convincing study whose wide implications cannot be adequately addressed here. Instead, I will focus on some of the author's more controversial views regarding the original's date, subject, background, narrativity, and ideology.

In a rare display of dogmatism, Cohen "insists" on a date after Gaugamela, for she thinks it "inherently improbable that works of art referring to Alexander's expedition would be commissioned while the expedition was at its height" (84). Yet two sentences later she admits that Lysippos's Granikos monument was indeed commissioned then, directly after the battle. So why not this one?

Cohen opts for a palimpsest of Alexander battles, arguing that by ca. 320 B.C., when she dates the original, events would have become clouded and conflated. Yet even if the picture were painted this late, her comparanda—the Iwo Jima Memorial and Manet's "Execution of Emperor Maximilian"—actually undercut her case. For both *do* portray a single, unique, historical event; though the Iwo Jima flag-raising was soon repeated, this was a Hollywood-style restaging in situ, not a new flag-raising during a different battle on another island. In Greece the genre of monumental battle-painting was long established (131), and there is no evidence either that any of these huge works depicted anything other than specific, unique events (e.g., Marathon and Mantineia), or that, confronted with yet another example, the Greek viewer would not *expect* such specificity. How the artist edited his battle is another matter.

Although bare trees dot the new Vergina hunt fresco, the Alexander Mosaic's tree is both bare and truncated, with two branches cut off. It is also—a fact Cohen overlooks—crossed by the leftmost lance in the background, which is enormously elongated for the purpose. So it cannot simply be dismissed as a topos (117). Nor can it lament "the desolation of human lives" on both sides (118)—a misconception based on Cohen's detection of a "community of interests" between them in the painting (164). For not only would this triumphalist genre, like Kallisthenes' and Kleitarchos's histories, lament only the deaths of the *victors*, but since the stricken tree echoes the gestures of Darius and his charioteer, and the spear crossing it mirrors the skewered Persian below, it must refer specifically to the desolation of the *Persians*. The background spears should therefore be Macedonian, not those of Darius's Greek mercenaries, as Cohen, following Nylander, believes (124). The picture's composition is thus broadly chiastic, Macedonian-Persian in front and Persian-Macedonian behind.

Cohen's discussion is good on narrative and its problems, but she concludes that the mosaic's temporal and causal emplotment is overshadowed by the "frozen drama" of the tragedies of the two Persians in the foreground, and of Alexander and Darius (e.g., 103, 147). This seems overstated, and her narrative-drama dichotomy invites the objection that Greek drama was a selection from and intensification of a broader narrative ("slices from Homer's banquet"), not a substitute for it (contra 145). To my eye, the nub is the confrontation between an Alexander with a now-useless sarissa and a Darius with no arrows, and I fail to see how this "does not . . . adhere to the requirements of *peripeteia*, the sudden reversal of fortunes and circumstances" (145, cf. 155) of dramatic narrative. As I argued some years ago (*Faces of Power* [Berkeley 1993] 146–47), fourth-century viewers would see it as a double *peripeteia* orchestrated by Tyche—who appears only when Cohen reaches the picture's afterlife in Pompeii (188–89).

All this hardly indicates that "Alexander and Darius seem to be suffering the same sense of ultimate loss and to be sharing a common tragedy" (120), creating a "subtext of community of interests between Greeks and Persians" (164). Although the artist certainly respects Persian valor, this humanistic reading strains the pictorial evidence and seems perilously modern. In support, Cohen points, i.a., to Alexander's pro-Persian sympathies that culminated in his "fusion" policy of 324—all of which increasingly annoyed the Macedonians and did not outlive his death, so are unlikely to have loomed large in this picture. Indeed, if, as I have argued elsewhere (*Faces of Power* [Berkeley 1993] 143–44), the picture's assimilation of Darius to a rape victim (compare, e.g., the *Abduction of Helen* mosaic at Pella) and other clues covertly feminize the Persians, then this reveals less an ideology of tragic equality than one of natural dominance and submission. Believing that the king "has eyes only for his soldier's predicament" (118; but he looks and gestures at *Alexander*), Cohen merely footnotes this view (105 n. 71); she does return to it later (173–74), but without reconciling the contradictions.

Cohen writes lucidly, though better editing would have caught such infelicities as "looked entirely differently" (38) and "enlisting them to" (51). The pictures are adequate, several in color excepted. And despite the reservations expressed above, this thoughtful book is essential reading for any serious student of Greek art in general and the Alexander Mosaic in particular.

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ANCESTOR MASKS AND ARISTOCRATIC POWER IN ROMAN CULTURE, by *Harriet I. Flower*. Pp. xvii + 410. Clarendon Press, Oxford 1996. £50. ISBN 0-19-815018-0.

Ancient historians have devoted much attention to the issue of whether the Roman aristocracy was hereditary. Even though the aristocracy was surely not hereditary in a technical constitutional sense during the Republic—sons did not inherit their father's magisterial offices or senatorial seats—a limited group of families dominated the highest offices of state over generations and even centuries. Leading historians such as Ronald Syme have described not only rank but also certain character traits as "inherited" within noble families, even though this cannot have been true in any literal, genetic sense.

Harriet Flower's valuable book, *Ancestor Masks and Aristocratic Power in Roman Culture*, illuminates some of these issues with an examination of a central aspect of Roman

political culture, the *imagines*, or masks/portraits of leading Roman officeholders. The book deserves praise for bringing the recent research on Roman family and household to bear on perennial questions of political history.

The introduction points to some of the striking features of the imagines. They were not cult objects in some sort of ancestor worship, but were realistic masks with secular, civic associations, earned by males who were elected to the highest offices of state. The masks were most prominently displayed at family funerals, where they were worn by actors impersonating the great ancestors. During the funeral, they sat on their curule chairs to listen to the *laudatio* given by a male descendant in the Forum to praise the deceased and earlier family members. As Flower points out, the masked ancestors constituted the audience to legitimate judgments of honor on the newly deceased and so reinforced to the living the sense of shame for deviance or failure. By measuring honor in terms of magistracies and triumphs, the funeral oration structured and reinforced the competitive values of the ruling elite. Thus, Flower broadens our understanding of aristocratic competition from an impoverished *Realpolitik* to a pervasive political culture based on honor, much as E.J. Lendon does in his new *Empire of Honour* (Oxford 1997).

Chapter 1 makes the case for the importance of the imagines through close interpretation of two principal texts, a Marian speech in Sallust's *Bellum Jugurthinum* and the recently published Senatus consultum de Cn. Pisone patre. The discovery of the latter provides part of the justification for a new study of imagines, because it shows clearly that into the early principate the imagines were an essential symbol in defining political lineage and prestige. It was important not only that Gnaeus Calpurnius Piso die for his alleged treason (he preempted his conviction by committing suicide), but that his memory be obliterated by eliminating his *praenomen* among descendants and his *imago* in the family's *atria*.

Chapter 2 sorts out the categories of ancestral representations. Imagines encompassed the wax masks, the painted portraits of the family trees in the atria of noble houses, the shield portraits, and the other imagines displayed outside the house at the entrance. Unfortunately, since no imago has survived, historians must deduce their features largely from written texts without direct visual observation. Flower takes an appropriately cautious approach in drawing conclusions.

The third chapter considers the deployment of ancestral images in the electoral politics of the Republic. Roman nobles did not inherit titles as markers of rank, in the manner of later European aristocrats, but they did inherit the privilege of exhibiting representations of politically successful ancestors. Flower surveys the various media of representations from coins and gems to statues. She rightly avoids a narrowly legalistic approach to the *ius imaginum*, which is a modern phrase rather than an ancient one. Flower acknowledges that we cannot measure the influence of ancestral allusions on Roman voters (neither could the Romans with any precision), but Roman senatorial authors such as Cicero and Sallust certainly assumed that their audience would recognize the importance of imagines.

In chapters 4 and 5 Flower analyzes the funeral procession and oration, which were the primary occasions for display of the imagines and public reiteration of the ancestors' accomplishments. A virtue of this treatment is its emphasis on the theatricality of the *pompa funebris* and *laudatio*, which provides insights into the vehicles that shaped and reshaped Romans' selective memory of the past. Each aristocratic funeral presented an opportunity for a family to articulate (or invent) that part of Roman history to which the family claimed to have contributed.

In the remaining chapters, Flower takes an expansive approach to her topic. For instance, chapter 7 on imagines in the atrium presents an extended, general summary of the place of the atrium and tablinum in the development of Roman domestic architecture. This information is helpful to the general reader, but the specialist may wish that the space had been devoted to more detailed exploration of some fundamental issues raised by the material.

The customs surrounding the imagines can enrich our understanding of the complex nexus of issues related to the gendering of status and kinship. Since imagines were won by virtue of holding top offices, they exclusively represented men and celebrated the political sphere as the sole avenue to the highest status. *Nobilitas*, won through election to the aedileship, praetorship, or consulship in Flower's view, was inherited through the male line alone. This gave Roman kinship its agnatic aspect. Yet Flower's material shows that Roman thought about the imagines was not structured simply along male, agnatic lines. The funerals of aristocratic women were used by men as occasions to parade the family imagines and to advertise family achievements. One might argue that this is another example of noble men manipulating passive women for their political benefit, but that argument ignores the status enjoyed by noble women such as Junia, whose funeral in A.D. 22 included imagines from twenty noble families, according to Tacitus. Although nobilitas was transmitted through the male line, women could bring the imagines of this natal family to their husband's house. As a result, the kinship circle of ancestors whose imagines lent prestige extended well beyond the agnatic line. The SC de Cn. Pisone patre suggests that the imago of Gnaeus Piso would have been displayed in the funerals of cognates and affines, had he not suffered *damnatio memoriae*. Such decisions about whom to include in one's gallery of illustrious ancestors demonstrate the need for a constructivist, rather than a biological, understanding of Roman kinship.

Flower touches on these issues, but the organization of the book does not encourage a full, systematic treatment. Nevertheless, *Ancestral Masks* is a thorough and sound study that results in important conclusions about how rank and status were transmitted from one generation to the next in Rome, and thus gives a functional, complex answer to the question of the hereditary nature of the Roman nobility.

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