

Miller, Stephen G. *Arete. Ancient Writers, Papyri and Inscriptions on the History and Ideals of Greek Athletes and Games*. Chicago: Ares Publishers, Inc., 1979. Pp. iii, 114. Index, glossary, appendix. Paper. \$6.00.

The goal of most athletes in ancient Greece was to achieve *arete*, a level of superior skill in their physical craft. For some athletes *arete* was appreciated as a virtue and a source of considerable pride. For a few *arete* could provide fame and wealth.

*Arete* is the title of a new book on the history of Greek athletics. The author, Professor Stephen G. Miller, is an experienced archaeologist and director of the University of California excavations at Nemea, the last of the four great panhellenic sanctuaries to be scientifically examined. The investigations at Nemea have revealed many new discoveries concerning the athletic games held at a regular basis at the site. Professor Miller's publications on the material evidence at Nemea and on related topics have established his leadership role in the study of ancient athletics.

*Arete* began as a collection of notes and translations of ancient writers assembled by the author for the use of his students in an undergraduate course in Greek athletics at Berkeley. The publisher of *Arete*, Ares of Chicago, has provided a great service to students of ancient athletics by bringing Dr. Miller's work to print and in reprinting two classics in the field; E. N. Gardner's *Athletics of the Ancient World* and R. S. Robinson's *Sources for the History of Greek Athletics*.

The author makes reference to both books in his Introduction. *Arete* was designed to improve on the concept of Robinson's work, adding new archaeo-

logical texts in the form of papyri and inscriptions. The ancient texts are translated and arranged on a thematic basis. Topics include such familiar subjects as the athletic events, athletic festivals and some early evidence in Homer. Other topics of a more provocative nature are also included; women in athletics, professionalism and athletes as heroes. Each entry is numbered, dated and translated with a short introduction preceding the text in offset type. *Arete* is not a synthesized history of athletics in the classical world. It provides in English access to the original texts for students who will likely be reading conventional histories. Professor Miller recommends Gardiner.

The specific intention of the author has been skillfully accomplished. The selection of authors from Homer to Philostratos spans nearly a millennium. The translations are the author's own. They are straight forward and in contemporary language. Entries in lyric verse are rendered in prose for the purpose of providing a concise, literal translation. Technical terms have been retained in transliterated form and are defined in a combined index and glossary at the end. In addition two appendices list the athletic events and the dates of their initial inclusion in the program of the Olympic and Pythian Games.

Notes are not included in *Arete*. Explanatory information must be attained from the Introduction, the Glossary or the preparatory statements that precede each entry. The entries are not visually articulated by subtitles to indicate the thematic subject matter. The reader must use the Table of Contents for this purpose. It is also unfortunate that a brief Bibliography was not included. These shortcomings are minor and reflect the development of *Arete* as a work to be used under the guidance of the instructor.

Student appeals have also dictated the translations of sums of money into American dollars. Professor Miller wishes to convey the considerable monetary values of prizes and other compensations earned by some athletes. An attempt has been made to equate an ancient and fluctuating medium of exchange, the *drachma*, with the modern dollar. The inherent difficulty of this venture is the gross disparity in economic structure between ancient Greece and twentieth century America. Secondly Professor Miller's sums in dollars have been reduced over the past two years by almost one third through inflation. If these figures are not soon revised in future editions of *Arete*, inflation will render worthless a virtuous intention.

*Arete* is a carefully written and intelligent work of considerable value to beginning students in ancient athletics. With a few additions of an explanatory nature the work would be appreciated by a broader audience.