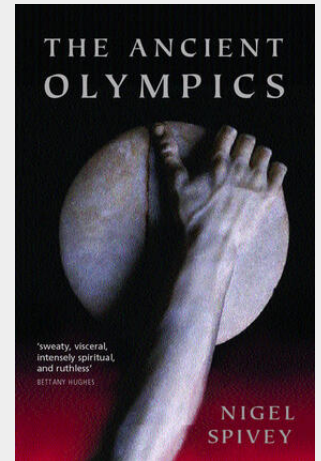


Spivey

The Ancient Olympics

The word 'athletics' is derived from the Greek verb 'to struggle for a prize'. After reading this book, no one will see the Olympics as a graceful display of Greek beauty again, but as war by other means. Nigel Spivey paints a portrait of the Greek Olympics as they really were - fierce contests between bitter rivals, in which victors won kudos and rewards, and losers faced scorn and even assault. Victory was almost worth dying for, and a number of athletes did just that. Many more resorted to cheating and bribery. Contested always bitterly and often bloodily, the ancient Olympics were not an idealistic celebration of unity, but a clash of military powers in an arena not far removed from the battlefield. The word 'athletics' is derived from the Greek verb 'to struggle for a prize'. After reading this book, no one will see the Olympics as a graceful display of Greek beauty again, but as war by other means. Nigel Spivey paints a portrait of the Greek Olympics as they really were - fierce contests between bitter rivals, in which victors won kudos and rewards, and losers faced scorn and even assault. Victory was almost worth dying for, and a number of athletes did just that. Many more resorted to cheating and bribery. Contested always bitterly and often bloodily, the ancient Olympics were not an idealistic celebration of unity, but a clash of military powers in an arena not far removed from the battlefield.



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