

Wendy J. Raschke (ed.), *The Archaeology of the Olympics: The Olympics and Other Festivals in Antiquity* (University of Wisconsin Press, 1988). Glossary, illus., index, pp. xiii + 298. \$US42.50, \$US17.50 (paper).

The Archaeology of the Olympics is a revised version of papers given at an international symposium titled *The Archaeology of the Olympics* held at UCLA 'as an academic precursor' (p.xiii) to the 1984 Los Angeles Olympics. As with any attempt to edit the papers of a symposium, there are evident problems, and the editor, Wendy Raschke, has valiantly laboured in her Introduction and Epilogue to synthesise and justify her inclusions. Some are highly questionable in their relevance, and so a subtitle, 'The Olympics and Other Festivals in Antiquity' has been (hurriedly?) utilised to assist the justification process. Considering the content of the papers this would have been a more appropriate title, as anyone expecting detailed analyses of artifacts, relics and remains as providing new and better insight of the Ancient Olympic Games will be surely disappointed. Some of the best contributions are those delving into other dimensions of ancient athletics.

There are six subdivisions in this anthology: Bronze Age Antecedents; Olympic Ideals: Appearance Reality; Olympia and the Olympic Games; Beyond Olympia (1); The Other Panhellenic Games; Behind the Scenes: Amenities and Nutrition; and Beyond Olympia (2): Local Rites and Festivals.

In the first section, Bronze Age Antecedents, Colin Renfrew analyses 'The Minoan-Mycenaean Origins of the Panhellenic Games' while Jaan Puhvel presents 'Hittite Athletics as Precognitions of Ancient Greek Games'. Renfrew's work is superficial, with little new material being introduced. The basic hypothesis advocated is that the athletic, social and religious festival of Olympia had its precursor in the Minoan-Mycenaean world, a concept lacking in originality, and

principally based on the activities presented in the Homeric legends. Puhvel really stretches the theme of the conference by including the Hittites as being influential in the historical establishment of the ancient Olympics. Though the material on the agonistic texts of the Hittites is most welcome, particularly to the specialist, the inclusion of the paper here is highly debatable.

A.E. Raubitschek discusses briefly 'The Panhellenic Idea and the Olympic Games' in the second section, pointing out the close contact between the two. This interrelationship resulted from the Greek yearning for peace, and the Sophists and orators embellished this aim by arguing that the Games would also promote friendship and harmony. The editor, Wendy Raschke, offers 'Images of Victory, documenting clearly that the Temple of Zeus was 'a synthesis or even the epitome of the religious, the agonistic, and the political ideals espoused by the Classical Greeks' (p.48). David Young, whose earlier excellent works have changed much traditional thinking about the ancient Olympics, presents 'How the Amateur Won the Olympics'. A forceful piece, in which he argues that Thorpe, Nurmi, Oldfield, Didriksen and so on, all modern Olympic champions who lost their amateur standing, were sacrificed to a false Greek god, that all vestiges of amateurism will disappear from the rules in the future.

As for the third section the late Alfred Mallwitz, who continued the work of the distinguished archaeologists Dörpfeld, Curtius and Kunze at the Olympia excavations, brings out in 'Cult and Competition Locations at Olympia' the findings of the more recent excavations which have led him to question the traditionally accepted date of 776 B.C. as being the date of the first Olympics. Hugh M. Lee, in 'The "First" Olympic Games of 776 B.C.', elaborates further on this issue, arguing that a larger and more varied programme than one foot race would seem to have been offered in 776 B.C.; furthermore he maintains that athletic competitions could well have occurred before 776, though they were, perhaps, too insignificant to be recorded.

In the fourth section, Joseph Fontenrose analyses 'The Cult of Apollo and the Games at Delphi'. Although somewhat sparse on the legend of Apollo, there is much useful information about Delphi in this article, particularly the progressive programme at the Pythian festival. Stella Miller's contribution, 'Excavations at the Panhellenic Site of Nemea' was surprisingly disappointing, as she and her husband Stephen have been the prime movers in the University of California excavation at Nemea. The authors of this review personally conducted fieldwork at the Nemea site, from 1968 to 1977, enthralled at witnessing the uncovering of the stadium from under a field of grape vines. Unfortunately, there is no new information in this paper that is not detailed in their other works, but one delightful quote warrants mention: 'Archaeology is ... the laboratory of history' (p.146).

The fAh section has an outstanding contribution by Stephen Glass of the structural analyses of 'The Greek Gymnasium', but it is followed by a rather weak, albeit interesting article by Jane Renfiew on 'Food for Athletes and Gods', in which the victualling of the Games is developed.

Thomas Scanlon's 'Virgineum Gymnasium: Spartan Females and Early Greek Athletes' is one of the major highlights of this anthology, and his thorough analytical investigations will be a most welcome addition to the generally scanty literature on athletics for females in the ancient world. Olympic type festivals were widespread throughout the Greek world and Kostas Gallis develops one provincial example in 'The Games in Ancient Larisa', and Daniel Hannon has an excellent summary of 'The Religious Significance of Games in the Roman Age' to round off the volume. The Glossary is a valuable source for those unfamiliar with Greek and/or archaeological terminology.

The Archaeology of the Olympics, in summary is a worthy addition to our sport history literature. As with any summary of a symposium, it is uneven at times, lacks continuity, and some of the articles could have been deleted. It is recommended as a resource

book for libraries and for the archaeologist, classicist and the sport historian and physical educator who deals with the athletics in the ancient world.

Reet A. Howell
Queensland University of Technology

Maxwell L. Howell
The University of Queensland