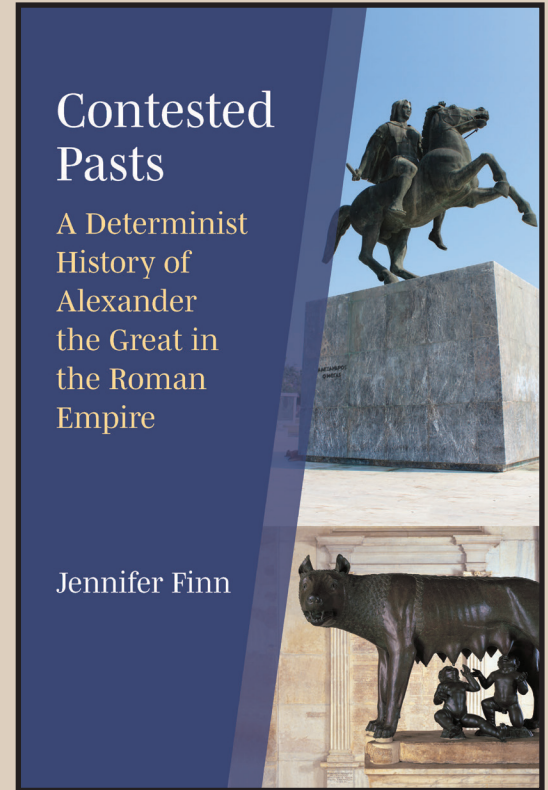


Contested Pasts

A Determinist History of Alexander the Great in the Roman Empire

Taking as a key turning point the self-fashioning of the first Roman emperor Augustus, author Jennifer Finn revisits the idea of “universal history” in Polybius, Justin, and Diodorus, combined with the Stoic philosophy of determinism present in authors like Plutarch and Arrian. Finn endeavors to determine the ways in which Roman authors manipulated narratives about Alexander’s campaigns—and even other significant events in Mediterranean history—to artificially construct a past to which the Romans could attach themselves as a natural teleological culmination. In doing so, *Contested Pasts* uses five case studies to reexamine aspects of Alexander’s campaigns that have received much attention in modern scholarship, providing new interpretations of issues such as: his connections to the Trojan and Persian wars; the Great Weddings at Susa; the battle(s) of Thermopylae in 480 BCE and 191 BCE and Alexander’s conflict at the Persian Gates; the context of his “Last Plans”; the role of his memory in imagining the Roman Civil Wars; and his fictitious visit to the city of Jerusalem. While Finn demonstrates throughout the book that the influence for many of these narratives likely originated in the reign of Alexander or his Successors, nevertheless these retroactive authorial manipulations force us to confront the fact that we may have an even more opaque understanding of Alexander than has previously been acknowledged. Through the application of a mnemohistorical approach, the book seeks to provide a new understanding of the ways in which the Romans—and people in the purview of the Romans—conceptualized their own world with reference to Alexander the Great.



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Jennifer Finn

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