Responses to Oliver Stone's Alexander: Film, History, and Cultural Studies (Wisconsin Studies in Classics)

From University of Wisconsin Press

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The charismatic Alexander the Great of Macedon (356–323 B.C.E.) was one of the most successful military commanders in history, conquering Asia Minor, Egypt, Persia, central Asia, and the lands beyond as far as Pakistan and India. Alexander has been, over the course of two millennia since his death at the age of thirty-two, the central figure in histories, legends, songs, novels, biographies, and, most recently, films. In 2004 director Oliver Stone's epic film *Alexander* generated a renewed interest in Alexander the Great and his companions, surroundings, and accomplishments, but the critical response to the film offers a fascinating lesson in the contentious dialogue between historiography and modern entertainment.

This volume brings together an intriguing mix of leading scholars in Macedonian and Greek history, Persian culture, film studies, classical literature, and archaeology—including some who were advisors for the film—and includes an afterword by Oliver Stone discussing the challenges he faced in putting Alexander's life on the big screen. The contributors scrutinize Stone's project from its inception and design to its production and reception, considering such questions as: Can a film about Alexander (and similar figures from history) be both entertaining and historically sound? How do the goals of screenwriters and directors differ from those of historians? How do Alexander's personal relationships—with his mother Olympias, his wife Roxane, his lover Hephaistion, and others—affect modern perceptions of Alexander? Several of the contributors also explore reasons behind the film's tepid response at the box office and subsequent controversies.

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Editorial Review

Review

"A very successful contribution to the burgeoning subsector of classical scholarship dealing with the modern cinematic treatment of the classics."—James S. Romm, editor of *Alexander the Great: Selections from Diodorus, Plutarch, Quintus Curtius, and Arrian*

"Responses to Oliver Stone's Alexander achieves its mission of raising important questions about Alexander's life and career as triggered by Stone's film. The editors are to be commended for choosing a variety of scholars representing a variety of disciplines and positions, and certainly for securing an Afterword that reveals Stone's continuing fascination and intellectual engagement with the subject. As a paperback original, this book is affordable enough for course usage and would make fine student reading."—Sheramy D. Bundrick, Bryn Mawr Classical Review

"Rigorously researched, often brilliantly argued essays by scholars of the ancient world"—Tony Pipolo, *Cineaste*

About the Author

Paul Cartledge is the A.G. Leventis Professor of Greek culture in the Faculty of Classics, Cambridge University, and the Hellenic Parliament Global Distinguished Professor at New York University. He is author, coauthor, editor, or coeditor of more than twenty books, including *Alexander the Great: The Hunt for a New Past*. Fiona Rose Greenland earned a doctorate in classical archaeology as a Rhodes Scholar at the University of Oxford, where she subsequently served as lecturer. She was hired by Oliver Stone in 2003 to provide expertise on Greek art and architecture for *Alexander*. She is currently pursuing a doctorate in sociology at the University of Michigan.

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Cesar Ford:

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