



By Zeus

An Annotated Combat Arts Manual of Late Antiquity

Author's Proof

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A Pulp History Book

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Intended for inclusion in The Boxer Dread.

Dust Cover

In the late summer of 2022 the author of The Broken Dance, a pulp history trilogy of ancient athletic methods, received a translation of The Gymnastica of Philostratus. By Zeus is an annotated critique of this ancient work of elite athletic sophistry by modern working class combat athlete.

James LaFond is the author of The First Boxers, The Gods of Boxing, AllPowerFighting, The Greatest Boxer, By The Winedark Sea, On Combat, The Combat Space, Solo Boxing, The Punishing

Art, The Logic of Steel, The Logic of Force and other books on the combat arts and training.

Preface

From Autumn of 2000 through 2002 I did a primary reading of 1152 sources on boxing history and methodology at the Peabody Conservatory and the Enoch Pratt Central Library in Baltimore City. While I was able to use the Lidell and Scott Greek English lexicon from 1899 to translate some Greek epigrams and check the questionable poetic translations, I was unable to make any sense of the only available translation of Philostratos' On the Naked Exercises, in German calligraphy. This was one reason for halting the final fourth volume of The Broken Dance, titled, The Boxer Dread.

An English translation of this work has now been made available from that German source. So The Boxer Dread is being completed.

Written at the end of antiquity, as an attempt to revitalize masculine culture in a decadent period, when most men no longer engaged in combat sports and the sacred circuit was dominated by a small cadre of touring professionals, this text is to ancient combat sports what Vegetus' manual of military methods was to ancient warfare, a nostalgic attempt to revitalize an ancient and storied tradition that had degenerated.

Based on Philostratos' Pictures in a Gallery, in which he discussed sacred prize fighting artwork and the painting of the Death of Arrichion, I shall treat him as an intimate expert with access to the sacred sites of the period agons, where rod bearers trained the athletes in preparations for the contests they judged. This would be like the umpires of the MLB World Series, keeping the teams in seclusion for two weeks before the game, overseeing their training personally. This did serve to concentrate a pool of knowledge that would have been available to a sophist visiting these sites.

Welcome to a world without ball sports, where the only athletes were combat athletes, chariot racers and jockeys, the latter two technically vestigial combat sports.

I will note when I have not retained the commentary of the 1936 editor of this translation.

[My annotations will be in brackets.]

James LaFond, Utah, October 3, 2022

To the Reader

Having read and annotated this volume twice now, and being familiar with the conduct of the actual combatants through reading of earlier sources, but primarily through analysis of extant popular art work depicting combat arts activities, to include training and competition, I find the work of Philostratus, who I have waited

decades to read, to be a great disappointment. The reader will not find a single description of how one conducts himself in the agony separating him and his opponents from the Prize. Though the author seems to honestly present a case for a return to a more vigorous masculine culture, in a sacred context, his very failure to present an athlete's view of these foundational cultural activities, confirms the solemn fact that his task was conducted in vain. What you are about to read, particularly if you are an athlete seeking truth through the combat of self improvement, will be an illuminating disappointment. This is worth a read for that very reason, the obvious fact that the literate strata of the Greco-Roman World of Late Antiquity, was not capable of regularly producing a fighting man. Concerning Gymnastics is a sophisticated illumination of the sad fact that "The Fellows from the Gym" who conquered the better part of the known world under Alexander at the end of Classical Antiquity, had no analogous social class in Late Antiquity, some 500 years later.

A cynical member of the court of Julia, wife of Septemus Severus, would have quipped to Philostratus, that his entreaty to embrace the Old Ways of Pagan Faith, of masculine striving in civic service, were not ripe for revival, that the Mighty would continue to hire their bloody handed men from among the raw warriors of the German, Caledonian and Sarmatian wilds... and that into the sanguine clutches of these barbarians, the Mighty would fall again and again, until the Civilized World had bled its treasures and its people white.

My apologies for the buzz kill. As we read, lets try to gain a clue concerning our own decline.

-James LaFond, Baltimore, Maryland, May 19, 2024

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Philostratos: Concerning Gymnastics

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I, PHILOSTRATOS AND HIS TIMES

[Footnote redacted]

[Only the biographical details related in this essay are retained.
Mister Woody's opinions on the actual work are respectfully
discarded, as this study is being conducted as A Fighter's View.]

LAVIOS PHILOSTRATOS, "the Athenian," native of the isle of Lemnos, is said to have lived from about A.D. 170 till the time of Philip the Arab (244-249). The early part of his education was probably gained in his native isle, or at Athens, at the hands of grammarist and grammaticus, whose training was the usual preliminary for those who would enter upon rhetorical studies at the university. That he continued his training at Athens, whither those of literary bent in those days were wont to turn, is all the more natural since Lemnos, with Imbros and Skyros, constituted at the time the chief foreign possessions of Athens. There, about 190, he studied under such sophists as Proklos, Hippodromos, Antipatros,

and at Ephesos under Damianos. His going to Rome is not definitely dated.

After 202, however, probably through the influence of Antipatros, his teacher and one of the most intimate friends of the imperial family, Philostratos became one of the brilliant, learned circle which Julia Domna, the talented, beautiful wife of Septimius Severus, gathered around her.

[Julia was one of numerous imperial matriarchs who undermined Roman ethics and power through extreme feminization of the male heirs, such as Nero, Commodos, Caracalla, Egabalus, and others. She instituted rule by experts through surrounding her sons with the genius minds of the age. Throughout the early Christian Era [200 to 530], to include the murder of various Roman Hero Generals such as Constantius and Belesarius by order of “the home office,” the rebellion of these closeted brats destined for rule, often included the more wilful princes befriending and imitating their more savage barbarian bodyguards. Sometimes slaying their more bookish brothers, and ultimately failing to live up to their barbarian advisor’s high masculine standards when they continued to cling to their mother’s imperial skirt, such sissy princes thence being murdered by soldiers frustrated with the leadership of effete youths. This situation, Philostratus may have envisioned reversing by interesting these princes in the physical culture that had produced such ancient Athenian leaders as Socrates, Themosticles, Thucydides and Xenophon. See Edward Gibbons

first 26 chapters of The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire.]

Of his movements but little is known definitely, but Muenscher infers that he may have been with Severus on his last campaign against Britain in 208, and with Caracalla on the campaign in Gaul in 212, inasmuch as the Empress and her literary circle accompanied the Emperor on his journeys and campaigns. In like manner, it is probable also that he was in Pergamon and Nikomedeia in Asia Minor, in 214-215, and in Antiocheia in Syria, 216-217, in company with Julia Domna and the literary followers of the royal court. At the death of Julia, which followed upon the murder of Caracalla, Philostratos took up residence at Tyros. There, about 217, he published the Life of Apollonius Tyana, which he had undertaken to compose at Julia's behest. From Tyros he returned to Athens where he enjoyed honor and fame befitting a sophist and one who had been an intimate of the imperial family.

[The Life of Apollonius of Tyana, if found extant, would be one of the most valuable works of Late Antiquity. Diocletian and his fellow Emperor Galerius, who took power soon after the death of Philostratus, saw this man as a pseudo messiah.]

There, in the literary capital of the world, where professional athletics flourished no less than professional letters,

[Amateur athletics, however, had deteriorated and the professional events had become corrupted with scandal, similar to our day, with

most spectators having no experience in the actual sport.]

Philostratos wrote his work *Concerning Gymnastics*, probably sometime between 219 and 230 (as Muenscher believes), the period when Helix was enjoying world-wide fame as an athlete; or, perhaps, as Jüthner holds, some time after the period in which Helix reached the height of his fame, though it may have been produced after the *Lives of the Sophists* appeared, i.e., after 238. His *Lives of the Sophists*, a brilliant, readable account of those whom he considered the exemplars of the highest culture of that day, written primarily for entertainment rather than instruction, was composed apparently between 230 and 238.

[Redacted summation. I very much enjoyed reading this *Lives of the Sophists*. The paragon of this Neo-Platonic movement of which Philostratus was a respected member, would be the Emperor Julian the Apostate, the philosopher emperor trained by a Christian eunuch to be a Christian bishop, only to relapse into a reincarnation of the Pious Alexander of Macedon, also Magnus or The Great. Julian would die in battle against the Persians causing his pagan reforms to be swept away more ardently than they had been under attack prior to his attempt to restore the dying world that Philostratus preceeded him in curation.]

This work *Concerning Gymnastics* is to be regarded as a literary essay by an able sophist who has attempted to write a defense of true gymnastics, by which he proposes to show how the evils of the present unenlightened, unscientific practice can be corrected.

Written well after middle life, or perhaps only shortly before the author's death, it probably reflects to some extent the critical attitude of one who sees the new generation around him through somewhat jaundiced eyes. How much of the criticism is his own, and how much belongs to contemporaries whom he imitated is hard to judge. But Jüthner concludes, after a survey of the problem of sources, that Philostratos is indebted to a certain introductory treatise or treatises from which he drew most of the details, and whose general pattern is reflected in his work.

[Now to the actual work of the eminent Sophist of antiquity, who died some 20 years before the Imperial collapse of pagan Rome, a Rome that was shot through with cultural rot, including its corruption of basic masculine traditions borrowed from the Hellenic culture Republican Rome had conquered. In some part, the works of Philostratos, which unfortunately included "Love Letters to a Boy," prefigured the re-orientation of the empire from the Latin West to the Hellenic East and the revitalizing of the military along ancient Macedonian lines, with Roman generals imitating the hero kings of Ancient Macedon, such as Phillip, Alexander and Phyrus.

[Philostratus seems to have been a part of the attempt by men of the literate class, to salvage and reinvigorate the pagan faith. This involved borrowing Eastern Rebirth theology and gnostic Christian doctrine and speculative theology. Also, the revitalization of the Sacred Agons, held, ultimately, before the Altar of Zeus in the Altis at Olympia, was key to this attempt. At this very same time, while

Philostratus passed on, the more able successors to the Roman Purple and that supreme earthly office, in correcting the soulless savagery of the degenerate emperors who succeeded Severus—to include his two pathetic sons—as well as a homicidal barbarian giant, sought to encourage religious piety of the old gods, and at the very same time, accepted the civic administration of the Christian Church in domestic spheres as well as the military service and even co-rule of Christian or Christian-sympathetic soldiers, such as Constantius. In this same dying breath of the Old Faiths, whose chief deities served a more civic and affirmative than redemptive purpose for humanity, and fared poorly in the lonely hearts of the masses of suffering folks during societal collapse, Zeus yet loomed.]

[Zeus was named Jove in Latin, the deity one in the same, and typically referred to as Almighty, similar in wrath to the God of the Bible. His second most common cult name was Time-holder, for his imprisonment of his father, Khronus/Saturn. Reliable and dispassionate art historians have demonstrated that the common image of Jesus Christ, his long, low straight nose, long auburn hair and beard, his light Nordic skin tone, was a Christainization of the giant image of Zeus, made of wood, painted, adorned, and infested with armies of mice, enthroned in his Temple at Olympia.

[More speculative historians, such as Jason Jorjani, suggest the image of Christ in mind and form, to have been descended from the teachings of Tyanna, whose biographer is the auther of this

document. Zeus, as Time-holder, Almighty, embodied in the oath By Jove, was recognized as the force that permitted human society to continue without being ground down by the remorseless march of Time. Cast down, bound and imprisoned in one of the many Planes of the Damned, Time thirsted to renew his passage, which was ruin. Time, as Saturn, was observed by the rich and celebrated by the poor at the end of December, the tenth month, in the year that ended with the rise of March. This changed in 1756 with callender reform. Saturnalian celebrations included a temporary social levelling. This celebration seems to have been, along with the Nordic celbration of Winter Solstice, chosen as the birthday of Jesus Christ celebrated as Christmas.

[The damned include fallen divinities, provided the Empire of the Demons that would arise in the end times of Rome, which in Philostratus' life time, were Nigh, to challenge the pious man and tempt him into sin. The use of athletics as a physical culture platform to instill discipline and self sacrifice into the hearts of the ruling class, had fallen away. Apollo would loom as a power of damnation in Christendom up until the composition of the Song of Roland. Although calling upon Zeus, Philostratus and his class abided Apollo as their patron deity, a figure which the early Christians regarded as a demon pretending to angelic status, and embodied by Apollonius of Tyana. Philostratus certainly served Julia's court alongside of unnamed Christians, who she included among her advisors.]

[Three notes should preface this study of a Roman decline document from deep in the collective mind of the intellectual class who educated the wives and heirs of Roman Imperial Power:

[1. The three best Legions in the vast Roman military machine, who hailed from the west, were manned by Germanic barbarians, often Christian in sympathy or faith and loving the Cross as a battle banner even if they were not Christians, were named: Jovians, Heraculians and Batavians. Only the third of these were not collective embodiments of Zeus/Jove Almighty and his son Hercules/Herakles, born of a mortal woman by intercourse with God, and consigned to suffering, sacrifice and finally ascension to Heaven and reunion with his holy father. The warrior discipline Philostratus fancied could once again be instilled in the hearts of literate men, when he writes 'By Zeus' were only embodied in the hearts and minds of barbarian and semi-barbarian frontiersman warriors, many of whom rose to imperial power.

[2. The intellectual world, the imperial courts, institutions of higher learning and religious colleges, were peopled in part, by slaves, prostitutes, a few athletes or gladiators, such as the wrestler that murdered Commodus in his bath at the orders of his other slaves, which included a Christian prostitute, eunuchs, grifters and sycophants. His works had government officers and academics as his target readership.]

[3. Imagine if the Stadiums of Major League Baseball and the NFL were also temples of religious worship and International Banks!

Diversions for the masses conducted by professional actors are a feature of civil decay. The sophist writing this tract was involved in art curation at such sacred sanctuaries, and, was, in effect advising the NGO banks of the day on a means of avoiding final internal, moral decay.]

‘By Zeus’

Of Naked Exercises: 2

II. CONCERNING GYMNASTICS

1. As arts and sciences we shall consider on the one hand, for example, the following: philosophy, artistic speech, occupation with poetry, music, geometry, and, by Zeus, astronomy too, if it be not carried to extremes. On the other hand, however, generalship of an army is also a science, and the following besides: the entire art of healing, painting, modeling, the types of sculpture, and engraving on stone or steel. To that which, on the contrary, is called handwork, art may properly belong, of course, in so far as with it a tool or implement is correctly finished; but let science be reserved for those occupations alone which I have named. I except navigation from handwork, since it implies an understanding of constellations, winds, and occult matters. It will be evident why I have stated this. As for gymnastics we designate it as a science, equal in rank to any other; and accordingly it is set forth in treatises for those who wish to apply themselves to it.

[This book is so sophistic, so academic, such a marker of masculine degradation and so fitting for a man who was the conversation companion of the wealthiest woman in a rotten

empire. This is like reading a history of The London Prize Ring written by Queen Victoria's librarian.]

The old gymnastics, for instance, produced such men as Milo [Sheep of Kroton, greatest wrestler of antiquity, 520 B.C.], Hipposthenes [Horse-strong of Sparta, second greatest wrestler of antiquity, 570s B.C.], Pulydamas [Many-subduer of Thessaly 400 B.C.], Promachos [frontlinefighter of Pellene, 400 B.C., defeated Polydamas], Glaukos [Gray-fish of Karystos, son of Demylos, and the athletes who lived still earlier than these, namely, Peleus, Theseus, and Herakles himself;

[Two different Herakles were said to have founded and rededicated the Olympic Agon.]

In our fathers' time, there were still marvelous athletes, worthy to be remembered, though, to be sure, inferior; but, as it is now, such a change has been brought about in athletics

[Footnotes concerning translations in German and English redacted. These continue so thickly I will delete every one and stop noting the deletions.] that the majority even feel an aversion toward lovers of gymnastic exercises.

[Asclepiades of Alexandria, in A.D. 196 and Damastratus, still fighting in 217 were prominent champions in the time of the author.]

2. I propose to show the reasons why this decline has come about, to set forth all I know for those who teach and those who practice

gymnastics, and to break a lance on behalf of nature, which is being slandered because athletes of today are so much inferior to those of the past.

[This, in Late Antiquity, was symptom of professionalism breeding spectatorship over participation, as in our own decadent time. The best modern boxers fought between 1920 and 1950 though most boxing money has been made since then, beginning in earnest in the 1970s, and taking off in the 1980s, even as amateur fights and local training programs dry up for lack of participants and local involvement, polluting the talent well. The cult of celebrity which infected Imperial Rome every bit as much as Post Industrial America destroys the arts even as the top artists are worshipped, by severely limiting the pool of participants]

For still today she produces lions in no wise of lesser sort than formerly, and the appearance of dogs, horses, and bulls is the same; as for her treatment of trees, the vines and the fruit of fig trees are still the same; and, in gold, silver, and precious stones, she has altered nothing, but reproduces everything now the same as before, even as she herself has ordained.

As for athletes, so far as their earlier excellencies are concerned, they have not been left in the lurch by nature—for she still continues to create the courageous, well-formed, and alert, these being natural characteristics—but the lack of judicious training and vigorous exertion has, indeed, robbed nature of her power. How this has come to pass, I intend to show later; first, however, we

shall give attention to the origin of running, boxing, wrestling, and the like, and when and where each had its beginning. The records of the Eleans will be kept constantly at hand, for of such matters one must speak most exactly.

[Elis was the small town that kept the Olympic sanctuary and officiated over the sacred contests.]

[What follows is an accounting of the legendry of athletic origins that will be placed in its own section. This is appearing overly academic and will no doubt be as far from actual combat practice as modern martial arts writing in our own sissy time is from self defense. Based on the length of the document and the enormous space granted to the history Philostratus's work smacks of something a sports writer would present on how boxers boxed without having done it himself. I will make only limited comments on the history, of which I provided a much more comprehensive account in *The Broken Dance*.]

[Of special interest is the fact that Rome had become so decadent that even the Greek-speaking guardians of high culture, had to be given a lesson on the history of their own culture. Also, the impulse to resurrect combat arts speaks to a spread of sloth so deep and broad that even the slothful class dedicated to leisure were concerned over the softening of their class.]

‘Of Contests’

Of Naked Exercises: 3

3. In the whole range of contests, there are the following light exercises: the stade-race, distance race, the race in armor, double stade-race; the heavy, however, are the pancration, wrestling and boxing. The pentathlon was made up of both; for wrestling and throwing the discus are heavy, and throwing the javelin, jumping, and running, light. Before Jason and Peleus, the wreath was given separately for the jump, and also for the discus; and the javelin, likewise, was alone sufficient for a victory at the time when the Argo was afloat. [The following are definitive statements of historical fact, just as placing the discussion under the purview of Zeus was a statement of the obvious truth that Eternity looked on and judged.]

Telamon was best at throwing the discus; Lynkeus, at hurling the javelin; the sons of Boreas, in running and jumping; Peleus was inferior in these things, but he excelled all in wrestling. So when they held contests at Lemnos, it is said that Jason united the five events to please Peleus; and in this way Peleus gained the victory and won the reputation of being the ablest warrior of his time, because of the bravery he showed in battle, as well as for his practice of the pentathlon, which is closely connected with war, since in the contests one also throws the javelin.

[In the 500s to 100s B.C. Pentathlon victors would distinguish themselves as small unit leaders, duelist and ambassadors.]

4. The origin of the distance race was as follows: couriers were accustomed to go from Arcadia to Hellas as heralds of war, and they were enjoined not to ride, but to complete the course on foot. The fact that in the brief course of a day they always covered as many furlongs as the distance race comprises, made them distance runners and trained them for war.

5. The stade-race came about in this way: when the Eleans made sacrifices, as their law requires, the sacrificial offerings were laid ready on the altar, but the fire was not yet applied. The runners were placed a furlong [stade, root word of stadium, in Greek, being 220 yards, or 8th of a mile] from the altar, before which a priest, as judge, stood with a torch; the winner kindled the offering, and went forth as Olympic victor.

6. After the Eleans had sacrificed, however, the other Greek delegates who came to participate in the celebration must also make sacrifice. In order, however, that their arrival might not take place without ceremonial, the runners ran a furlong away from the altar, as if to invite the Hellenes, and returned again to the same point, as though to announce that Hellas came gladly. So much for the origin of the double stade-race.

7. The race in armor (Greek) is ancient, especially the one at Nemea, where they call it the armed race and the horse race; and it

is dedicated to Tydeus and his companions, the seven well-known heroes. The armed race at Olympia, however, was established, as the Eleans maintain, for the following reasons: the Eleans began such an implacable war with the Dymanes, that even the Olympian games brought no truce; and when, on the day of the contests, the Eleans were victorious, it is alleged a heavy-armed soldier came running from the battle into the race course, and delivered the happy news of the victory. This is in itself plausible, but I hear the same thing also about the Delphians, when they were waging war against some of the Phocian cities; of the Argives, when they were wearing themselves out in a long-continued war against the Lacedaemonians; and of the Corinthians when they were making war in the Peloponnesus itself, and also beyond the boundaries of the Isthmus.

[Such questions occupied authors from the time of Herodotus, with the authors of antiquity constantly checking and comparing lore for accuracy and probability.]

However, I have a different notion about the armed race: I believe, namely, that its introduction certainly was originally connected with war, but that it was given a place in the contests to signify the resumption of a state of war, the shield indicating that the truce of God is past and one has need of weapons.

[Note the singular use of God, referring to Zeus, who the Olympic games were dedicated to. Regarded as The Almighty, Eternal Time-holder, Zeus had numerous cult titles, one of which was

Oath-holder. A man who broke his oath at Olympia was fined for money to build a statue of Zeus of Oaths, called a Zane, 7 of which werestanding in the time of the author.]

And if one listens attentively to the herald, one perceives that he is announcing to the assembled people that the contest for prizes is at an end; and the trumpet sounds the signal of Enyalios that calls youth to arms. This herald's cry commands, also, that they take oil and carry it away, not for anointing, but as a token that anointing is at an end.

[Contestants were anointed with oil as a sacrament and as a practical measure.]

8. The armed race of Plataea in Boeotia was esteemed the most notable on account of the length of the course, and the armor which reached to the feet and covered the athlete, just as if he really had to fight; because it was established in consequence of a brilliant feat of arms, the battle with the Medes; because this institution of the Greeks was directed against the barbarians; and especially, too, because of the standing law which Plataea duly promulgated, concerning the announced competitors. That is, with them, one who had once been crowned must give a hostage in case he entered the lists again; for, if he were defeated, he was condemned to death.

[The Mayans had a similar rule in their ball sports. I suspect that the ancient Minoans of Crete, whose boxing rites are related to the

Greek tradition, fought to the death for a cyclic term of Kingship.]

9. Boxing is an invention of the Lacedaemonians, and once found acceptance among the barbarian Bebryces. It was best practiced by Polydeuces, on which account the poets sang his praises. The ancient Lacedaemonians boxed, however, for the following reason: they had no helmets, and they considered that fighting with such was not according to the customs of the country; but the shield took the place of the helmet if one understood how to carry it. In order, then, to parry blows directed at the face, and when they came to withstand them, they practiced boxing and sought, in this manner, to harden the face.

[It does seem probable, that since boxing was only developed by warrior cultures who used the shield, that boxing was a way to learn how to ward blows of depth without being maimed by a wooden weapon.]

In the course of time, however, they gave up boxing, and likewise the pancration, inasmuch as they considered it disgraceful to participate in such contests, in which there was danger that, if a single one should yield, Sparta would be open to the reproach of cowardice.

10. Formerly, one was equipped for boxing in the following manner: the four fingers were wrapped with a strap and projected so far that by closing them one could double up the fist; but they were held firmly together by a thong which one wore bound round the lower

arm as a support. Now, however, it is different: for one tans the hide of very fat cattle and makes sharp, projecting knuckles; the thumb, however, to avoid excessive injuries, does not share with the other fingers in the blow, so the entire hand may not fight. Thus, they ban thongs of pigskin from the stadia, for they consider wounds from it painful and difficult to heal.

11. That wrestling and the pancration were invented for their utility in war, is proved, in the first place, by the feat of arms at Marathon, which was so performed by the Athenians that it seemed like a wrestling match; and, secondly, at Thermopylae, where the Lacedaemonians fought often with their bare hands, when their swords and lances were broken. And of all the contests which are customary, the pancration is pre-eminent, although it is composed of imperfect wrestling and imperfect boxing.

[This is an excellent description of the symphonic compromise of these arts in MMA.]

Pre-eminent it is, however, among all save the Eleans; for they, assuredly, look upon wrestling as the test of strength and, to employ a poetic word, "painful," not merely because of the intricate holds in wrestling, which require a supple and nimble body, but also on account of the threefold contest, prescribed among them, so many falls being required. And while they accordingly consider it extraordinary to award the crown in the pancration and in boxing, without an actual contest, they do not refuse it to the wrestler;

[In the 170s and again in the 190s, Asclepiades of Alexandria won pankration because no one would fight him. It was not permitted to win wrestling like so.]

for the rules of the games expressly permit such a victory only in the tortuous and “painful” wrestling match. And to me the reason is clear why the rules thus prescribe: for if participation in the contest at Olympia is an arduous performance, the training seems still more difficult. As for the light exercises, the distance runner practices running some eight to ten laps, and the pentathlete, some one of the light exercises; the runners, the three kinds of running, the stade-race, the double stade-race, or both. None of all this is hard; for the nature of the light exercises is the same, whether the Eleans prescribe the training, or others.

The heavy athlete, however, is trained by the Eleans in that season of the year when the sun dries up the mud most in the lowlands of Arcadia, and he must endure a dust hotter than the desert sands of Ethiopia, and keep at it from noon-day on. Now, among these painful exercises, the most arduous is wrestling. For the boxer, when his time comes in the stadium, will receive and give wounds and will kick shins, but in training he will only carry on a mimic contest; and the pancratiast in actual conflict will employ all forms, which are known to the pankration, but, in training, only this one and again that one.

[It is of interest that low kicks seem to be allowed in boxing at this date. Shin stomps are a method used in knife fighting. And, since

these boxers were fighting with knuckle dusters, its inclusion makes sense. The fact that wrestlers are better than other types of fighters are at their arts is based on this training intensity made possible by lack of submission holds and strikes. The art was a stand up contest to the best of three throws and had no ground work.]

Wrestling, however, is the same in the trial as in the actual contest; for, at both times, it offers proof of how much one understands and how much one can do, and is rightly called intricate; for intricacies do indeed occur in wrestling. Therefore the Eleans award the wreath to the best training—indeed, for training alone.

12. All these, however, apparently, did not gain admittance to the contests at one time, but one after the other, as it was discovered and developed by gymnastic. For example, formerly, until the 13th Olympiad, the Olympian games consisted simply of the stade-race; and three Eleans, seven Messenians, a Corinthian, a Dymanes, one from Cleonae, were victorious therein, each in another Olympiad, but never the same person in two. In the 14th, the double stade-race began, and Hyphenos from Elis won the victory. Afterwards came the contest in long-distance running, and the Spartan Akanthos was victor.

The exercise of the men's pentathlon and the men's wrestling match began with the 18th Olympiad, and the victor in wrestling was Eurybatos from Luso; and, in the pentathlon, the Laconian Lampis. Many, however, designate Eurybatos also as a Spartan.

The 23rd Olympiad called men to the boxing contest, and the Smyrnian Onomastos conquered as best boxer and thus linked the name of Smyrna with a glorious deed. For at one stroke Smyrna surpassed all cities of Ionia and Lydia, all on the Hellespont and in Phrygia, and all nations which inhabit Asia, and won first the Olympian crown of victory. This athlete wrote rules for boxing, [Onomastos means Rulegiver.] which the Eleans observed on account of the expert knowledge of the boxer; and the Arcadians were not offended that they were bound by contest rules which had their origin in effeminate Ionia.

‘In the 33rd Olympiad the pancration was established—which till then did not exist—and Lygdamis [Twisting-subduer] from Syracuse was victor. This Sicilian, indeed, was such a giant that he had a foot a cubit long. He is said to have measured off the stadium with as many of his own footsteps as a furlong has cubits.

13. It is said that the boys’ pentathlon also was introduced at the 38th Olympiad, and that at that time the Laconian Eutelidas was victor; but never again did a boy enter this sort of contest at Olympia.

The victor in the boys’ stade-race at the 46th Olympiad—for it was then first instituted—was Polymestor, the shepherd boy from Miletus, who by his fleetness of foot was able to catch a hare.

According to one account, the boys’ boxing match is said to have begun in the 41st Olympiad, and Philytas from Sybaris is said to

have been victor; according to another, it is said that it began in the 60th Olympiad, and that the victor was Kreon from the island of Chios.

Damaretos, who, as I believe, came from Hera, was the first, it is said, who was winner in the race in armor at the 65th Olympiad. In the 145th Olympiad the boys' pancration was admitted; this introduction was accomplished with incomprehensible delay, since it was already esteemed elsewhere; for it came late in the series of Olympiads, when Egypt had already been crowned; and also that victory went to Egypt, Naukratis, namely, being proclaimed, since the Egyptian Phaidimos was victor.

‘The Trainers’ Of Naked Exercises: 4

It seems to me that these exercises could never have been introduced into the contests, thus one after the other, and the Eleans and all the Hellenes could never have become such zealous contestants, if gymnastics had not made progress and trained them; for the victories which have been cited are to be credited to the trainers no less than to the athletes.

[Philostratos was by employment, a system advocate and sycophant, his trade occupying the higher thoughts of the empress.]

14. How then ought we to conceive of gymnastics? How otherwise than as a science, comprising the art of the physician and of the paidotribe [the youth coach and teacher], which, however, is more complete than the latter, and is only a part of the former. To what extent it participates in both, I intend to show.

The paidotribe will show all kinds of wrestling holds that exist, specifying the opportune moment, the degree of effort, and the extent of the movement; further, how one is to defend himself, or how one can overcome the defense of the other; the gymnast [the dedicated trainer of prize-seekers], however, will also be able to

give instruction in that which the athlete does not yet know.

Moreover, occasionally, it is advantageous in wrestling and the pancration to be aggressive, to yield to the opponent's advantage, or to parry it, none of which would occur to the gymnast, if he did not understand the art of the paidotribe. So far, therefore, the two arts are alike.

But the purging of humors, removing superfluous matter, rendering the hard flexible, and fattening, modifying, or warming any part of the body whatsoever, belong to the science of the gymnast. The paidotribe will either not understand that at all, or, if he should have some knowledge, he will apply it improperly for boys, and thus merely torment youth of noble blood.

[By Late Antiquity combat sports were generally limited to classical instruction for the nobility, with two of the pancration standouts of the 200s politicians. Secondly, the habit of training for and entering slaves into these sacred contents, which began in Egypt in the 260s B.C. and had long been the mechanism for riding race horses, racing chariots and fielding gladiators, had expanded into athletics. To compete at Olympia and some other sacred agons, the slave competing in some event other than driving or riding, must have been freed.]

So much more complete, then, is gymnastic than the forenamed art, but its relation to the art of healing is as follows: illnesses which we call catarrh, dropsy, consumption, and varieties of epilepsy are healed by physicians by injections, healing drafts, [we seem to be

following the ancients here] or plasters, but gymnastic combats such by means of diet and massage. If, however, one has suffered from a fracture, a wound, dimness of eyesight, or dislocation of a limb, he must be taken to the physician, since gymnastic has naught to do with such things.

15. By this I believe I have shown how gymnastic is related to both other branches of knowledge, but I think I may also make the following observation concerning it. The entire art of healing cannot be mastered by one alone; but one knows about wounds, another has knowledge of fever, a third handles those with eye trouble, while a fourth treats consumption successfully.

[The existence of tuberculosis is possibly indicated, depending on the quality of the translation.]

And since it means a great deal to practice even just a small part of it [medicine] physicians justifiably maintain that they understand the whole of it. But no one, certainly, would dare designate similarly the entire science of gymnastics as his specialty; for he who knows running exercises will understand nothing of wrestling and the pancration; and he who can train in heavy exercises will prove himself otherwise unskilled in the art.

16. The range of the art is as suggested; but the reason of its origin lies in man's natural capacity for wrestling, boxing, and running upright; for, indeed, nothing of the sort would have arisen, had there not been a previous natural cause. And just as the *raison*

d'être of the smithy's art is in iron and brass, that of agriculture in the earth and her products, and that of navigation in the presence of the sea, so also we will adhere to the view that gymnastic was native in man, and has grown together with him.

And there is a legend that, when Prometheus lived, gymnastic did not yet exist, and that Prometheus first devoted himself to certain physical exercises; that Hermes, however, introduced the training of others in gymnastic and was admired for the discovery; that Hermes' palaestra was the first; and that those formed by Prometheus were the ones who exercised themselves in the mud and believed that they were formed by Prometheus because gymnastic made their bodies apt and powerful.

[Here, the origin of combat arts being instituted by the Titan who gave science and art to Man, and was thence punished by The Almighty, is conflated through the medium of the pancratiast's training mud with the clay used by Man's Creator forming him like a golem, as described in Genesis as man's second creation and in Gilgamesh as the means by which Enkidu the wild man was created. The panratiast or MMA fighter is indeed soemthing of a wildman created and sanctioned by Classical and Modern Aryan society.]

17. In Delphi, on the Isthmus, and wherever else on earth contests exist, the gymnast, wrapped in a cloak, superintends the athletes; and no one can force him against his will to discard the same. In Olympia, however, he performs the inspection naked, because,

according to the opinion of some, the Eleans wish to convince themselves that the gymnast knows how to endure the toil and heat of summer; according to the assertion of the Eleans, however, for the following reason. Pherenike of Rhodes was the daughter of the boxer, Diagoras, and in external appearance was so robust, that, at first, she seemed to the Eleans to be a man. Therefore, at Olympia, she was unrecognizable under the cloak, and was able to train her son, Peisidoros. He, too, was one well-skilled in the art of boxing, and in no way inferior to his grandfather. When the deception was discovered, they were afraid to kill Pherenike, out of respect for Diagoras and the sons of Diagoras—for the whole family of Pherenike were all Olympian victors—but the decree was promulgated, that the gymnast must lay aside clothing, that he himself might not be left unexamined.

[Doreus or Spear-lord, was a son of Diagoras and brother of Phernike, who had winged victory in her name. He lead three Rhodian warships for Sparta at about this period, and when captured by Athens in the latter stages of the Peloponesian War, and was released due to his athletic stature. However, after Rhodes left the Spartan Alliance, and Doreus was captured by the Spartans traveling home from Elis, possibly after the event above described, he was slain as a traitor to the Spartans.]

18. There, also, the gymnast carries a strigil, perhaps for the following reason. Covered with the sand of the palaestra, the Olympian athlete must expose himself to the blazing sun. In order

that they may not suffer any injury to health, the strigil reminds the athletes of the oil and signifies that they must apply it so copiously that, after anointing, it can be scraped off. Some relate that a gymnast at Olympia once killed his athlete with the sharp strigil, because he had not striven for victory. And I give credence to the story, for it is better to inspire trust rather than mistrust. So then, may the strigil serve as a sword against bad athletes, and let gymnasts at Olympia take precedence over the judges of the contests.

[This story was not in the classic, older record, and most likely refers to a slave athlete. If the owner had freed an athlete to compete in Olympia, then failure to strive would have been a breach of trust and the trainer probably had standing orders for the execution. Extensive letters concerning Phyrus, a slave athlete in Egypt in the mid 200s B.C. are extant.]

19. The Lacedaemonians also demanded that the gymnasts have a knowledge of tactics, because they recognized in the contests a preliminary training for war; and this is not surprising, since the Lacedaemonians constantly associated even the dance, the most carefree amusement of peace times, with war, for they danced in such a manner as if to evade or throw a missile, leap up from the ground, and manipulate the shield cleverly.

20. The instances in which gymnasts have been of use to athletes, through encouragement, rebuke, threat, or strategy are numerous, and their enumeration would be superfluous; the most noteworthy,

however, may be related. Glaukos of Karystos, who was giving way before his opponent in boxing, at Olympia, was led to victory by Tisias, the gymnast, when he shouted to him to use the “plough-stroke.” This meant, namely, to strike the opponent with his right; for in that hand Glaukos had so much power that once, in Euboeia, he had straightened a plough-share, which was bent, by striking it with his right hand as if with a hammer.

[The hammerfist punch, similar in mechanics to shield and spear strokes, is the safest for the lightly strapped or bare hand, can be used to break the clavical, and was used by Jack Slack the Butcher, who named it “The Chopper” to take the London Prize Ring bare knuckle title from Jack Broughton in the mid 1700s. This punch is often found in ancient illustrations and was supposed to be the blow that Amycus the giant attempted to defeat Polydukes with when Jason and the Argonauts beached their ship Argo in the land of the Bybicans. Polydukes straight punches won the bout and the second part of his name, Dukes meaning Many-sweet or Very-sweet, from which the term “dukes” for fists in boxing comes.]

21. Arrichion, the pancratiast, who had already been victor at two Olympiads, was competing for the wreath in the following third Olympiad, and was on the point of declaring himself vanquished, but was inspired with a desire for death by Eryxias, the gymnast, when he shouted: “What a splendid memorial, not to surrender at Olympia.”

[In his Pictures in a Gallery, a transcribed lecture, Philostratus does a superb illumination of the holy aspects of the Agon. We forget at our peril that the ancients had paintings, not just carvings and statues, and that these two were painted.]

22. As for Promachos of Pellene, his gymnast learned that he was in love, and, when the Olympian games were near, he said: "I believe, Promachos, thou art in love." And when he saw that he blushed, he continued: "Not in order to plague thee have I asked this, but to be helpful to thee in thy love affair. For, perhaps, I shall even put in a good word for thee with the maiden." And, without having spoken with her, he came to the athlete and brought him an untrue, but for the love-lorn youth, exceedingly precious answer. He said: "She will not refuse thee her love, if thou conquerest at Olympia." And Promachos took courage from what he heard, and was not only victorious, but even defeated Pulydamas from Skotussa, even after the adventure with the lions, which Pulydamas had captured at the court of Ochos, the king of Persia.

[Promochus, Front-line-fighter, almost single-handedly won a battle between his small town and a neighboring town.]

23. I myself heard Mandrogenes from Magnesia say that he must credit to his gymnast the endurance, which, as a young man, he displayed in the pancration. He related, namely, that his father had died and the house was under the direction of his mother, who was as able as a man. To her the gymnast is said to have written the following letter: "If thou shouldst hear that thy son is dead, believe

it; but that he is defeated, believe not!" Out of consideration of this letter, as he said, he summoned up all his courage, so that the gymnast might not be given the lie, nor his mother be deceived.

[Mandrogenes is a pankratiast that had eluded my original survey. Again, this entry suggests pancration as an art practiced by sons of the elite, occupying the top 1% of person, where in ancient Hellas athletes other than jockeys came from the top 10%.]

24. Optatos from Egypt was victor in the race at Plataea. Since, however, as stated, they had a law that that one who is defeated after a victory must die at the hands of the state, and may not participate in the exercises until he has given a hostage, and since no one there wanted to assume so dangerous a security, the gymnast resigned himself to the law and strengthened the athlete for the second victory. For to those who are about to begin a great task, trust, as I believe, brings happy confidence.

[This odd law would encourage the best athletes to enter coaching, which is rarely the inclination of the highest quality competitor.]

[We are now halfway through our only extant training manual on ancient athletics and the author has yet to address METHOD of execution in any serious or direct way. One is reminded of the sole English translation of Bernal Dias's Conquest of New Spain, in which the translator omitted the military preparations as unimportant! Has God damned us to be served in collective

memory by the most daft among us, the academic? The poets left us more exact if maddeningly brief records of athletics.]

To Judge Nature Of Naked Exercises: 5

[The qualities and duties of the trainer, at this point in the written lecture, begin to focus on the qualities of the athlete himself. 29 of 50 pages in, we are yet to discuss method.]

25. However, since an abundance of such cases comes to mind when we add the new to the old, let us rather fix our attention on the gymnast himself, what sort he must be and what he must know, in order to be able to have superintendence of the athlete. The gymnast ought to be neither talkative nor unskilled in speech, that the efficacy of his art may neither be injured by garrulity, nor appear too crude, from being unaccompanied by good speech. And he ought to be thoroughly acquainted with the whole science of physiognomy.

[The reading of facial structure and skull shape is still important to boxing coaches to determine the durability of the fighter.]

This I require for the following reason. The Hellanodik, or the Amphiktyon, has to examine a boy athlete on the following points: whether he has a tribe and a native land, a father and a family, whether he belongs to the free citizens and is not a bastard, and, finally, whether he is young and not past boyhood.

[This served the purpose of connecting the athletes to the founders of their cities, the heroes that generated their tribal races, and ultimately the origin of mankind, formed by the divine, with a face and posture so designed to look up to heaven. It was also a brake on using bought slaves as ringers, though this had happened from the late 500s B.C. onward in civic agons, but only became a general practice in Egypt.]

But whether he is temperate or immoderate, a drinker or a gourmet, and whether he is courageous or cowardly, about that their regulations say nothing, even if they understand it. The gymnast, however, must understand this exactly, since, to a certain extent, he has to judge nature. [The following is beautifully written.]

He should, therefore, know all the signs of character which are in the eyes, by which the sluggish and also the violent betray themselves, as do the inactive, the less enduring, and the immoderate. For the character of the black-eyed is different from that of those who have bright, blue, or blood-shot eyes; different, too, is that of those whose eyes are yellow, flecked, bulging, or sunken; for nature has indicated the seasons of the year by the constellations, and character by the eyes.

The nature of the parts of the body, on the contrary, is to be considered, in the following manner, as in sculpture. The ankle must correspond with the wrist, the forearm with the shin, and the thigh with the upper arm; the buttocks must be in harmony with the shoulders, the back with the belly; and, in the same way, the breast

should form an arch, like the region below the hips; and the head, the pattern of the whole, ought to be in correct proportion to all the rest.

[A balanced body was thought best, contrary to the modern obsession with its size. A well knit kinetic chain was known to provide the boy, youth and man with the most adaptability to urgent, coordinated means.]

[The following is an excellent discourse on the foundation of civilization, namely domestication of the human and his specialization as a type of productive beast suitable to its assigned task.]

26. After the close of this exposition, training is not to follow directly, as some might suppose; but the one to be trained is to be stripped and brought forth for an examination of his natural ability, how it is constituted and to what end. For, indeed, how is it seemly, that huntsmen and horse-fanciers take such pains with dogs and horses, that they do not employ dogs for any purpose they like, or the same breed for every sort of game, but some for this and others for that; and that of horses they train some for hunting, others for war-steeds, and still others for the race or chariot, and even these last not indiscriminately, but according as each is intended for a particular side of the chariot-tongue, or for the lines; but that of men, those who are to be entered at Olympia or Delphi, as contestants for the prize of victory that Herakles himself desired, are left without examination? I demand, therefore, that the gymnast

know the correct proportions of which I spoke, and still more the properties of humors.

[In the following, the author reinforces his two main points of subtext: that the athlete himself is merely and active object, and that the thinker's real goal is to form a bridge with the thinkers of antiquity, rather than with the athletic actors of his own proximity. Philostratus is conducting a proxy, activity-based discourse with Paul who did not merely shadow box, Aristotle who put fourth the Pentathlete as the masculine paragon, Lyco of Troas, the boxer/philosopher, Plato who desired a republic in which men boxed for character development, Socrates who wrestled and fought as a hoplite, and Thales, who died of heat stroke at Olympia watching the contests.]

27. Moreover, there is something more important than this, which also seemed weighty to Spartan Lycurgus. In striving, for instance, to provide Laconia with athletes capable in war, he specified that "maidens take up physical exercises and be admitted to the public foot-races." Naturally, for the sake of the children, and that, as a result of powerful bodily constitution, they might bear vigorous offspring. Then, too, when she comes to the house of her husband, she will not avoid carrying water, or grinding meal, because of exercise from youth up; and, moreover, if she be united with a youth who has participated in exercises, the offspring she bears will be especially excellent—that is, slender, powerful, and healthy. And

Laconia became so great in war, because they proceeded in this manner with respect to marriage among them.

[The practical aspect of the fit athletic woman, especially in the migratory, tribal Dark Age that formed Lyncurgian Sparta, reflected in all of the epic poems in sea roving, was that women be able to perform the logistical feats of migration, escape, retreat and evacuation in order that the war making activities of their men not result in a captivity or extinction of the women and children. This was an important aspect in the success of such small Amerindian tribes as the Crow and Blackfeet, in dealing with larger tribal nations such as the Lakota.]

[Below the trainer is placed on the front lines of Eugenics, as the examiner of parental traits and the filter placed to winnow out those athletes of less than excellent potential. My coach, Mister Frank Gilbert, would do this at the Loch Raven Boxing Team gym, by glancing at a person's body and declaring often, "You're fat! Leave, just go!"

28. Since one must begin, therefore, with the birth of man, the gymnast ought to approach the boy athlete and consider him first of all with respect to his parents; whether, when they married, they were young, strong, and free from diseases, such as those which affect the nerves and the eye-sockets and attack the ears or internal organs; for, occasionally, these diseases may disappear with natural development, and in childhood they are latent and unrecognizable, but on advancing to the ephebic age, at the

transition to manhood, and when the best years begin to decline, they become evident and discernible, since, at the change of life, the blood undergoes a change. The youthfulness of the parents, if we assume no blemish on either side at marriage, imparts to the athlete power, untainted blood, strength of bone, fresh humors, and a symmetrical physique—indeed, I would maintain that it gives him beauty. Granted that they are unknown, and are not present at the examination of the youth, how then shall we examine his parentage? For our procedure would degenerate into absurdity, were we to put aside the athlete, who literally stands ready to enter the racecourse to strive for the olive or laurel crown, for an investigation of his father and mother, who perhaps died in his tender youth. Instead, a method is required, by which, by looking at the nude athlete, we may be clearly confident as to the nature of his parents. The conclusion a posteriori is laborious and by no means easy, but it is not beyond the limits of science. Therefore, I call it to attention.

29. I have pointed out what kind of offspring the procreation of faultless youthful parents will produce; that of those who are advanced in age is to be determined as follows. The skin of such people is tender, the collar bones form cavities, the veins stand out, as after hard work, the hips are clumsy and the muscular system weak. When at exercise, these indications increase. They are, for instance, listless on account of coldness, and their blood is crude; their perspiration is superficial rather than springing from the curves and hollows of the body, and they also gain no color from exertion,

if we cannot bring out the perspiration; they are also incapable of lifting anything, but have to pause for rest; moreover, their recuperation after exertion is not in proportion to their performance. I judge these unfit for all contests—for manliness is not their forte—but, especially, for the pancration and boxing; for such persons, who do not even have a firm skin, succumb easily to blows and wounds.

[Coaches in combat sports today take this same winnowing process, of separating out the weak for remedial training and improvement and the strong for competition. A fighter who has a hard time sweating before heating up is more prone to injury. I have had this problem. Vascular visibility, such as I have and body builders desire, places veins and arteries in vulnerable circumstances, protected only by skin. For this reason, gladiators were fed enough to form a layer of fat between skin and muscles to prevent easy bleeding. Also, visible exposed collar bones in a catch weight fighter makes him liable to a KO blow from a hammer fist down onto the shoulder and also makes him more likely to suffer shoulder injuries in throwing and grappling sports. I have been KO'd by larger fighters 5 times now, in stick fights, my downward blows to my boney shoulders. The effect is a kind of electricution.]

Nevertheless they are to be trained, but handled with more caution on the part of the trainer, since they are in need of it in exercise and in training. If, in the case of such people, it is merely in respect

to a single part that procreation appears to have been at an advanced age, then the defects will be similar, but less evident.

[Note that the greatest breeding problem recognized in the ancient world, is when parents are older when they have children. With harim-based, patriarchal societies producing notoriously weak and effete men, as well as Modern Economic Man not breeding until middle age and producing a suicidal drug addicted land whales of sloth herd of mewling dischord, might the ancient sophist be validated over time?]

30. The tendency to disease, however, will show in the blood; for it must certainly appear turbid and flooded with gall. And, even if such blood be invigorated by the gymnast, it changes again and becomes turbid; for that which is not of good heredity causes many difficulties. The prominence of the larynx and shoulder-blades may also be a sign, as, likewise a long neck, too much sunken at the jointure of the collar bones. And truly also those with narrow or excessively extended chests exhibit a strong tendency to ill health; for the former, naturally, have the inner organs compressed, do not breathe easily, are not well when exerting themselves, and are plagued endlessly with poor digestion of food; the latter, however, will have heavy, pendulous organs, their breathing will be sluggish, restraining them even when in movement; and food will do them less good, since it goes to the belly more than to the nourishment of the body. So much concerning the heredity of the future

contestant; fitness for each sort of contest, however, must be tested in the following manner.

[The boxers of the 19th and 20th centuries were, by these ancient standards, drawn as they were from malnourished and impoverished industrial populations, often exhibits of dysgenic quality. Sunken chests was one of the common afflictions of early boxers who often died of respiratory disease before old age.]

[The ancient Eugenics and body typing lesson over, we will hopefully turn to some method of execution concerning the physical arts under discussion.]

‘He Who Intends’ Of Naked Exercises: 6

31. He who intends to enter the pentathlon ought to be heavy rather than light, and rather light than heavy; and besides, lean, well-built, tall, sufficiently yet not excessively muscular. He should also have long rather than well-proportioned legs, and lithe, flexible hips, because of the back-swing in javelin-throwing and hurling the discus, as well as for jumping; for he will jump with less pain and break nothing in his body, if he gains a firm footing, letting the hips down slowly. And he must also have long hands and slender fingers, for he will throw much better, if, as a result of the length of finger, the discus be hurled with a sharply crooked hand; and he will hurl the javelin with less effort if the fingers do not have to touch the thong with the tips, because they are too short.

[The javelin used has the thong in the ancient Thracian style of the peltast. Its use in the cast imparts a spiral and additional leverage. This man, the pentathlete, was regarded as the best all around citizen by Aristotle and generally took up the heroic roll of leader for small town military action in the time when Rome was becoming involved in Greek politics. Wrestling was the fifth, least, and last of the five contests, with one who sweeps the track and field not required to wrestle. Imagine baseball mixed with one on one rugby,

while wondering what modern athletes would be best at this contest.]

32. He who wishes to excel in the distance race, ought to be strong in neck and shoulders, like a pentathlete, but should have light, slender legs, like the stade-runners; for these set their legs into quick running motion by means of their hands as though they were winged; the distance runners do this at the end, but, at other times, they go almost as in a walk, holding the hands forward in a pushing position, for which reason they need stronger shoulders.

33. Between contestants in the armed race, stade- and double stade-race, no one makes a distinction any more, since the time when Leonidas of Rhodes was victorious in these three events in four successive Olympiads;

[This might have been in the late 400s and early 300s B.C. when Rhodian athletes were dominant. This is the first mention I have found of this man in ancient sources. This was the kind of athlete that best matched the poetic description of Achilles.]

nevertheless, a distinction is to be made between those who intend to compete in these contests separately, and those who compete in all at the same time. The armed runner ought to be distinguished by a slender waist, well-developed shoulders and supple knees, in order that the shield may be easily carried and supported by these parts.

[The aspis shield was designed to rest on the shoulder.]

Of the stade-runners, who represent the lightest sort of contest, the well-proportioned are, indeed, quite good, but better than these are those who are not too tall but still somewhat slenderer than the well-proportioned; for excessive height lacks firmness, just as do plants which shoot up tall. They should be powerfully built, for the beginning of a good race is good posture. Their physical proportions should be as follows: the legs should be in proportion to the shoulders; the chest somewhat below the mean and have sound organs; the knees should be supple, the shin straight, and the hands above the average; they should also have a moderate muscular system, for excessive muscles are leaden weights for speed.

[My boxing coaches, all five of them, would look at muscular men and say, "Are you on weights?" as if he were on some terrible drug.]

For contestants in the double stade-race, let those be designated who are stronger than the stade-runner, but lighter than those who run in armor. The participants in all three kinds of races, however, ought to be selected from the best, and should unite in themselves the merits which these separately exhibit. Let no one consider this impossible, for such runners have appeared even in our own day.

34. The boxer should have long hands and a strong forearm and not... upper arm,

[The forearm was used to block against a gauntlet that was a weapon, rather than padded. This is the same in bare-knuckle boxing, that the lower arm act as a shield. A large upper arm was not valued because without clinching allowed, the upper cut would be of limited utility. Long hands makes for a heavier fist, and, since boxers were allowed to spear the eyes, permitted longer range fingertip strikes.]

powerful shoulders, and a long neck.

[Powerful shoulders are obvious. The long neck, often a disadvantage in some forms of combat, would help with slipping straight punches and pulling the chin away from hook punches.]

As for the wrists, the thick are heavier for striking; the less thick, mobile and adroit in thrusting.

[Without weight classes, it must be understood that style will depend on relative attributes, with the thicker boned man shielding with forearms and counter punching hard as he comes in, as described in Virgil, with the heavy man relying like Glaukos, on the hammer fist, which, like the back fist and spinning back fist, may strike with the pinkie side of the wrist. His lighter-wristed opponent must lead and feint and move with straight punches. This was the type of match described between Polyduces and Amycus, and Apollo and Bupul, with the lighter boned man thrusting punches at a heavy boned man.

[Striking, as opposed to trusting above, indicates the prevalence of hammer fists, vertical, lateral and diagonal, as attested in art and literature. John L. Sullivan in the 1870s-80s, ruled the ring largely by using a diagonal, outward, backhand hammer fist lead to sweep aside the guard of his lighter opponent and follow with a hard, short rear hand.]

Well-built hips should also support him, for the forward thrust of the hands throws the body off balance, if it does not rest on firm hips. [This is a function of balance and hip strength is a key aspect of balance.]

Thick-calved persons, according to my observation, are not fitted for any sort of contest, least of all, however, for boxing; for they are especially sluggish in kicking the shin of an opponent, and, on the other hand, are easily taken unawares by kicking.

[Obviously, by this time in Late Antiquity, the prohibition against kicking has been adjusted to permit leg kicks only. This makes sense in point of fact of the dangerous hand gear and the primacy of pankration over boxing. It is still an axiom today, that the boxer with thick calves, especially that have short tendons, suffers in outer range footwork and is most suited for getting in close and hooking with power punches with elbows close to the hips. The dangerous nature of the hand gear of the age, would make this especially risky and the shin stomp, mostly used today in Wing Chun and Jeet Kune Do in association with weapon knife use, would be an obvious method for checking the forward progress of

such a bruiser, whose brows could be diced up with the hard glove. In stick fighting this is called a foot check and was a common method in french savate and cane work. The ancients did not permit this in boxing. Due to the traditional weight of these sacred contests, I am suggesting that kicking was redefined to exclude foot checking. There might also be a problem with the Greek-to-German-to English translation here. The gunman who I coach in knife fighting, who is lighter built than I, uses foot checks, stomp checking the shin of my lead leg to stall my lunges.]

His shins ought, therefore, to be straight and proportionate, while the thighs should stand out far apart from each other; for the figure of the boxer is adapted for attack if the thighs are not close together.

[He is arguing against a thick-thighed man such as Odysseus, more adapted to sniping with quick blows, as described by Quintus of Smyrna in the 400s A.D. “the quick play of cunning hands.” the drift away from the powerful boxer to the dexterous boxer caused by the hand gear, obviously made the boxer less suited for pankration. The build is again conducive to dextrous kicking.]

It is best if the belly be drawn in; for such people are light and have good respiration. For all that, however, the belly [if it is prominent] gives the boxer a certain advantage, for such a belly hinders blows at the face, in that it checks the force of the blow.

[The belly helps against body blows so long if not distended. The idea that a fatter fighter gets hit less hard in the face than the lighter fighter, is flat wrong, it being the opposite, with the excess weight anchoring the head more and imparting more resistance to the punch and stressing the neck. This man did not box, but misread the fact that lighter fighters hitting larger fighters in this system, as with bare knuckle boxing, were loath to commit all of their force against a foe who could bring down a hammer fist and break their collar bone.]

35. Let us go on to the future wrestlers! The normal wrestler ought to be slender rather than well proportioned, but built like the well-proportioned; he should have neither a long neck nor one sunken into the shoulders, for, though, to be sure, that is useful, it, nevertheless, looks deformed rather than athletic, at least if one has a comprehension of such things; how much more pleasing and god-like are those statues of Herakles which are nobly-formed, not sunken.

[Here, this homo, who wrote Love Letters to a Boy, is more concerned about how handsome the wrestler is, an activity he supercharges with erotica, despite the fact that a 'sunken' or short necked and large shouldered build presents benefits to the wrestler. This book is written to assist the elite, non athletic spectator in his enjoyment of a viewing agons as a spectator.]

Rather, the nape of the neck should be erect, as in a beautiful, proud horse, the base of the neck reaching down to the collar

bone. Well-joined upper shoulders and elevated shoulder tips give to the future wrestler a stately appearance, noble figure, power, and better adaptation to wrestling; for such shoulders are a good protection, even if the neck be turned or bent down in wrestling, since they give the head the support of the arms. A well-formed arm is an advantage in the wrestling match. However, by well-formed I mean an arm of the following sort: thick veins begin in the nape of the neck and throat, one on each side, and, running over the shoulders, and appearing on the upper and lower arm, they go down to the hands. A person in whom they are excessive and visible on the surface, gains no power through them, and such veins are also unpleasing to look at, like varicose veins:

[His obsession with veins being visible showing weakness is probably based on the more durable nature of men with a slight layer of fat to pad him against blunt trauma, misunderstood by his homo-erotic eye.]

but for one in whom they are deeply imbedded and but little distended, they reveal a slight and peculiar *pneuma* of the hands, and keep the arms of older persons young, while, in the younger, they give an appearance of readiness, promising much in wrestling.

The breast is best if prominent and arched, for the organs rest therein as in a firm and well-constructed room, noble, powerful, healthy, uniting courage and calculation. The breast, however, is also beautiful, if it is moderately arched, lean all round and marked with lines; for it is then strong and adroit, but, to be sure, less fit for

wrestling, though better adapted than some others. People with flat, sunken breasts, according to my opinion, are neither to be stripped nor trained; for they betray themselves by indigestion, unsound organs, and short breath.

[Polikoff, in *Ancient Combat Sports*, notes that graphic prize fighting art in the classic period was distorted by the homo-erotic focus on the handsome chest.]

The belly, in its lower parts, ought to recede, for a pendulous belly is a useless burden for the wrestler. The groins, however, upon which it rests, should not be undeveloped, but even somewhat well-nourished; for such groins are adapted to squeezing everything that presents itself in wrestling, and, when squeezed themselves, will rather cause pain than suffer it.

[The chief interest in the wrestler is obvious erotic and explains that in the author's life time that a wrestler and bathing companion of an emperor was employed to strangle him in his bath. He is correct that a big belly is useless in wrestling, while in boxing, big bellied men who move side to side or wait on the other's advance, rather than lumbering forward, gain some advantage from their weight. At least one pankratiast of the 100s B.C. boasted of his great belly.]

The back is beautiful, if it is straight, but one slightly bent is better adapted to wrestling, because nearer to the wrestling-posture, which is curved and bowed forward. It ought not to be characterized by a hollow back-groin, for this is the result of lack of

marrow, and the vertebrae are then easily bent and are occasionally forcibly dislocated, inward, by holds in wrestling. Still this, to be sure, may be more fanciful than true. The hips, set like an axis between the upper and lower limbs, must be flexible, mobile, and firm. This, however, is effected by their size and, by Zeus, a little more than average amount of flesh. The parts under the hips ought not be too emaciated, nor yet too fat—for the former betrays weakness; the latter, unfitness for training—but, for the future wrestler they should be strong and moderately prominent.

[This man is not portraying the massively strong wrestlers of classical antiquity such as Milo, who were front line combat soldiers, but an athlete that was more of an interactive posing body builder than what we think of as a wrestler. This was upright naked judo without ground work. Our idea of wrestling involves more the pankration grappling aspect. Also, the focus on wrestling over other sports may be vested in the practical fact that the men who ran the Sacred Synod of Herakles, the leaders of the athletic union of the day, were typically wrestlers and were expected to be well lettered, possibly students of men such as Philostratus.]

A flexible side, which imparts mobility to the breast, is fit for attack and defense in wrestling; for such people, if they lie under an opponent, are difficult to conquer, and on the other hand are no light burden for him who lies under them. The rump is weak if it is narrow, when too broad, inert; if well-formed, adapted to all purposes. A well-jointed upper thigh which turns outward combines

beauty with strength and supports the whole easily, and, to be sure, all the more easily if the shin which supports it bends out nowhere and the thigh resting upon it forms a straight knee. Ankle bones, which are not straight but slanting and pushed inward, injure the balance of the body as sloping bases do that of firm pillars. Such is the nature of the wrestler, and he will be able, with these characteristics, to execute the pancration on the ground [Greek] but the standing hand-contest [Greek] less well.

[The homo-erotic authority on prize-fighting from Late Antiquity, continues to explore combat sports as a spectator lesson in human domestication for academics, homo-sexual submissives, and women. He does seem to have a working knowledge of wrestling born of experience. The wrestler he describes would be adept at the grapevine.]

‘Two Right Hands’

Of Naked Exercises: 7

Perfect pancratiasts are those who are better qualified for wrestling than the boxers, and better for boxing than the wrestlers. [Not a word is offered as to the method of fighting in the pankration, the premier sport of the time.]

36. Good athletes, also, are those who are great though of small stature. As such we shall consider the ones who, in size, rank after the thick-set and well-proportioned, but display a magnificent, and, for their size, unusually fine physical structure—all the more, if they do not appear emaciated, but exhibit even some corpulence.

[Ground fighting rewards the shorter stronger man and is reflected by the heavier weight of the same height combat athletes in boxing and MMA.] Their advantages are of more value in wrestling; for they are mobile, adroit, impetuous, light, agile, and tough, and elude many dangers and difficulties in wrestling, by virtue of the fact that they stand just as firmly on the head as on the feet. In the pankration and boxing, however, they are not good contestants, since the blow of the opponent strikes them from above, and they must bob up from the ground very comically, in opposition, when they themselves deliver a blow.

[He is more concerned with the viewing aesthetics of punching and would be horrified, and apparently was, peek-a-boo and shell boxing as well as by “superman” punches.]

As an example of those who are great though small, we may mention the statues of the wrestler, Maron, whom Cilicia once produced.

[Not found in my original survey.]

To be excluded also from this class are those with long chests; for they, indeed, are able to elude wrestling holds, but they are incapable of throwing any one because of the strain on the legs.

[Four types of athletes viewed metaphorically according to totem animals again, offer the viewing non-combatant perspective and continue to avoid method. Nothing about how a thing is done has yet been produced. It seems that the trainers the author talked to did not take him seriously as a practical inquirer and communicated with him according to spectator conventions.]

37. Lion-figured, eagle-like, splinter-shaped, and those nicknamed bears: these are the types of athletes. The lion-figured are powerful in breast and hands, but weaker in the hinder part; the eagle-like, similar to these in figure, but lean in the groins like eagles in upright position, These two types produce bold, violent, impetuous people, who, however, easily lose courage in case of failure; and one need

not be surprised at this, if one considers the nature of lions and eagles.

38. The splinter-shaped and string-like are both rather slender, with long legs and excessively long hands, but differ from each other in great and small; for the former appear stiff, beautifully delineated and have good limbs, and from that, I think, their nickname comes; the latter, however, are rather limp and sluggish, flexible of body, and are for that reason compared with the string. Some, however, are more daring in holds, and others, the string-like, more restrained and slow.

[Hilarious terminology for the elongated and also sharp-eyed athlete continued into the 1930s when one had such fighters as the Elongated Panamanian and the Cuban Hawk. Men such as Tyson, Marciano, Pazienza, Mancini, Tommy Morrison, who are so loved by modern fans, the sophist here would class as lion-figured.]

39. Enduring athletic types are the hard, the muscular, those with narrow waist and cheerful face, but, more dependable than they, are the phlegmatic; for the choleric among them are such that, because of the sprightliness of their disposition, they may even go mad.

40. Those likened to bears are roundish, supple, fleshy, less finely articulated and more bowed than upright, hard to throw, agile in slipping out, and enduring in a clutch. And their breath rattles like that of bears when running.

[Butterbean, Tank Abott, Ruiz and Ray Mercer come to mind.]

41. The ambidextrous, who may be characterized as people with two right hands, a strange trick of nature, are of invincible strength, hard to ward off and tireless. These characteristics, of course, are due to the two-sided development of the body, which is capable of more than the usual condition. Whence this knowledge comes, I am going to state.

The Egyptian Mys, [Not found in original survey.] as I learned from older people, was a moderately-big little man, but he wrestled with extraordinary art. He fell ill and swelled up on the left side. When he was about to give up the profession of athlete, he dreamed that he should not be concerned about the illness, for he would be able to do more with the afflicted side than the well and uninjured. And the vision was true; for, since, with the affected parts he knew how to employ wrestling holds which could not be parried, he was dangerous to opponents, and even had advantage from the illness, since his strength lay precisely in his infirmity. That is a miracle and should not be related as normal, but to appear as an exception, more the work of a god who wished to reveal something extraordinary to men.

[When I wrestled in Junior High School, our team captain was a one armed youth who was almost impossible for most wrestlers to deal with due to his extreme build.]

42. Concerning bodily proportions, then, and whether these or those characteristics are better, there is indeed hypercritical disagreement among those who have not investigated these things intelligently; but, as concerns temperaments, however great their number, no objection has been raised, either previously or even now, against the opinion that the best of temperaments is the warm-moist; for it consists, like precious statues, of genuine, unadulterated stuff. Free of clay, mud, and superfluous humors are they who lack phlegm and fluidity of the bile, and who are equal to the necessary exertions, have good digestion, are seldom ailing, recover quickly from illnesses, on the contrary, and are tractable and docile in varied kinds of training as a result of their happy temperament.

[More erotic, academic, spectator theory better suited for pro wrestling. That said, a person who tends to produce phlegm, as many boxers find out, may develop sinus infections that impede balance and breathing. Indeed, two boxers of the early 1920s, Harry Grebb and Tiger Flores died during nasal surgery.]

Among athletes the choleric are warm, but dry in temperament and as unproductive for trainers as is hot sand for the sower; however, they are conspicuous for their presence of mind, for this they possess in unusual degree. The phlegmatic, on the contrary, in consequence of coldness, are sluggish in their behavior. These are to be trained by means of the most vigorous movement; the choleric, however, leisurely and with pauses for rest—for the one

needs the spur, the other the rein—and one must be dried with dust, the other moistened with oil.

[Below this sissy admits that the true agonistic heroes of antiquity did not concern themselves with his faggotry, but with the real actuality of physical combat.]

43. So much may be said about temperament according to modern gymnastics, since the old did not even have any knowledge of temperament, but merely exercised the physical power. By gymnastic, however, the ancients understood physical exercise only, whatever its form. Some exercised themselves by carrying heavy burdens; others, by competing in speed with horses and hares, bending or straightening thick iron plates, or by having themselves yoked with powerful oxen, and, finally, by subduing bulls or even lions. Thus did men such as Polymestor, Glaukos, Alesias, and Pulydamas from Skotussa. The arms of the boxer Tisandros from Naxos, who swam around the promontories of the island, carried him far out to sea, thus training themselves and the body.

[This narrative has become an exposition in how the author and his contemporaries are degenerated strands of ancient humanity, pointing out that nothing he has said about the preparation for the contests thus far are related to how the real champions of antiquity actually trained.] And they bathed in rivers and springs and were accustomed to sleep on the ground, sometimes stretched out on hides, sometimes on pallets of hay from the meadows. Barley

bread and unleavened wheaten bread made from pollard served them for food, and the meat they enjoyed was of the ox, bull, goat, and roe; and they anointed themselves with oil of the wild olive and oleaster. Therefore, they exercised without illness, and were apt to grow old late. They took part in contests for sometimes eight, sometimes nine Olympiads, were adapted to heavy military service and fought about the walls, by no means without success therein but rather distinguished by prizes and trophies, regarding war as preliminary practice for gymnastic, and gymnastic as preliminary training for war.

[Well stated, well attested and true of the most ancient date. See Homer's Iliad and the Funeral Games for Patroclus.]

44. When, however, a change had come about, champions became worthless as soldiers, the energetic became sluggards, the hardened became weak, and Sicilian gluttony gained the upper hand, then enervation entered the stadia, and, of course, all the more, when the art of flattery was introduced into gymnastics. Medicine first made use of it, when she took as councillor an art which is good, of course, but too weak to be used upon athletes, in that it teaches them further inactivity and to sit before exercises chock-full like Libyan or Egyptian meal sacks, puts in more fancy cakes and extravagant cooking, by means of which fastidious persons and voracious eaters are brought up, and sets forth wheaten bread of fine flour covered with poppy seed, fattens them with irregular fish-fare entirely contrary to rule, determines the

nature of fish according to the place whence they come in the sea —those being fat which come from the mud; those from the cliffs, lean; those from the open sea, fleshy; sea-weed blossom producing only small ones; and algae, insipid—and, moreover, provides pork with whimsical directions. Namely, they lay it down as a rule that pigs on the sea-coast are to be considered unusable, on account of the sea garlic of which the shores and the sand dunes are full; also to avoid those from near the rivers because they eat cray-fish; and, for a strict diet, to use only those fattened on cornelian cherries and acorns.

[Beginning in the mid 300s B.C., as Classical Hellas waned, it became a common place that full time professional prize fighters would become “parasites” or gluttonous feasting companions to Tyrants, their bodyguards. The presence of these touring professionals seems to have discouraged broad based participation in these potential crippling events and weakened the pool of able men. This seems similar to the introduction of TV in boxing in the late 1940s, which had the result in a single generation, by the 1960s, of eliminating most local prize fighting venues and the boxing gyms that were associated with each, again, reducing the talent pool.]

[Below the contests are shown to be fixed and even null, with the prize unearned valued more than the victory earned, placing Rome of 220 A.D. on the same ethical footing as America of 2022. Rather

than a defense of athletics, the author has offered a condemnation.]

45. Such luxury is also a strong stimulus to the sex impulse, and even gave the athletes an impetus to lawlessness in money matters, and to the purchase and sale of victories; for some sell even their honor, as I believe, because they need much; others must buy themselves an easy victory, because they lead a luxurious life. And if one steals or destroys a silver or gold votive offering, the laws against sacrilege pursue him with their wrath; but the wreath of Apollo or Poseidon, for which the gods themselves strove mightily, one can sell unpunished and purchase unpunished; and only among the Eleans is the olive-crown according to ancient belief still inviolable. As for the rest of the contests, however, I will mention among many examples the following one, which explains everything.

[The trade in collectables, which saw O.J Simpson jailed for abducting a man selling memorabilia associated with his career, and of Ray Mercer being overheard at ringside asking an opponent to throw the fight for 100K, come to mind, as does the sham exhibition involving Mike Tyson on June 1 2024.]

A boy was victorious in wrestling at the Isthmian Games, after he had promised one of his opponents 3,000 drachmas for the victory. When they entered the gymnasium the next day, the one demanded his money; the other, however, declared that he owed him nothing, for he had conquered against his will. Since that

settled nothing, they had recourse to an oath, and, arrived in the sanctuary of the Isthmian god, the one who had sold the victory swore he had sold the god's contest and that 3,000 had been promised him. And he made this confession with a loud voice, without the least hesitation. The truer the affair, even though witnesses were not lacking, the more ungodly and infamous it is. He swore to it, however, on the Isthmus, and in the face of Hellas. What then may not occur in Ionia, or in Asia, to the disgrace of the games.

Of this corruption, I can not acquit even the trainers themselves. They come, of course, to training provided with money, make loans to athletes at a higher interest rate than is customary among merchants at sea, and take no concern for the honor of the athletes, but advise them to buy and sell and seek only their own advantage, whether it be in profitable loans to those who are inclined to buy, or in collecting after a successful deal.

[The scumbag boxing and MMA promoters of today seem to have had a pedigree of some great antiquity. Recall earlier, the sophist offered the account of a trainer killing his fighter within the sacred bounds. It seems that the professional class of fighter who did not come with their own family fortune to invest in touring, were liable to become debtor slaves on par with gladiators and soldiers.]

So much may be said concerning the haggling traders; for they hawk, as it were, the ability of the athletes, while they take good care of their own advantage.

46. They commit, however, the following blunder also. They strip and train the boy athlete like a grown man, let him fill his stomach beforehand, go walking in the midst of training and belch so that it rumbles. In this way, like bad tutors, they deprive the boys of their youthful love of movement and accustom them to inaction, postponement of work, sluggishness, and a timidity inappropriate to their age. They should practice movement as in the palaestra. I mean, however, the passive movement of the legs as in light massage, and of the arms as in vigorous massage. And the boy should clap to it, since then these exercises are more vigorous. The Phoenician Heliz [Not found in original survey.] trained according to this rule not merely in boyhood but when he had reached manhood, and excited incomparably greater admiration than all those, so far as I know, who applied themselves to this sort of recreation.

'Tetrads'

Of Naked Exercises: 8

[Possibly, the only useful training information lies ahead in the final pages of a book that has not addressed method at all but dwelt in history, philosophy, sophistry and the concerns of the onlooking sissy.]

47. Also let us take no heed of the tetrads of the gymnasts, by which the whole of gymnastics has been ruined. By tetrads is to be understood a cycle of four days, on each of which something different takes place. On the first, the athlete is prepared; on the second, intensively engaged; on the third, given over to recreation; and, on the fourth, moderately exerted.

[Cyclic training in this manner is adopted by many combat athletes today.]

The preparatory training is, however, an energetic, short and rapid movement, which arouses the athlete and prepares him for the coming exertion; the intensive, an irrefutable test of the inner strength of constitution; the recreation, the period in which movement is again systematically resumed; the day of moderate exertion teaches escape from the opponent, but if he himself flees, not to relax.

[This may have been an ancient method, as it mimics mustering and/or marching, battle, raping and pillaging and reforming for action. The author does not agree with this method, though his opinion has been seen to be of little worth on matters beyond the beauty of the athlete.]

And since they plod through this entire method of training systematically, and always repeat the tetrads, they deprive their science of intelligent understanding in respect to the condition of the athlete to be trained. For foods are harmful, wine is detrimental, and so are stealthy eating, anxiety, weariness, and much besides, partly voluntary and partly involuntary. How, in such cases, shall we bring about a cure by means of tetrads and training by fixed rules?

[Gluttony among champion athletes and warriors, some of whom had eating contests, was a demonstration of vitality in imitation of the gorging lion and not beneficial to future but rather a demonstration of current vitality. Circa A.D. 1200 a man who would conquer the lands in which Philostratus leisured his life away, Babyars, was famous for eating a whole lamb at one sitting and was the most feared warrior of his age. In training, during classical periods and in the modern period, a frugal diet has generally been recommended for fighters.]

48. Over-feeding will be betrayed by the pendulous brow, panting breath, filling out of the cavities at the collar bones, and the groins at the side, which exhibit a certain voluptuousness. Wine drinkers are marked by a thick paunch, lively blood, and moisture of the

groins as well as at the knee. Those who come from the enjoyment of Venus betray themselves at training in many ways. They are, for instance, diminished in power, short of breath, timid in attack, lose their color under exertions, and are recognizable by such signs; stripped, they betray themselves certainly by hollows at the collar bone, relaxed hips, ribs in relief, and coldness of blood. Were we to try it with them, they could not carry off a wreath at a contest. There is a hollowness under the eyes, the heart-beat and perspiration are weak, their sleep, which regulates digestion, is light, their glances are unsteady and reflect the consciousness of love's favor.

49. As for pollution, it is to be sure a discharge of over-flowing health, but the persons nevertheless appear pale, are covered with perspiration and diminished in physical strength, but are well-nourished as a result of sleep, have faultless hips and plenty of wind. Though comparable with those who embrace the enjoyments of love, they are yet not the same; for they experience a purification of their condition, while the others wear themselves out. It is a certain sign of exhaustion, if the surface of the body appears tenderer than usual, and the veins puffy, the arms limp, and the muscular system flabby.

[Reasonable precautions for training eaters are made below.]

50. The overfed, if they are to undertake either light or heavy exercises, are to be massaged downward, in order that the superfluous weight may be drained off from the heavier parts. The pentathletes are to be trained in one of the light exercises; the

runners are not to be strained, but to go leisurely, only at a little more vigorous pace; the boxers ought to practice boxing lightly and only with blows in the air. Wrestling and the pancration are upright contests; but there is of necessity also the contest on the ground. So they ought to practice the contest on the ground, but lying above more than under, and never go head over heels, that the body may not be injured by a wound. And the trainer ought to massage the light as well as the heavy athletes with little oil, chiefly on the upper parts, and he will have to wipe off the oil which he applies.

51. If athletes have too much wine in their system, moderately hard exercises will produce secretion of sweat; such over-full people, of course, ought neither to be trained vigorously nor left entirely to recreation, for it is better to drain off the stale liquid, in order that the blood may not be harmed by it. The trainer should, accordingly, dry him off and scrape him, using a moderate amount of oil, that the sweat pores may not be stopped up.

52. If one comes from sexual indulgence, it is better for him not to take training; for where is the manhood of those who exchange the wreath and the herald's cry for vile sensual pleasure?

[Perhaps the author is not physically erotic, as indicated here, and his obsession with masculine beauty is like some post-masculine idyll like those currently engaged in by neo-masculinity advocates of today.]

If, however, they are to be trained, let it be as a warning, that the condition of their strength and their respiration be brought home to them. Both of these are especially severely affected by sexual debauchery. As for the condition of those who suffer pollutions, that is also a phenomenon of sex life, but, as said, involuntary. They are, therefore, to be trained with care, principally to increase their physical power, since they are short in that, and to drive out the perspiration, since they have a superfluity of it. Their exercises ought to be less intensive but long drawn out, that breathing may be exercised. They need an adequate amount of oil thickened with dust, for this means preserves and refreshes the body. [Sex before combat is rarely regarded as a positive activity for fighters, but held as a reward after combat. Below is some practical advice for training men for self improvement.]

53. Nervous athletes should be mentally influenced by comforting words which encourage them and set them up, but they should be trained together with those troubled with insomnia and poor digestion. Systematic training does them good, for timid souls learn more willingly, which one has to be on his guard against. Exhaustion, perchance, is the beginning of illnesses, and it will be sufficient to give people who have tired themselves out in the clay and sand of the palaestra a gentle relaxation, in the manner described; those tired out in the dust, however, must be trained further again the following day in clay, with a little increase. For sudden rest after exercise in the dust is a bad remedy for fatigue, since it does not preserve the powers but enervates them. Thus,

therefore, a more competent science of gymnastic might be developed which fixes attention upon the individual peculiarity of the athletes.

54. A bit of evidence against the tetrads that I have repudiated is the blunder in connection with the wrestler, Gerenos, whose tomb stands in Athens, on the right side of the road to Eleusis. He was, in fact, from Naukratis and was among the best wrestlers, as witness the victories which he had carried off in the contests. He had just been victorious at Olympia, and when for two days thereafter he had made a carousal and had entertained some of his acquaintances in celebration of the victory, he could not sleep, because of the unwonted debauch. On the following day, when he came to the gymnasium, he confessed to the trainer that his digestion was disordered and that he felt indisposed. The latter, however, was vexed, listened angrily, and was displeased because he wished to delay, and to interrupt the tetrads, and, finally, he killed the athlete in the midst of training, from a lack of understanding, since he did not prescribe the training which was in order, even when the athlete was silent.

[Of course, each trainer should engage a method best suited for each athlete. However, these contests were religious observances of tradition and site trainers at Olympia, for instance, would insist on running contestants through regimented paces before the contest. These athletes were temporary and sometimes permanent sacrifices. The best and the lucky would be rewarded.]

If the tetrads are so constituted and the gymnast so untrained and uneducated, it is no small calamity. For is it not depressing when the stadia lose such an athlete? And what do those who rave about tetrads do with them when they come to Olympia? There, there is dust as I have described it, and exercises according to command; and the Hellanodik also does not train according to a pre-announcement but everything is improvised at the time, and even the trainer is threatened with the whip, in case anything happens contrary to their orders.

[The whip, along with the rod, were instruments of military and servile torment applied to athletes who slaved for The God of the Contest under the direction of the Priests, even as a soldier was beaten by his officers in sacrifice to the need of his nation for an obedient combatant.]

There is, however, no contradicting their commands, for those who resist them can be debarred from the Olympic games. So much for the tetrads; if we adhere to this, we shall show that gymnastic is a science, and shall strengthen the athletes, and the stadia will flourish as a result of proper training.

55. The halter is an invention of the pentathletes, but was invented for the jump, from which it receives its name; for the rules of the game consider the jump a difficult type of contest and inspire the jumper with music of the flute and give him wings with the jumping weight; that is to say, it is a sure guide for the hands and brings the feet firmly and gracefully to the ground. What that is worth, the

rules of the game show. That is, they do not permit the measurement of the leap, if the imprint of the feet is not faultless. The oblong jumping weights, however, exercise the arms and shoulders, the roundish ones also the fingers. Light as well as heavy athletes ought to employ them along with all exercises, excepting recreation.

56. Of the dust places, the clay is fitted for purification and for the restoration of normal conditions in case of surfeit. Brick dust serves to open closed pores and to bring out the sweat; bituminous dust, to warm the parts that have become chilled; the black and the yellow dust are both earthy and good for softening and nourishing, but the yellow dust also imparts a luster and is more beautiful to look at, on a noble, perfectly-formed body. But one must strew the dust with a loose wrist, letting it through the fingers and sprinkling it rather than pouring it on, so that the fine dust may fall on the athlete.

57. The punching bag should also hang ready for the boxers, but above all for those who attempt the pancration. The one intended for boxers ought to be light, since the hands of boxers are to be trained merely for quickness; the one for pancratiasts, larger and heavier, so that, on one hand, they develop firmness of footing, when they obstruct the swing of the bag, and on the other, the shoulders and fingers, when they meet resistance. The athlete should run against it with his head and, in general, go through all forms of the upright pancration.

[The heavy bag was more for checking, kicking and clinching drills. The light bag would be lighter than ten pounds, probably half that weight. In the bare knuckle and small glove era of the 1870s thru 1890s, the heavy bag was a ten pound object and disliked by most boxers for causing wrist and hand injuries.]

58. Those sun themselves unintelligently who do it in every kind of sunshine and all without distinction; the experienced and intelligent, however, not at just any time, and only in so far as it does them good. For when there is a north wind, or a calm, the sun's rays are pure and salutary, since they spring from the clear ether; with a south wind and cloudy sky they are moist and unduly hot, and so enervate rather than warm those who are training. I have, therefore, described the days with favorable sunshine. The phlegmatic, however, must sun themselves more, in order to sweat out the superfluous; but the choleric must be kept from it, that fire may not be added to fire. And, of course, those more advanced in age ought to sun themselves, lying inactive, exposed to the sun as if for roasting; those abounding in youthful strength, however, in activity and practising everything, as the Eleans prescribe.

[The ritual beatings of the Spartans, were being conducted as tourists attractions in the time of the author. The sweat-bath and dry anointing, however, since this pertains to the rougher gymnastic, we shall leave to the Lacedaemonians, whose exercises are similar neither to the pancration nor the boxing match. Still the Lacedaemonians themselves explain that they do

not practice these types of contest for the purpose of competition, but merely for the purpose of hardening, and this is entirely in harmony with their flagellation, for a law among them prescribes lashing at the altar.

[They were are, over 10,000 words from antiquity describing how people fought, by a bookish nerd who merely watched, with not a word on how a man actually trained for combat. As we reside in such a similarly soft time, I expect this book to be praised, almost entirely worthless as it is.]

No wonder the Boxer was Dread, for the spectators to such combats had no idea at all the methods by which these shadows or earlier, better men, fought. In the Iliad, Homer said more about boxing in two lines attributed to Nestor punching straight from the shoulder than this man said about all of combat sports.

Here we are, having hoped for an explanation of how men trained for combat, finding instead, a description of his sophists viewed combat as a medical-totemic morality play.