

could be understood to say that Constantine was a Holy Roman Emperor: 'such language became much more comfortable once the Holy Roman Emperors themselves were Christians, which began with the Emperor Constantine'.

This book's value lies in its usefulness as a teaching aid or companion for secondary pupils and first-year undergraduate students. I have already found the section on Hellenistic philosophy useful when teaching the basic philosophical background to Horace's *Odes* to a Year 13 class. As an introduction to ancient philosophy, it does not rival other books such as A. Kenny's *Introduction to Ancient Philosophy* (2007), but its focus is slightly different. Its intention is to be a clear and concise companion to the primary texts, and it largely achieves this.

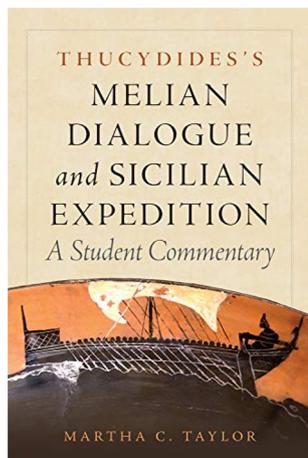
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Thucydides's Melian Dialogue and Sicilian Expedition. A Student Commentary

Taylor, M. Pp.xx + 456, maps. Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 2019, US\$34.95. ISBN: 978-0-8061-6194-5

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'Thucydides is hard' as Taylor comments. How best to help students who are at a relatively early stage of their Greek studies make sense of the text, both for its historical context and the way it expresses its ideas? Taylor has chosen the episode of the Sicilian expedition and put it in the context of the Melian dialogue. The work shows that she is an experienced practitioner who knows the needs of her students well.

She gives a full introduction of 41 pages, dealing with such topics as writing history, Thucydides' language, the city of Syracuse and

themes in his account of the Sicilian expedition. She sets out the issues clearly and perceptively, but in a way that invites the reader to explore further. To facilitate this, she includes a significant bibliography and also a series of reading lists on various topics which she calls 'Sources for Student Work' such as 'Alkibiades and Nikias' and 'The City Theme' and 'Homeric Allusions'. The bibliography and reading lists are complementary and useful at undergraduate level.

The bulk of the book is the commentary. Unusually for a student-facing edition, there is no text within the volume. Taylor bases her comments on the Oxford Classical Text of H.S. Jones to which she refers the reader, helpfully pointing out that it is available on Perseus. There is a lot of value in a student at this level being able to print out a copy of a text for their own annotation. However, this approach has the disadvantage that not everything is contained in

the one book. There is also no alphabetical list of vocabulary in the book, so the student will have to be confident in using their lexicon. She warns against overreliance on the Perseus vocabulary link – 'there is much value in flipping through a paper dictionary'.

What about the level of help given? She notes that today's students need more help than those of the past – such as the 'senior pupils in schools' who were Dover's constituency in his edition of Book 7 in 1965. This edition is not designed to be read all the way through, so Taylor has decided to repeat herself in the commentary to facilitate this. She also states that she has erred on the side of saying more rather than less. This means that often quite basic things are touched on, which makes the commentary longer to work through and perhaps detracts from its clarity. In this, her notes are longer and fuller than those of H.D. Cameron in his edition of Book 1 (2003) aimed at a similar constituency. The presentation has a clear, well-spaced typeface of a good size. As a minor point, it would have been helpful, to my eyes at least, if the Greek words being commented on had been made to stand out, such as putting them in bold and I would have found it helpful if the summaries had been distinguished from the notes in their appearance. On the plus side, there are many references to Smyth's *Greek Grammar* so the less common points can be easily checked by the student whose curiosity has been aroused.

I found her exploration of the style of Thucydides very helpful. She helps make sense of Cicero's comment that Thucydides' writing, especially his speeches, contain 'so many dark and obscure sentences as to be scarcely intelligible'. She places a lot of emphasis on grammatical analysis and explanation (as opposed to gloss), an approach which is favoured in North America, but may be found on the dry side in the UK.

This edition is an interesting and helpful resource for anyone who wishes to begin to get to grips properly with the language and style of Thucydides and useful for any teacher wanting to brush up their skills, perhaps in preparing for teaching Thucydides as an unseen author.

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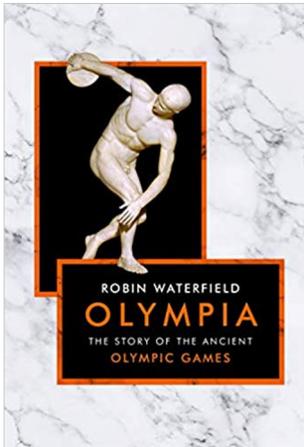
Olympia: The Story of the Ancient Olympic Games.

Waterfield, R. Pp. 214, b/w & colour ill. London: Head of Zeus Ltd., 2018. Cased, £18.99. ISBN: 9781786691910.

James Watson

This book is a readable and highly informative overview of the ancient Olympic Games, their venue at Olympia, and their modern 'revival'. With the Tokyo 2020 Summer Olympics now due to happen next year, this book would be an excellent resource for those inspired by them to find out more about the realities of the ancient games, although even those with some prior knowledge of the subject are likely to find new material and perspectives in this text.

In the Prologue, two key aspects of the ancient Olympics are emphasised – that the games were part of a religious festival, and



that only winning really mattered – to demonstrate how different they were from their modern counterpart. Chapter One then introduces the reader to the site of Olympia and its features, including the Temple and Statue of Zeus, as well as considering what would have been the ancient experience of visiting it; there is also an overview of the excavation history of the site. The second chapter then investigates the origins of the Olympics, surveying the stories the ancient Greeks told about the commencement of the festival before

considering modern theories. The author suggests ‘that the games evolved out of the natural competitiveness of the Greek elite’ (p. 45) as he situates the development of the games in the context of the archaic period and emphasises that only the wealthiest in society would have had sufficient time and money to be competitors. Such ideas are further developed in the third chapter, entitled ‘Sport and society in ancient Greece’, where the emergence of the Greek gymnasium culture and athletic training are discussed alongside the establishment of a circuit of games around Greece, of which the Olympics were the most prestigious. This chapter also addresses the question of why athletes came to compete at Olympia without clothes; the case is made that ‘nudity... [was] adopted for ritual and aesthetic purposes rather than practical and performance-enhancing ones’ (p. 84).

The fourth chapter addresses the Olympic festival itself, considering the timing of the games, the truce that accompanied them and the role of the judges, as well as trying to establish the order of events at the festival and noting the date at which different competitions were introduced (and in some cases discontinued). In the following chapter the ‘sporting’ events themselves are surveyed, and here too is where one may read about the Heraea, the games for girls that were also held at Olympia. Examples of those who were victorious at Olympia are the focus of Chapter Six, where we read that some Olympic champions became ‘heroes’, that is, semi-divine figures in the Greek sense of the word; sceptical modern readers are reminded that in our own day ‘Elvis Presley’s Graceland mansion is a pilgrimage site...[and] In Jamaica, Bob Marley’s status is very close to that of a hero in the ancient Greek sense’ (p. 142).

Chapter Seven deals with more earthly matters, namely politics. We read of the tension between the ideal of Olympia being a place where Greeks could meet as equals and the reality of it being an excellent venue for different Greek cities to express their rivalry with one another. This is a rich chapter which reveals ancient examples of issues that we may associate more with the modern games – the banning of states from competing, and even the cancellation of the games. We also see how the site of Olympia came to be used by different Greek cities, through the creation and display of monuments, as a venue for the expression of inter-state rivalries. ‘Much of the earlier history of the Olympics,’ we read, ‘...was undoubtedly characterized by belligerent rivalry between states, their supporters and their athletes’ (p. 173).

The final chapter notes the difficulties with available sources that make study of the ancient Olympics challenging, before considering the games’ decline through the Hellenistic and Roman eras and then their modern revival in the late nineteenth century. An

appendix discusses the marathon race, and dismisses the idea that it recreates an ancient run. There is also a timeline, noting key dates between 1400 BC and (AD) 1988; this is helpful but feels disconnected from the main text by referring to ‘combat events’ which elsewhere are termed ‘heavy events’, and also by mentioning William Penny Brookes, the organiser of ‘Olympian’ games in London in 1866, despite his name not appearing anywhere else in the book.

Although one could learn about specific topics by reading the relevant chapters individually, it is really as a whole that this book should be read; ideas are developed throughout the book and so its different parts work together to give a sense of the realities of the ancient Olympics. The book’s illustrations help with this; they are chiefly photographs, which occupy either a single or double page and appear regularly throughout the text. One criticism would be that the placement of these illustrations does not always fit well with the text; p. 160, for example, has a picture of a statue of Hera, captioned as ‘the patron goddess of the Heraea’, whilst p. 161 which it faces discusses Olympia as ‘a place where teachers and intellectuals disseminated their ideas’, and often one feels that the pictures belong elsewhere than where they have been placed. More helpful are the endnotes, which point the reader to the ancient source material that has informed the text.

The book gives a clear overview of the ancient Olympics, but also illustrates this with anecdotes that help to bring the past to life; there is, for example, the story of a horse that managed to win the Olympic crown for its owner despite losing its jockey at the start (pp. 109–110), which reveals the insignificance of the actual riders – who were probably slaves – in the equestrian events. The book’s suggestions for further reading remind us that there are many titles available on the ancient Olympics, but this well-written and carefully-researched volume certainly joins the best of them in giving a vivid sense of such a famous festival.

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Augustine: Confessions Books V – IX

White, (P) (ed). pp. 368 Cambridge University Press (31 Aug. 2019)
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Books V – IX of Augustine’s *Confessions* follow Augustine from Carthage to Rome and then to Milan. This geographical journey is tied up with a journey of intellectual and religious conversions, in which Augustine grapples with ideas of Manichaeism, Neoplatonism, and Christianity. Some of the best-known episodes fall within this volume: Monnica’s abandonment, Ambrose’s silent reading, Alypius’ bloodlust at the games, and Augustine’s crisis in the garden at Milan as he agonises over his conversion to a life of chastity.

White’s introduction situates the reader in this extraordinary text with a succinct discussion of important points of content, context, and style. A section on ‘*Confessions* in the life and literary career of Augustine’ gives a brief sketch of Augustine’s life at