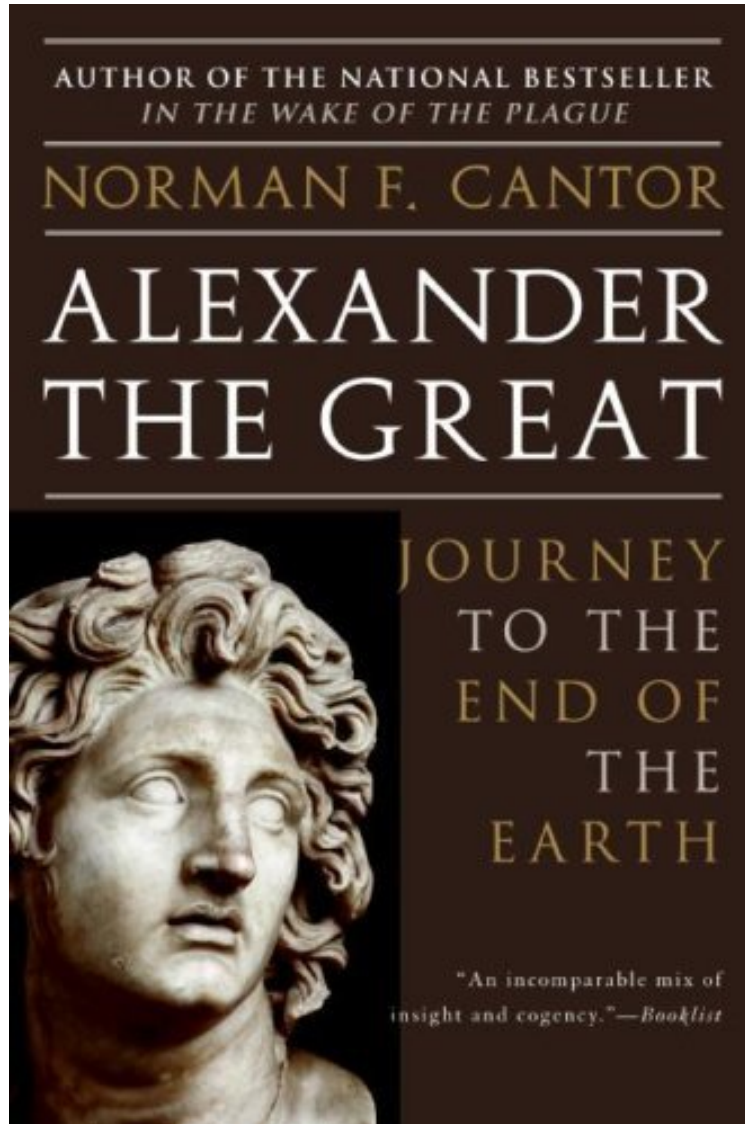


Alexander the Great: Journey to the End of the Earth

Von Norman F. Cantor

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Von Norman F. Cantor : Alexander the Great: Journey to the End of the Earth before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Alexander the Great: Journey to the End of the Earth:

KundenrezensionenHilfreichste Kundenrezensionen0 von 0 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. Alexander, brought down to earthVon FrKurt MessickAs other commentators have noted, this book is more of a survey of the history about and around Alexander the Great than an original contribution to scholarship and knowledge. Taken on that basis, this is a good book I would not hesitate to use this as part of a general survey course

on ancient history for a lower-undergraduate or advanced-secondary level, as the writing is clear, accessible and flows easily from topic to topic. Perhaps the one drawback I see with regard to the text arrangement is that it probably makes more sense to those who already have a background in the history than to those who do not. The ancient world from pre-history Greece and Persia to the time of Alexander (over a thousand years) collapsed into a mere thirty pages will be a difficult task for anyone. In the first chapter, Cantor sets the stage by giving a rather sweeping account of the history of the 'known' world leading up to this time, together with a brief account of some of the legacies of Alexander and Hellenism, and a few details about modern archaeological and historical research in the area. The subsequent chapters see Alexander developed more fully, both in terms of military and political strategist as well as in terms of psychological being. Alexander was both a product of his world as well as the maker of his world in many ways. Cantor contrasts Alexander the Great with Julius Caesar, often likened and compared, developing an Alexander who is much more the military purist than a political creature (more of a Patton than an Eisenhower, in modern terms). Cantor's last chapter develops the aftermath and the legacies of Alexander much more fully. This includes his actual influence on nations and military issues as well as his heroic and mythic figure that continues to inspire in different directions up to the present day. This book is not a deep analysis. One commentator describes the book as a disappointment, given Cantor's ability and reputation, but I have to wonder if that was his intent. This looks and feels like a general survey, intended to serve as some historical underpinning for those whose only likely exposure to Alexander comes from Hollywood films. Are there better books on Alexander? The answer is certainly, yes. Are those better books as accessible, as likely to be read by the general reader? I leave that question for the reader to decide. Given the option, I would award this text three-and-a-half stars; it has good writing, good material, and raises good questions (which might prompt readers to read further in other sources). There are several points at which more explanation or development would have been helpful.

Kurzbeschreibung "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. 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. Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. From Booklist *Starred* 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

