Mercuriale, Ligorio, and the Revival of Greek Sports in the Renaissance

HUGH M. LEE - USA

On P. Ioannides, whose memory we honor by this lecture in his name, was a Professor of Physical Education whose career was devoted to the ideal, derived from ancient Greece, that a complete education must include the body as well as the mind. Appropriately, the lecture is held under the auspices of the International Center for Olympic Studies, which is dedicated to research in the Olympic Games, another part of our Hellenic legacy. These two concepts, first, the training of the body, and second, the elite competition in which the highest degree of physical excellence is demonstrated, may seem to be complementary. Yet both in ancient Greece as well as in the revival of classical antiquity, they have not always been viewed as harmonious but rather seen as antagonistic. From our viewpoint in the twentieth-first century, this dichotomy may seem surprising. Few of us would question the value of physical exercise, and it is difficult to imagine a world without the Olympic Games. Yet once the classical world came to an end, it took much longer to renew the Olympic Games than to reestablish physical training. Two contemporaneous works from Renaissance Italy, one literary and the other artistic, will help us to understand why.

Under the leadership of the Frenchman Pierre de Coubertin, the first modern Olympiad was celebrated in Athens in 1896. These Games, however, came as the climax of a centuries-long rediscovery of ancient Greece. In the decades before Coubertin, the Greeks themselves had organized successful Olympic Games in Athens. At the site of ancient Olympia, German archaeologists had begun excavating in 1875, excavations which still continue today. On the political front, Hellas fought a successful war of independence against the Ottoman Greeks. Earlier, in the eighteenth century, the West had experienced an intellectual as well as artistic movement known as the Greek revival.
There was, however, an earlier Greek revival, one in which Greek manuscripts were brought from the moribund Byzantine Empire to Italy; the study of ancient Greek became popular among intellectuals, and new editions of Greek texts were published. Furthermore, humanists such as Pietro Paolo Vergerio (1349-1428), Vittorino da Feltre (1378-1446), Maffeo Vegio (1407-1458), Eneo Silvio Piccolomini (1405-1464), Jacopo Sadoletto (1477-1547), and Girolamo Cardano (1501-1576), influenced by the Greeks, had advocated some form of physical exercise in order to restore some balance to an education that had become predominantly intellectual. This earlier Greek revival was of course the Italian Renaissance. Thus, after the fall of Constantinople, an Italian humanist, Francesco Filelfo (1398-1481) could write, "Greece has not perished, but has migrated to Italy, the land that was known of old as Magna Graecia."

What did this earlier Greek revival mean for Greek sports and the Olympic Games? To answer that question, we turn to two figures from the late Renaissance. One is Pirrhu Ligorio (1510-1586), originally born into a noble Neapolitan family, who in the 1570s designed but did not paint the striking ceiling frescoes of ancient sports and games in the castle of the ruling d'Este family in the city of Ferrara. The other is Ligorio's younger colleague, Girolamo Mercuriale (1530-1606), a citizen of Forlì in northeast Italy and author of the treatise De Arte Gymnastica, that is, On the Gymnastic Art. Both men are also known by the Latin version of their names, Pyrrhus Ligorius and Hieronymus Mercurialis.

Still little known to historians of sport, the frescoes in Ferrara are among the finest works of athletic art from the Renaissance. They are to be found in two large adjoining chambers in the castle of Ferrara. The Salone dei Giochi, the "Large Room of the Games," contains the more numerous scenes of exercises, eleven altogether. Nine are on the ceiling, arranged in three registers of three pictures each. These depict wrestling, exercises with weights, the pankration, an exercise for women involving a swing or balance, the game using the small ball, the four-horse chariot race, the discus, a footrace in which the runners carry a wheel or hoop, and the game with the large ball. At each end of the ceiling there are single panels depicting swimming and the pyrrhic dance, which was a Greek dance in armor. The wrestling and pankration, the discus, and the chariot race are all Olympic sports. The pyrrhic dance was contested in the Panathenaic Games in Athens. The footrace recalls the stadion, the ancient sprint approximately 200 meters in length, but the run with the hoop was not an Olympic event.

In the other room, the so-called Saletta dei Giochi, or the "Small Room of the Games"--which, contrary to the name, is itself quite a large chamber--there are fewer scenes of sports, and the subject of the center panel, the Four Seasons, is non-athletic. However, on each of the long sides of the central fresco are depictions of some kind of exercise. On one side there is an elaborate scene of five pairs of nude boxers in combat. Boxing, as we know, was also an Olympic sport. The other long panel depicts a game with wineskins in which some of the participants also carry the weights, the
balteres, employed in the ancient long jump. The scenes on one of the short sides are an armed battle, perhaps an echo of the armed combat at the Funeral Games for Patroklos in the Iliad (23.798-825), and a gladiatorial combat. In the latter we see a contest from the Roman arena. Three armored and helmeted figures, each wielding a net and trident, are Ligorio’s mistaken conception of a kind of gladiator known as a retiarius, the Latin word for fishnet being retes. The retiarius, however, did not wear heavy body armor or a helmet. Also curious are the two opponents of the retiarii. They are armed with a short sword in the left hand and some sort of mallet in the right. This mixing of things Greek with things Roman is not atypical of the age, which views antiquity as Greco-Roman. The sharp distinction between Greek and Roman does not occur until the eighteenth century.

The frescoes in Ferrara were executed by Sebastiano Filippi, ("Il Bastianino"), Ludovico Settevecchi, and Leonardo da Brescia, according to designs supplied by Ligorio. Following a serious earthquake in 1570 which caused heavy damage in the castle, both the Salone and the Saletta were renovated in time for a visit by Henry III, King of France and Poland, who resided in the chambers from July 27-31, 1574. While a later completion date of 1574-6 is suggested by the archival records of payments to the artists, the recording of the payments may have been late and the work completed earlier. Why the choice of a sporting theme from the classical world? The ruler of Ferrara, Duke Alfonso II, happened to be an afficionado of physical exercises. Furthermore, since the early fifteenth century, under the enlightened leadership of the d’Este family, Ferrara had been one of the leading centers of the Renaissance.

Ligorio was a Renaissance polymath, an antiquarian, artist, architect, numismatist, epigrapher, and topographer. Among his more notable accomplishments, he was the architect of the Villa d’Este in Tivoli and the so-called Casino in the Vatican Gardens, and in 1564, he succeeded Michelangelo as architect of St. Peter’s Basilica. His passion for the ancient world was such that he had planned to write an encyclopedia of antiquities, which he never completed, although the notes and drawings survive.

The choice of the subject matter for the frescoes is not, however, purely the result of Ligorio’s interest or his patron’s. This becomes apparent when we turn to a contemporary treatise, Mercuriale’s De Arte Gymnastica. The gymnastic art of the title refers not to the modern sport of gymnastics, but rather to the exercises performed in the ancient Greek gymnasium, including the events contested in the panhellenic contests. Both words are derived from the Greek gymnos, which means “nude,” recalling the fact that the ancient Greeks exercised and competed totally naked. The first edition appeared in 1569 under a slightly different title and without illustrations. Attesting to its popularity, the work was published again in Venice in 1573, 1587, 1601, and 1644, in Paris in 1577, and in Amsterdam in 1672. It is the second edition of 1573 which especially concerns us, for Ligorio supplied Mercuriale with illustrations.
The two had first met in Rome in the 1560s. Ligorio, as we have seen, was a person of some distinction attached to the highest political and social circles in Rome. His patron was Cardinal Ippolito II d’Este, whose employ he had entered in 1549 and for whom he designed the Villa d’Este. This connection paved the way for his appointment to the court of Ferrara two decades later. Mercuriale, from a leading family of Forlì and by training a physician, had come to Rome in 1562 as a member of a diplomatic mission to Pope Pius IV. There he came under the patronage of Cardinal Alexander Farnese, to whom the 1569 edition of *De Arte Gymnastica* is dedicated. It was in this elite circle that he first came to know Ligorio.\(^{16}\)

Both men left Rome at the end of the decade. Ligorio, as we have seen, departed for Ferrara. Mercuriale also headed north to become Professor of Medicine in Padua. In 1573, however, he was summoned to Vienna to the bedside of the ailing Holy Roman Emperor, Maximillian II. Mercuriale could hardly have failed to notice the parallel with the Greek physician Galen (129-?199/216 AD), who, after returning to the East from Rome, had been recalled to attend to the ill Emperor Marcus Aurelius. As a physician and a professor of medicine, he would have been familiar with Galen’s works. When, therefore, Mercuriale published the second edition of his work in 1573, he altered the dedication, replacing Cardinal Farnese with the Emperor. In his introduction (1587:i-v)\(^{17}\) he urged the Emperor to emulate the wise rulers of antiquity and thus secure his fame by supporting the gymnastic arts.\(^{18}\)

The date of the second edition corresponds with the period during which the frescoes were being painted, and indeed a comparison of the frescoes with the drawings makes manifest their similarity and the role of Ligorio in each. In both we find representations of swimming (1587:45), games with the large and small ball (1587:89, 93), an exercise with the swing involving women (1587:164), a pyrrhic dance (1587:98), the discus throw, (1587:122,125), exercises with weights (1587:120,127), wrestling (1587:104), *pankration* (1587:106), and boxing (1587:112,113,114). Ligorio claims that his illustrations are based on ancient monuments (1587:44, 56, 103, 105, 111, 119, 154, 166). Mercuriale clearly respects and accepts the word of his elder colleague, whom he praises as being "an antiquarian of the highest authority" *maximae auctoritatis antiquarius* (1587:53) and "most expert" *peritissimus* (1587:111).

The discus throw presents a number of curiosities. Although Ligorio has seen a nude statue of a discus thrower, for which he provides a drawing (1587:125), when he depicts the actual throw, in both drawing (1587:122) and fresco he shows four clothed and shod athletes employing a backhand throwing motion similar to that used in tossing a frisbee. That is, the athlete, holding the discus in one hand, brings it across the front of the body to the opposite hip, and then releases the discus as he brings the hand back across the front of the body. In both drawing and fresco, the event takes place in a Roman hippodrome, as can be surmised from the *meta*, the three conical posts placed on a base at each end of the *spina* around which the chariots turned.\(^{19}\) In the drawing, the athletes are throwing towards the viewer’s left. In the fresco, they aim in the opposite direction, so that drawing and fresco are mirror images of each other.
There is a description of the discus thrower in the Greek writer Lucian, (Philopseudes 18): "When you came in the hall," he said, "didn’t you notice a totally gorgeous statue up there, by Demetrios the portraitist?" "Surely you don’t mean the discus-thrower," said I, "the one bent over into the throwing-position, with his head turned back to the hand that holds the discus, and the opposite knee slightly flexed, like one who will spring up again after the throw?" "Not that one," he said, "that’s one of Myron’s works, that Diskobolos you speak."

An edition of Lucian was printed in Florence in 1496. The Aldine Press in Venice published editions in 1503 and 1522, and a Juntine edition appeared in 1535. Ligorio’s rendition of the discus throw in both drawing and fresco, except for the position of the head, is consistent with Lucian’s description; and Ligorio could argue that his drawing shows a slightly later moment after the athlete has turned his head forward. The fifth century BC statue of the Discobolus, an original bronze by Myron, is perhaps the most famous extant athletic statue from antiquity. However, "the most faithful copy" of the original, the so-called Lancellotti statue, was not discovered until 1781 in Rome. This copy, along with the many vase paintings of discus throwers unknown to Mercuriale and Ligorio, enables us to reconstruct the discus throw more accurately.

Two drawings (1587:120,127) and two frescoes, one in each room, show athletes with the halteres, the Greek jumping weights, of a type dating to the Roman period. Also shown in the drawings and in the fresco from the Salone are men holding slabs or blocks of stone or metal, including a curious set of weights curved to fit on the shoulders (1587:20). Rather than a long jumping contest, we seem to be viewing some form of exercise. In one illustration (1587:127), two of the athletes holding the halteres, namely the figures in the center and right foreground, and two from the fresco in the Salone holding slabs (the figures second from the left and on the far right) strike a pose which is similar to that of the discus throwers. It seems that we are to imagine them hurling the halteres and the slabs with the same backhanded throwing motion which we observed in the scenes of the discus. There was an exercise with the weights called the halterobolia mentioned in a fourth century AD medical writer named Oribasius (6.14.34). Mercuriale (1587:255-7) and Ligorio seem to think it refers literally to the throwing of the weights, rather than being simply a series of exercises involving the use of weights held in the hands.

Concerning stand-up wrestling (Latin luctatoria, Greek pale), in which the wrestler attempts to throw his opponent to the ground, and the pankration, in which the contestants continue to wrestle and punch until one of them submits, the representations contain no errors. In the drawing (1587:104), three pairs of wrestlers are shown. One pair is in the center foreground, and the athlete on the left grasps his opponent on the left forearm. Behind them on the left are two wrestlers who stand and face each other without touching, and on the right is another pair who grasp each other around the shoulders. In the fresco, likewise there are three pairs of wrestlers, but these are arranged in a row on more or less the same plane. The pair in the middle and on the right bear a close resemblance to their counterparts in the drawing, except
that with the central pair in the fresco, the left figure grasps the arm at the wrist. The two wrestlers on the left in the fresco, however, are locked in a tight grip around the upper body. For the pankration, two pairs of athletes are shown. In the drawing (1587:106) one pair is positioned above the other; in the fresco, the two pairs are side by side. The bottom pair in the drawing and the left pair in the fresco are quite similar. In each the pankratiast on the right is in a sitting position, his left arm grasping the outstretched right arm of his opponent and his right hand resting on the ground behind his back. The right leg of his opponent is outside his left leg. In the fresco, however, Ligorio has made some additions. A female figure in the background leans on an altar-like pedestal on which rests a bowl in which two palm branches have been inserted, and a pair of boys wrestle on the right.

The illustration of boxing (1587:112) shows two pugilists with arms raised against each other. They are flanked by a single boxer at each side. The fresco in the Saletta dei Giochi, is a much larger and more complex composition showing five pairs of boxers in action. A single boxer watches on the left, while on the right a pair of trumpet players sound their instruments. However, no evidence exists for trumpet playing during ancient Greek boxing contests. There is one other striking difference between the drawing and the fresco. In the former, the boxers have a cloth draped around their loins; in the latter they are nude. No such distinction is made in the representations of the wrestlers and pankratiasts, all of whom are shown nude.

In both drawing and fresco we observe the same type of boxing gloves. These consist of thongs wrapped around the wrist and fist, and studded with pieces of metal. In De Arte Gymnastica, there are two other drawings (1587:113, 114) of the gloves. Virgil describes a pair of gloves studded with metal in Aeneid 5.401-5, which, it should be emphasized, is a mythical setting, namely the Funeral Games for Aeneas’ father Anchises. They were owned by the boxer Entellus, and had formerly belonged to his boxing mentor Eryx. Dares, Entellus’ brash and boastful young opponent, is stunned by the unexpected sight of such bloody gloves, and when the contest takes place, it is significant that leather gloves are worn. Mercuriale, however, has mistakenly leaped to the conclusion that metal-studded gloves were used either in Greek athletic festivals or in training for them. There is no support in the ancient evidence for this idea. Rather, the Greeks always utilized leather gloves on such occasions.

In the choice of subjects and in many detail it is therefore clear that the frescoes and illustrations have much in common and that Ligorio, as both antiquarian and artist, is the link between them. We can discern, too, a shared curiosity concerning Greek sports on the part of Ligorio and Mercuriale. But what did they think about the Olympic Games? For Mercuriale’s attitude, we turn to the text of De Arte Gymnastica. Here, much to our surprise, we find that Mercuriale is in fact hostile to athletics, which he regards as physical exercise corrupted by an excessive desire to obtain victory, to win glory and rewards, and to delight the crowds. Thus, he necessarily must
disapprove of the panhellenic festivals, including the Olympic Games, which are the apex of athletic competition.

How does Mercuriale, whose treatise surpasses any previous post-classical work in the depth and breadth of its treatment of Greek physical exercises, come by his hostility? Like Galen, Mercuriale, who, we recall, is a physician, believes that the medical art has two functions: to cure ailing bodies and to maintain health. The gymnastic art helps to fulfill the latter function. He divides this art into three categories (1587:65-76). The first is the *ars gymnastica medica* or *legitima*, the "medical" or "legitimate" art. This consists of exercises for bodily health. The second is the *ars gymnastica bellica*, or the "military art." This involves exercises designed to produce soldiers fit for war. The third is the *ars gymnastica athletica* which is also an *ars vitiosa*, a "vicious" art. The word *vitiosa* comes from the noun *vitium*, whence the English "vice" and also too "vicious." The *ars vitiosa* is the Latin translation of Galen’s Greek term *kakotechnia*, that is, the "evil art;" and by this evil art Mercuriale means athletics.

Athletics is a perversion of the gymnastic art because it causes harm to the body. Galen (*On Exercise with the Small Ball*) comments on the injuries caused by the individual contests of athletics such as running, wrestling and boxing, and horseback riding. The game with the small ball, on the other hand, he considers ideal because it exercises the most parts of the body while causing the least injury. In his *Exhortation for Medicine* (9-14, 28), he faults athletes for their unhealthy condition, the lack of moderation in their diets and habits, and, in the case of boxers and wrestlers, their gross physiques. In Greek athletic competition, no weight classes existed, and thus, all else being equal, the bigger athlete enjoyed the advantage. Consequently, there was a temptation to overeat. He also criticizes their mental dullness and their inability to manage their financial affairs. In the essay *To Thrasyboulos* (36), Galen also finds a lack of moderation in the fact that athletes train not primarily for reasons of health but to beat their opponents.

In his long treatise, Mercuriale thus devotes relatively little space to the "evil art" of athletics. The primary discussion of the individual sports occurs in the second of the six "books" of *De Arte Gymnastica* (1587: 102-31). These events are wrestling, boxing, pankration (a combination of wrestling and boxing), running, the jump, discus, and javelin. Mercuriale also knows that the pentathlon consisted of the jump, discus, javelin, running, and wrestling. As for the running events, he knows that there were four events: the *stadion* (stadium), *dolichos*, *diaulos*, and the race in armor (1587:116-7). He correctly understands that the stade was a sprint down the length of the track, and the *diaulos* (duplex stadium) two lengths up and back. The *dolichos*, however, which we now know to be a race of seven to twenty-four stades (about 1400 to 4800 m) he also believes to be a *duplex stadium* ("double stade"), but one run in a single course rather than with a turn.

Yet, while steadfast in his opposition to athletics, Mercuriale must confront a paradox. The events which are contested in athletic festivals can also be used for exercise, either for health or to prepare soldiers for war. Here he displays some
independence from Galen. Thus, in the fifth book of De Arte Gymnastica (1587:244-75), he discusses the possible physical benefits of those athletic contests. Boxing is especially problematic because, thanks in part to Ligorio’s claim that his illustrations are based on ancient monuments, Mercuriale erroneously believes that the Greeks used gloves loaded with metal or stones (1587:107). Mercuriale does, however, recommend shadow-boxing because in such an exercise the lethal gloves would do no harm (1587:248-9).

Indeed, Ligorio is a highly controversial figure, especially judged by later, more rigorous scholarly standards. He apparently forged a large number of inscriptions. Those with some knowledge of Greek and Roman sculpture may also wonder to what degree, if at all, his illustrations were based on actual monuments. For the most part, the athletic drawings and frescoes, although containing accurate details such as the spina or meta of the Roman circus, appear to be quite free renderings owing more to Ligorio’s creativity and imagination and are not literal representations of specific monuments.26

It is understandable that Mercuriale, more conversant with the literary sources, relied on Ligorio for the art, and, with one possible caveat, we need not question his motives. A diligent scholar, Mercuriale provides a list of the dozens of classical authors who he cites or quotes in his treatise. There is, however, one conspicuous and puzzling omission, the poet Pindar, although paradoxically Mercuriale does refer to the Pindaric commentaries (1587:118; 126). Yet texts of Pindar were available, with editions published in Venice (1513) and Rome (1515).27 How do we account for this striking omission? Can we ascribe it simply to his hostility to the evil gymnastic art of athletics? Did he believe that if he quoted Pindar’s encomia both to athletes and the panhellenic games, he would undercut his advocacy of the good gymnastic arts?

Whatever the answer, Mercuriale’s distinction between the good and bad gymnastic arts had far-reaching effects. In the scholarly realm, the major successors to De Arte Gymnastica are Johann Heinrich Krause’s Die Gymnastik und Athletik der Hellenen (1841) and E. N. Gardiner’s Greek Athletic Sports and Festivals (1910) and its abbreviated version, Athletics of the Ancient World (1930). Not only do they follow Mercuriale in condemning athletics as a profession or vocation, but Gardiner and his Victorian colleagues go further and help to create the modern myth of the Greek amateur athlete.28 It was thus left to non-scholars like Coubertin to revive the Olympic Games. The rise and growth of professional sports in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries have made us comfortable with the idea that athletics can be a profession or vocation, and professionals are no longer barred from Olympic competition. Many if not most of us, while conceding the faults and imperfections of athletics, do not regard it as an ars vitiosa.

Yet if Mercuriale and Ligorio appear inadequate when judged by modern standards, fairness also demands that we also evaluate them in the context of their own time. The Renaissance had previously produced nothing of such quality in literature or
in art on the subject of Greek sports. The frescoes especially deserve to be known better. Moreover, if Mercuriale’s opposition to athletics has found support over the centuries, so too has his advocacy of the good gymnastic arts. Three centuries later, in a different political, social, and economic environment, Pierre de Coubertin himself was inspired by the idea of sports as a component of a complete education. The happy result, as we know, was his revival of the Olympic Games.
Endnotes


7 See Sandys, *History*, 57, for the translation of the quotation.

8 For a biographical sketch of Ligorio, see Erna Mandowsky and Charles Mitchell, *Pirro Ligorio’s Roman Antiquities. The Drawings in Ms XIII.B.7 in the National Library in Naples* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1963) 1-6. For the frescoes, see most recently Jadranka Bentini and Marco Borella (eds.), *Il Castello Estense* (Viterbo: BetaGamma, 2002), especially the essay therein by B. Ghelfi, "Artisti a corte: le gloriose decorazioni ducali," 113-34, which contains an excellent summary in English, pp. 113-4, of the history of the scholarly attribution of the frescoes, a description of the rooms, the role of Ligorio in the decoration, and his connection with Mercuriale. The volume contains gorgeous photographs of the frescoes. The definitive scholarly articles are to be found in Jadranka Bentini and Luigi Spezzaferro, (eds.), *L’impresa di Alfonso II. Saggi e documenti sulla produzione artistica a Ferrara nel secondo cinquecento* (Bologna: Nuova Alfa, 1987), in which see especially Jadranka Bentini, "Precisazioni sulla pittura a Ferrara nell’eta di Alfonso II", 71-90; Adriano Cavicchi, "Appunti su Ligorio a Ferrara", 137-50; Luigi Spezzaferro, "Perche per molti segni sempre si conoscono le cose..." Per la situazione del lavoro artistico nella Ferrara di Alfonso II," 3-24, who discusses how archival studies recording payments to the painters help to establish the chronology and
attribution of the frescoes; and Giuliana Marcolini and Giulio Marcon, "Appendice documentaria", 23-69, who list the documents found in the archives.

9. A recent work on Renaissance sport which discusses the frescoes and also Mercuriale's connection to them is Alessandro Arcangeli, Recreation in the Renaissance. Attitudes towards Leisure and Pastimes in European Culture, c. 1425-1675 (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 23-9. See also Ginette Vagenhim, "Le dessin de L'essercito gladiatioro di Pirro Ligorio et le De arte gymnastica de Girolamo Mercuriale," Ludica 3 (1997) In the preparation of this paper, I was not able to obtain L. Caporossi, "Il programma iconografico di Ligorio nel Castello Estense di Ferrara: gioco e tempo nell’ "Appartamento dello Specchio,” Ludica 8 (2002).


14. Henry A. Millon and Craig H. Smyth, "Pirro Ligorio, Michelangelo, and St. Peter’s" in Robert Gaston (ed.) Pirro Ligorio Artist and Antiquarian (Milan: Silvana, 1988) 216-62, who state, 235: "In all likelihood Ligorio was dismissed by Pius V in the winter of 1566-67, as several scholars have held, not in the fall of 1565 (when Pius IV was still pope), as others have thought."

15. Strictly speaking, the first edition was not called De Arte Gymnastica. Instead, the title page gives Artis Gymnasticae apud Antiquos Celeberrimae Nostris Temporibus Ignoratae Libri Sex. In the second and later editions, the title is De Arte Gymnastica Libri Sex. Nor did the first edition contain the illustrations which we find in the second edition of 1573.


17. In this and subsequent references, I employ the third edition published in Venice in 1587.


24 Imitating Virgil, the epic poets Statius, Thebaid 6.733, and Valerius Flaccus, Argonautica 1.420, likewise describe gloves containing metal, again in a mythical setting. Mercuriale (11587.111,248) cites these texts.

25 Hugh M. Lee, "The Later Greek Boxing Glove and the 'Roman' Caestus: A Centennial Reevaluation of Jüthner's Über antike Turngeräthe," Nikephoros, 10 (1997) 161-178. When I wrote this article, I had traced the idea that Greeks fought with metal gloves in regular athletic competitions back to the nineteenth century, but it is now clear that the erroneous idea originated with Mercuriale and Ligorio.

26 The essays in Gaston, Pirro Ligorio, discuss the range of creativity which Ligorio permitted himself when drawing ancient monuments, and the subsequent difficulties which modern scholars face in determining what actually existed in the original. Margaret Lyttleton, "Pirro Ligorio's Description of the Villa of Caius Caecilius Near Anguillara: A Case Study in Sixteenth Century Antiquarian Research," in Gaston, 121, comments on Ligorio's reputation as a fabricator of inscriptions.


29 MacAloon, Symbol, 83-113.