

Himanshu Prabha Ray and Daniel T. Potts edited,
MEMORY AS HISTORY: THE LEGACY OF ALEXANDER IN ASIA, Aryan Books International, New Delhi, 2007 (aryanbooks@vsnl.com;
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This volume examines the legacy of Alexander the Macedonian as it survived and transformed itself in literature, the arts and archaeology in Asia. The tendency to idealise Alexander began in antiquity and by the Roman period, a body of romance had grown around him, which continued to expand in almost every language from Scotland to Mongolia. The portrait of Alexander as the universal conqueror who was also the civiliser and benefactor of mankind owes its origin to Plutarch who wrote in the early centuries AD and has been extraordinarily potent in shaping modern views of Alexander.

The legacy itself has been surprisingly tenacious and continued well into the present, as it became the guiding star of nineteenth and twentieth century British archaeologists in the Indian subcontinent, such as Alexander Cunningham, John Marshall, etc. in their search for cities established by Alexander and of the entire development of Gandharan art, which was considered Buddhist in nature, but Greek in form. The larger question that this book addresses is the creation of cultural memory and its persistence or appropriation through time as it establishes an almost parallel perspective on the past.

The book will be of interest to historians, archaeologists, art historians and all those interested in Alexander's journey through Asia.

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