

SPORT CONTESTS, GAMES AND PHYSICAL EXERCISES ON THE TERRITORY OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE

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ABSTRACT. The aim of this research is to bring the history of sport and physical education in the Roman Empire to the current knowledge. The intrinsic value of written and archaeological sources about ancient roman sports is great. Some literary, epigraphic and numismatic sources, those that are direct sources cannot be disputed. They must be taken as such. Archaeological sources, which are certainly more numerous and more widespread, can be interpreted both in terms of representation and interpretation. At the same time, however, the advertising policy of sports becomes difficult to understand, although it is comparable to nowadays policy, based more on interpretation.

Keywords: stadium, pugilat fighting, duumvirate, pancratium, pentathlon, palaestra.

REZUMAT. *Întregerile cu caracter sportiv, jocurile publice și exercițiile fizice pe teritoriul imperiului roman.* Scopul lucrării este acela de a aduce istoria sportului, a educației fizice din Imperiul Roman, la nivelul cunoștințelor actuale despre acest subiect. Valoarea intrinsecă a surselor scrise și arheologice antice despre sportul roman este mare. Unele surse literare, epigrafice și numismatice, cele care sunt surse directe nu pot fi disputate. Acestea trebuie să fie luate așa cum sunt scrise. Sursele arheologice, care sunt cu siguranță mai numeroase și mai răspândite, pot fi interpretate atât în termeni de reprezentare și de interpretare. În același timp, politica de publicitate a sportului devine greu de înțeles, deși este comparabil cu politica de astăzi, bazată mai mult pe interpretare.

Cuvinte-cheie: stadium, pugilat, duumvirat, pancrațiu, pentatlon, palestra.

Introduction

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Physical education and sport contests had an important place in the life of the Empire's inhabitants. Physical activities and sports competitions were very numerous and complex, starting from the simple movement outdoors (running, marching, swimming) to systematically organized activities, that are linked to certain political and religious events or to public sports competitions (wrestlings, racings, fights in the amphitheatre etc.) and to activities that had either a luxury character (dance) or were involving large material investments (tourism trips).

The roman state initiated, encouraged, popularized and financed many of these sport activities, having the obvious tendency to ensure the population with fun and relaxation; among donors was the emperor; so the funding has become a policy of the state.

The roman state supported or facilitated the sport advertising and especially of public games, either by building sports bases (stadiums, circuses, amphitheatres) along the length of the roman state (and especially in its western part where there was a taste for such events), either by advertising sports through monetary shows, inscriptions, models of action.

Along with the state and taking his model, the private entrepreneurs started to make publicity to physical activities by art (paintings, mosaics, sculptures) of different sport events (especially carts racings and gladiator fights) or producing many artefacts with representations related to various sports (luxury vessels of clay or glass, patterns of clay for cakes or bread, statues of bronze, clay, lead, bone, etc. representing fighters. Such sports and games (especially the popular ones) had reached through the way of art or artifacts all over the Empire, especially in its European and North-African parts.

The current status of researches

For the period we are interested in sports movement in Roman antiquity, we are talking about the Roman Empire that had its beginnings in the late first century BC and it touched its apogee at the end of the fourth century (after that it was dismembered).

In the early first century AD. Empire held in an organized way, only Italy, Hispania, Gaul, Greece, Cilicia, Crete and North Africa. In the first century were conquered Noricum, Dalmatia, Rhaetia, Germany, Britannia, Moesia and Thracia. In the second century were conquered Dacia, Mesopotamia, and Armenia. The Roman Empire reached the apogee of its extent. At the end of

the third century began territorial losses which were never recovered: Dacia, Germany Higher part = Agri Decumates, Armenia (*Bechert 1999*, passim). However, in these first four centuries the Roman Empire was extent on three continents: Europe (western, central and south-east, from Britannia to the Black Sea and Aegean Sea), North Africa, from Gibraltar to the mouth of the Nile, Asia Minor and the Arabian territories (Syria, Lebanon, Palestine). This territory was divided into provinces which were called after the people who lived there. In I-III centuries, there were 50 provinces; in the fourth century (after 285) were reorganized 101 and then 117 provinces (*ECR*, p 630-631, *Bechert 1999*, pp. 5-13). During this period, the Roman state was led in a centralized way, in two forms: in I-III centuries, principality (*Cizek 2002*, pp. 237-250) and IV-VI centuries, domination (*Cizek 2002*, pp. 524-642). Octavianus, nephew of Julius Caesar called himself princeps, and the first three centuries have been known since antiquity "principality". Year 27 BC. is widely and traditionally considered the beginning of the Roman Empire.

Principality was an authoritarian monarchy with extended juridical status from republican epoch (*ECR*, p 614-626). Under the principality, they have kept the old republican institutions, but new institutions and adequate bureaucracy appeared. Under domination, the leadership of the state became totalitarian (*ECR*, p 267-276) and only the name of old institutions were preserved, all of them becoming subordinating tools of the dominus.

In general, the roman state, based on a strong and permanent army also emphasized physical training of youth, organizing and always inventing new branches of physical education.

Moreover, forms of physical education, sports, began to be publicized through all forms of propaganda. G.W. Weeber (*Weeber 1994*) declares in his book that the development of physical exercises and sport has become a policy of the Roman state and that representations relating to sport and physical education have been promoted and supported by the State. To an analyse of representations related to sports or field (stadiums, amphitheatres, circuses) or the various artefacts related to art, games etc., his declaration becomes true.

Stadiums for running contests, circuses, amphitheatres and other similar structures were built in an overwhelming proportion. They were financed by the state (by the emperor) (*ECR*, p 731-732, 189-190). Amphitheatre number increased tenfold (*ECR*, p 53-54). No less was supported constructions of theatres for the literary performances, rhetoric, theatre itself (comedies, tragedies) (*ECR*, p 750-751). Public performances (*ECR*, p 730-731) have become widely used. The fact that they were promoted on one hand by special constructions and on

the other hand by various representations on artefacts, even by typical artefacts, led to their knowledge by large parts of the society. As all public performances demanded special trainings (trainings for leaders and animals, special schools for gladiators, schools for fighters) things have become very popular. Moreover, certain special fights were represented by some nations with their weapons. For example, between gladiators, a special place belonged to Thracian warriors, samnites, etc. Today, some representations of games or fights represents artistic patrimonies of humanity: the circus scene in the Palace of Septimius Geta in Rome, mosaic representing a stadium baths of Caracalla in Rome, mosaic of Piazza Armerina from Sicily.

A higher form of culture was the bath, which became mandatory on Romans, developing as well the health culture and other fields related to it: rhetoric, reading, gym exercises etc.

Roman Empire has developed a real strategy of shows and sports entertainments. . During the same year were forty- five days of public celebrations (*Cizek 2002*, p 271), seventy- two festive days, sixty days of public games (circus, station, amphitheatre).

Physical education (gymnastics, wrestling, riding, athletics), public games, dance and tourism in the Roman Empire

Sources of the paper

We analysed two large groups of sources: literary sources, epigraphic and numismatic on the one hand and archaeological sources on the other hand.

Many representations made of bronze (statues, chandeliers) present gladiators, gymnasts, acrobats, athletes, fighters, dancers.

There are a few representations (graphitized drawings) on the bricks with gladiators.

There are more pieces connected with brain games and gambling; bricks with the game drawn (backgammon), dice and discs made of bone, clay or glass for the movement on the board.

What do the roman written sources reveal?

The information we have gathered about the sports movement in the Roman Empire allowed us to establish six groups of activities, each of them having characteristic subgroups. We know that there is no other division of these activities, so we hope that our initiative to do so.

In literary sources, we find information about places where activities took place; various activities are defined, such as the game, nominating certain physical activities (walking, running, swimming, boxing, fights in the amphitheatre). In the epigraphic sources, we find poor data, like names of athletes or sports activities performed by a certain person.

The numismatic sources are those that are mediating the games at the Empire level, the organizers, the places where are taking place (circus, stadium, theatre) or parts of competitions (Premiers).

A detailed study of literary sources reveals information about:

- the places where physical exercises and sports took place; the most data we have are about the Field of Mars (Rome and the banks of the Tiber); here were held celebrations in honour of the god and practiced many races (*Lascau 1965*, 394-395, ECR 473).

- the construction of the palaestras as parts of the baths we have information from Vitruvius (V, 11, p 223-226, 256-257), quadrilateral plan with a long side; a lateral pavilion is for oil massage and for boxing exercises.

- the stadium - the stadium was a construction for athletic competitions; a construction with quadrilateral plan and a round extremity, gates at the opposite extremity with a lateral disposal (*Tudor 1976*, 95, ECR, p 732).

- the circus - the circus was the place for horse racings and carts (ludi circenses); quadrilateral construction rounded at the extremities, with stands along sides; along the stands were sandy tracks; in the middle was a higher which had protection pillars in places where carts were turning; racings included usually seven tours (*Lascau 1965*, p.405 ff, *Larousse DCR*, pp. 67-68, *Tudor 1976*, p 92-94).

- the amfiteatrum – an amphitheatre is a construction designed for combined performances (individual fights, group fights, gladiators fights, hunting wild animals, naval battle).The number of amphitheatres is very high and they are grouped mainly in West Europe. The biggest and most complex remains amphitheatre called Colosseum from Rome (cf. *SHA Claudius*, note 4, *Tudor 1976*, pp. 84-92; *Lascau 1965*, p 410, *Larousse DCR*, p 22, ECR, p 53 -54).

Literary information related to sports activities

(cf. *Petecel 1980*, passim)

Physical activities

Marcus Porcius Cato (234-148 BC.) in the education of his son gives strong emphasis to heat and cold resistance, swimming, riding and boxing (*Kirişescu 1964*, p 128).

Vergilius (70-19 BC.) in his opera named Eneida (VIII, verses 62-165) is mentioning riding, spear throwing at target, runnings, wrestlings, all being considered necessary to strengthening the body (*Lasca 1965*, p 353-396).

First century

Titus Livius (73 a.Chr.-17 p. Chr.). *De Urbe Condita*, cap. XII: about bulls' games, contests of athletes, lions and panthers hunting;

Ovidius (43 a.Chr.-18 p. Chr.): *Ars Amandi* I 135 about the carts racings beauty one hundred and forty seven about bets; about fights.

Horatius (65 a.Chr.-9 p. Chr.): Ode I, vers 4-12; the importance of sport and especially of swimming; he names a series of sports activities: riding, swimming, disc throwing, spear throwing, running, marching (*Lasca 1965*, p 394).

Cicero (106-43 BC.) mentions swimming as an important physical activity (*Lasca 1965*, p 395).

Seneca (2 a.Chr.-65 AD.), Ep. Luc 7 about punishing criminals as gladiators in the amphitheatre, he manifests love for athletics; about the importance of trainings (*Grimal 1960*, p 397).

Martialis (43, 104), epigrams X, 41: about the expenses with the shows, XIV, 47 about ball games, XI.1, 3 about bets, IV, 67 about awards and salaries of carts leaders, XI, 6 about the periods when the game of dice was forbidden, XII, 20.1 Domitianus Emperor forgave a defeated gladiator, XI, 1, X, 50 about the spectators worship of victorious cart leaders.

Quintilianus (35-95 AD.), a known educator, in his opera named *Ars oratorica* proposed an educational system that in which physical exercises had an important role "one hour of exercise enhances understanding, rejuvenates and refreshes" (*Kirițescu 1964*, p 137; *Rusu 2008*, p 63); Quintilianus (first century), *Oratorical Art* VI, 3, 63 about the circus behaviour, I, XI, 15-10 about dance.

Second century

Iuvenalis (55-130 AD.), III, 30 about the murder of a defeated gladiator; X, 36 about racings arbitrators; X, 75 about imperial policy "bread and games"; VII, 113-114 about hunting in the amphitheatre.

Cornelius Tacitus (55-120 AD.) underlines the importance and the value of physical exercises (*Rusu 2008*, p 63).

Petronius (first century), 27: about playing with the ball in palaestras.

Fronto (second century), *Principiae Historiae* 4, 11: about the shows.

Epictetus (50-125 AD.) wrote a manual for athletes (study of the conditions, lifestyle, and training).

Suetonius (AD 75-160.), *Vita duodeci, im Caesarum: Lives of 12 Caesars*, Aug. 6, introduced new sports; Claudius 21: how to dress for the circus ; Nero - personally led the cart for a race; Caesar 10: ordered to senators to finance the games; Claudius 21: about circus constructions; Augustus 43: plans the way of seating in the stands in the amphitheatre; Domitianus 4: about the number of rounds at the circus; Titus 6-7: about the number of killed animals; Claudius 21: gladiators salute to the emperor; Claudius 34: concern to occupy a good place in the amphitheatre.

Plinius the Younger (62-114 AD.), *Letters* IV, 22: Senate has forbidden to Vienna (Gallia) to organize "Greek" games.

Galenus (second century): about exercises with the ball, gymnastics hygiene.

Lucianus (second century): about dance.

Pausanias (second century), in the description of Greece V, 89: about pentathlon, wrestling /fighting, cart racings, pancratiun, running with arms.

Third century

Dio Cassius (163-235), *Roman History*, LIV,10: the importance of sports performances to the society; LII, 30 circus games; battles offered by Traianus; LIV 17 the emperor behaviour at the shows; LII, 30 the maintain of valuable athletes; awards for victorie.

Tertullianus (115/160-240/250), *De spectacula*; describes the circus, the stadium, the amphitheatre, mostlywith their negative parts.

Dio Cassius LXII, 15 mentions an organizer of games under Nero: Tigelinus, prefect of the praetorium.

Philostratos (end of the third century – start of the fourth century), author of a treaty "*De arte gymnastica*" including fights, pancratiun, boxing, trainings, the mental state of athletes, victory through reason.

SHA, Commodus 17: the emperor had an athlete as a trainer.

Epigraphic information

CIL X, 1074 Pompei: Aulus Claudius Flaccus organized a parade with thirty pairs of athletes, in the second year of his duumvirate.

Monuments

Pompeii: on a house door is represented an athlete who holds a palm branch in his hand after the victory; those who occupied second and third place are represented on the extremity doors (*Etienne 1970*, pp. 343-344).

Pompeii: house with mural decoration; in the back of the stage are some athletes (*Etienne 1970*, p 351).

Without going into core sports, the data provided by literary sources give very important information: about the contest places (stadium, circus, theatre), methods of construction, the organization of the stands, how the places are being occupied. There are mentioned a number of physical exercises, data about organizing performances, the behaviour during the shows etc. Unfortunately, most of them refers exclusively to Rome rather than the provinces of the empire.

Literary sources allow us to compose a list of Olympic champions during the I-III century AD. (cf. *Petecel 1980*, passim).

Polyctor fights between children OL 192 12 BC.

Nikostratos fights, pancratium, OL 204 37 AD.

Artemidorus of Tralles fights, pancratium, OL 212 69

Demonstrated of Sinope isthmian games - -

Polites of Keramos stage, running, OL 212 69

Hermogenes of Xantos stage, biathlon, running with arms OL 215 81

Sarapion of Alexandria pugilism OL 217 89

Helenius of Roma gladiator sec. I

Geranos of Naucratos fights OL 247 209

Modrogenes of Magnesia stage OL 249 217

Sarapamon of Alexandria pugilism OL 264 227

Gorgos of Elea running with weapons sec. II-III.

As we can see, the majority that are registered here have names with Greek resonance and they come from places like Greece, Southern Italy or Egypt. Area where Olympic champions are spread at this stage of knowledge is quite low. They won at sports like athletics (running, throwing, wrestling's, and boxing) or like complex sports such as biathlon, pentathlon and pancratium.

Proper games in literary sources (smart games)

Suetonius (17-160 AD.) speaks about *Iudus telus* (knucklebone game that everybody were playing, including emperors Augustus, Nero and Claudius);

Horatius (65 a.Chr.-8 AD.) Intelligence and luck games are forbidden at certain times (*Lascu 1965*, p 391-393).

Sports competitions; professional sports on inscriptions

CIL X, 1074; Aulus Claudius Fispicus, duumvirate quinquenalis in Pompeii organized a parade during the first duumvirate, with troops of pugilists and isolated pugilists; in the second duumvirate it has marched a band of pugilists at the parade.

Sports competitions; public games in literary texts

Res gestae divi Augusti, 22, 3: twenty six times, either in the circus or in the forum we have offered shows with t animals fights ; 22, 2 "I organized the games in my name for four times and for twenty three times on behalf of other magistrates; I organized the secular games (ludus seculares) and for the first time, games of Mars"; 22, 1" I offered three times gladiatorial games in my name and five times on behalf of my sons and my grandchildren "(*Zugravu 2004*, p 99).

SHA Hadrianus, 19: "organized for the people games with gladiators, that he attend himself ".

SHA Commodus, 11: under Nero, games were held for 4-6 days, and the carts racings, wrestling with beasts, gladiator fights.

Dio Cassius, LXI, 17: „Nero led the cart in the circus and fell off from the car ".

Dio Cassius, LXIII, 14: the emperor (Lucius Verus) loved carts racings and he sympathized with the greens.

Representations related to sports in numismatic sources

T. Deidius (113-112 BC.) Rome, denarius, the reverse shows gladiators in battle with shields and whips (*Münzkabinett Gotha 1980*, p 31, no. 29, page 51 taf. 29).

Titus (79-81) Rome sestertius, on the observe is the representation of the amphitheatre of Rome (Colosseum) (*Münzkabinett Gotha 1980*, p 40, taf. 56, no. 114);

Traianus (86-118) Rome, sestertius of 104-114, BMC 853; reverse; the representation of the circus maximus, with colonnades and quadriga (*Bauten Roms auf und Münzen Medaillen*, p 38, no. 70);

Septimius Severus (192-209); Rome, denarius from 203-208, BMC 432; reverse ship moved by oars, lower register; above carts racings; under various wild animals (*Bauten Roms auf und Münzen Medaillen*, p 39, no. 71);

Tertullianus and Christian reaction against performances and sports competitions

Tertullianus, first Christian author of the Latin language in Africa; fundamentalist; militant opera against declined morals, against pagans, against Jews, against heretics, against kind Christians (*Larousse DCR*, p 195-196). In his work about the shows, he makes a harsh criticism against them, against the organizers and spectators. On this occasion, he provides important data about all these components:

The organization of games (VII, 2-3, 4): the organization of the games in Rome and in the provinces; the series of the statues, the parade of the images, triumphal carts , sacred carts ,closed carts drawn by elephants , thrones, crowns, rituals and sacrifices; in the provinces there are organized with a little less effort.

The circus: wall that crosses it, statues columns, altars (VIII, 1).

XVIII, 1 - what happens on the stadium: fists, feet, aggression; all forms of human facial disfigurement; racings, runnings, spear throwings, jumpings;

XXX, 5: beatings with fists and fights (not a few, but many).

XVIII, 3: the specific gesture of the fighter was character of the snake: strong in tightening, coiled to keep connected, slippery to escape.

XXVIII, 4: you sigh after the scenes, after the circus landmarks, after the dust and sand.

Amphitheatre

XII, 7, XX, 4: amphitheatre is the temple of all demons; archways, solar screen.

Way of running the circus

XV, 1: horse, carts drawn by four horses, carts drawn by two horses, coachmen dressed in colours.

IX, 5: the praetor rotates the urn with stones chosen by chances.

XXII, 2: carts leaders, actors, gymnasts, wrestlers in the arena.

XXIII, 2: the leader that is causing the outbreak.

Audience

XVI, 1: at the circus the unleashes yelling it really reigns; the unleashed crowd comes shouting, filled with frenzy.

XXV, 2: exaggerated trimmings of the women and men characterize the show.

Athletes

XXII, 2: they are so loved ... the men lay at their feet their souls, and women (and even men) their bodies.

Dance: dance can be grouped as public entertainment and dance as a part of pantomime.

Literary sources

Seneca (2-65 AD.); mentions the dance (*Lasclu 1965*, p 395-396).

Horatius (65 a.Chr.-9 AD.) mentions dance as a form of decadence (*Lasclu 1965*, p 396).

Suetonius (75-160): Emperor Caligula was a great dancer (*Lasclu 1965*, p 391).

Tacitus (55-120 AD.) mentions several dance styles (*Lasclu 1965*, p 398).

Dio Cassius, LX, 7, Note 4: under Nero, children who had been called to learn the pyric dance have played it only once (warrior dance, dance with swords and fake a fight).

SHA, Hadrianus, 19: the emperor organized for the people warrior dance performances, being a witness himself.

Special studies regarding different Roman sports

amphitheatre amphitheatre, in *DACL I.2*, 1024, col. 1618-1682

athleta 1877 atleta, in *DAGR I.1*, 1877, p. 515-521

athleta 1924 atleta, in *DACL II.2*, 1924, col. 3105-3111

gladiator gladiator, in *DA II.2*, 1896, p. 1562-1599

gladiator 1924 gladiator, in *DACL VI.1*, 1924, col. 1275-1283

Tourism

Tourism was never considered between physical exercises and sports from antiquity. Probably also because in modern sports entered later. General paper works about ancient civilization (*Lasclu 1965*, p 354-387) but, mostly related to travelling and transportation from antiquity ,have managed, systematically analysing the sources, to identify different types of journeys: business journeys, diplomatic journeys, inspections on the one hand and, on the other hand, pleasure journeys (of education, tourism itself and pilgrimage).

- **villegiatura:** Horatius (63 a.Chr.-9 AD.), journey from Rome to Brindisi (approximative 250 km) indicating the roads, hotels, restaurants, historical localities.

- journeys of the provincials from Gaul and Africa to Italy and Aquileia (*Chevalier 1988*, p 13).

- **historical tourism**

- visiting the colossus from the Mnemon (*Chevalier 1988*, p 299-309).

- visiting the mosaics from Sicily: Piazza Armerina (*Chevalier 1988*, p 316-318).

- visiting the villas of Cicero (*Chevalier 1988*, p 337-340).

- **visiting natural curiosities**

- volcanoes and special waters (*Chevalier 1988*, p 310-312).

- **information and cultural journeys**

Plutarch (46-120), Aemilius, 6: writes that Aemilius Paulus ordered that his son, accompanied by specialized tax collectors should visit Macedonia and the library of Perses.

Philostratos (170 -?), Vita Apolonii I, 20: Apollonius travelled from Athens to India, and the border post (Syria) was cleared customs (*Gudea 1986*, p 87-125).

- **journeys of scientific interest**

Plinius the Elder, Historia Naturalia V, 9-10 says that in times when Scipio Aemilianus was governor of Africa, Polibius made a boat trip in order to find out the outline of Africa (*Chevalier 1988*, p 345).

- **religious tourism / pilgrimages**

Titus Livius, XXVII, 35, 3 L. Manlius was sent to the Olympic Games (*Chevalier 1988*, p 372).

- pilgrimages to oracles e.g. Oracle of Delphi (*Chevalier 1988*, p 384-385).

- travels of the Apostle Paul (*Chevalier 1998*.p. 384-385).

- pilgrimages to sacred places, to the the tombs of saints (*Chevalier 1988*, p 392-393).

Reviewing the data offered by the five groups of sources that certifies activities considered as "sportive" has allowed us a number of legal findings related to the literary certified documentary about sport:

- at present, there are numerous data related to the official development places: stadium, circus and amphitheatre, relatively accurate as technical information; less data exist about the free events (Olympic-type) and those who were held in the large baths of the palaestras.

- there are data about the financing and the organization of the games where the emperor had a great role, followed by all magistrates.

- there was a calendar of public games; some dates were fixed, other had happened during certain events (victories in wars, anniversaries of different characters, born of the throne etc.)

- data are given separately in connection with certain athletes; for example, under Tiberius, was a famous gladiator Castro, due to the scandals he used to cause (Dio Cassius, LVII, 14, note 72), the popularity of sports boxer, gladiators, carts leaders was very large; they were sung by poets.

- there are many data about the rewards they received.

- there is also data about the audience, supporters of fighters or leaders of carts.

Technical and historical perspective of sport based on data provided by archaeology

Based on illustrations that we have studied, it can be completed what is known from written sources:

- first of all, after studying these illustrations and representations, the conclusion is that sport was very popular; the advertising materials circulated over large areas of the Empire, representations were made on very different artefacts from all areas and on monuments of art "(some of them visited as tourist destinations: e.g. Piazza Armerina in Sicily with its mosaics).

- secondly, we can remark how important were the rewards, either honorary reward (consisting of olive or palm branches) or cups of bronze, silver or gold, or even money.

- the various way of the publicity by different forms of art, artefacts, jewellery, gifts.

Conclusions

Luxury terra sigillata vessels, especially those produced in Gaul, during the second and third centuries, were spread throughout the empire, bringing with them nearly every scene of ancient sports. Theirs spreading may be a sign that all or many sports have come to the attention of people in the farthest corners of the empire, especially in its western part.

It is obvious that, after the demonstrations made especially by Weeber, the Roman state, the emperor and those around him, have financially supported, directly or indirectly, sports, building in the same time sporting

facilities (stadiums, circuses, amphitheatres) and they also financed and the games. In this process, they have attracted individual persons (animals' capturers, conveyors to the bases of games, animal maintenance, schools for athletes and for gladiators).

From all sports events in the Roman Empire, certified both in written sources and archaeological, we chose a limited number (as many as were necessary to be able to study the similitude of the process in the Dacian provinces) but enough, we believe, to show the proportion of sports movement in the empire, the variety of sports, the popularity of sports and athletes of certain specialties, the realism that some sports have been described both in written sources and archaeological representations.

It is obvious that the sports movement was financed by the state (by the emperor) for the physical preparation of young people and especially in the interest of imperial dynasties. Maintaining a sporting spirit, be it physically through movement and through intelligence was well distributed policy over three centuries of the empire.

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