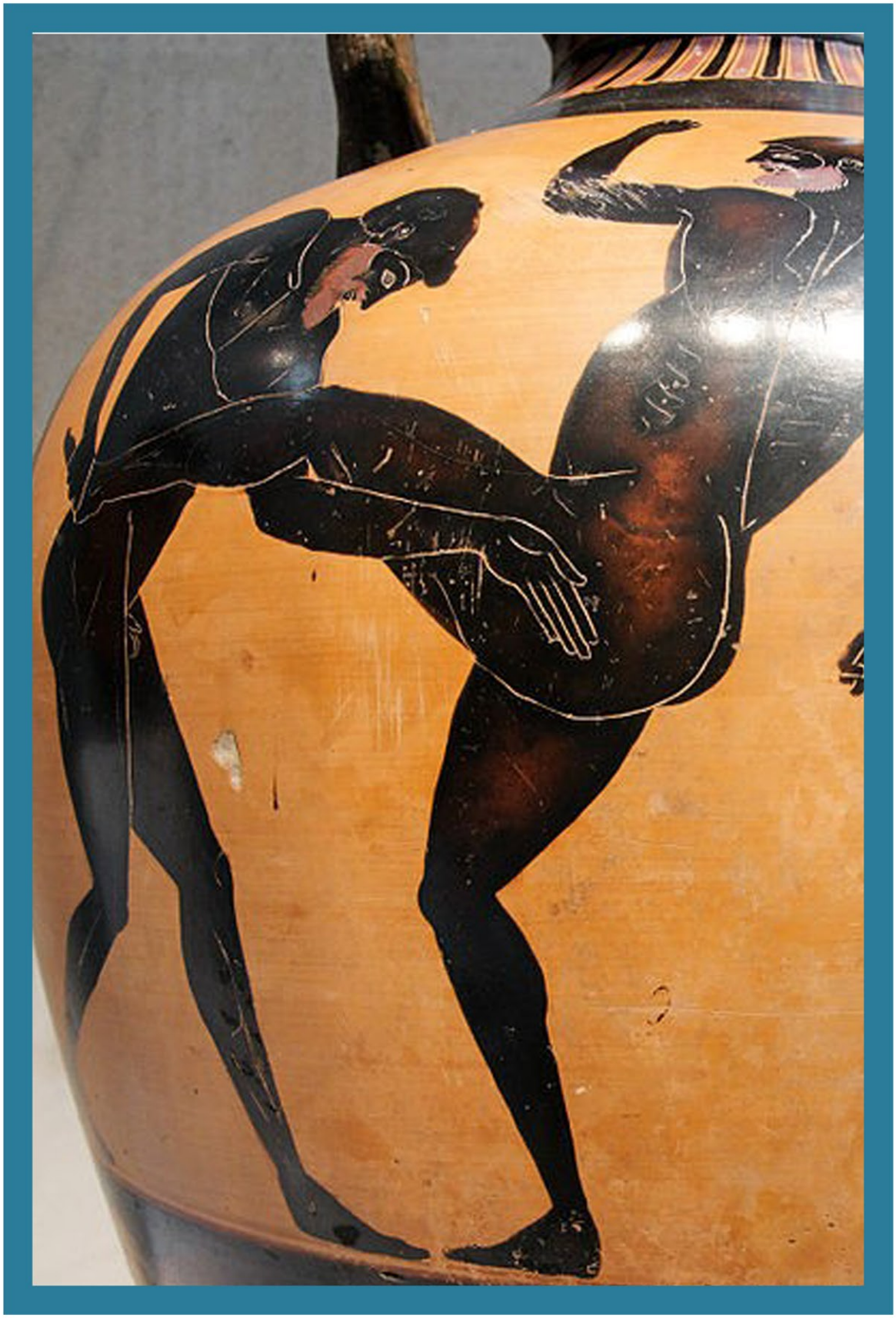
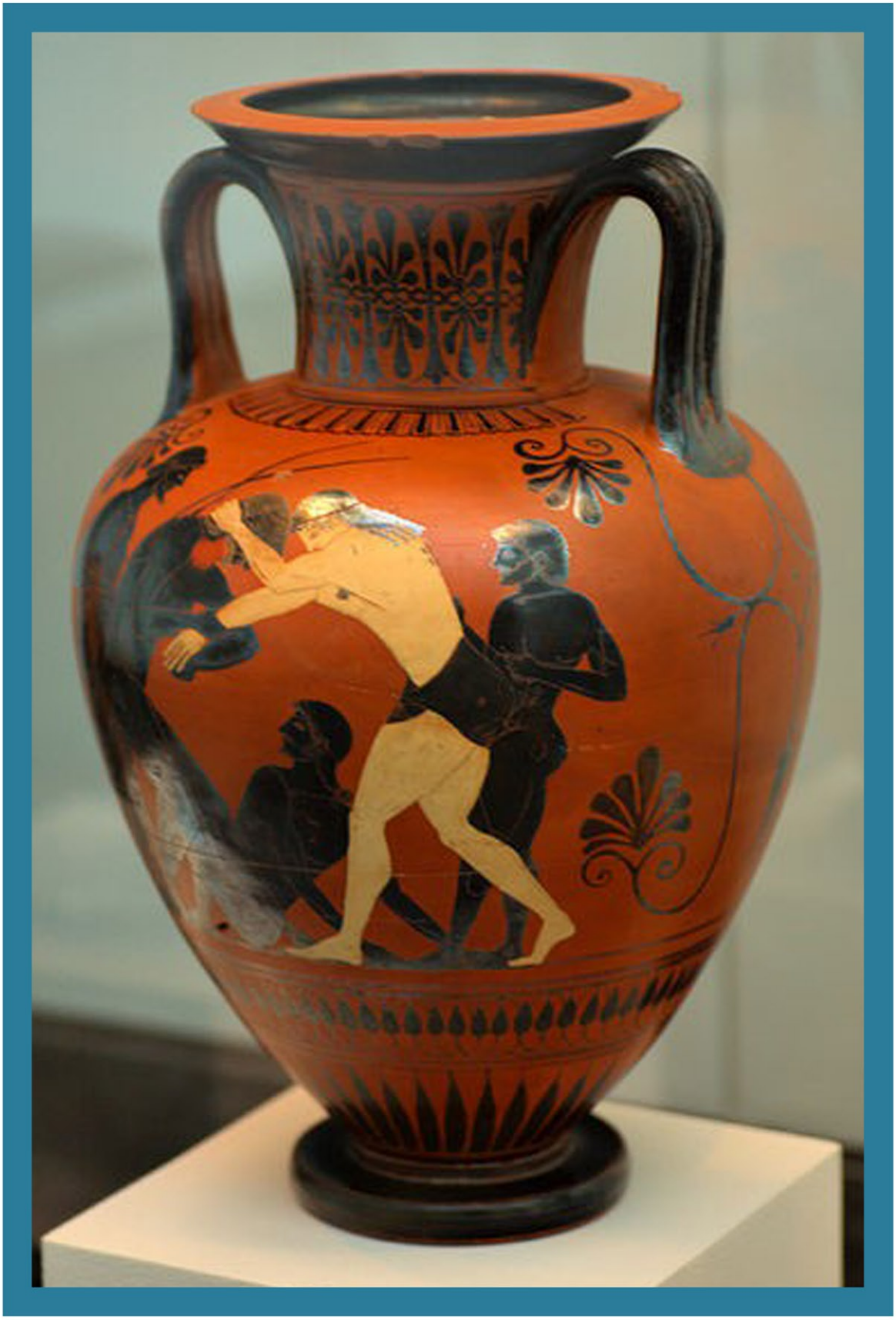


This vase from the Metropolitan Museum in New York shows two people competing in pankration. Pankration (pronounced pan-crat-eon) was similar to boxing and wrestling except there were no rules. It was an aggressive sport and competitors were known to bite and gouge out opponent's eyes.

Photo Courtesy of Metropolitan Museum of Art, online database, Source Photographer, Marie-Lan Nguyen



This vase depicts the huntress Atalanta wrestling Peleus (a Greek mythological hero). At the funeral games for Pelias, who sent Jason on the quest for the golden fleece, Atalanta wrestled and defeated Peleus. This is a popular subject matter in ancient Greek vase painting.

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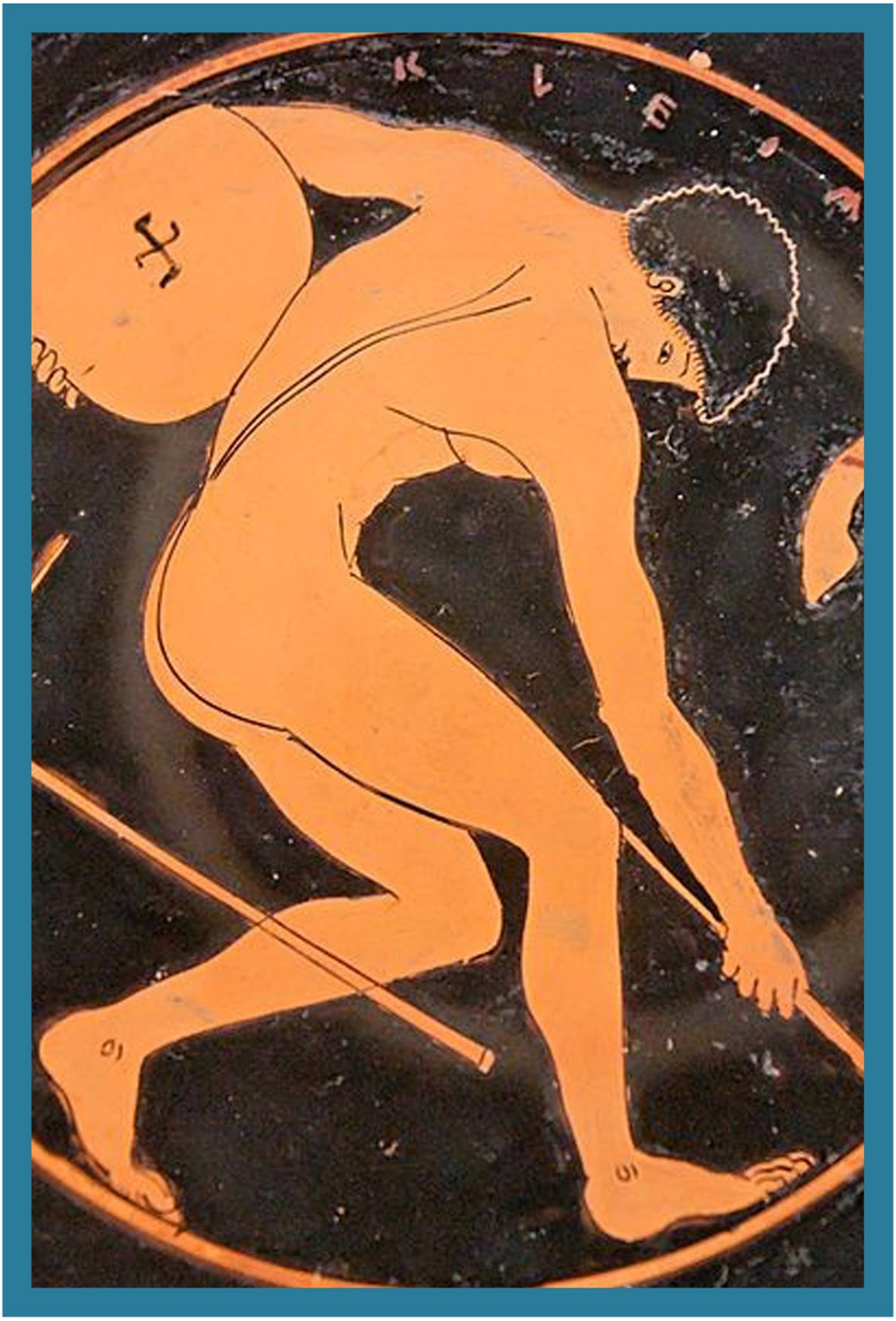
Photo Courtesy of Wikimedia Commons, Matthias Kabel

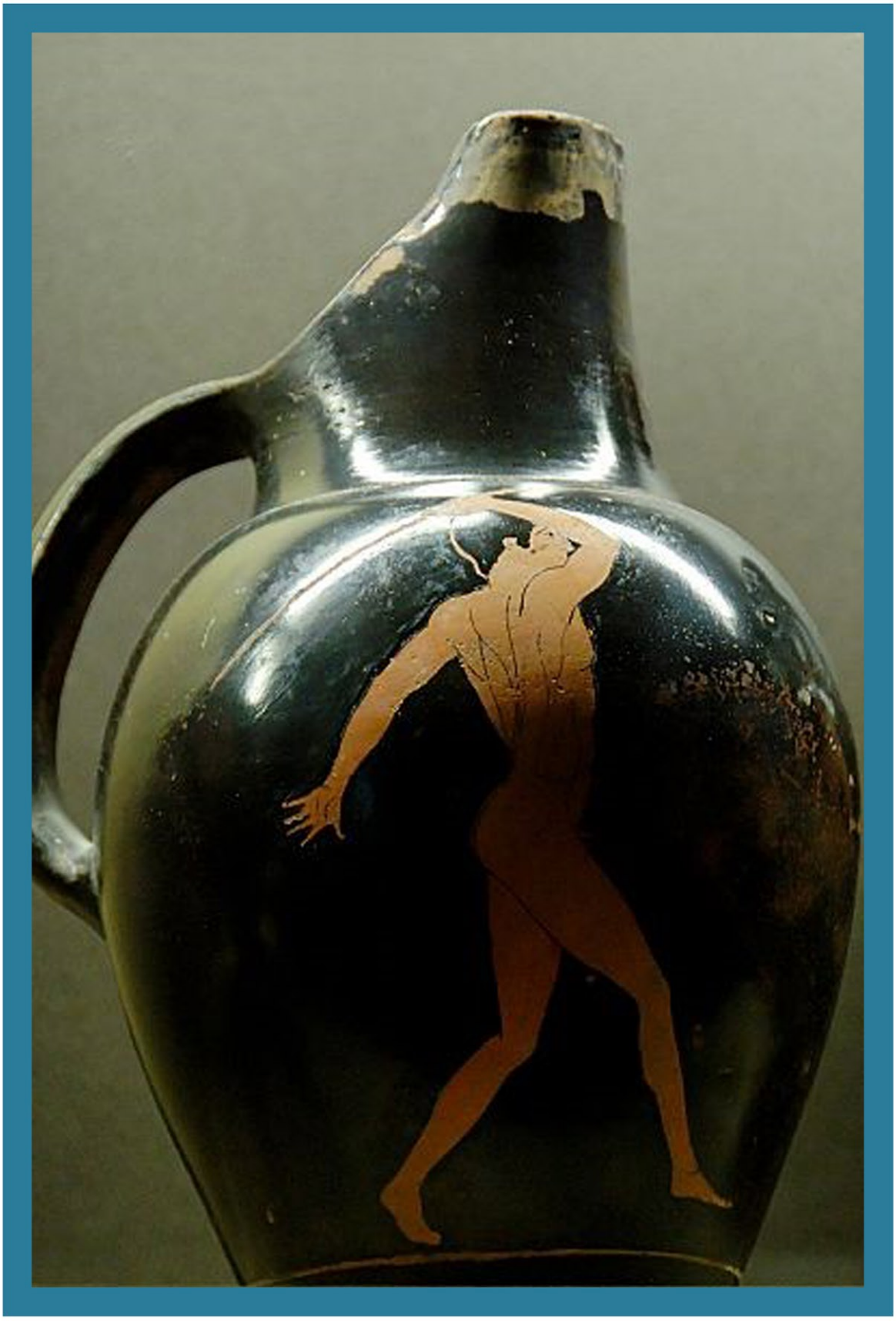
This vase shows competitors in a boxing match with a referee watching from the side-line. The competitor's fists are clearly clenched showing how violent the sport would have been.

Photo Courtesy of Wikimedia Commons, Matthias Kabel



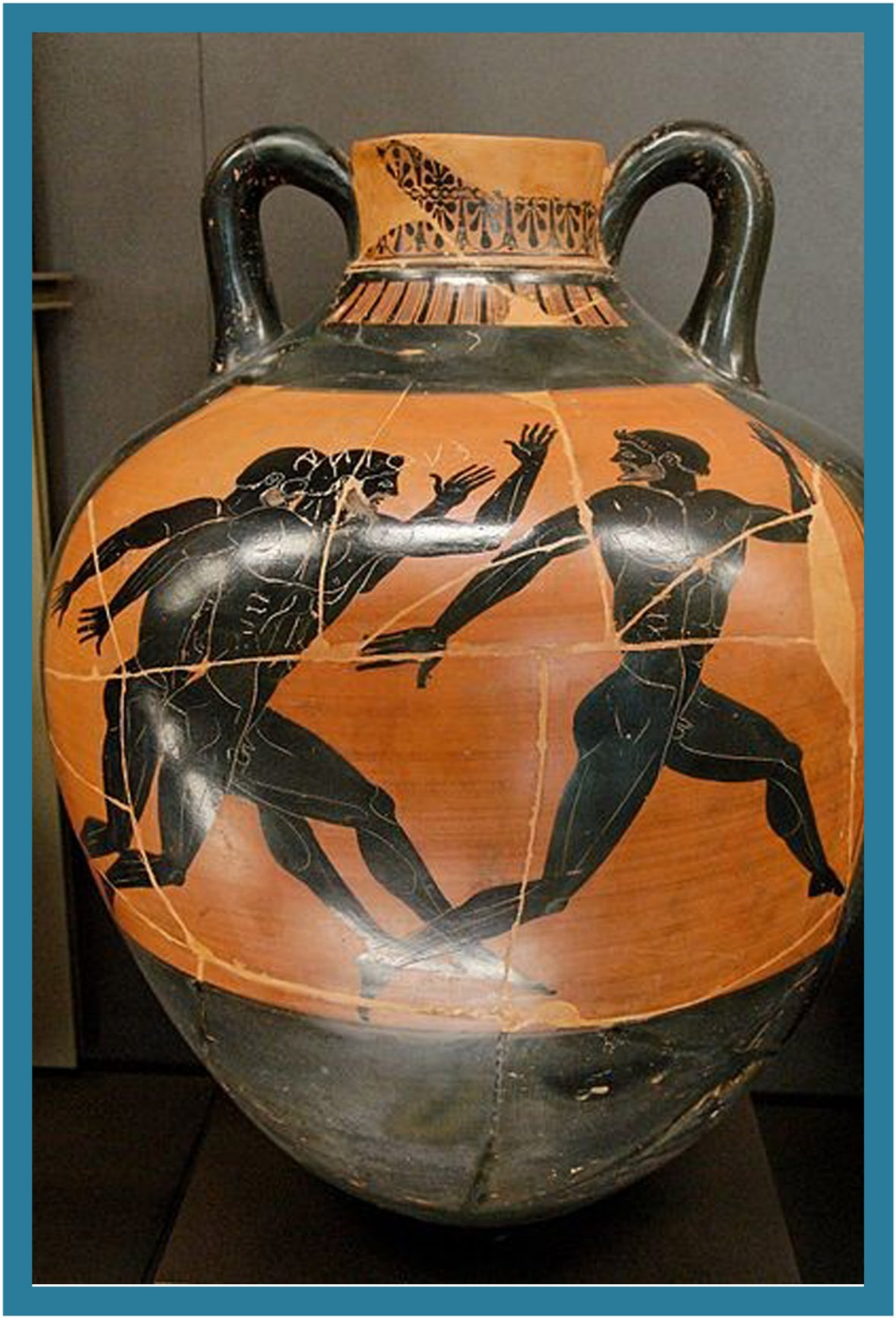
A young boy can be seen on this vase holding a discus at a palaestra (a wrestling school or gymnasium) probably preparing for the Olympic Games. Also shown is the handle of a pick which would have been used to prepare the landing ground for the long jump and on the right is a part of some dumbbells used to maintain balance during the jump.

Photo Courtesy of Wikimedia Commons, Mus e du Louvre, Atlas Database



Thinking about what you have learnt about the images on these ancient Greek vases, what or whom do you think is being depicted in this vase?

Photo Courtesy of Wikimedia Commons, Jastrow 2007



This vase shows runners taking part in a stadion which was a race that was held at three of the four Panhellenic festivals in ancient Greece: the ancient Olympic Games, the Pythian Games and the Nemean Games. For the first 52 years of the ancient Olympic Games, the stadion was the only event and competitors would race nude and barefoot.

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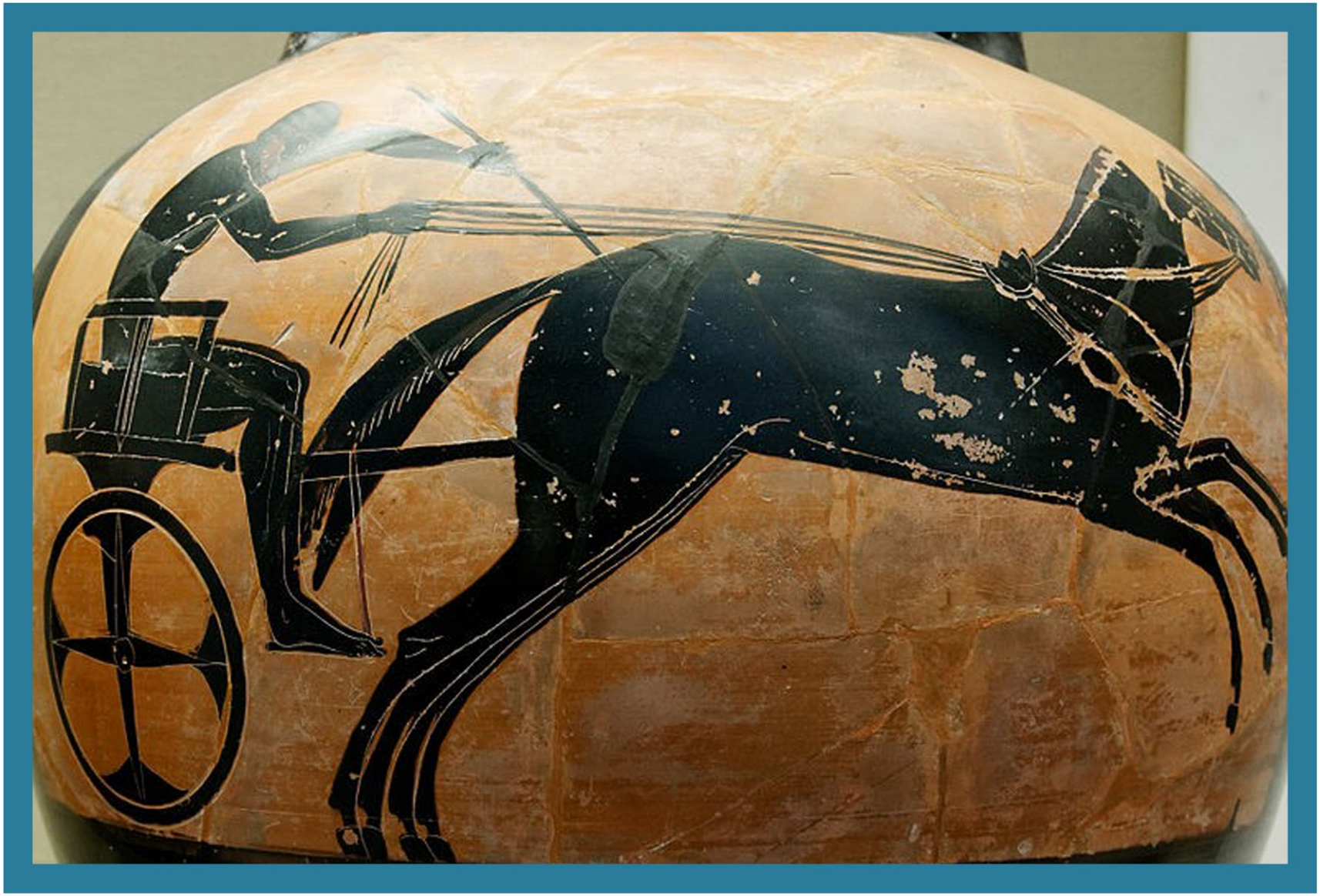
Photo Courtesy of Wikimedia Commons, Jastrow 2007



A black-figured man is shown on this vase riding a chariot drawn by two mules. This chariot is unusual as it has a seat, many chariots in ancient Greece were steered by a driver who would stand.

Photo courtesy of Wikimedia Commons, Marie-Lan Nguyen