Three Views on Alexander the Great

I. Stoics

A. Flawed from the start

1. *hubris* (ὁβρίας) — pride, *insolentia*
2. *tufos* (τούφος) — “all that one dislikes in those with whom one disagrees”

B. Main Source: Justin (a 3rd-cent. CE epitome of Pompeius Trogus *Philippic Histories*)

C. Modern Historians

1. Ernst Badian [numerous articles]

II. Peripatetics

A. Aristotle turned out a perfectly good pupil, but he was ruined by his own fortune *(τυχή) // didn’t know how to make good use of it*

B. Main Source: Quintus Curtius Rufus, *The History of Alexander* (1st cent. CE)

C. Modern Historians


III. Apologists

A. Sustained positive assessment

B. Main Sources

   — *pothos* (desire)

C. Modern Historians

Antecedents for Alexander the Great

I. Trojan War
   A. Iliad
   B. Achilles over Hector

II. Greek Religion
   A. Zeus – Ammon
   B. Heracles
   C. Dionysius

III. Greek-Persian conflicts
   A. Xerxes invasion of Greece (480 BCE)
   B. Xenophon, *Cyropaedeia*
      1. supported Cyrus the Younger
      2. lost at Battle of Cunaxa (401 BCE)
      3. retreat described in *Anabasis*
   C. Cyrus the Great (d. 529 BCE)

IV. Greek Culture
   A. Aristotle (384–322 BCE)
   B. Euripides (480–406 BCE)
Primary and Secondary Sources

I. Archaeological Evidence

II. Textual Evidence

A. Non-extant Sources used by the Ancient Historians

1. Journals and Diaries
   a. King’s Journals (Diaries)
   b. Records of specialist Greek officers on Alexander’s staff

2. Histories of Eyewitnesses
   a. Ptolemy, one of Alexander’s generals, wrote a history (285–283 BCE)
   b. Callisthenes, accompanied Alexander until 327 BCE, nephew of Aristotle
   c. Aristobulus, Greek engineer, wrote memoirs ca. 305–290 BCE
   d. Nearchus, wrote about the journey from the Indus to the Persian Gulf
   e. Onesircritus, wrote about India
   f. Chares of Mitylene, wrote about life at court
   g. more than 400 fragments from nearly 30 lost authors

3. Histories and Comments of Non-Eyewitnesses
   a. Cleitarchus, wrote his history ca. 323–290 BCE (12 books)
   b. Marsyas of Pella (d. 307 BCE)
   c. Eratosthenes (ca. 200 BCE) quoted in Strabo's Geography (1st cent BCE)

B. Extant Secondary Sources (used as “primary” sources by modern historians)

1. Diodorus (Sicilian Greek of mid-1st century)
2. Quintus Curtius, History of Alexander (1st cent. CE)
3. Plutarch, Lives and Moralia (2nd cent. CE)
4. Justin (2nd cent. CE epitome of earlier general history by Pompeius Trogus
5. Arrian, The Campaigns of Alexander (2nd cent. CE)

III. Some Methodological Questions

A. Battle of Granicus (334 BCE)

B. Who Was Barsine?

C. Of what did Alexander die?

D. Dream of One World or Cruel Conqueror?
IV. Films

A. *Alexander den Stone* (1917); dir. Mauritz Stiller

B. *Alexander the Great* (1956)
   1. Robert Rossen (1908–1966), director, writer, producer
      a. joined Communist Party 1937; left CPUSA 1947
      b. refused to name names before HUAC in 1951; named names 1953

C. *Megaleksandros* (1980); dir. Theo Angelopoulos

D. *In the Footsteps of Alexander* (1997); writer: Michael Wood