



## The History of Alexander

*Quintus Curtius Rufus , John Yardley (Translator) , Waldemar Heckel (Introduction)*

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**The essential history of Alexander the Great, compelling and brilliantly realized**

Alexander the Great (356-323 BC), who led the Macedonian army to victory in Egypt, Syria, Persia and India, was perhaps the most successful conqueror the world has ever seen. Yet although no other individual has attracted so much speculation across the centuries, Alexander himself remains an enigma. Curtius' *History* offers a great deal of information unobtainable from other sources of the time. A compelling narrative of a turbulent era, the work recounts events on a heroic scale, detailing court intrigue, stirring speeches and brutal battles--among them, those of Macedonia's great war with Persia, which was to culminate in Alexander's final triumph over King Darius and the defeat of an ancient and mighty empire. It also provides by far the most plausible and haunting portrait of Alexander we possess: a brilliantly realized image of a man ruined by constant good fortune in his youth.

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## The History of Alexander Details

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## From Reader Review The History of Alexander for online ebook

### Athanasia The Book Fairy says

Δεν ε?μαι ιστορικ?ς Αλλ? πιστε?ω ακρ?δαντα ?τι αυτ? το βιβλ?ο μου πρ?σφερε γν?σεις που δεν γν?ριζα. Τελικ? η ιστορ?α του Μεγ?λου Αλεξ?νδρου ε?ναι μαγευτικ? και ε?ναι υποχρ?ωση ?λων μας να την γνωρ?ζουμε.

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### David says

Not as enjoyable as Plutarch but still good.

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### Ch J Loveall says

I do not agree with some of his descriptions. But, as he seems to be politically motivated, is this really a surprise?

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### Jesse says

This is a rhetorical account of Alexander's campaigns; Curtius does a rather poor job of explaining the battle action, but a very good job of representing the emotional tumult of each event, and the words of Alexander, his generals, friends, enemies and conspirators as imagined by him. Also, Curtius rambles, sometimes talking about (false) geography for a little too long, or, in the speeches, some really tedious platitudes come out (certainly not near the caliber of Plutarch's). However, it has its moments of literary brilliance, too, and Alexander's campaigns are of endlessly compelling interest.

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### Gregg Jones says

First I would recomne

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### Lora says

Considering it is one of the few primary sources available on the life of Alexander the Great it was good. I read it over a 2 years ago for my Classics Special Topics class on the Life of Alexander the Great. If I remember correctly I did a paper/powerpoint on the death of Alexander.

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### **rabbitprincess says**

The translator of this book was my prof for Greek Civ. I never did finish the book, because I was a silly little frosh with a short attention span at the time, but now that I'm more mature, have some Latin under my belt, and am all nostalgic for classical studies, I'm going to try reading it again.

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### **Fawls13 says**

Old time history, so some things are to be taken in the context of the times written in.

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### **Jay Eckard says**

The main interesting point is that this history of Alexander is told from a specifically Roman viewpoint. Curtius has an old-school Roman soldier mien that only slips when he fawns over his emperor. He specifically sees Alexander's life as a moral arch: his initial good luck, acumen and leadership is ultimately defeated when sexual laxity and adoption of foreign culture trumps his inherent virtue.

Curtius is at his best, as befits an old soldier, describing the battles scenes of Alexander's conquest. His prose comes alive in the cut and thrust and deployment of lines of battle. His own opinions also spice up the text, when he makes nasty little asides about the Greek or Persian national character. And while you do get a feel for the character and personality of Alexander, virtually everyone else is a cipher.

So: does what it says on the tin, leavened occasionally with humour or insight, but doesn't really contextualize Alexander into his own society and time, so falls short of a really great history.

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### **1L3N says**

It's a fantasy, written 2000 years ago.  
The part set in India blows your mind.  
The first part of the book is more realistic.

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### **Sharkcrow says**

Not a bad source for Alexander. Has some great material in it for assignments. Haven't read it the whole way through, only dipped unit it as needed, but the translation is easy enough to read and I probably will read it as a whole at some point.

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### **Yann says**

L'histoire de la plus grande conquete de tous les temps. Edifiant.

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## Andrej says

Less reliable than Arrian but way more readable account.

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## Gavin says

Less dry than Arrian's *The Campaigns of Alexander*, but covering a similar period. Based on different sources to Arrian's ones but nearly similar in the basic sequence of events. It's also a good deal shorter than Arrian's tome. Both are well worth reading.

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## J. Watson (aka umberto) says

Having this paperback since August 2012, I've long reluctant to have a go with this seemingly tedious ten-book biography entitled "The History of Alexander" by Quintus Curtius Rufus. It's a pity its Books 1 and 2 had been lost, so we've to make do with the summary. I didn't know why, perhaps its biographer's name wasn't familiar to me, that is, I've rarely heard his name till its page informed me he was the Roman historian who "wrote the only life in Latin of Alexander the Great" (p. i) Generally, it looks formidable because a system of numbering within square brackets followed by translated sentences has been used, for instance, Book Three: Section 1 [1] ..., [2] ..., [3] ..., ... [24] ... ; Section 2 [1] ..., [2] ..., [3] ..., ... [19] ... ; Section 3 [1] ..., [2] ..., [3] ..., ... [28] ... Section 13 [1] ..., [2] ..., [3] ... [17]. This system seems obviously repetitive; it's allowed as a kind of connectivity in relation to the original texts, presumably for comparative translations by those Latin vs English scholars.

Alexander, notably deserved such an honorific 'The Great', has since been admired because his incisive character on occasions as the victor was impressively eminent and proudly recorded by historians for posterity. For example, how he extended his kindness towards Darius' family has nobly proved his integrity as a kingly, god-like, gentleman-like warrior in the ancient world history as we can see from this extract:

At this particular time, certainly, his actions were such that he outshone all previous kings in self-control and clemency. The unmarried princesses, who were extremely beautiful, he treated with as much respect as if they were his own sisters. As for Darius' wife, who was surpassed by none of her generation in beauty, Alexander was so far from offering her violence that he took the utmost care to prevent anyone from taking advantage of her while she was in captivity. He gave orders for all their finery to be returned to the women, and as captives they lacked none of the magnificence of their former state – only their self-esteem. (p. 46)

That is what he did as a true heroic victor, even vanquished Darius who knew their troubled plight and kind treatment later said:

'Gods of my country,' he said, 'before all else make firm my rule; but my next prayer, if my career is at an end, is that Asia find no other ruler than this just enemy, this merciful victor.' (p. 75)

By the way, I kept wondering why he's called 'Curtius' taken from his middle name while 'Arrian' taken from his last name (Lucius Flavius Arrianus). However, I couldn't help comparing it to Arrian's "The Campaigns of Alexander", I found reading its seven books in July 2011 more enjoyable and delightful due to

its flowing prose, in other words, no obstructive numbers while reading like this one.

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