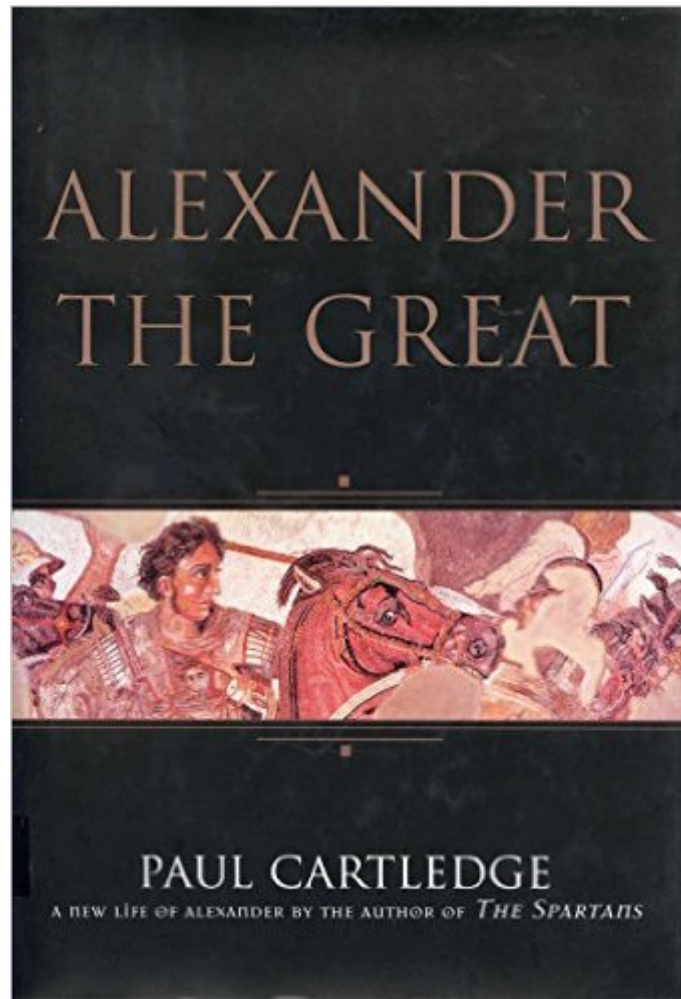


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Alexander The Great: The Hunt For A New Past



Synopsis

Paul Cartledge, one of the world's foremost scholars of ancient Greece, illuminates the brief but iconic life of Alexander (356-323 BC), king of Macedon, conqueror of the Persian Empire, and founder of a new world order. Alexander's legacy has had a major impact on military tacticians, scholars, statesmen, adventurers, authors, and filmmakers. Cartledge brilliantly evokes Alexander's remarkable political and military accomplishments, cutting through the myths to show why he was such a great leader. He explores our endless fascination with Alexander and gives us insight into his charismatic leadership, his capacity for brutality, and his sophisticated grasp of international politics. Alexander the Great is an engaging portrait of a fascinating man, and a welcome balance to the myths, legends, and often skewed history that have obscured the real Alexander.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This biography of the Big Alex was clearly not intended as a dry scholarly work. It is a relatively light reading, as regards the style - almost informal (cf. "When Julius [Caesar] was on an early tour of imperial duty in Spain, Plutarch relates, he is said to have gazed at a statue of Alexander [...]. And he wept because, whereas Alexander had died at thirty-two, king of so many peoples, he himself at that same age had not yet achieved any brilliant success. I am no Julius Caesar. But I am fifty-six at the time of writing this - so you can, I hope, imagine how I feel." p. 39). That makes the reading highly entertaining but it also shows that this book, while well researched, does not obsess about the protocol of scientific writing (footnotes etc.). It is targeting intelligent non-specialists or perhaps college students who want to be introduced to the story of Alexander. That is why the book contains

a glossary and an overview of all important figures (experts in the field presumably know these things by heart so the book would not include that if it was designed for them). The book is organized thematically, not exactly chronologically. The chapters are titled: Alexander and the Macedonians, Alexander and the Greeks etc. The disadvantage of this is that you do not get a clear chronological story line (but that's for dimwits anyway). The advantage is, however, that many facts and dates and events are mentioned in several chapters - and this repetition (though every time with a slightly different point in mind - depending on the topic of each chapter) is a very good way of remembering them. The book contains quite a bit of military history but does not provide minutely detailed descriptions of the battles.

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