SPORTS IN ANTIQUITY

ABOUT

By Pasko Varnica

4/16/2013

ABOUT THIS WEB SITE

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Of the many daily distractions and diversions, Romans derived most pleasure out of their passion for the immensely popular sport of chariot racing.     However, sports in ancient   Rome are an astonishingly under researched subject.  It appears that few ambitious historical studies will claim that the field of research is related to the topic of sports. Alan Cameron in the preface to his “Circus Factions” lamented, “Scholars essayed an interpretation [of circus factions] in social, religious and political terms rather than sporting terms.”​

Could it be that scholars from high academia are disconnected from the world of those who they deem uneducated masses? We, *plebs sordida* spend our Sundays in front of TVs watching football games. Perhaps, sport is an undignified topic not worthy of high culture.​

Whatever the reasons, the intent of this web site is to do justice to the passion of the Romans for sports. You will be able to read and learn all about it and, with time, join a community of like-minded fans.​

I want to enlist your help: if you have done any research on the topic and you want to share your findings, access Forum page to get in touch with me. Your contributions to this site are welcome.

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       Suggested reading:

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- H.A. Harris, Sport in Greece and Rome, Cornell University Press, 1972​

- Alan Cameron, Porphyrius, The Charioteer, Clarendon Press, Oxford University Press, 1973

- Alan Cameron, Circus Factions, Blues and Greens at Rome and Byzantium, Clarendon Press, Oxford University Press, 1976​ [rated the best book about sports in antiquity; check out the review at www.amazon.com]

-  Richard Burgess, Description of the circus on the via Appia near Rome with some account of Circensian games, 1828, freely available on Google play www.play.google.com​

- John H. Humphrey, Roman Circuses, Arenas for Chariot Racing, University of California Press, 1986​

- Anne Mahoney, Roman Sports and Spectacles, A Sourcebook, Focus Publishing, R. Pullins Company, 2001

Recommended web sites:

<http://skookumpete.com/chariots.htm>

A well-researched and accurate description of chariot racing by Peter Donnelly

<http://penelope.uchicago.edu/~grout/encyclopaedia_romana/>

Selected essays about history and culture of Rome by James Grout

<http://www.livius.org/>

Articles on Ancient History, a scholarly site about ancient history, including Rome, by Jona Lendering.

[All web sites are cited with permission]

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  ABOUT THE AUTHOR

The reading habits of men follow three stages. Men begin their reading life with comic books, move on to fiction and later in life when they get curious about their place in this puzzling universe, they read history. I have reached this blessed third stage around 10 years ago. Since that first book, Life In Ancient Rome by F.R. Cowell (Perigee Book, 1961) my principal interest has been the history of the Roman Empire, as you can probably guess.​

I have lived in Italy, have studied Latin and have visited Rome on several occasions. You may say that I am naturally inclined to be interested in Rome in antiquity. That could be partially true.

Drawing parallels between the U.S and the Roman Empire is thought provoking and another possible reason for my enthusiasm about studying Rome in antiquity.  A worthy topic, but, oh, so boring.​

Roman Empire offers  a  unique  opportunity  to  study  a classical civilization as it evolved from birth, through rise and glory days, to  the  decline  and ultimately, by closing the loop,  to  the  fall and  final demise.  The multitude of evidence   about   the life in ancient Rome appears as scattered pieces of  a  large  puzzle.  Putting that puzzle together has fascinated a countless number of people over centuries. I am among them.​

  One specific aspect of the daily life in ancient Rome has captivated me: sports. Those pesky romans were big sports fans.   I am, too.   I like soccer, baseball and by extension, fantasy baseball.  My first fantasy baseball season was in 1992. Since then I have joined Mastersball, a fantasy baseball analysis site, as a staff member and contributor, Today I play at a quasi-expert level, modestly   speaking, and have been quoted by   USA Today during the draft seasons.

Studies of sports in antiquity and fantasy baseball have made my life richer, fuller and more valued. This web site is a marriage between my two passions.

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Other writings by Pasko Varnica:

[Summer of my silence](http://www.smashwords.com/books/view/283724)

Fantasy Baseball web sites I recommend:

<http://www.mastersball.com/>

<http://www.rotobuzzguy.com/>