

This relatively thin book holds many key developments in the study of Iran. And the editors did a magnificent job of bringing so many views together in this short volume. As a resource for scholars, it is a massive help, even to the person who is looking only for one specific reference. Whether you are a graduate or post-graduate student this compilation will be of help to you in furthering your studies or focusing your research. The ideas are many and the conclusions profound but most of all it shows the world the possibilities of great research undertaken without any foregone conclusions and the love of a culture that transcends national boundaries; like the Persian Empire itself.

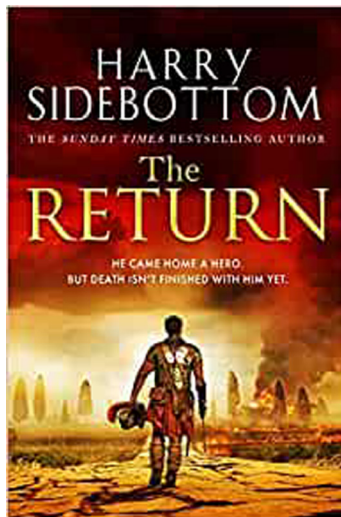
doi: 10.1017/S2058631021000611

The Return

Sidebottom (H.) Pp 304, map. London: Zaffre, 2020. Cased, £14.99. ISBN:978-1-785-76963-4. <https://www.zaffrebooks.co.uk/books/the-return/>

Hilary Meyrick-Long

Latin Teacher St. Andrew's Episcopal School, Austin, TX, USA
hmeyrick-long@sasaustin.org



The Return's protagonist, suitably and ironically named, Gaius Furius Paullus arrives home in Temesa after three years of military service, decorated by the *corona civica*. Polluted by a killing just as he arrives home, he is also pursued by the Furies on account of his experience and actions during his time in the army. The story alternates between flashbacks to Paullus' military life, presented in chapters entitled *Militia 608/607 Ab Urbe Condita* (147–146 BC) and the murder mystery he is solving in his

present existence, presented in chapters entitled *Patria 609 Ab Urbe Condita* (145 BC).

Generally speaking, as someone who has striven endlessly over the years of my career to make the ancient world a lively and relevant place for the students I teach, I would recommend this book both to high school teachers and students of the ancient world, as another resource for adding colour and life to the study of this time period. Sidebottom is clearly well-versed in Roman history and culture and the inclusion of many small details (*lares, genius, mos maiorum, ubi tu Gaius, ego Gaia* to list just a few) combines with action and adventure to build a vivid big picture of that world.

As a middle-school Latin teacher with a strong background in Aegean pre-history, I didn't feel I knew much about the

historical background to this book and found myself having to research the sack of Corinth in 146BC and the demise of the Achaean League, as well as the geographical setting of the Sila and Temesa in the murder-mystery aspect of the plot. I presume most school students reading this book would have to do the same but it was not an obstacle to my enjoyment of the plot by any means.

Again, as a middle-school Latin teacher, I probably wouldn't recommend this book to any of my 6th-8th grade students due to occasional language and descriptions of violence, but I could see it being a useful addition to a high school library as well as an ancillary tool to high school units on the Roman military. Sometimes, units on the Roman military can prove a little dry and I think using extracts from *The Return* would provoke interesting class discussions and provide the opportunity to make connections with the modern world as Sidebottom's hero experiences combat stress and guilt as a result of his time in the army. Moreover, I think students would enjoy reading or hearing about the different components of the legion such as *hastati, principes, triarii* or *velites* in the context of a story rather than lists of jobs soldiers could do which is how most text books present them. In addition, extracts from the book could be used to illuminate student knowledge of Roman agriculture and animal husbandry. I, for one, now have a clearer idea of what the practice of winnowing involves!

In conclusion, I enjoyed *The Return* sufficiently to hope that Gaius Furius Paullus makes a reappearance in a sequel at some point. After all, surely something noteworthy was occurring somewhere in the Roman world in the aftermath of *The Return's* conclusion in 612 *Ab Urbe Condita* (142 BC)? Paullus could next participate in the Third Celtiberian war perhaps? Whatever he may do, this Latin teacher looks forward to reading about it.

doi: 10.1017/S2058631021000477

Themistocles. The Powerbroker of Athens

Smith (J.A.). Pp. xxviii + 284, maps, colour pls. Barnsley: Pen & Sword Books, 2021. Cased, £20. ISBN: 9781526790453

Danny Pucknell

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

At the opening, the author's stated aim is 'to understand the mythos of Themistocles' (pp.x). Whether this book is successful in achieving the stated aim of its author, is open to debate. Clearly an admirer of his subject, Smith offers the reader a Themistocles who is blessed with a political acumen far above his contemporaries; however, this does, at times, in my opinion, afford Themistocles too much credit. Smith ends the introduction of his work by noting that Themistocles was a man who transcended a typical political career to end Greek mythology as a hero in the vein of Odysseus, Achilles or Theseus, yet the historical Themistocles is a man who made mistakes and died ignominiously, despite his once glittering political career.