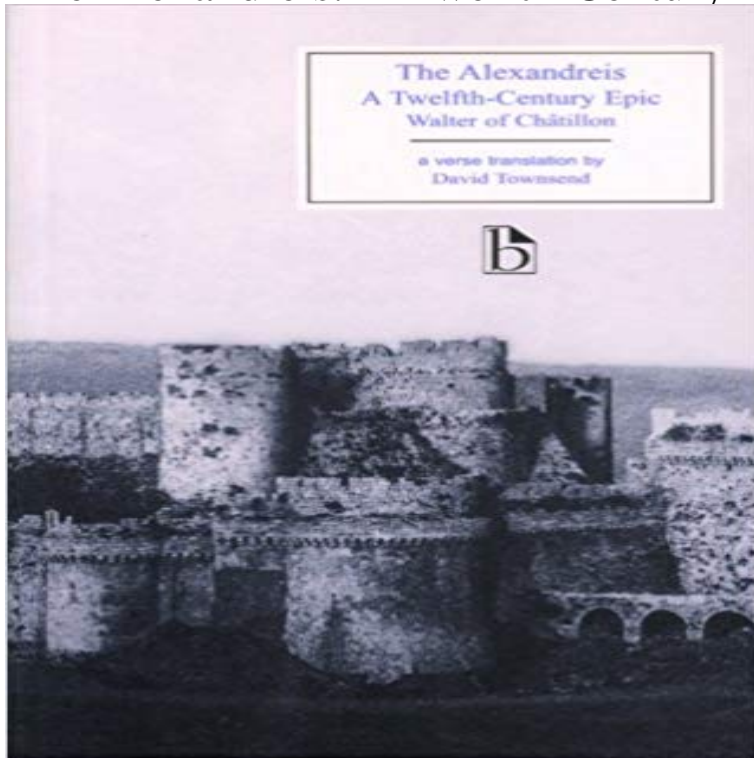


## The Alexandreis: A Twelfth-Century Epic



Walter of Chatillons Latin epic on the life of Alexander the Great was a twelfth- and thirteenth-century best-seller: scribes produced over two hundred manuscripts. The poem follows Alexander from his first successes in Asia Minor, through his conquest of Persia and India, to his progressive moral degeneration and his poisoning by a disaffected lieutenant. The *Alexandreis* exemplifies twelfth-century discourses of world domination and the exoticism of the East. But at the same time it calls such dreams of mastery into question, repeatedly undercutting as it does Alexanders claims to heroism and virtue and by extension, similar claims by the great men of Walters own generation. This extraordinarily layered and subtle poem stands as a high-water mark of the medieval tradition of Latin narrative literature. Along with David Townsends revised translation, this edition provides a rich selection of historical documents, including other writings by Walter of Chatillon, excerpts from other medieval Latin epics, and contemporary accounts of the foreign and exotic.

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