

## Book Reviews

*Matz, David. Greek and Roman Sport: A Dictionary of Athletes and Events from the Eighth Century B.C. to the Third Century A.D.* Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 1991. Pp. 169. \$29.95.

The purpose of a dictionary is traditionally to establish the accepted terminology for a developing discipline or subject area. This book, presenting as it does, a wide selection of facts and information on Greek and Roman sport is more accurately described as a reference handbook.

The work has been organised into the following eight parts; A Brief History of Greek and Roman Sport (7 pages), Sources (ancient and modern) (7 pages), The Dictionary (82 pages), Special Essays (on such themes as "The Strange Case of Melissus of Thebes," "Drawing Conclusions about Gladiatorial Combat from the Biographical Information" and "How Long Was Diocles Career?") (18 pages), Lists of Athletes and Horses (from ancient sources) (25 pages), Classical Texts Cited, a Glossary of Places and finally an Index.

To me it is a slightly odd combination and although each section is useful in its own particular way, the book as a whole has the potential to fall between too many stools.

Individual entries within the Dictionary proper, range from a couple of lines to almost four full pages. Much of this section is a "Who's Who" of Greek and Roman Sport. Included for each individual athlete included are details of his name, event(s), the dates he flourished, his place of origin, his exploits and a cursory bibliography of ancient sources.

Unfortunately, this reviewer is not sufficiently conversant with the primary source material to pass judgement on the thoroughness of the author's search and selection of material or the accuracy of translation of that which is included. One hopes and assumes that there are no problems in this respect. Certainly the reader is informed precisely of where the information was found and so it would be a fairly straight forward task to check the authenticity of any particular snippet of information.

As a reference work on sport in the Greek and Roman Empires, it sits comfortably alongside existing reference works such as Neil Crowther's "Studies in Greek Athletics," (1985), Stephen G. Miller's *Arete: Greek Sports From Ancient Sources* (1991), Rachael Robinson's *Sources for Greek Athletics* (1955), W. E. Sweet's *Sport and Recreation in Ancient Greece* (1988) and Tom Scanlon's *Greek and Roman Athletics: A Bibliography* (1984) without duplication or overlap. Nevertheless, I cannot help but think that it might have been more helpful had all these authors been able to get together and produce three different volumes between them, i.e., a comprehensive bibliography, a com-

pendium of extracts from primary sources and a collection of essays on specific subjects.

Returning specifically to Matz, I personally would find it useful as an accompanying text for undergraduate courses in Greek and Roman sport, although not in the same way that one might use *Arete*. I would recommend it for students requiring familiarity with the terminology and certain concepts in Greek and Roman sport but above all else, I think its main value would be as a starting point for students about to begin their term papers and still in need of ideas for choosing their topic to investigate primary source material to explore. Very quickly, they could identify individuals or places they might like to investigate and be supplied with a ready guide as to where to start looking next.

University of Manchester  
Institute of Science and Technology

Richard William Cox