

Citizenship and the ancient Olympic Games

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ABSTRACT

For people in antiquity, citizenship was crucial, since only citizens enjoyed full rights. Citizenship encompassed not only rights but also responsibilities, including the duty to train and be physically prepared to defend their *polis*. Citizens who neglected this duty were often labeled *idiotai*, or “untrained”. Citizenship granted access to active participation in Olympic events in the stadium, and only citizen-aristocrats could compete as horse and chariot owners in the hippodrome. This structure changed with the rise of Macedonian kings like Alexander I, Archelaus, Philip II, and significantly with Alexander the Great and his successors, who divided and ruled the vast empire he had established. This shift also transformed public perceptions of citizenship and fandom, as exemplified by the Olympic boxing match between Cleitomachus of Thebes and Aristonicus of Alexandria. With the expansion of the Roman Empire, the Games opened to other nations, and in 212 AD, Emperor Caracalla’s *Constitutio Antoniniana* (*Antonine Edict*) extended Roman citizenship to all free individuals across the empire. This development enabled athletes from across the Roman Empire to participate in the Olympic Games, broadening the event’s inclusivity beyond its traditional Greek confines.

KEYWORDS

ancient Greece; ancient Macedonia; ancient Olympic athletes; ancient Rome; athletic identity

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INTRODUCTION

The relationship between citizenship and the Panhellenic Games – especially the Olympic Games – in antiquity was fundamental, as initially only citizens, and likely only aristocrats, had active access to the competitions. Over time, the athletic and combative disciplines held in the stadiums became democratized, allowing ordinary citizens to participate and achieve victory. In response to this, the aristocracy mostly relocated to the hippodrome, competing in equestrian events through their horses

and charioteers. The next phase in the social stratification of sport came with the admission of non-Greeks – that is, foreigners – into the Games. After Greece was conquered by Macedonia and later by Rome, this rule underwent significant change. By the 3rd century AD, during the reign of the Roman Emperor Caracalla, citizenship was extended throughout the Roman Empire, rendering the earlier restrictions practically irrelevant. What had begun as a local event for Greeks alone gradually expanded over the centuries into an international spectacle open to dozens of nations. The first Olympic victor was Coroebus of Elis (a *πόλις* near Olympia, which usually organized the Games), and the last known winner was Varazdates of the Arsacid dynasty in Armenia. Generally speaking, most participants came from Greece, Macedonia, the Hellenistic states, and the Roman Empire. For most of the Games' history, the level of one's citizenship did not play a decisive role; on the contrary, Olympic victors could sometimes be granted citizenship by various city-states or cities as a reward for their glory.

Citizenship in antiquity

In ancient Greece, a full citizen (*πολίτης*) was any adult free man born to two citizen parents. In Athens, a citizen was even forbidden from marrying a foreign woman and passing her off as an Athenian. The concept of citizenship was most notably defined by Aristotle. According to him, the state is a collection of citizens who are defined by their right to participate in judicial functions and public office – that is, those who share in judicial and deliberative power. However, this also depends on the type of constitution under which the citizen lives – a citizen differs and holds different rights in a democracy, an oligarchy, or a tyranny. A further condition for citizenship, as already mentioned, is that one must be the child of two citizens (Aristot., *Pol.* 3.1274b–1275b).

There were many different social strata consisting of people who were only partial citizens. In Athens, these were the *μέτοικοι* (resident foreigners), and in Sparta, the *περίοικοι* (craftsmen and merchants living in the surrounding area). Although they were not full citizens, they were indispensable to the functioning of the community. For this reason, the Spartans, especially in the 5th century BC, granted them more rights (for example, they were allowed to bear the lambda symbol on their shields, referencing the first letter of another name for Sparta, *Lakedaimon*). Necessary concessions to the *μέτοικοι* in Athens were discussed, for instance, by Xenophon. Xenophon (Xen, *Ways*, 2–3) considered this, alongside support for maritime trade and the leasing of slaves for work in the mines, to be one of the main ways to strengthen Athens' economy at the beginning of the 4th century BC.

Among other non-full citizens were women, whose status varied across different city-states. The most favorable position for women was found in Sparta and its colonies. Here, they were not only allowed but rather required to engage in sports and, as young girls, even wrestle against boys. They wore very loose clothing, often revealing their thighs. For this reason, they were known in the Greek world as *φανομηρίδες*, or “thigh-showers” (Ibyc., F5). Spartan women could even own and inherit property and were entitled to a portion of the harvest from land worked by slaves. As a result, despite not being full citizens, they often became quite wealthy. If a woman's husband or father died in battle – a common occurrence in Sparta – she inherited part or all of his estate. She could then marry a wealthy Spartan, perpetuating this cycle (Blundell, 1995, p. 156). It should be noted, however, that in reality, ultimate ownership of everything –

even children – belonged to the Spartan *πόλις* (Plut., *Lyc.* 15). The state would then allocate land, resources, and slaves to individual Spartan families. In the rest of Greece, such a system was virtually unthinkable. Girls and women were typically confined to the household, limited to domestic tasks, and when they ventured outside, they had to be veiled. They could not own property and were entirely dependent on their husband or male relatives (father, brother). The differences in clothing, public appearance, and physical fitness between Spartan women and Athenian women (or women from other parts of Greece) are brilliantly depicted by Aristophanes in his comedy *Lysistrata*, set during the Peloponnesian War (431–404 BC). He highlights that, unlike Athenian women, Spartan women were trained in gymnastics and athletics, often exercising in the nude; in one scene, the other women marvel at a display of *βίβασις*¹ performed by Lampito, a Spartan, admiring both her beauty and strength (Ar., *Lys.* 76–82). Spartan women were indeed physically formidable, and according to Pomeroy (2002, p. 24–27) and Scanlon (2002, p. 115 & 2008, p. 162), they were often the ones who participated in the *Heraia*, the women’s Olympic Games held before or after the traditional Games. There is, however, limited evidence that girls from outside Elis traveled to Olympia to compete in the *Heraia*, even though it seems plausible².

Another economic group was that of the slaves. They were often treated as property, especially the Messenian *helots* (*εἰλωτες*) in Sparta. The Spartans distrusted and feared them, as their numbers far exceeded those of the Spartans. The Spartans organized the *κρυπτεία*³ against them, and the helots had very few rights – for example, they were allowed to keep only a small portion of the harvest from the fields they cultivated for themselves and their families. *Helots* not originating from Messenia – which the Spartans had subjugated during the so-called Messenian Wars (743–724 BC and 660–650 BC – had a somewhat better status. They were most likely the ones who accompanied Spartans into battle⁴ and, in exceptional cases, could be otherwise recognized or rewarded. Some sources even attest to friendly relations between helots and Spartans. There is even a recorded case of a freed *εἰλωτος* who held the office of *ἀρμοστής*⁵. There were also numerous other semi-citizen groups, such as the *μόθακες* (illegitimate brothers – typically sons of a Spartan father and a helot mother), the

¹ A typical exercise practiced by Spartan women involved leaping into the air and striking their gluteal region with their heels, immediately followed by an identical jump (Miller, 2004, p. 157). Polydeuces mentions a certain Spartan woman who was reportedly able to repeat this exercise 1,000 times (Poll. 4.102).

² At both Olympic Games (those held in honor of Zeus and those in honor of Hera) a strong (political) influence of Sparta could be observed up until the early 6th century BC, where athletic education was extended even to women. The Spartan state possessed sufficient authority to elevate these originally local competitions into events of greater significance, aimed at reinforcing the educational system for Spartan girls (a view also supported by Schöbel, 1965, p. 114).

³ A particular Spartan institutional practice served both for the training of selected youth and the elimination of *εἰλωτες*.

⁴ Every Spartan soldier was accompanied into battle by a *εἰλωτος*, who carried his shield and provided support.

⁵ The Spartan military commander appointed over a subjugated region was typically a Spartan or a *περίοικοι*, though an exceptional case is recorded in which this position was held by a former *εἰλωτος* who had been dismissed.

νεοδαμώδεις (new citizens – mainly freed slaves) ... In the context of the Olympic Games, these individuals could participate only if they had been freed individually (as in the case of a freed slave who later held the office of *ἀρμοστής*), or collectively (as after the Battle of Leuctra in 371 BC and the campaign of Epaminondas into Sparta – in the case of the Messenian *εἰλωτες*). In Athens, slaves (*δοῦλοι*) were considered the property of their master. They had no political rights, could not own property, yet played an essential role in the economy and in households. Even a freed slave could not become a citizen.

This stratification of rights and statuses was also reflected in the famous Greek democracy – specifically the Athenian slave-owning democracy – referencing *δῆμος* and *κράτος*, rule of the people, although slaves, foreigners, and women were excluded from the *δῆμος*. If true rule by all people had been intended, the proper term would reference *ἄνθρωπος* (human being, every person), suggesting instead an anthropocracii.

In Rome, a *civis Romanus* (Roman citizen) was also a person with full rights – both political and legal. A citizen was someone born to Roman citizens, but one could also become a citizen as a freed slave (*libertini*), although such individuals did not have full political rights. Full citizenship would pass to their descendants. If citizenship was granted to a city or province, its inhabitants became citizens as well. Foreigners could also be granted citizenship as a reward for service – such as in the military – and after 25 years of service, members of the auxiliary troops (*auxilia*) were granted citizenship for themselves and their children. In 212 AD, when Emperor Caracalla issued the *Constitutio Antoniniana* (*Antonine Edict*), he extended citizenship to almost all free inhabitants of the Roman Empire, making citizenship an universal status. Among other things, this edict also served as a way to bring more revenue into the imperial treasury by extending certain taxes to a wider population⁶ (Dio Cassius 78.9). By that time, however, the practical difference between citizen and non-citizen had begun to blur. In the legal scholarship of the late 2nd century AD, terms such as *honestiores* and *humiliores* (privileged and non-privileged citizens) appear more frequently than citizen and non-citizen.

Benefits and duties of citizenship

Being a Greek citizen came with a wide range of benefits. It was a fundamental status for a person who could then live and express themselves authentically to a certain degree. Citizens had full rights and access to religious cults, theaters, and various local and pan-Hellenic games (Olympic, Pythian, Nemean, Isthmian) and festivals. Greek citizens could vote (*ἐκκλησία* in Athens, *ἀπέλλα* in Sparta), serve as jurors in courts, and be elected (*ἄρχων* or member of the *βουλή* in Athens, member of the *γερονσία* in Sparta). They also had property and inheritance rights, and the right to protection.

Citizenship also entailed duties, such as military service (often required of non-citizens and slaves as well), and preparation for it, which was carried out through training for boys and adolescents (*εφεβία* from ages 18 to 20 in Athens, *ἀγωγή* from age 7 to 18–20 in Sparta). A citizen was obliged to participate in political public life and to improve physically. Those who could not or refused to do so were punished with

⁶ Such taxes included, for instance, the manumission tax imposed upon the release of a slave, or inheritance taxes.

ἀτιμία (loss of honor) and labeled as useless (*ιδιώτης*) for not engaging in the political life of the *polis* and exercising their rights, or as *ιδιότης* if they failed to spend their free time (*σχολή*) meaningfully – ideally through sports or visits to the gymnasium. For Plato, an *ιδιώτης* was someone who could not read/write or swim; more generally, it was someone who refused physical activity and bodily development. Such people were mentally or physically unfit citizens, those who rejected participation in public life (Kouřil, 2016, p. 16). Citizens were also obliged to pay certain special taxes, for example the honorary taxes known as *λειτουργία*, which financed training, theater performances, or the functioning of gymnasia (*γυμνασάρχος*, olive oil, etc.).

One could say that the main duty of Greek citizens was to train and be physically prepared to defend their *πόλις*. That is, to preserve freedom (*ἐλευθερία*) for its citizens – the most valuable thing for Greeks. According to Aristotle (*Pol.* 1.1254a–b), freedom was what distinguished the citizen from the slave. Similarly, Plato in the *Laws* (6.776e) highlights the degradation of human worth and soul in conditions of slavery. This view is echoed already in Homer, where Zeus “takes away half his worth from a man, when the day of slavery comes upon him” (*Od.* 17.322–323). Yet this conception was not reciprocal: while slavery diminished a man’s *ἀρετή*, the loss of *ἀρετή* did not automatically entail the loss part of a citizen’s freedom. In this sense, *ἐλευθερία* remained the fundamental prerequisite of civic identity, whereas *ἀρετή* defined its quality.

In the case of Rome, this depended on the given period (for instance, whether it was during the Republic or the Empire), but generally, the benefits of Roman citizenship included legal privileges such as the right to vote during the Republic, the right to defend one’s case in court, to appeal to the people’s assembly or later to the emperor (*provocatio ad populum, provocatio ad Caesarem*), in some cases the right to hold office, to manage one’s property, the right to personal protection (such as a legal trial), and the right to higher military rank. Roman citizenship was highly prestigious, though it also depended on a person’s position in society – particularly within the *cursus honorum*⁷, the sequence of public offices. Among the duties were, for example, military service (especially during the Republic), paying certain taxes, and fulfilling civic obligations such as giving testimony in court. Just like in Greece, citizenship in Rome did not imply equality. Greek *ἰσονομία* (equality of rights) did not include *ἰσόμοιρία* (equality of property); wealth and lineage played a key role in both societies and defined, for example, the difference between patricians and plebeians.

Citizenship and the Olympic Games

For participation in the Games, it was necessary to be a Greek citizen during the Archaic and Classical periods. Participation was banned for slaves, foreigners, barbarians, non-Greeks, murderers, sacrilegists, blasphemers, and married women (Kössl, Štumbauer & Waic, 2018, p. 23). At that time, the death penalty was imposed

⁷ The sequence of political offices that a Roman citizen – whether patrician or wealthy plebeian – was required to hold in order to become a senator was as follows: 1. *Quaestor* (financial administrator), 2. *Aedile* (overseer of public order, markets, festivals, and games), 3. *Praetor* (judicial magistrate and deputy to the consul), 4. *Consul* (the highest executive official of the Republic).

on a married woman who attended the Games as a spectator. She would be thrown off the Tropaion cliff (Drees, 1968, p. 56). Only one woman is known to have violated this rule – Pherenice (also known as Callipatira), the mother of Peisirrhodus, who came from the famous Olympic-winning Diagoras family⁸ (Sweet, 1987, p. 220). The mother of the future victor disguised herself as his trainer, and after Peisirrhodus' victorious *άγων*, she revealed herself while jumping over a barrier. Because of the high status of her family, she was not punished. From that point on, however, even the trainers of *άθληταί* were required to observe the competitions naked (Ael., VH = 10.1; Philostr., Gym. 17; Paus. 5.6.7–8, 6.7.2). Kyle (2006, p. 224–225) argues that this story was entirely fictional and suggests that nudity may have been introduced to prevent bribery (hiding money). According to surviving sources, bribes were provided by the *άθληταί* or their fathers, not their trainers⁹.

This structure changed with the rise of Macedonian kings like Alexander I, Archelaus, Philip II, and significantly with Alexander the Great and his successors (*διάδοχοι*), who divided and ruled the vast empire he had established. The influence of these Macedonian kings on access to the Olympic Games by citizens and non-citizens was fundamental.

Alexander I was the first Macedonian king to compete in the Olympics as a non-Greek. He would not have been allowed to compete, but he proved his Argive ancestry, as Macedonian kings were said to be descendants of Heracles. Herodotus records this shift in access to the Games for non-Greeks:

When Alexander decided to compete in the Olympic Games and arrived in Olympia for this purpose, his opponents from amongst the rest of the Hellenes reacted because, supposedly, no barbarians but only Hellenes had the right to participate in the Games. Alexander, however, having proved his Argeian origins and having been judged as an Argeian by descent, competed in the stadion and finished almost simultaneously as the winner. (Hdt. 5.22.2)

This passage is interesting not only because it marks a shift in access for non-Greeks to the Games – and probably a second-place finish for the Macedonian king, which is deeply tied to Macedonian history¹⁰ – but also because a wealthy aristocratic king

⁸ Diagoras was a victor in *πυγμαί*; his three sons also achieved Olympic victories – Acusilaus likewise in *πυγμαί*, and on the same day, Damagetos triumphed in *παγκράτιον*. The youngest, Dorieus, later won in *πυγμαί* as well. Diagoras's grandsons, Eukles and the aforementioned Peisirrhodus, also emerged victorious in *πυγμαί* (Paus. 6.7.1–3).

⁹ From the 4th century BC onward, instances of attempted corruption and fraud began to emerge at the Olympic Games. These transgressions were commemorated by the erection of statues known as *Ζάνες* (i.e., statues of Zeus). These penalty statues were commissioned at the expense of those found guilty of bribing competitors or judges (three recorded cases), or of committing other infractions – such as cowardice, as evidenced by a statue paid for by an athlete who fled upon facing his opponent; the use of a false excuse for late arrival at the pre-Olympic training camp; or a prearranged outcome of a contest (Drees, 1968, p. 131; Miller, 2004, p. 93; Sweet, 1987, p. 239–240).

¹⁰ It was especially the latter – Achilles – who was renowned for his athletic prowess and was described in the *Iliad* with the epithet “swift-footed”.

competed not in the *ἵππικός ἀγών*, but in the *γυμνικός ἀγών*. At that time, wealthy aristocrats typically scorned stadion contests and competed instead as horse and chariot owners, represented by jockeys and charioteers on the hippodrome.

A king who significantly expanded Macedonian influence in Olympic Games and simultaneously promoted Greek influence in Macedonia was Archelaus I, an Olympic victor in the *τέθριππον*¹¹ in 408 BC and founder of the Macedonian Olympic Games in Dion or Aigai (Arr., An. 1.11.1; Diod. 17.16). Archelaus established these games to strengthen connections with the Greeks and promote the Olympic ideal and Greek culture in his kingdom.

Philip II fully exploited Macedonian access to Olympia and cleverly used victories there¹² to further his political ambitions (following the model of the Athenian statesman and general Alcibiades) and to promote Macedonia's rise at the expense of Greece itself.

Alexander the Great did not compete in the Olympics, although he was reportedly an excellent runner. When asked if he would race, he responded that he would only do so if his opponents were kings and sons of kings, reflecting the aristocratic view on democratization in sport. At that time, ordinary citizens such as farmers, fishermen, herders, and even individuals without full citizenship rights – like the Spartan *περίοικοι* Ladas and Nicocleus – were winning Olympic events (Christesen, 2013, p. 41 & 47).

The 4th century BC also brought key changes to the access of full and non-full-right citizens to the Games – particularly regarding women. The first female Olympic victor was Cynisca of Sparta, who won the *τέθριππον* as the owner of a chariot team in 396 and 392 BC at the age of 40 to 50 (Pomeroy, 2002, p. 21). Xenophon and Plutarch both wrote in their biographies of Agesilaus that the idea of horse breeding and Olympic competition was not Cynisca's, but the king's (Plu., *Ages.* 20.1; Plu., *Mor.* 212b; Xen., *Ages.* 9.6). It was likely part of his military reforms and a way to downgrade individual glory in favor of collective success won on the battlefield. In 368 BC, another Spartan woman, Euryleonis, won the two-horse chariot race (Paus. 5.8.11; Crowther, 2007, p. 148). Other women Olympic victors included Berenice I (who sought to rival Cynisca's fame), her daughter Arsinoë II (sister and wife of Ptolemy II), who was the first to win all three equestrian events (*τέθριππον*, *συνωρίς*, and *τέθριππον πῶλων*¹³) at a single Olympiad (Golden, 2005, p. 17 & 27; Kyle, 2014, p. 269; Remijnsen, 2009, p. 251).

Ptolemy's courtesan Belistiche Machesis of Macedonia also won the *τέθριππον πῶλων* in 268 BC and the *πῶλων συνωρίς* in 264 BC. Berenice II, wife of Ptolemy III Euergetes, won the *τέθριππον* in 248 BC (Paus. 5.8.11; Crowther, 2007, p. 148; Kyle, 2006, p. 216 & 2014, p. 269). Thus, women's participation and victory in the Olympic Games is linked to Sparta – where women could inherit and own property – and the Ptolemaic royal house in Egypt. These women only participated passively, as owners represented by their chariots, drivers, and horses.

¹¹ The basic equestrian event, a four-horse chariot race.

¹² Philipp won in *keles* (356 BC) and twice in *tethrippon* (352 and 348 BC).

¹³ The race in *πῶλων συνωρίς* (two-horse chariot race with foals) was introduced only after her death.

When studying the development of Olympic victors (see especially Christesen, 2012) and their regional origins in relation to Greek citizenship and the Olympic Games, the reign of Alexander the Great and the *διάδοχοι* appears to be a turning point. The campaign of Spartan king Agesilaus II (396–394 BC) in Asia Minor and the subsequent expedition of Alexander the Great into the Greek East (334–333 BC) led to the liberation of Greeks in Asia Minor and sparked a rapid rise in participation and victories by athletes from that region. A similar surge in athletes and victors from Egypt – especially Alexandria – was connected with the rule of the Macedonian-Ptolemaic dynasty, founded by Alexander’s general, friend, and (according to some legends¹⁴) half-brother, Ptolemy Soter (Paus. 1.6.2), who strongly supported science and the arts. The Ptolemaic dynasty supported astronomy, mathematics, philosophy, medicine, and athletics, producing many Olympic champions from this region. These “Egyptians” were in fact Greeks and Macedonians ruling in Egypt but were no longer strictly Greek citizens. By then, the requirement of Greek citizenship for Olympic participation had ceased to exist. Simultaneously, the number of Olympic victors from mainland Greece declined.

During the hellenistic period the Olympic rule about citizenship fell. This shift also transformed public perceptions of citizenship and fandom, as exemplified by the Olympic boxing match between Cleitomachus of Thebes and Aristonicus of Alexandria. Cleitomachus was a remarkable champion, winning both *παγκράτιον* (216 BC) and *πυγμαή* (212 BC) at the Games, and also claiming victory in *πάλη* at other competitions; he even won one of the games at the Isthmus in *παγκράτιον, πυγμαή* i *πάλη*. Aristonicus, talented boxer, received support from Egyptian Ptolemy IV Philopator.

When he [Aristonicus – author’s note] appeared on the arena at Olympia a great number of the spectators, it seems, immediately showed their favour for him, and cheered him on, being rejoiced that some one should have had the courage to make some sort of stand against Cleitomachus. But when, as the fight went on, he showed that he was a match for his antagonist, and even gave him a well-placed wound, there was a general clapping of hands, and the popular enthusiasm showed itself loudly on his side, the spectators calling out to Aristonicus to keep up his spirits. Thereupon they say that Cleitomachus stepped aside, and after waiting a short time to recover his breath, turned to the crowd and asked them “Why, they cheered Aristonicus, and supported him all they could? Had they detected him in playing foul in the combat? Or were they not aware that Cleitomachus was at that moment fighting for the honour of Greece, Aristonicus for that of king Ptolemy? Would they prefer an Egyptian to carry off the crown by beating Greeks, or that a Theban and Boeotian should be proclaimed victor in boxing over all comers?” Upon this speech of Cleitomachus, they say that such a revulsion of feeling came over the spectators, that Aristonicus in his turn was conquered more by the display of popular feeling than by Cleitomachus. (Plb. 27.9.7–13)

This passage illustrates not only the geopolitical shifts that influenced athlete participation in the games, but also a fascinating evolution in how the Greeks perceived the

¹⁴ They were most likely introduced later in order to support the dynastic succession of the Ptolemies.

games, athletes, and patriotism. This transformation was closely tied to the changing world and the globalization sparked by the conquests of Alexander the Great.

In Greece before the 4th century BC, obtaining the citizenship of another city-state was extremely rare. Up to that time, Sparta had granted citizenship to only two non-Spartans, and such cases were exceptional elsewhere as well. This practice was rooted in a view that emphasized loyalty or disloyalty to two different cities. Olympic victors, however, gained a variety of privileges due to their fame and were often sought after as suitable friends of kings and aristocrats or as husbands for their daughters. In later periods, the custom of granting citizenship for such individuals began to fade, but several Ὀλυμπιονίκαι received honorary citizenship in other πόλεις, and some were even called “the citizens of all the world” (Drees, 1968, p. 106; Kouřil, 2019, p. 81).

The games gradually and steadily opened to other nations, and in 212 AD, with the issuing of the *Antonine Edict* (*Constitutio Antoniniana* by the Emperor Caracalla), they were made accessible to nearly everyone within the Roman Empire through the extension of citizenship. This also explains how Varazdates of Artaxala could become one of the last champions. He was an Armenian king who, later in life, was exiled by the Romans to the island of Thule, which is likely modern-day Iceland.

CONCLUSION

This paper has explored the relationship between citizenship and sport, focusing particularly on the ancient Olympic Games. The first part summarized the essence of Greek and Roman citizenship and then reflected on its role as a prerequisite for participation in the Games, followed by the gradual erosion and exceptions to this originally unshakable requirement (that only Greek citizens could actively participate in the Games). The first to challenge this rule was the Macedonian king Alexander I, who demonstrated his kinship with the Greeks through his claimed descent from their ancestor Heracles. He was followed by other Macedonian rulers such as Archelaus and Philip II.

The rule concerning the participation of full citizens was further broken with the inclusion of women in the Games (most notably Kyniska of Sparta, whose entry was made possible through the influence of her brother, King Agesilaus II). After the conquest of Greece by Macedonia and later by Rome, and with the rise of the Hellenistic kingdoms, the requirement of Greek citizenship was applied much more loosely – residents of cities like Alexandria and Rome regularly took part in the Games. These were still citizens, though not Greek ones.

By the late 2nd century AD, the concepts of “citizen” and “non-citizen” gradually disappeared (especially in legal discourse) and were replaced by the categories *honestiores* and *humiliores*. This shift culminated in the *Constitutio Antoniniana*, issued in 212 AD by the Roman emperor Caracalla, which made citizenship a universal category. With a few exceptions (such as the *dediticii*, or surrendered peoples), nearly every free person in the empire became a Roman citizen. The Olympic Games thus became accessible to virtually all men and women (although Roman women did not continue the tradition set by their Spartan and Ptolemaic predecessors) from both nearby and distant regions. The Armenian king Varazdates, who was mentioned above, is the best example of this.

The development of the relationship between citizenship and the ancient Olympic Games has been closely tied to the broader history of the ancient world. The weakening and eventual subjugation of Greece marked the first major turning point that allowed for significant change. This was followed by the conquests of Alexander the Great and the transformation of the ancient world into a globalized one. Roman imperialism and influence in Greece were merely the epilogue to these already irreversible changes for the ancient Greeks.

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