

# CLAS 0210

## Sport in the Ancient Greek World



Class 15

Wednesday 12 October

The Pythian Games and  
the site of Delphi



759 - ΔΕΛΦΟΙ. Ἡ Ἱερὰ Ὀδὸς καὶ ὁ Θησαυρὸς τῶν Ἀθηναίων.  
DELPHE. La Voie Sacrée et le Trésor des Athéniens.





# Delphi

stadium

museum

theater

temple of Apollo



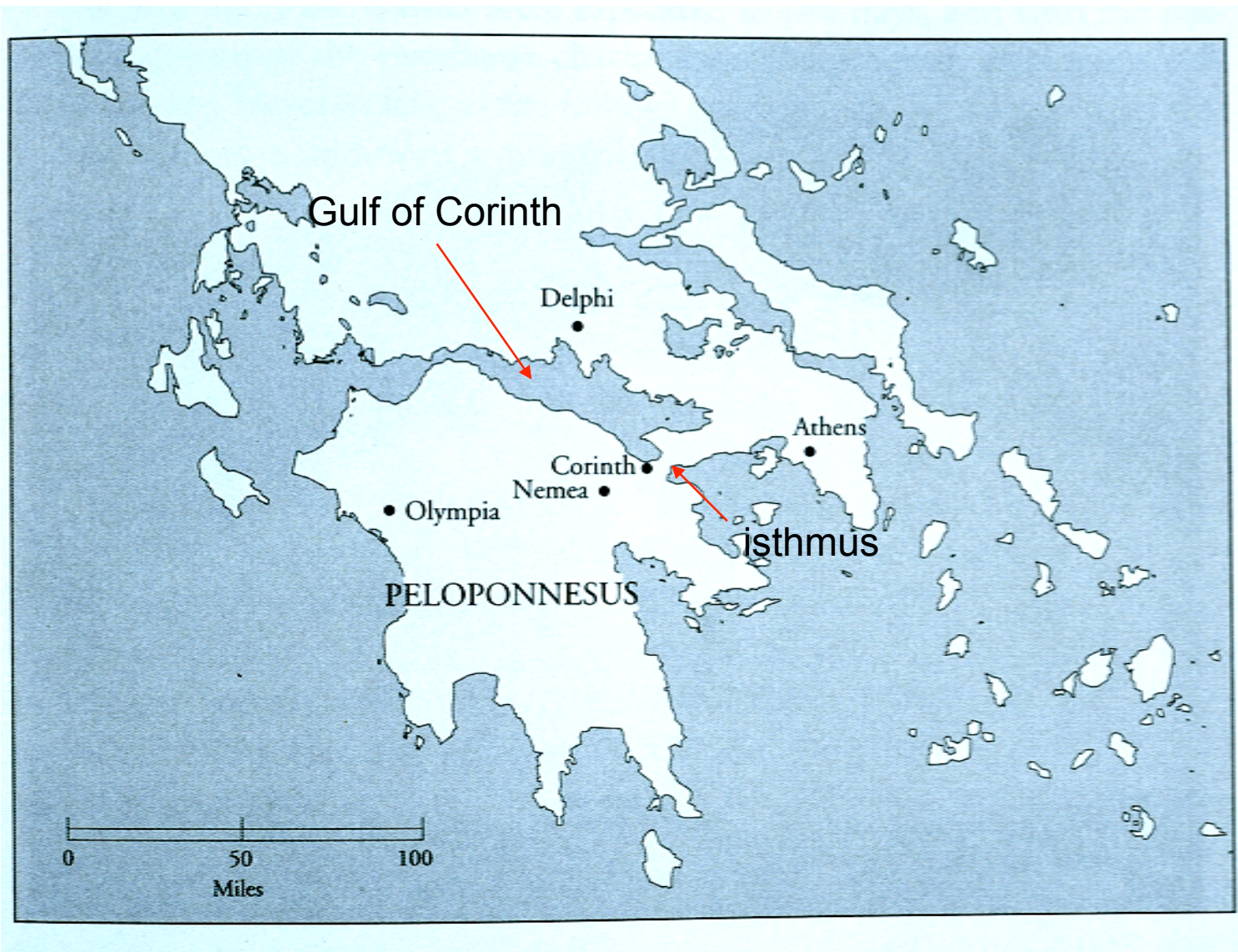






Image NASA  
Image © 2008 TerraMetrics  
Image © 2008 DigitalGlobe

©2007 Google™

Pointer 38°28'15.29" N 22°29'17.66" E elev 121 m Streaming |||||100%

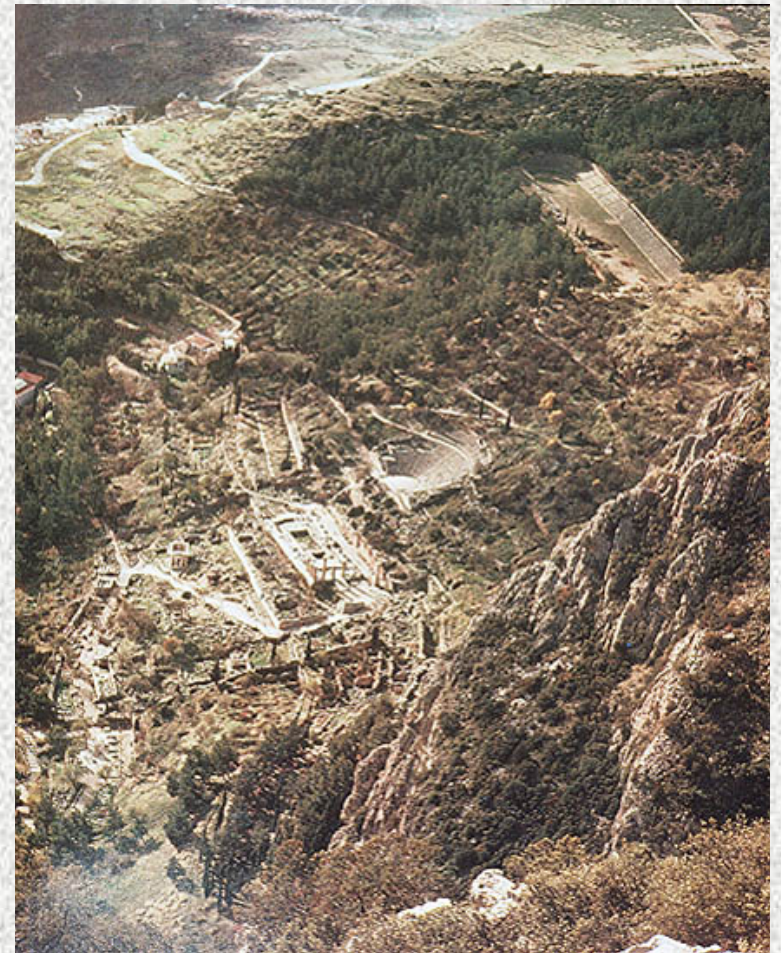
Eye alt 5.98 km





Delphi's landscape setting

Beneath the cliffs of Mt. Parnassus







Roman copy

- The omphalos (navel-stone) marking the center of the world at Delphi



# Temple of Apollo





# Temple of Apollo

- Earliest temple: wooden
- First stone temple 7th century BC (burned down in 548 BC)
- Second stone temple built ca. 500 BC (destroyed by landslide)
- Third stone temple finished ca. 305 BC (what you see today)



# Oracle of Apollo

priestess (pythia)







Red-figure vase showing the Pythia seated on the Delphic tripod, with a priest



Did the Pythia inhale ethylene??



# Aetiological myths of Delphi

---

- Apollo comes to power by slaying the python...  
“the reddish-scintillating serpent in the shade of the luxurious laurel-tree, the earth-born, huge-bodied monster, guardian of the oracle” [Euripides].
- This killing required purification: Apollo goes into exile in Thessaly, where he works as a slave for 8 years, to atone for the blood he had shed.
- The earliest festival at Delphi included a ritual enactment of the slaying of the python in its nest, every 8 years.



- Pre-586 BC, contests at Pythian Games probably purely musical.
- **1st Sacred War**, for control of the sanctuary and its oracle.
- Delphi taken over by the **Amphictyonic League**, which instituted the first games in 586 BC.
- Prizes initially were golden tripods, but quickly became **crowns of laurel** (in recognition of the founding myth)







# Delphi stadium



↑  
starting line





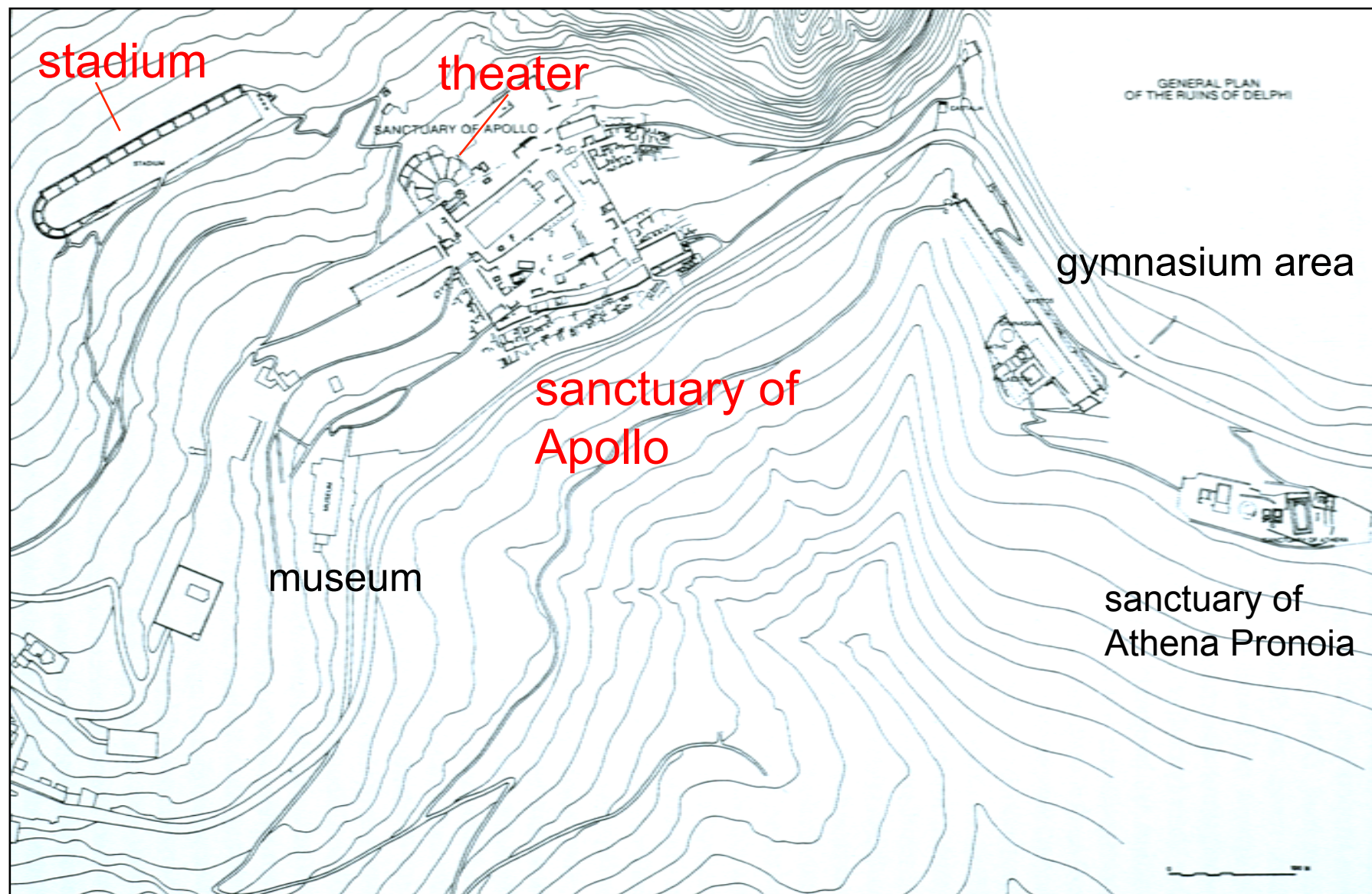


Theater at Delphi: 2nd century BC, 31 rows of seats













theater and Temple  
of Apollo

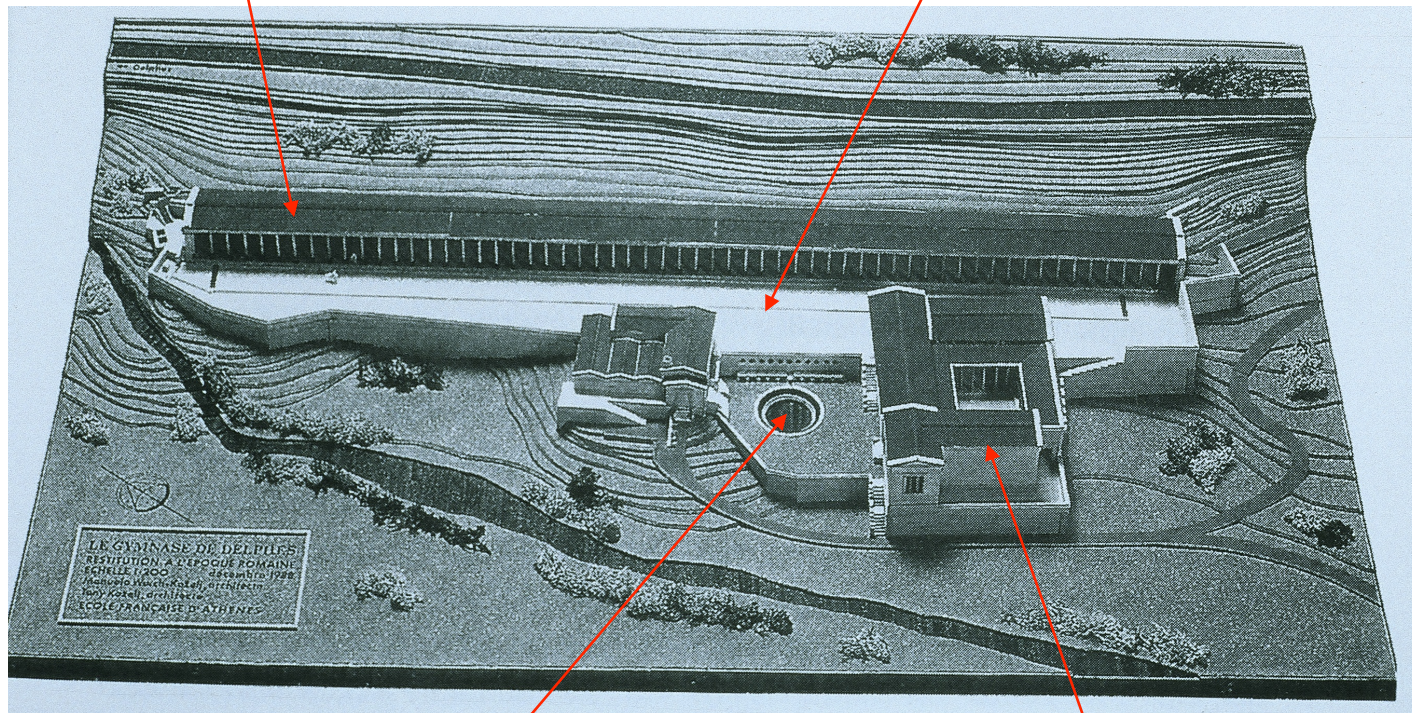
remains in  
gymnasium area



# Model of Delphi gymnasium

roofed colonnade

open-air running track



circular pool

palaistra





circular bathing pool

- running track



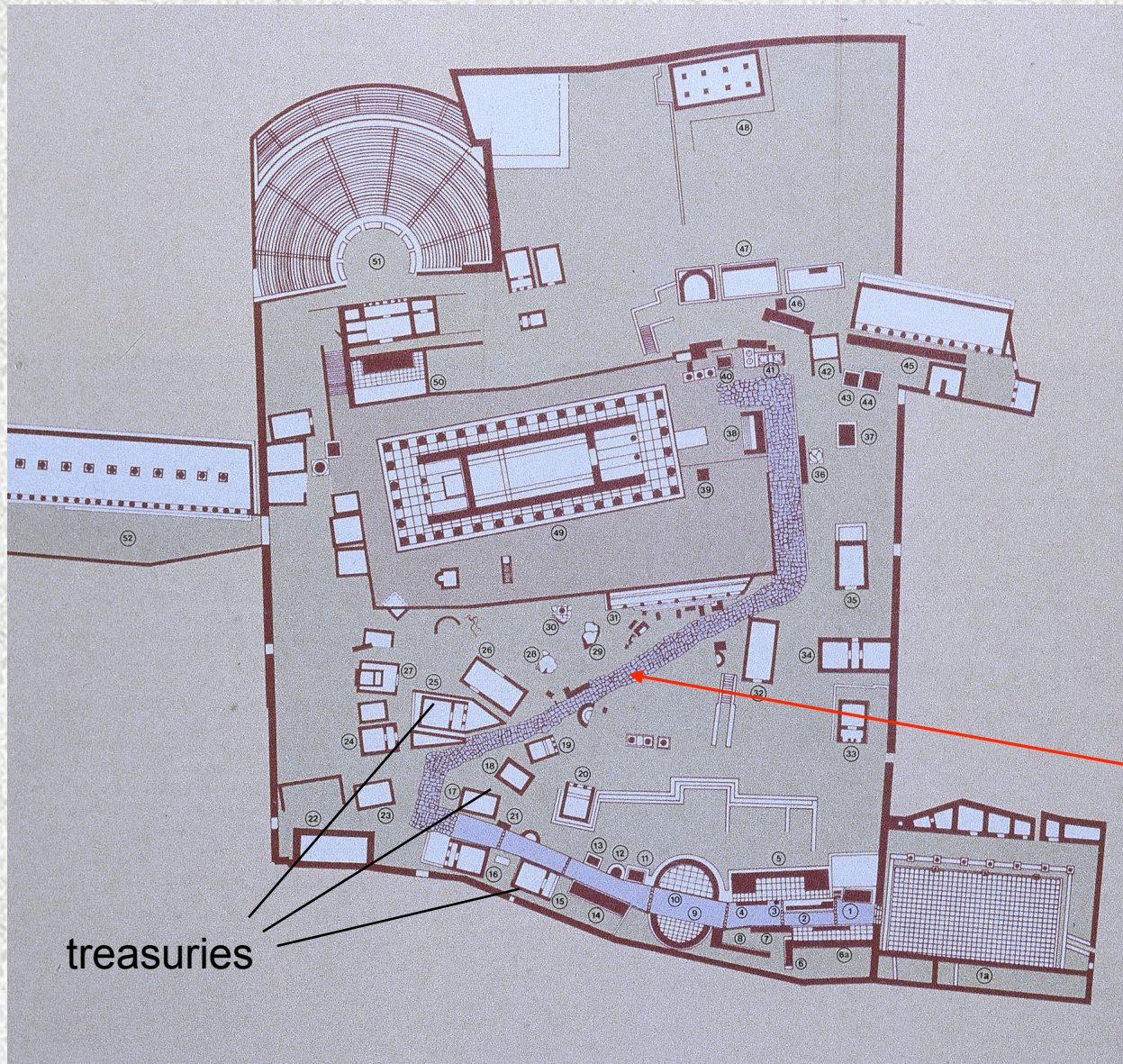




The Tholos, in the Sanctuary of Athena Pronoia



# Delphi, sanctuary plan



treasuries

Sacred  
Way





Treasury of  
the  
Athenians







Sphinx of the Naxians



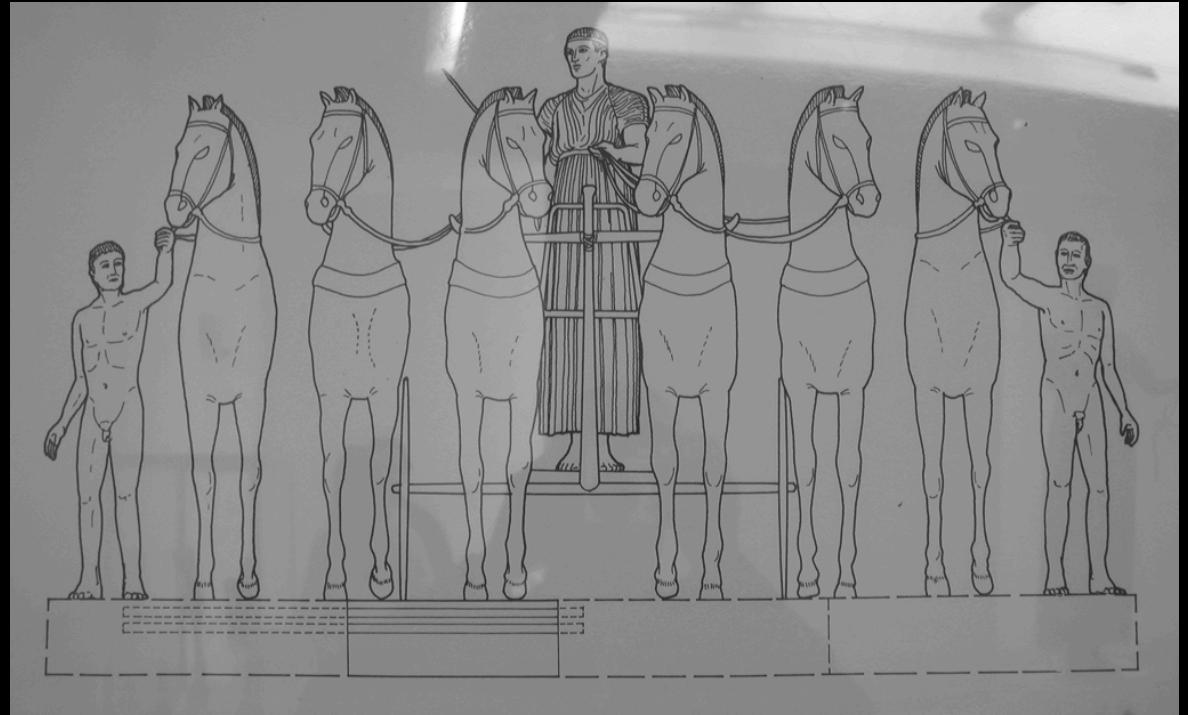
Cleobis & Biton





- Agias, the pankratiast
- by the sculptor Lysippos
- 4th century BC
- Delphi





Delphi charioteer  
ca. 470 BC



