



The Ancient Olympic Games: Third edition

Judith Swaddling

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For over 1,000 years, between 776 BC and AD 395, people from all over the classical world flocked every four years to Olympia in Western Greece to see famous athletes compete for the olive crowns of the ancient Olympic Games. The Games were huge, and so was the build-up: virtually the whole of the preceding year was devoted to the preparations of the site and the athletes. But these games were much more than just a sporting event: religion, power, politics, scandal, and propaganda were all at the center of the five-day festival. Held in honor of Zeus, the supreme god of Greek mythology, a visit to Olympia was also a pilgrimage to his sacred temple.

In this updated edition of her indispensable guide to the ancient Games, Judith Swaddling traces their mythological and religious origins. Describing the events, the sacred ceremony, and the celebrations that were an essential part of the Olympic festival, this book paints a vivid picture of what it was like to be at these prestigious games.

Concluding with a chapter on the modern Olympics that brings the story right up to the preparations for the London 2012 Games, this fascinating book is essential reading for anyone interested in the Olympics, the greatest games of them all.

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