

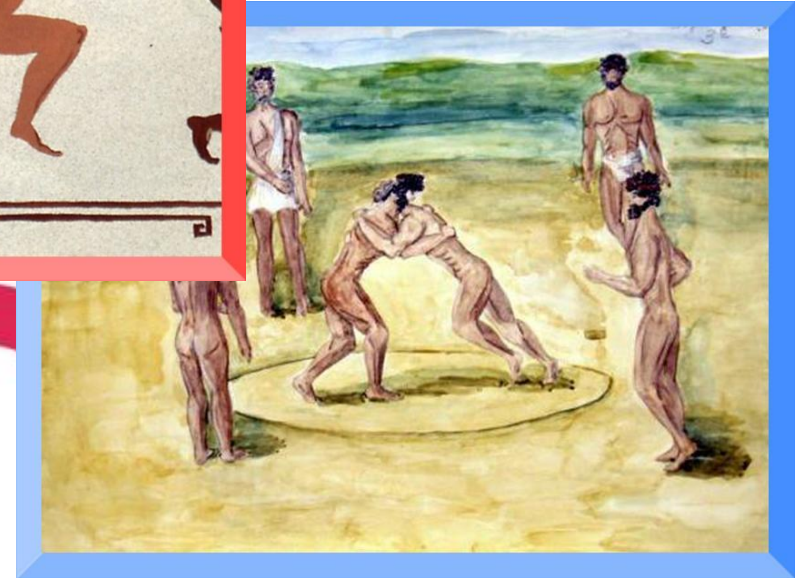
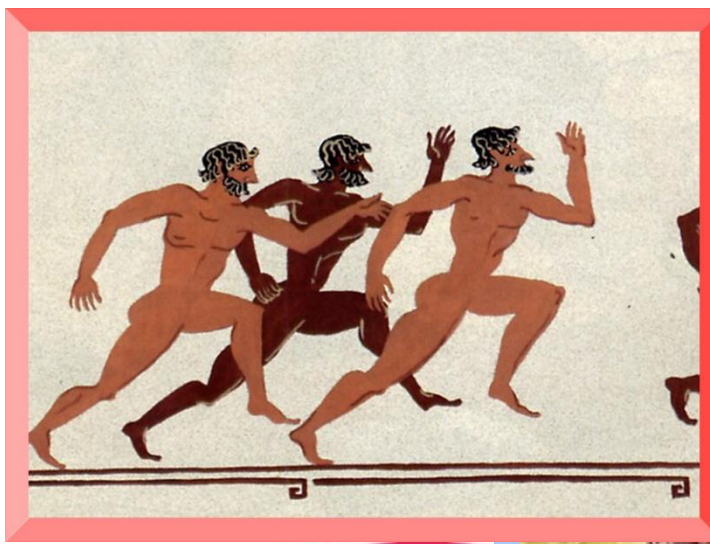
the Olympic Games



Games appearance



Long ago ancient Greeks often waged wars. Small states suffered and lost much even if they did not take any side and stayed out of wars. The ruler of such a small state, Elis, wanted to live in peace with all neighbours. He was a good diplomat because his negotiations were successful and Elis was recognized a neutral state. To celebrate this achievement, he organized athletic games.



In the beginning this feast lasted one day, but later a whole month was devoted to it. All wars and feuds were stopped by special heralds who rode in all directions of Greece.

The games were held every four years in Olympia on the territory of Elis. The first games which later were called the Olympic Games were held about a thousand years before our era.

Usually the Olympic Games began before the middle of the summer^ Best athletes arrived from many Greek states to Olympia to compete in running, long jumps, throwing of discus and javelin and wrestling. In the course of time fist fighting (boxing) and chariot races were also included in the Games.





All athletes took an oath that they had been preparing well for the Games and promised to compete honestly and keep the rules of the sacred Olympics. The athletes took part in all kinds of competitions. Winners were called «olympionics», they were awarded olive wreaths and cups of olive oil. This tradition has survived. In our time sportsmen often get cups and wreaths for winning the first place in sports competitions.

The olympionics of ancient Greece became very popular. Best craftsmen were chosen to make honorary cups, many poets wrote and recited in public poems about the best athletes. Sculptors made their statues which were put up at the birthplace of the winners. The Olympic Games were accompanied by arts festivals. Poets recited their poems, singers sang hymns dancers danced and orators pronounced speeches — all this in honour of the sacred Games.

