

Journal Surveys

I. Ancient and Medieval Sport

- I-1 Benario, Herbert W., "Sport at Rome," *The Ancient World*, 7, Nos. 1 & 2 (March 1983), 39-43.

By examining the writings of ancient, well-known Roman writers, Benario made a case for the average Roman citizen participating in certain sporting endeavors. Modern historians have primarily emphasized the Romans' distaste for Greek athletics and their enthusiastic enjoyment of the gladiatorial events as spectators. In comparing Greek and Roman sport, it was again confirmed that the ordinary Roman never supported striving for excellence as an athlete or generally participating in public sport. However, games patterned after the Greek Panhellenic Games were begun by Augustus (Actian), Nero (Neronia), and Domitian (Capitolia). although most Romans were not receptive to them. Young Romans did play ball and were avid swimmers. The majority of Romans preferred the Campus Martius and the public baths to the Circus Maximus or the Colosseum where the cruel and dissipated "games" were held. The Romans also recognized the relationship of exercise to good health. Based on secondary sources; has one bibliographical note which refers to seven sources.

—Joan Paul

- I-2 Brown, Truesdell S. "Herodotus Views on Athletics," *The Ancient World*, 7, Nos. 1 & 2 (March 1983), 17-29.

The seven books of Herodotus were examined for their references to individual athletes and the great athletic festivals. Brown compared Herodotus' comments about these select athletes and events to those of other early writers as well as to the writings of modern scholars. Although early Greek intellectuals tended to express the notion in their writings that wisdom was superior to physical prowess, Herodotus showed the Greek athlete as more often occupying an enviable place in society. Although Herodotus probably intended to be objective in his writing, he showed a definite bias toward the advantages of athleticism. Based upon primary and secondary works; 45 notes.

—Joan Paul

- I-3 Carter, John Marshall. "Sport, War, and the Three Orders of Feudal Society: 700-1300," *Military Affairs*, 49, No. 3 (July 1985). 132-139.

Sport during the feudal society between 700-1300 should be viewed within a military context since those who monopolized the martial arts controlled society. For the noble knights, the mock-combats of the medieval tournaments demonstrated an interpenetration of sport and war. The clergy, or "those who prayed," accepted tournaments as necessary preparations for holy wars, although church rhetoric condemned sport for its injuries and deaths. Those who worked, i.e. the peasants, emulated the martial-sport skills of the warriors primarily as play but also employed them during the endemic

wars. War and sport thus provided opportunities for interaction of the three orders of the feudal epoch. Based on primary sources and secondary works; 46 notes.

— Angela Lumpkin

I-4 Hopkins, Keith. "Murderous Games," *History Today*, 33 (June 1983), 16-22.

The modern tendency to view spectacles as leisure often obscures the political and social functions of the Roman gladiatorial contexts. The origins of the gladiatorial games were religious and were presented to commemorate the dead. By the last century B.C., these religious elements were overshadowed by the political and spectacular while elaborate contests were used to confirm and to enhance the power and social reputation of the Roman nobility. The emperor Augustus attempted to limit the power of the nobility by limiting their rights to presenting gladiatorial contests. The Imperial Games were enormous displays of orchestrated violence used to confirm the power of the Emperor and the state. Mass executions of criminals symbolically re-established law and order. often served as political theater. and provided one of the few opportunities for the Roman populace to voice its sentiments, thus acting as a political safety valve. The enormous popularity and sexual appeal of the games led emperors, nobility, and even women of high, freeborn status into the gladiatorial ranks. Even with the institution of the Pax Romana, Rome remained a warrior state, and the gladiatorial contests in turning war into a game nurtured the virtues, skills, and murderous ferocity needed to sustain the empire. It was through this complex interplay of sociopolitical, religious, psychological and even psycho-sexual forces that these games developed into a central institution confirming both the moral and political order of Imperial Rome. Based on primary sources and secondary works: no notes.

— James Peckman

I-5 Wilson, Rick. "Fighting Arts of Antiquity," *Inside Kung-Fu*, 12, No. 8 (August 1985). 48-50, 52.

Artifacts depicting material arts revealed that ancient cultures shared remarkable similarities in their methods of combat. Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey* described Achaean warrior-heroes boxing, wrestling, and engaging in armed combat as affairs of honor. During the Classical Age of Greece (seventh-fourth century B.C.), the three major fighting arts of wrestling, boxing, and pankration were used in training for war, in the worship of health, beauty, and strength, and in competition and the pursuit of victory. Professionalism and specialization undermined the virtues and values of Greek fighting arts as they became mere spectacles. No notes.

— Angela Lumpkin