

emptiness (e.g. *vanus*). Verbs like *iacto* and *tumeo* might have been included in this study as well, since they add to the evidence for embodiment and the readability of another's pride. The discussion of Tarquinius Superbus, the very symbol of arrogant pride from the Roman Republic, comes at the meeting point of Parts I and II and ties together persuasively the study of terminology and scripts with political overreach.

In Part III, the texts B. examines are very familiar, though she argues convincingly that they require a fresh reading in light of her earlier argument, and we find again sensitive and astute interpretations throughout. Still, the scope does narrow in several ways, first by focusing on just one term (*superbia*), and second by looking only at poets, and poets who are responding to each other's work. As B. herself admits, the case for a positive story about pride is still fairly limited. Yet if we consider the evidence more widely and do not restrict ourselves to lexical evidence of just a few words, we might come to a different assessment of the emotion's history and development. When Cicero uses the *pluralis modestiae*, for example, he can claim positive credit for something while distancing himself from it at the same time. Horace does something similar in *Satires* I, where he tells two stories about his life, one a modest tale about his humble upbringing and simple tastes, and another more self-important story about his entry into Maecenas' circle. Even earlier, the clever slave in comedies like Plautus' *Pseudolus* or *Bacchides* will boast, in the first person, about his crafty plot to help his young master, and while he may be criticised as arrogant by other characters, the comic depiction of him is sympathetic. In all these cases, the attitude towards pride is still primarily negative, which supports part of B.'s argument. But not wholly so: far from being an exceptional case or something that only develops later, *superbia* belongs to a pattern continuous from the Republic onwards.

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JENNIFER FINN, *CONTESTED PASTS: A DETERMINIST HISTORY OF ALEXANDER THE GREAT IN THE ROMAN EMPIRE*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2022. Pp. x + 234, illus. ISBN 9780472133031. US\$70.00.

Jennifer Finn offers a fresh perspective on the Roman reception of Alexander the Great. Her book pursues a path opened by D. Spencer, *The Roman Alexander* (2002), and followed by J. Peltonen, *Alexander the Great in the Roman Empire, 150 BC to AD 600* (2019) and C. T. Djurslev, *Alexander the Great in the Early Christian Tradition* (2020). There have been two main schools of Alexander scholarship: one more interested in reconstructing the fourth-century B.C.E. reality behind the Roman narratives, the other more focused on how contemporary concerns shaped the Alexander(s) that we encounter in the Roman-period sources. F.'s study focuses on how Roman writers used the Alexander tradition to construct Augustus' reign and Roman supremacy, and present it as the determinist outcome of the history of previous world empires. F.'s approach is to focus on certain episodes in the Alexander literature, identify Roman manipulation of the stories and demonstrate their contemporary relevance. Ch. 2 deals with the Trojan and Persian wars and the Great Weddings at Susa. Ch. 3 focuses on the battle(s) of Thermopylae in 480 and 191 B.C.E. and Alexander's victory at the Persian Gate. F. writes that both Alexander's historians and later Romans contrasted their respective victories with the fate of the Spartans who lost their battle against the troops of Xerxes I, underlining their claims to world domination. F. identifies compelling connections between different literary accounts, but the interpretation requires a lot of reading between lines, since the Roman writers do not explicitly make the comparison with the battle of Thermopylae in 480 B.C.E.

Ch. 4 analyses the account of Alexander's 'last plans' that appears solely in Diodorus' narrative. In contrast to some earlier scholars (notably Badian and Atkinson), F. sees the 'last plans' as a late invention intended to portray Augustus as a new Heracles and Alexander. Ch. 5 analyses the role of Alexander's memory in the imaginary of the Roman Civil Wars, focusing on the representation

of Pompey and his opponent Sertorius as new Alexanders. The connection between stories told about Alexander and Sertorius is a novel contribution to the literature. The *Alexander Romance* tradition seems to be related to the story where Sertorius visits the 'Isles of the Blessed'. Ch. 6 takes a different approach to the rest of the volume by exploring how Roman writers compared Alexander to the Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar. F. argues that the Roman-period accounts of the siege of Tyre represent Alexander as surpassing Nebuchadnezzar, who failed to conquer the part of the city that was situated on the island. In her analysis, the story of Alexander's visit to Jerusalem was similarly invented in order to depict Alexander as an anti-Nebuchadnezzar, treating the Jewish people with more benevolence than the Babylonian king, who destroyed the temple of Solomon. The fact that there are no explicit references to Nebuchadnezzar in the surviving Alexander tradition makes the argument speculative. But there can be no doubt that the historical Alexander knew that the Babylonian king had been unsuccessful in his siege of Tyre, and probably also that the Babylonians had destroyed the temple of Jerusalem. It is often very hard to determine conclusively what was done by the historical Alexander, what was added in the time of his successors and what was invented by the Roman writers. The line between fact and fabrication is blurred.

F.'s book underlines this fundamental issue, while also showing why Alexander and his reception continue to intrigue ancient historians. She also demonstrates elegantly how the Romans wanted to depict their supremacy as part of the grand story of the previous world Empires, in which Alexander played a key role. I highly recommend this book to any scholar or student interested in the history of Alexander or his reception.

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KIMBERLEY CZAJKOWSKI and BENEDIKT ECKHARDT, *HEROD IN HISTORY: NICOLAUS OF DAMASCUS AND THE AUGUSTAN CONTEXT*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021. Pp. vii + 196 pages. ISBN 9780192845214. £65.00.

*Herod in History* is a stimulating book. Central to it is a provocative premise that Nicolaus of Damascus, a courtier of Herod I of Judaea and one of Josephus' main sources for him, did not write to praise Herod. Instead, his characterisation reflects his views on what made kings good or evil in the ancient world, and in particular the Augustan era. He was also casting his own questionable role at Herod's court in a positive light.

Reconstructing Nicolaus' material on Herod (reigned c. 37–34 B.C.E.) is challenging. Originating from Damascus, Nicolaus was an adviser to Herod and perhaps other eastern Mediterranean dynasts under the triumvirs and then Augustus. As an historian, Nicolaus' achievements included an autobiography, a life of Augustus and a *Universal History* that fielded his material on Herod. His works, however, only survive in fragments, and while Josephus borrowed heavily from the *Universal History* in his *Jewish War* and his *Jewish Antiquities*, he does not always cite Nicolaus explicitly. People have therefore posited different theories, by necessity circular, about what originated from Nicolaus. A widespread assumption is that Nicolaus, keen to praise Herod, was responsible for favourable material (Josephus, *AJ* 16.183–7 states as much). More critical matter was produced by other sources, or Josephus himself. Notionally, this would explain differences in Josephus' portrayals of Herod in *War*, mainly positive, and in *Antiquities*, which is more hostile.

The authors disagree. They posit that Nicolaus completed his *Universal History*, probably totaling 144 books, after Herod died; Books 123–4 recount parts of Herod's reign, and Nicolaus must have reached his death by Book 144 (8–9). A critical retrospective on Herod was possible. The authors also observe that Nicolaus had his own intellectual and moral reputation to consider. His longevity at Herod's court, even at its most violently depraved, plausibly affected his portrayal of Herod and his own conduct (22–4). They accordingly surmise that Nicolaus' treatment of Herod is best understood by reconstructing how he treats ancient kingship and Roman governance in his undisputed fragments, along with his debt to prior treatments (like Xenophon's *Cyropaedia*). One