

Waldo E. Sweet, *Sport and Recreation in Ancient Greece: A Sourcebook with Translations*. Foreword by Erich Segal. New York: Oxford University Press, 1987, xii, 281 pp. Notes, bibliography, indices, glossary, maps, plates.

The publication of *Sport and Recreation in Ancient Greece: A Sourcebook with Translations*, by Waldo Sweet, has been anticipated for some time. With the release of Sweet's collection, an alternative to the standard two sourcebooks, Rachel Robinson's *Sources for the History of Greek Athletics* (Urbana, 1955; reprinted Chicago, 1979), and S.G. Miller's *Arete* (Chicago, 1979), now exists. Sweet's volume is more than a sourcebook, however, for the work can singularly be used as a class text for a sport history course. Those course elements usually supplied by the instructor-supplemental secondary sources, illustration, and the probing of significant issues in the field-are bestowed to the reader (Sweet's most appreciative audience will be undergraduate students and instructors responsible for a subject matter of which they know nothing), by the chosen text of *Sourcebook*. Offering students who have neither knowledge of ancient languages nor experience of Classics a means to explore, in one

place, selected primary literature, epigraphy and archaeology of ancient sport and leisure, the volume familiarizes the reader with classical sources, the methods and materials of classical scholarship, and modern critical studies. Sweet has made use of Latin sources, ranged far in defining his topic, and selectively illustrated his work with eighty excellently captioned black and white plates and two maps.

The thirty-three short chapters of *Sourcebook* encompass more than the expected testimonies on ancient Olympic events, Pindar and Pausanias. Chapter 16, "Miscellaneous Activities and Games," is based almost entirely on vase paintings. Other chapters examine selected ancient literature surrounding such topics as nudity in athletics, attitudes toward athletics, training, women, hunting and fishing, dance and music. Can chapters concerning "Theater" and "Dining" legitimately be included in a sport and recreation book? I thought not until I approached them in Sweet's light. Plays were part of religious competitions, as were games; playwrights vied for victory in dramatic competitions. The "Theater" and "Dining" chapters involve us with the customs, mythology and ordinary people of antiquity, and thus the recreation of the time period is better understood and placed within its real context.

The topic of "women" in historical scholarship is not necessarily a given theoretical or organizational convention. Sometimes, the study of gender as it was manifested in a certain time and setting is better undertaken in terms of the broader framework of culture. Sweet's translations collected in the "Women in Greek Athletics" chapter could have been integrated into non-gendered chapters centering on festivals, running, game administrators, dining or horse racing, with commentary to the effect of the non-status and sparse evidence of women in antiquity. Mary R. Lefkowitz and Maureen B. Fant, *Women's Life in Greece and Rome: A Sourcebook in Translation* (Baltimore 1982), offer further testimonies to women's involvement in athletics and agonistic festivals.

Sweet's interest in sport ranges further than the ancient period: at Amherst, he captained the track team, won medals in national AAU competitions, was a finalist in a running event in the 1936 Olympic trials, and later coached track and skiing. The compilation of a sourcebook would seem to be a literary venture without much opportunity for the creativity that comes directly from one's life experiences. Yet Sweet's personal experiences illuminate the direction *Sourcebook* takes in several ways. For instance, analogies to modern sport events and equipment accompany translations about specific ancient athletic activities. Chapter 22, "Walking and Mountaineering," probably never would have materialized had not Sweet been an instructor of U.S. mountain troops during WW II. He questions the purpose of ancient mountain ascents, the equipment, the method, by choosing sources ranging from Homer to St. Augustine to approach his queries. Sweet's research ["Protection of the Genitals in Greek Athletics," *Ancient World* 11, nos. 1-2 (1985): 43-52], surrounding infibulation, a curious feature of Greek athletics in which a string is tied around the prepuce of the penis and then fastened about the waist, is highlighted in Chapter 19, "Nudity in Greek Athletics." Discussion of an alternative to

Sweet's infibulation theory was published after *Sourcebook*, in David Sansone, *Greek Athletics and the Genesis of Sport* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1988).

Before joining the Classics faculty at the University of Michigan, Sweet taught Greek and Latin in secondary schools and authored several Latin instructional books. The reader of *Sourcebook* benefits not only from Sweet's expertise in philology, but also from his experience as "teacher." In this role, Sweet chides the reader not to forget: "We repeat, this account is *almost* completely wrong" (p. 86), points out errors made by ancient and modern scholars, and coaxes close analysis of texts and art. Each translation or group of passages is introduced by Sweet's commentary and followed by study questions. Recommended readings for each chapter come mostly from Gardiner, Drees, Finley-Pleket, Harris and Yalouris—introductory overviews to be sure—but in *Sourcebook's* own terms, sufficient. Likewise, the bibliography is short and select, but includes standard works with in-depth bibliographical directions. Style, print-type and presentation substantially influence the comfort with which a book of translations can be used. These elements are faultless in *Sourcebook* with one exception: since the "Index of Testimonia" is arranged by chapter number and testimonium, chapter headings found on the top of each page also should have included chapter numbers for use in locating entries.

Underlying *Sourcebook* is a carefully planned instructional methodology, which progressively exacts doses of information, amounting to a domain of knowledge. Sweet's collection provides one answer to the question "what is the use of sport history?" An undergraduate student enabled by *Sourcebook* becomes, in a sense, an expert in the field of ancient athletics, exposed to its evidentiary base, its modern myths, and critical of its interpretation. Students introduced to the ancient voices translated by Sweet will carry what they learn from antiquity into the daily practice of understanding human nature in all time periods.

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