
"Alexander the Pretty Good"

This past Friday, November 2nd, a lecture was given at the UPEI main Building by Dr. Brian Campbell. Campbell is the author of *The Emperor and the Roman Army 31 B.C. - A.D. 235*, two chapters of the *Cambridge Ancient History*, and articles in the *Journal of Roman Studies*. He has just finished a lecture tour of the Atlantic Provinces, ending here in Charlottetown, sponsored by the Classical Association of Canada. The topic he presented Friday (its an audience Dr. Buck described as a "small but select gathering.") concerned whether or not Alexander the Great deserves that nifty adjective we've been tacking onto his name for years now, "great". Dr. Campbell obviously didn't think so, and the witty, tongue-in-cheek lecture he gave might easily have been retitled the "Alexander the Great Roast."

Dr. Campbell spoke of an Alexander who probably murdered his own father, so that the Macedonian kingship wouldn't fall to the commoner he was about to marry. Then, to be on the safe side, Alexander disposed of the aforementioned commoner and her son once he was king. He then, as a king, led a long war in which his forces marched on and on to the east, conquering a huge empire but in the process slaughtering thousands and beginning a military action that he became obsessed with, refusing to stop marching his forces even further. Any opposition within his kingdom was messily eliminated, and this paranoid king was also fond of disposing of the people who helped him gain power after he was safe in his position. His own people hated him because of his arrogance (the man wanted to be worshipped as a god in his later years.) his violent nature, his ruthlessness, and his "palling around" with the people he conquered. His conquered peoples hated him too, for ravaging their lands, and when he died from too much boozing, his unstable empire promptly began to break up.

All in all, Dr. Campbell gave Alexander a pretty

harsh assessment. He led aggressive wars for no just reason. He left his own kingdom divided and unstable. He conquered and enslaved thousands, and didn't bring civilization to his conquests as Roman conquerors later did. Alexander, like most people of his country then, had less culture than yogurt. The only reason that he has ever been admired is his conquests, since he conquered territory like nobody's business. Of course, many of us wouldn't call that reason enough to label him "great". After all, has anyone patted Saddam Hussein on the back lately for flattening Kuwait? I don't think so.

To sum up, this lecture painted a picture of Alexander as a drunken, lecherous, ruthless megalomaniac with virtually no redeeming qualities. For those of you who missed the lecture, you may want to read up on this a bit to decide whether Dr. Campbell is right or whether Alexander has gotten an unfair shake this time. After all, everyone has their own opinion.

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Application forms are available at the Student Services office in the Robertson Library, or the Registrar's Office in Kelley Building. Expiry Date: November 15.