



Alexander the Great: Journey to the End of the Earth

By Norman F. Cantor

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"Alexander's behavior was conditioned along certain lines -- heroism, courage, strength, superstition, bisexuality, intoxication, cruelty. He bestrode Europe and Asia like a supernatural figure."

In this succinct portrait of Alexander the Great, distinguished scholar and historian Norman Cantor illuminates the personal life and military conquests of this most legendary of men. Cantor draws from the major writings of Alexander's contemporaries combined with the most recent psychological and cultural studies to show Alexander as he was -- a great figure in the ancient world whose puzzling personality greatly fueled his military accomplishments.

He describes Alexander's ambiguous relationship with his father, Philip II of Macedon; his oedipal involvement with his mother, the Albanian princess Olympias; and his bisexuality. He traces Alexander's attempts to bridge the East and West, the Greek and Persian worlds, using Achilles, hero of the Trojan War, as his model. Finally, Cantor explores Alexander's view of himself in relation to the pagan gods of Greece and Egypt.

More than a biography, Norman Cantor's *Alexander the Great* is a psychological rendering of a man of his time.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

The last work of the late historian Cantor (*In the Wake of the Plague*) is a flat and uninspiring study of a leader of gigantic proportions and unparalleled courage. Drawing heavily on previous modern biographies, as well as on biographical sketches from Plutarch, Arrian and other ancient writers, Cantor recreates Alexander's world, his military campaigns and his family life. Cantor mechanically traces Alexander's military exploits through Persia, Jerusalem and India, where he often freed the people of one region from a tyrant and then enslaved them himself. In tantalizing brevity, Cantor provides a picture of the bloody civil wars, the superstition and fears, and the environment of honor and shame in which the young prince grew up. Alexander's reputation as a chivalrous leader developed much later, Cantor says, both in the Alexandrine romances of the first century and in Christian legend and lore of the Middle Ages. The author clearly demonstrates that Alexander's greatness derives primarily from his abilities as a field commander rather than from his abilities as a political leader. Regrettably, Cantor offers no startling information that would help distinguish his short biography from the more complete and detailed works of Robin Lane Fox, Peter Green or Michael Wood. Map.

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From [Booklist](#)

Starred Review Has the famous Macedonian king been "done to death"? Several biographies of the conqueror of what was then the "known" world have appeared recently; however, turn to this extremely useful one for its incomparable mix of insight and cogency. Professor Cantor, author of, among other books, the best-selling *In the Wake of the Plague* (2001), begins with a trenchant explanation of the context for understanding Alexander--the tenets of ancient Greek culture--which is matched, as if by a second bookend, by the author's equally solid concluding--chapter summation of the man's "greatness." In between lies the heart of the book, in which Cantor, easing the reader along in an effortlessly styled, smoothly flowing narrative, reconstructs the events in Alexander's life; but more difficultly, given the expanse of time between then and now, he offers a valid evaluation of the man's character. Military exploits (in Alexander's case, of course, *military talents*) are excitingly revived, and honesty is the hallmark of Cantor's appreciation of Alexander's relationship with his longtime male lover, Hephaestion. A book that does the biographical art proud. *Brad Hooper*

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Review

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Booklist (starred review)

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Albert Parks:

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