

Divided into four distinct sections, this work charts Themistocles' career: beginning prior to Marathon in 490 BC; Themistocles' elimination of his rivals and his rise to become the supreme political power in Athens; his impact on Greek victory against the Persians; and finally, his exile from Athens, association with the Persians, and eventual suicide, rather than lead Persian forces against his fellow Greeks. Smith's basis for the brilliance exhibited by Themistocles is the

ancient Greek concept of *arete*, or excellence. He refers to legendary figures such as Theseus, Achilles, and Agamemnon, who demonstrated their *arete* in the epics, which Themistocles would have read during his education. This constant drive for excellence leads Themistocles to achieve great things, yet Smith notes that he is no hero by modern standards (xvii). In only the second chapter, it is clear that Themistocles is a risk taker, albeit of the calculated kind. He deploys the law of ostracism – the exile of a citizen from their home state if a predetermined number of votes are received for that outcome – to deal with his political adversaries within Athens. Setting out Themistocles' rivalry with his great ideological adversary, Alcibiades, Smith demonstrates to the reader both the ruthlessness and political acumen of his subject. This chapter also highlights to the reader the political tensions within Athens in between the years of Marathon (490 BC) and Salamis (479 BC), where those like Aristides and Xanthippus, (who Smith notes were the champions of conservative Greek values) were outmanoeuvred and outthought by this most wily of political operators.

The ostracism of his political opponents is not the only occasion where Themistocles' political skills are noted. Throughout the work, Themistocles is seen as a politician of some guile, yet that is not to say that he always achieved his aim in every situation. For example, Smith suggests that during the Congress at Corinth in 480 BC, where 70 Greek city-states gathered to decide how to oppose the Persian invasion of Xerxes, Themistocles increased his public profile, but was not granted overall command of the Greek naval forces.

Despite the challenges which he faced, and as noted in the account of Herodotus, Themistocles is almost universally credited with a foresight and tactical acumen, which saved Greece from destruction at the hands of the Persian empire. This supports Smith's assessment of his subject and is backed by two major events. The first was the fate of the vast quantities of silver which Athens had discovered at their mines in Laurium in 484 BC. Aristides suggested that all the citizens of Athens should receive their share; Themistocles argued that after the events of Marathon, Athens needed a powerful navy with which to defend itself if the Persians were to return to Greece. In this debate, Themistocles was the ultimate victor. The Laurium silver financed the building of the largest navy of any Greek city state, making Athens the pre-eminent naval power in Greece. The second of Themistocles' great actions was the tactics at the naval battle of Salamis.

Although not in overall command of the fleet (see above), Themistocles was wise enough to see that the superior seamanship of the Greeks could be most effective in tight spaces, by drawing the Persian navy in close to the shore, and shallower waters; this superiority bore itself out.

This section of the work is clear in its praise for Themistocles, which makes the latter half of the work more poignant. For Themistocles life and career balances on the twin concepts of hubris and nemesis. As Smith notes in chapter 11, 'like the heroes of the Homeric poems, Themistocles had a fatal flaw in his hubris [...] And like those heroes, he would pay the price for his actions'. After the Greek victory in the Persian war, Themistocles had, at his own expense, commissioned a temple of the Goddess Artemis next to his own home. An inscription before temple read 'to the best counsellor'. This declared that he alone was the saviour of Greece. Despite the veracity of the statement, Themistocles was ostracised from Athens. Not content with his exile, his political enemies denounced him as complicit in Persian activities to destabilise Greece. In response, Themistocles fled to Persia and entered the service of Artaxerxes I. It is recounted that Themistocles lived well for several years as an honoured companion and advisor to the Great King. Once tasked with fighting his fellow Greeks however, this is where Themistocles cements his honour among the Greeks, committing suicide rather than fighting his city state. Like the Homeric heroes of his youth, Themistocles believed he had found his own brand of honour at the end of his life.

Overall, this is a well-balanced work. Whether the mythos of Themistocles can be understood at such a distance is an interesting discussion and one which Smith conducts both well and informatively. I believe this would serve as a fine text for the Ancient History modules on Democracy in Athens and should be read by both staff and students alike.

doi: 10.1017/S205863102100057X

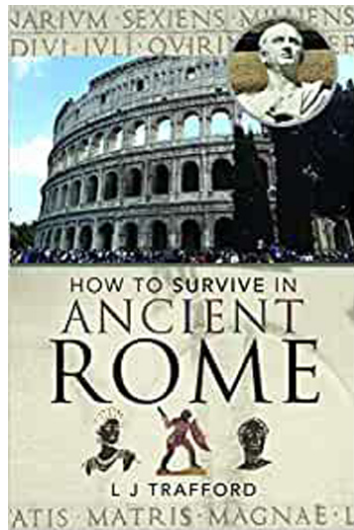
How to Survive in Ancient Rome

Trafford (L.J.) Pp. xxxiv + 147, ills. Yorkshire and Philadelphia: Pen & Sword History, 2020. Paper, £10.49. ISBN: 9781526757869

Danny Pucknell

Cardiff and Vale College, UK
Pucknell_3@hotmail.co.uk

Divided into an eclectic mix of 13 chapters, *How to Survive in Ancient Rome* is part tourist manual and part of an introduction to ancient Rome. The author guides the reader through the guise of two members of the Roman hierarchy: Titus Flavius Ajax, the imperial secretary to the Emperor and Hortensia, a member of the patrician class. Set during the reign of the Emperor Domitian (AD81-96), Trafford first offers the reader a view of Rome in the year AD 95, which helps set the scene. Despite the immediate focus on a single year, Trafford soon carries us on a 'whistle-stop tour' of



the early history of Rome, recounting the early mythology of Aeneas, Romulus, Remus, and the ruinous exploits of the last King of Rome, Tarquinius Superbus. This section is engaging, and the mythological history of Rome will be enjoyed by both student and casual reader alike.

After this early mythology lesson, Trafford dedicates a chapter each to a particular aspect of life in Rome. Written in an amusing, and often informal style, this work keeps the narrative fast-flowing while providing the

reader with a suitable depth of knowledge on various topics. The work asks, 'What was it like living in ancient Rome?' while also providing advice on 'How best to get along' if you ended up living there. While informative, Trafford does not aim to overwhelm the reader with unnecessary academic language, often using a type of internal monologue (presumably provided by Ajax or Hortensia), to keep the tone light. For example, when noting the lacklustre efforts to assassinate Romulus and Remus, the narrator observes that to accomplish the job properly and drown the twins, the assassins would have needed 'effort and a decent overarm' (XIV).

One of the most enjoyable aspects of the work can be found in the form of 'did you know' boxes. These are interspersed throughout the work and provide the reader with interesting facts on a variety of different topics. These interesting asides are mentioned in relation to the topic of a particular chapter, for example, while chapter 4 is about accommodation in Rome (pp. 35–42), one 'did you know' box in this chapter highlights the fact that the emperor Nero had a running waterfall in his dining room (p.41). Although there are footnotes throughout the work, it is a shame that the 'did you know' boxes themselves do not contain footnotes. As these boxes are often referencing the more weird and wonderful aspects of Roman history, it would aid the reader in seeking out these pieces of information and investigating further, should they wish.

Throughout the work, Trafford seeks to involve all aspects of life in Rome, be that as a tourist or as a permanent resident. For example, in the chapter on entertainment, Trafford details several ways in which a resident or visitor to Rome may pass the time. This chapter is particularly entertaining as it informs the reader about the various events and competitions which occur at the games. Here the reader is regaled with outrageous tales of the emperor Nero, who rather than running the Empire, embarked on a two-year chariot racing and theatrical tour of Greece! Along with these light-hearted elements, there are more extreme and sometimes violent instances too. We hear of a pacifist gladiator who committed suicide by choking on a lavatory sponge rather than fight, and a racing fan so overcome by the death of his favourite racing driver, he threw himself onto the man's funeral pyre!

In Rome, Trafford argues, there are many people to keep on the right side of. These she examines in individual chapters: the gods, in chapter 11 on Religious Beliefs, and the emperor in chapter 12, on Law and Order. There are ways to appease both, yet as our guide, Ajax helpfully informs us, many ways to fall foul of both, particularly the emperor. In his guide to 'upsetting the emperor',

Ajax notes that there are many crimes for which the emperor may put someone to death. Some of these appear quite understandable, for example, plotting to replace the current emperor yourself or with someone in his own family. Other examples are less understandable, with such cases being that the individual in question was described as 'being tall and handsome' or another, where the individual carried a coin bearing the emperor's image into a toilet when they needed to use the facilities. Overall, *How to Survive in Ancient Rome* is an informative and enjoyable work which will provide readers with a good introduction to the Roman world. There are moments of genuine humour as well as a large amount of scholarly work which has gone into the creation of this volume. I believe this would be a fine introduction to Rome for those in key stage 4 or as a good summer text before an AS Ancient History course. In addition, it would make a good introduction to those who are not studying for a course but are interested in a more panoramic view of the Republic and Empire.

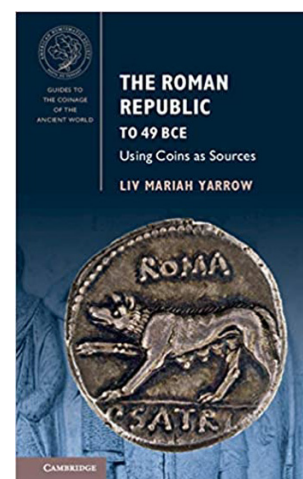
doi: 10.1017/S2058631021000581

The Roman Republic to 49 BCE. Using Coins as Sources

Yarrow (L.M.) Pp. xxxviii + 273, b/w and colour ills, maps. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021. Paper, £19.99. ISBN: 978-1-107-65470-9.

Tom Johnson

University of Cambridge, Cambridge, UK
tdj25@cam.ac.uk



Yarrow's book is the latest in a series intended to provide non-specialists with an introduction to the use of coinage as historical evidence. Yarrow is largely successful in achieving this and has produced a work which will be useful for teachers and students alike. The work is organised thematically into four main chapters, although a useful chronological table acts as a 'temporal index' allowing coins relating to specific events to be easily located.

Chapter 1 ('Money') discusses the development and use of coinage as a facilitator of exchange in the Roman world, providing the reader with an introduction into many of the features and problems of Roman coinage. As an introduction it occasionally tends towards oversimplification of complex or controversial topics without adequate discussion or referencing, ('The Romans continued to use credit systems' (p.5) and give the 'impression that [they] cared far more about the quality of the coinage that they used