

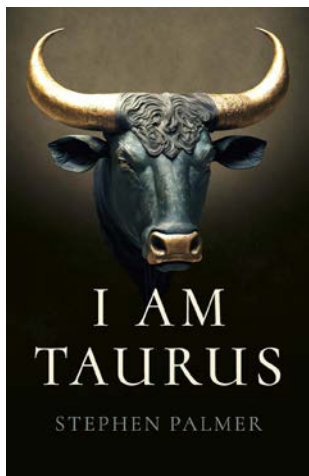
Book Review

I am Taurus

Palmer (S.) Pp. 99. Alresford: IFF Books, 2024.
Paper, £8.99, US\$10.95. ISBN: 978-1-80341-466-9.

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As a means to understanding mankind itself, man's fascination with the bull has been analysed and discussed at length by those working across disciplines. Palmer's *I am Taurus* is a reimagining of the mythical Taurus, who is the omniscient narrator of the book. Through the eyes of Taurus, the reader views the evolution of humanity. Although a non-fiction book, Palmer has deftly woven his research, spanning thirty-five years, into an elegant narrative, divided into eleven chronologically-ordered chapters to convey the

'continuation of an idea in human culture'. Palmer explores a mere nineteen thousand years of history through triangulating his thorough research into the archaeology, anthropology and mythology of Taurus in all his various guises and manifestations. The reader embarks on this journey with a

description of the creation of the cave paintings depicting aurochs at Lascaux. Palmer's work is wide-ranging geographically, impressively so in a book of less than one hundred pages. He takes the reader on a bovine odyssey as far east as the Indus Valley and as far west as Pamplona, concluding the book with an account of bullfighting in Spain, a tradition which continues to this day and will doubtless be familiar to his readership.

Students and teachers reading *I am Taurus* will undoubtedly already be familiar with many of the ancient sites, rituals and myths described in the book; Palmer goes further in exploring what gave rise to these ideas about the sacred bull. His attention to detail is evident throughout and the use of the present tense draws the reader into the mind of the omnipresent Taurus. Palmer draws on theories across disciplines from Jo Marchant, John Knight Lundwall and David Lewis-Williams, demonstrating to his reader that examining 'big ideas' about humanity through the lens of more than one discipline has much to offer.

Whilst Palmer manages to artfully condense thousands of years' worth of history into prose, a further avenue which it would have been interesting to have seen included is Celtic mythology. The bull holds an often-malevolent role in Scottish Gaelic, Manx and Irish folklore traditions and an association with bodies of water. Furthermore, although Palmer does state some of his sources and cites the theories which provided the inspiration for his work in the *Introduction*, I would have liked to see a select bibliography, if only to provide guidance for further reading in areas which piqued my interest. Overall, *I am Taurus* was an enjoyable and thought-provoking read, requiring no longer than an hour or so to read it in its entirety. More significantly, it led me to reflect on how Classics can offer opportunities to examine big questions and ideas through the lens of different disciplines and to consider how this might look and be scaffolded in a classroom environment in a meaningful way. Palmer has suggested that there may be further *I Am...* books in the future which would be highly anticipated by this reviewer.

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