

Yalouris, Nicolaos, ed. *The Eternal Olympics: The Art and History of Sport*. New Rochelle, N.Y.: Caratzas Brothers, 1979. Pp. 303. Illustrations, bibliography, index. \$40.00.

This handsome quarto volume of late 1979 is not quite as new as it appears, since it was earlier published in Athens, in both Greek and English, in 1976, under a somewhat different title. Omitting the 1976 chapter on the modern Olympics, and altering slightly the introduction by M. Andronicos, the present volume is printed (still in Athens) from the plates used in 1976. This means that the misprints of 1976, fortunately few, are reproduced; like the Olympics, they too are eternal.

The title is catchy but inexact, for two reasons. Only about 75 pages deal exclusively with the ancient Olympics, and there is no word, in this edition, about what has happened since 1896. The subtitle is better, and one may heartily applaud the emphasis on Greek athletic art (an art unparalleled in any other time or place) and the generous size, excellence, and great number (156) of illustrations, all in color. The book must be rated as the best available pictorial presentation of ancient Greek sport. The placement of the illustrations is

appropriate, but the text seldom gives detailed interpretation of them. The amazingly early boxing fresco from Thera (Plate 6) is a recent find and will be new and welcome to most readers of the book. Several line-drawings by an artist, K. Iliakis, are indeed helpful.

The eight contributors to the volume, Greeks every one, and mostly archaeologists, are to be credited with the excellent choice and reproduction of athletic art from the museums of Europe, England, and the U.S.A. Experts as they are in archaeology, the contributors are not equally expert students of ancient athletics, as the one-page bibliography makes painfully clear. Only the general editor, Yalouris, appears in the bibliography, for a volume on Olympia and an article on Athena as goddess of the horse. More extensive bibliographies, available elsewhere, will show that Greece is not producing specialist students of ancient Greek athletics.

The latest item in the bibliography is of 1975; the use of the 1976 plates precluded any updating. Thus there could not be any mention of the sensible 1976 volume of Finley and Pleket, *The Olympic Games: The First Thousand Years*. Intentionally, but perhaps unwisely, excluded are the helpful volumes of readings in the sources: the French one by Berger and Moussat, and the English one by Mrs. Robinson. There is also a new volume of readings now available, by Stephen Miller.

Archaeologists should, and in this book do, interpret correctly the Greek works of art. We thank Andronicos for the excellent short chapter on athletic art. But we perceive on page 119 a wrong interpretation of Berlin Vase 2180, correctly interpreted seventy years ago by Gardiner in his earlier book on Greek athletics (p. 478). The person identified on the vase as "Tranion" (a slave-name, reappearing as such in the Greco-Roman comedy *Mostellaria*, by Plautus) cannot be an *aleiptes*, since he is a slave. Tranion is not massaging the sole of Hippomedon's foot, but is trying to extract a thorn or sliver.

The interpretation of the "bye" on page 123 is wrong and inherently improbable; here again Gardiner (p. 375) is right, and so is Harris in his book.

The account of the Olympic Games, well written by Palaeologos, is the liveliest part of the book. Palaeologos also continues with a separate summary account of each event (running, jumping, etc.), as known at Olympia and everywhere in Greece.

We welcome the chronological list of all known ancient Olympic victors, since Moretti's *Olympionikai* (1975) appeared in the proceedings of a learned academy in Italy and is not conveniently available.

Even when numerous topics compete for space in a book of such a comprehensive nature, we regret that there is only one page in this volume on "Games and Religion" (an all-important connection in ancient Greece) and only one paragraph of twenty-six lines for the Nemean Games. Future books of this sort will be aware of the results of the important American excavations, during the 1970's, of the stadium at Nemea.

Finally we record surprise and pleasure at the generally correct English usage and spelling in a book which was originally written in Greek by Greeks. We are nowhere told who did the translating.

The book is designed for popular consumption and, appearing in late 1979, is calculated to make an especial appeal to buyers in the Olympic year of 1980. The chapters are not meant to contribute to the knowledge of specialist students, but the glorious illustrations supersede everything in Jüthner, Gardiner, Harris, or any similar books.

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