb. The “winner”, if there was one, lived at least until the next interment.

Republic and Empire

The absolute monarchy introduced by the Etruscans gave way to the republic of the Romans, their successors. The senate or council of fathers, whose members were patricians, or nobles, was retained. Officials were chosen by the other legislative division, the assembly, to which the plebeians, exploited by the patricians, demanded that all laws be put into written form. Between

452 and 450 B.C, a commission produced the twelve tables the basis of all Roman law including the Justinian code the roman intellect's greatest contribution to western civilization.

Carthage the Macedonian empire (including Athens), Gaul Britain all fell before the aggressive republic. But during its last hundred years the republic was racked by civil strife, in part the consequence of conflicting ideals and ambition. During this period many famous names were written on history's pages- Cicero, Pompey, Caesar, brurus, crassus, Lepidus, Anthony, Octavius.

Octavius survived the civil wars and emerged supreme. As augustus he accepted supreme power from the senate. During his regin (31 B.C-A.D 4) rome reached the height of its glory. He bequeathed to his successors an empire so well organized that, despite many utterly incompetent rulers, it thrived for almost two centuries. And it was only after another 250 years that the last chapter was written. Rome succumbed finally to the barbarian onslaught. In 455 all that remained of the empire was rome itself, and in that year rome was completely sacked by the vandals.

Education during the Republic

At first the father (who often depended on a slave-tutor) was responsible for his son's education formal schools did not exist. For three hundred years the "academic curriculum" consisted chiefly of the twelve tables, which had to be memorized. Some use was made of biographical and traditional material relating to early roman heroes, real and fictitious. Unlike the Greeks, the romans had not produced a rich literature. Not until the early years of the empire was the Aeneid written. Early republican romans had no equivalent to the iliad and the odyssey.

The twelve tables provided a guide to, if not a complete expression of roman ideals. Hence roman education was very practical, based in large part on the definition of property rights it was largely from these laws that the roman derived his concept of individuality and his code of ethics.

In his sixteenth or seventeenth year the roman youth became a full-fleged citizen (toga virilis and was subject to military training instruction in the use of weapon and tactics and conditioning exercise.

Education during Empire

The Greeks, vanguised in the Macedonian wars, exerted a profound influence on roman education. By the middle of the second century B.C a school system which provided elementary, secondary, and higher education was well established. Most parents sent their sons and daughters to elementary schools, but some citizens preferred the old system of instruction at home.

In the elementary school (ludus) reading, writing, and some arithmetic were taught by a slave or a freedman. Seutonious refers to these as the schools of literators or grammatists. There was also a higher type of elementary school in which latin and greek (and the odyssey in translation) were taught. By 150 B.C latin literature translated from, or written in imitation of, the greek provided the basis of grammar school of rhetoricians, where he was trained in oratory and debate. Grammarians also taught in these schools.

Philosophy was emphasized in higher education. Wealthy romans Hired greek tutors and sent their sons to greek universities, usually Athens or Rhodes, to complete their education. Cicero was 27 when he studied at Athens and Caesar 25 when he attended Rhodes to study rhetoric.

Considering the times, the universities of Athens was large. Theophratus, who had succeeded Aristotle as a professor, drew more than 200 students, many from other countries, some of them poor. Students who could afford to stay for the year dressed alike and attended the same lectures. Physical and military exercises were required “subjects”. Like theology in the middle ages, philosophy was the keenest intellectual exercise and the only source of light on the problems of life and destiny.

Education of Roman Women

A plebeian girl was trained in household chores by her mother; the patrician girl was educated at home by a slave or in a coeducational school. Music and dancing (rhythmical movements of the upper part of the body and the arms) were emphasized. She learned to play and sing with the lute or lyre.

Parents sought to assure their daughter a happy and early marriage. For most roman girls marriage was a sudden release from surveillance and restriction. As a matron she has full authority in her home and was never secluded. She could attend a banquet or the circus, solicit votes for her husband in the streets, make speeches, dress according to her taste, and belong to any religious group. Many roman women worked as seamstresses, weavers, or fishmongers. Others were physicians, lawyers, managers of estates, and business executives. The story of the influence of women on roman politics will never be fully known.

Roman Physical and Military Education

Campus Martius

Named in honor of the god of war, the campus martius was a 300 acre, level plain between the Tiber River and the Capitoline and quirinal hills that served as an assembly point for men called to arms and a place to conduct military exercises and maneuvers.

Here, in the days of the republic, young men ran foot races, boxed, wrestled, threw the discus and javelin, and practiced archery. They played several ball games, including one similar to handball.

The campus martius was the site also of festivals and games. One of the oldest roman festivals was the equiria, a horse race run over the plain. Suetonius describes the spectacular games held there in honor and cavalry drills. And there was a hand battle between two “armies” of 500 foot soldiers, 30 cavalry and 20 elephants.

The Juvenes

During his reign augustus promoted the juvenes, clubs organized for the purpose of training the sons of patricians for civil and military service. In organization and spirit they resembled to some extent the modern boy scouts, except, of course, for the class distinction. Each unit dedicated itself to a deity, a famous general or a reigning emperor. The Pompeian club, for example, was called juvenes venerii pompeiani, or the young men’s venus association. Another took the exclusive title nongenti, or the nine hundred. Each club had a president secretary, and treasurer,

and since expenses maintenance of the club building, exhibitions, and prizes were heavy the boys sought the patronage of a wealthy citizen who would repay the honor by underwriting the costs. Instruction, focused on physical and military education, resembled the type of training provided the Athenian youth during the first year of his military service. The scope of the juvenes' physical education program was probably similar to that of the greek because a gymnasium usually adjoined the clubhouse. At Pompeii the juvenes has their headquarters at the gymnasium near the amphitheater in the older part of the city; they also owned an up-to-date gymnasium with elaborate baths and a clubhouse. Members were taught to use weapons of all types, often by ex-gladiators. Although augustus forbade the nobility to appear in the arena, some older boys who were club champions did fight I gladiatorial contests.

The roman baths

Rome boasted many public baths, and the ruins of some of the great building that housed the baths, or *thermae*, testifies to the love of luxury prevalent during imperial days. Many baths were combinations of library, gymnasium, garden, and lecture room, and some even had handball courts. A bather could progress from a hot to a tepid pool and finally finish with a brisk, cool immersion. Some of the more famous baths were the brisk, cool immersion. Some of the more famous baths were the *tyus*, Trajan, Caracalla, and Diocletian, the baths of Caracalla, which could accommodate 16,000 people at one time, measured a mile in circumference. Its many apartments, which contained pools of various temperatures, were adorned with paintings, stuccowork, and statuary. During the middle ages the beautiful baths of the Western Roman Empire were abandoned, but the custom was preserved in the eastern empire and adopted by the Mohammedans.

Greco-roman shows

These games held every four years included athletics, musical and equestrian competition, and a regatta. Victors received crowns and bore the title of *Actiads*. Greco-roman games, however, were considered by the masses tame and boring to the exciting and spectacular shows of the circus and the amphitheater. Now these days Greco-roman is a style of wrestling that is practiced worldwide. It was contested at the first modern Olympic games in 1896 and has been included in every edition of the summer Olympic held since 1908.

The games of the Amphitheather

The most important t shows were the *venationes*, the hunt for wild beasts. In these, spectators witnessed full-scale hunts by experts; sometimes they were treated to animals hunting and killing their Natural prey. Later the game was reversed so that beasts "hunted" men , often unarmed.

The Gladiators

Gladiatorial exhibitions, which had been popular among the Etruscans, were not revived by the romans until the middle the middle of the second Century B.C. these affairs were financed first by wealthy citizens and later by the state. Augustus provided funds for extraordinary shows" and set aside the month of December for gladiatorial exhibitions at public expense. All other gladiatorial shows were financed by public officials and private citizens.

During the republic most gladiators were drawn from prisoners of war who preferred death at the sword to slavery. As the demand for this type of entertainment increased training schools were established during the time of Sulla, in which slaves were prepared for this "profession". Under Augustus and after criminals (usually noncitizens) were sentenced to the arena or to become the hunted in the venationes. Roman citizens, both men and women, who sought a means of expiation or notoriety, volunteered for the arena. They were called *auctorati*, or volunteer gladiators.

Imperial training schools for gladiators were operated at public expense and were supervised by public officials. In addition, many private schools were financed by wealthy citizens to supply their own exhibitions. The schools produced efficient and deadly fighting machines. Gladiators were supervised by a trainer (*lanistae*) who maintained strict discipline, checked diet and sleep, prescribed regular exercise, and provided instruction in the use of weapon by experts (doctors).

Classification of gladiators

Three pairs of gladiators fought at the funeral games of Brutus Pera (264 B.C.); as many as 500 pairs fought at exhibitions in the late empire. Gladiators were classified according to weapons and when they appeared on exhibition. The *Secutores* were armed with a sword (*gladius*) and a type of mace loaded with lead. The *thraeces* carried a scimitar, like those used by the Thracians. The *myrmillio* were armed with a shield and a short scythe and wore a distinctive fish ornament on their helmets. The *dying gaul* represents a *myrmillo*. The *remertiarii* carried a trident in one hand, a net in the other. *Retiarii* carried a trident in one hand, a net in the former, with his trident and net, pursued the latter, he cried out. "I do not want you, gaul, but your dish!" the *hoplomachi*, as the Greek name implies, were dressed in full armor and carried sword and shield. There were many other classifications for example, the *caesariani*, who because of their bravery and skill fought only in exhibitions attended by the emperor, and the *catervarii*, gladiators chosen from the various classifications to fight as a troop.

By selective matching of these different types, it was possible to enhance the novelty of combat and vary the mode of death. Usually it was the people who decided the fate of the wounded combatant. If he had conducted himself with courage and skill, his pardon was granted. If he had shown cowardice, his death was a foregone conclusion. Spectators indicated "let him live" by displaying the hand with by extending the hand with the thumb raised and pointing toward the wounded gladiator.

The ancient Olympic Games were a series of athletic competitions among representatives of various city-states of ancient Greece. They were held in honor of Zeus, and the Greeks gave them a mythological origin. Historical records indicate that they began in 776 BC in Olympia. They continued to be celebrated when Greece came under Roman rule, until the emperor Theodosius I suppressed them in 394 AD as part of the campaign to impose Christianity as the state religion of Rome. The games were usually held every four years, or *Olympiad*, which became a unit of time in historical chronologies.

The Roman Empire was in many ways the heyday of the ancient Olympic festival. The prominence it enjoyed was part of a wider pattern of the flourishing of Greek culture, and especially Greek athletics, under Roman rule. Nearly every Greek city had its own athletic festival, and prominent athletes were international stars, travelling far and wide across the

Mediterranean world in pursuit of successive victories. The gymnasium continued to be one of the key institutions of higher education for young men in Greek cities. The Greek art and literature of the Roman Empire return again and again to the subject of athletic competition and training, idealizing it and satirizing it. Olympia was at the heart of those developments: It was supported by successive emperors; and it continued to draw athletes and spectators from across the Roman world.

From 776 BC, when the Olympic Games were first established by the Greeks, until the 4th century BC this sacred institution managed to remain unaffected by historical circumstance, but after the death of Alexander the Great, the prestige of the Olympic Games began to fade. The Romans, who had already taken over Greece in 146 BC, were considered to be Greek descendants and were allowed to take part in all of the national sports events. That's when the first professional athletes made their appearance. We now know that they had formed their own trade unions and held considerable political power. They were paid to take part in the most significant sporting events (Olympia, Pithia, Nemea, Isthmia etc) and they literally offered their services to the city that was willing to pay the most money, trading on victories and defeats in the exact same fashion.

During the Mithridatic Wars, L. Cornelius Sulla sacked the sanctuary and moved the 175th Olympiad to Rome (80 BC). For the next few years the Olympic Games were diminished to a local sports event.

But after these years of decline, the Olympic Games had a second heyday during the Roman Empire. After the political and social conditions went back to normal during the reign of Emperor Augustus, the temple of Olympia, and the Olympic Games, started flourishing again - both financially and culturally. There are records of M. Vipsanius Agrippa, the Emperor's general and son-in-law, visiting the area while extended restoration works were carried out at the sanctuary that was to play such an important part in the newfound international appeal of the Games. The chariot races that were once banned were now back in the Olympic schedule with several members of the imperial family taking part, e.g. Emperor Tiberius, who won the 194th Olympiad (4 BC).

According to the numerous pedestals and inscriptions bearing the names of members of the imperial family, Olympia continued to enjoy the emperors' favor, even when Augustus's successors ascended the throne. Tiberius's adoptive son Germanicus continued in the same fashion, winning the chariot races in the 199th Olympiad (17 BC). Unfortunately not all Roman interest in the Olympic Games had positive results. Emperor Nero's morbid love of Greece resulted in a chronological disruption, something that had never happened before. The 211th Olympiad not only took place two years too late but it also included a musical contest and a chariot race with ten-horse chariots, so that Nero could obtain all of six victories and become the most successful Olympic champion of all time, even though historical sources revealed that his voice was horribly off key. After he passed away that particular Olympiad was stricken off record and was thereafter referred to as the Unolympiad.

