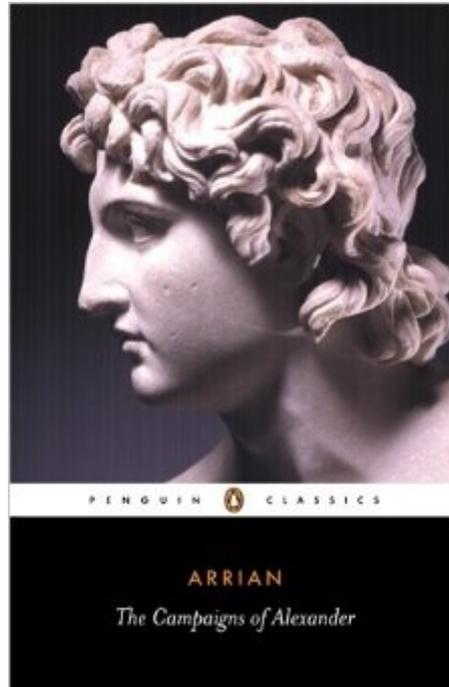


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The Campaigns Of Alexander (Penguin Classics)



Synopsis

'His passion was for glory only, and in that he was insatiable' Although written over four hundred years after Alexander's death, Arrian's Campaigns of Alexander is the most reliable account of the man and his achievements we have. Arrian's own experience as a military commander gave him unique insights into the life of the world's greatest conqueror. He tells of Alexander's violent suppression of the Theban rebellion, his total defeat of Persia, and his campaigns through Egypt, India and Babylon – establishing new cities and destroying others in his path. While Alexander emerges from this record as an unparalleled and charismatic leader, Arrian succeeds brilliantly in creating an objective and fully rounded portrait of a man of boundless ambition, who was exposed to the temptations of power and worshipped as a god in his own lifetime. Aubrey de Sélincourt's vivid translation is accompanied by J. R. Hamilton's introduction, which discusses Arrian's life and times, his synthesis of other classical sources and the composition of Alexander's army. The edition also includes maps, a list for further reading and a detailed index. For more than seventy years, Penguin has been the leading publisher of classic literature in the English-speaking world. With more than 1,700 titles, Penguin Classics represents a global bookshelf of the best works throughout history and across genres and disciplines. Readers trust the series to provide authoritative texts enhanced by introductions and notes by distinguished scholars and contemporary authors, as well as up-to-date translations by award-winning translators.

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Customer Reviews

Alexander the Great was already a historical figure and "larger than life" character by the time Arrian wrote his CAMPAIGNS OF ALEXANDER. More than 400 years had passed since Alexander's death and, while there was doubtless plenty of popular lore about him, there also was a considerable mass of written source material in existence. Much of this material came from contemporaries who had campaigned with Alexander, but these accounts apparently often conflicted. Forced to pick and choose from all this information, Arrian appears to have relied largely on Ptolemy and Aristobulus. Ptolemy was experienced in military matters and, as one of Alexander's generals, had participated in many of the operations he described. Arrian brings his own knowledge and experience of military and administrative matters to bear on this information with generally good results. The rap on Arrian is that he displays a sound grasp of Alexander's military exploits and of his character, but is too forgiving when it comes to Alexander's faults and glosses over other issues. Arrian brought a wealth of experience to his task. His own personal accomplishments were considerable. A Greek by descent, he was born in the city of Nicomedia, capital of the Roman province of Bithynia, sometime prior to A.D. 90. His family was prosperous and had attained Roman citizenship, giving young Arrian the possibility of a career in the imperial service. Before he was done, he attained the Roman consulship and was subsequently entrusted by Emperor Hadrian with the governorship of Cappadocia, a border province on the eastern frontier that entailed the command of two Roman legions plus auxiliary troops.

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