



Alexander's Veterans and the Early Wars of the Successors (Fordyce W. Mitchel Memorial Lecture)

Joseph Roisman

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Runner-up, PROSE Award, Classics and Ancient History, 2013

From antiquity until now, most writers who have chronicled the events following the death of Alexander the Great have viewed this history through the careers, ambitions, and perspectives of Alexander's elite successors. Few historians have probed the experiences and attitudes of the ordinary soldiers who followed Alexander on his campaigns and who were divided among his successors as they fought for control of his empire after his death. Yet the veterans played an important role in helping to shape the character and contours of the Hellenistic world.

This pathfinding book offers the first in-depth investigation of the Macedonian veterans' experience during a crucial turning point in Greek history (323–316 BCE). Joseph Roisman discusses the military, social, and political circumstances that shaped the history of Alexander's veterans, giving special attention to issues such as the soldiers' conduct on and off the battlefield, the army assemblies, the volatile relationship between the troops and their generals, and other related themes, all from the perspective of the rank-and-file. Roisman also reexamines the biases of the ancient sources and how they affected ancient and modern depictions of Alexander's veterans, as well as Alexander's conflicts with his army, the veterans' motives and goals, and their political contributions to Hellenistic history. He pays special attention to the Silver Shields, a group of Macedonian veterans famous for their invincibility and martial prowess, and assesses whether or not they deserved their formidable reputation.

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