

“Mind and Body: Athletic Contests in Ancient Greece,” *National Archaeological Museum*, Patisision and Tofitsa Roads, Athens, Greece. May 15, 1989 to January 15, 1990.

The “Athletic Contests in Ancient Greece” exhibit was the major part of the three “Mind and Body” exhibits which were shown simultaneously at three different museums in Athens. The other two displays were “The Revival of the Olympic Games” and “Athletes and Motion in Contemporary Greek Art.” The objective of the program was to acquaint a wide audience to the values of characteristic features of Greek athletic contests. The organizers also hoped to revitalize what they called “the true character of the ancient Olympic ideal, which cultivated physical and intellectual growth.”

The staff of the National Archaeological Museum interspersed high tech media with the exhibits. A documentary film “Mind and Body” was shown as well as an animated film produced by the Executive Committee for the Candidacy of Athens for the 1996 Olympic Games. Monitors were provided throughout the displays to provide selected information to augment the exhibit.

A rich collection of items were on display from a number of museums in Greece and from museums in several other countries. The exhibition rooms were spacious and well-lit. The curators organized the antiquities into eleven units: 1. Introductory Material; 2. Contests in the Bronze Age Aegean; 3. Contests in the World of Myth; 4. The Gymnasium: An Institution for Athletics and Education; 5. The Panathenaic Festival; 6. Olympia. The Sanctuary and the Contests; 7. Delphi and the Pythian Games; 8. The Sanctuary of Poseidon on the Isthmus of Corinth and the Isthmian Games; 9. Nemea and the Nemean Games; 10. The Events (including the foot race, jumping, discus-throwing, javelin-throwing, wrestling, the pentathlon, boxing, the pakration, chariot-

racing, equestrian contests, and prize giving); and finally, 11. Victorious Athletes. Captions were in Greek, Japanese and English.

*Mind and Body: Athletic Contests in Ancient Greece* (1989) the 352 page, paperback, oversized catalogue is well worth the price of 300 drachmas. The volume discusses 235 pieces from the exhibit including thirteen previously unpublished items. All of the pictures are in color and many items are photographed from more than one angle. Most of the pictures are clear, although, many are flawed by an annoying glare and two photos (provided by the British Museum) are entirely out of focus. Helpful explanatory texts (initialed by the contributors) and bibliographies are included beside their corresponding items in the catalogue. Unfortunately, the book is very poorly bound.

The utility of the catalogue is further enhanced by eight introductory chapters written by experts in their respective fields. The chapters include: "Contests in the Bronze Age Aegean" by K. Demkopoulou, Keeper of the Prehistoric Collection National Archaeological Museum; "The Gymnasium" by O. Tzachou-Alexandri, Director of the National Archaeological Museum; "The Panathenaic Festival" by K. Rhomiopoulou, Keeper of the Sculpture Collection of the National Archaeological Museum; "Olympia. The Sanctuary and Contests" by K. Herrmann, expert on Olympian architecture; "Delphi and the Pythian Games" by O. Picard, Director of the French Archaeological School at Athens; "The Sanctuary of Poseidon on the Isthmus of Corinth and the Isthmian Games" by E. Gebhard, Director of the University of Chicago Excavations at Isthmia;" "Nemea and the Nemea Games" by S. Miller, Director of the University of California Excavations at Nemea; and "The Events" by E. Kakarouga-Stassinopoulou, R. Proskynitopoulou, and S. Papadiaman-topoulou-Kalliodi, Assistant Keepers of Antiquities of the National Archaeological Museum. The chapters provide a highly informative and, in places, technical synthesis of recent scholarship. It should be noted that scholarly papers were presented in the fall of 1988 at an "International Symposium on the Olympic Games" sponsored by the city of Athens. The proceedings are being edited by W. D. E. Coulson and Helmut Kyrieliess and will be published jointly by the American School of Classical Study and the German Archaeological Institute in Athens.

Apart from the contribution on Delphi, the chapters in the catalogue are not annotated. Helpful line-drawings, photos, maps, a general bibliography, as well as bibliographies at the end of each chapter, are provided. While the catalogue may not be well-suited for the general public, it will be of great use to the student and scholar alike. The two chapters composed in English are clearly written but the translation into English of the other chapters is somewhat cumbersome.

Several points of criticism should be underscored. First, the exhibition was hampered by an unfulfilled idealism. The exhibition dealt largely with the "body" but little attention was given to the "mind." While the gymnasium received excellent coverage it is regrettable that more was not done on musical and dramatic competition, certainly part of the "mind" of the Games. Philo-

sophical opposition to the Games may have presented, as well, an interesting balance. The exhibition's idealism unfortunately skewed the interpretation and presentation of ancient competition. The assumption made by the Coordinator of the Exhibition is that corruption and cheap professionalism are intrinsically related to modern competition. Furthermore, the suggestion is made that the modern Games should return to the undefiled purity of ancient (Greek) ideals. The public does not need to have this misunderstanding reinforced. The absence of D. C. Young's classic revisionist work *Myth of Greek Amateur Athletics* (Chicago, 1984) from the catalogue's bibliography is conspicuous.

Second, the exhibition was tainted by a myopic and, perhaps, self-serving nationalism. The catalogue reinforces the misimpression that ancient athletic competition was a distinctively Greek institution. In the same vein, it is important to realize that the exhibition was a platform to broadcast Greece's hope (or, as stated by the Coordinator of the Exhibition, "their just claim") to host the 1996 Summer Olympic Games. Whether or not Greece has a right to host the Games is not the issue and the actual decision will be made by the Olympic Committee in Tokyo this year. The point is that the use of this exhibition as a solicitation for the right to host the Games may betray an economic motivation. Let's face it, the almighty drachma is a powerful influence. On the positive side, this offers an interesting example of the inextricable relationship between politics, economics and athletics.

Despite these minor flaws, the exhibition was tremendously successful. Drove of people were exposed to sport history, ancient and modern, in a magisterial format. The publications and heightened public interest generated by the exhibition will also benefit the scholarly community. If the "Mind and Body" travels to New York, it is definitely well-worth seeing and the catalogue is also worth the purchase price.

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