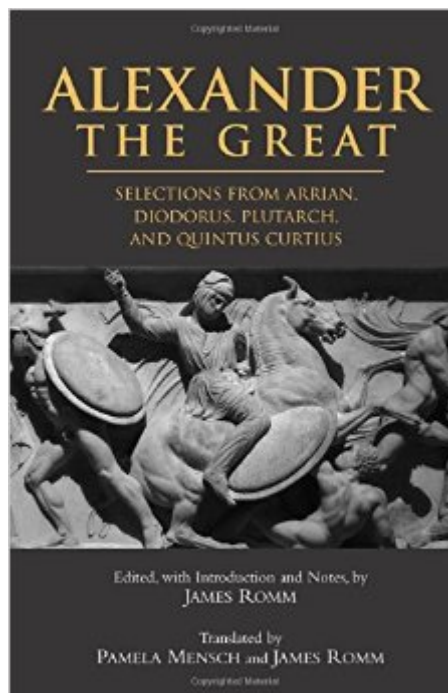




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# Alexander The Great: Selections From Arrian, Diodorus, Plutarch, And Quintus Curtius



## Synopsis

Comprising relevant selections from the four ancient writers whose portraits of Alexander the Great still survive--Arrian, Diodorus, Plutarch, and Quintus Curtius--this volume provides a complete narrative of the important events in Alexander's life. The Introduction sets these works in historical context, stretching from the conclusion of the Peloponnesian War through Alexander's conquest of Asia, and provides an assessment of Alexander's historical importance as well as a survey of the central controversies surrounding his personality, aims and intentions. This edition includes a timeline, maps, a bibliography, a glossary, and an index.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

The translations . . . are rendered in clear, modern style. Romm's Introduction is fresh, mature, and insightful--one of the best brief synopses of Alexander's life and impact this reviewer has read in recent years. . . . Romm's carefully selected and well-translated passages from Arrian provide a vivid and cohesive narrative of the highlights of Alexander's career. Wherever there is a major discrepancy among our ancient sources, or wherever an alternate version seems to enrich Arrian's account, Romm relegates the variant source to his notes, thereby providing the enhancement without disrupting the main narrative. He has thus preserved the flow of Arrian's narrative, while also providing a commentary that alerts the reader to some of the pitfalls that mark any attempt to understand the course of Alexander's achievements. I highly recommend this work as a pedagogical component in the teaching of basic courses on Alexander. And even some

battle-hardened advanced students, scholars of the Macedonian monarchy, and history buffs would benefit by the insights of Romm's introductory essay and the notes accompanying Arrian's text.

--Eugene N. Borza, *The Classical Outlook* A refreshing new work which will no doubt open up a number of possibilities for undergraduate instruction. Romm has produced a comprehensive and well-organized reader. --Charles M. Muskiet II, Villanova University

James Romm is the James H. Ottoway, Jr. Associate Professor of Classics at Bard College. He is also the editor of Herodotus, *On the War for Greek Freedom: Selections from the Histories* (Hackett Publishing Company, 2003), and Plutarch, *Lives that Made Greek History*.

..... So much has been said, both good and bad, about this highly successful and highly driven general. In reality, it is quite amazing that he still raises such controversy. His father, also a powerful figure, does not seem to have reached the level of interest as has Alexander. Charlemagne--whose reign also impacted European history in a powerful way--I wonder if he has inspired such interest? Romm's contribution has been to combine the works of the main ancient biographers of Alexander and to put their words together in an effort to "harmonize" or to make a continuous story, from beginning to end, of the career of Alexander. I came to the study of Alexander because of my study of the biblical Book of Daniel, among which one of the "prophecies" of chapter 11 was said to refer to Alexander. In fact, I could not find a commentator on Daniel--no matter what else his belief or disbelief in Daniel or religious commitments--who said that that verse applied to anyone else. So it seemed that, to understand this part of the Bible, it would be fit to understand the history it references. And, just as, in biblical study, I like to consult different sources and to consider the arguments and the cultural and historical backdrop to what was written--so I want to do the same with the study of Alexander. Give me the sources, the originals. I do understand that most of these fellows--Arrian, Plutarch, etc--wrote 300 or 400 years after Alexander, though using often the works of those who lived closer to the time period. I have all of this in mind as I read, and am aware that this compares differently to the timespan between event and record that exists with some biblical books, like the New Testament books and letters, which were written down in the lifetimes of most of those who knew Jesus of Nazareth. In the future, I may want to read "all" of Arrian, as I have already read all of Plutarch (elsewhere), and will soon read Curtius/ version. It will be interesting to compare and contrast the accounts where possible. This book, edited by Romm, is just one step on my journey.

This compilation of excerpts from all the major ancient sources that relate to Alexander the Great is a good source if you require a compact straight forward document on Alexander's highlights. Although it doesn't replace the full editions of the books it quotes from, it is a very handy - and inexpensive - source book that can be very handy if you don't want to wade through reams of pages of evidence. It can also give you an idea of a starting point to look at in the full editions.

It's a book for class

Great secondary source book on Alexander the Great. Had to purchase this book for a class on Alexander and found it a good source book on him by as close a reference as one can find

One of the most pivotal and complete histories ever written in ancient times!

This was just what I wanted. It had some writing in it but not too where it was a problem.

Sourcebooks tend to be really hit or miss, and this is not one of the successful ones. What Romm has done here is organize a chronological account of Alexander's life from the ancient sources. He does a good job with that, but the problem behind this is that it does not make for a good or particularly useful sourcebook. The first real problem is that this book only has a narrative. Each major event in Alexander's life receives an entry but with only a single source. This book's price suggests that it is for students taking an introductory university class with the goal of getting them to read primary materials. That's all fine and well, but presenting on a single viewpoint is both less interesting and less pedagogically useful than having several different accounts. The richness of the Alexander tradition only becomes evident in comparing the accounts that do not agree, but this book would lead introductory students to believe that the main sources really don't diverge on main events. The second problem stems from the first, in that this book is almost certainly aimed at introductory undergraduate classes. It's cheap, but so are the sources. — The Campaigns of Alexander (Penguin Classics), The Age of Alexander: Nine Greek Lives (Penguin Classics, L286), The History of Alexander (Penguin Classics) — and, — Diodorus Siculus: Library of History, Volume VIII, Books 16.66-17 (Loeb Classical Library No. 422) — are all very affordable and even minor academic libraries should have copies of at least the three published by Penguin. Romm also only hits the major sources. Some snippets of the extremely unreliable but still interesting 'Alexander Romance' could have helped to complete this book. Also missing is any material from Justin:

Epitome of The Philippic History of Pompeius Trogus: Volume I: Books 11-12: Alexander the Great (Justin's). Some sourcebooks are valuable in themselves just for having some material that would otherwise be inaccessible to students, like *Pagans and Christians in Late Antiquity: A Sourcebook* (Routledge Sourcebooks for the Ancient World). However, this book only has material that is available easily and cheaply elsewhere. Skip this volume and get the full versions of the major historians.

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