time for domestic consumption. The first- and second-century writers upon whom we rely for most of our information about Alexander depended in turn on contemporary Greek sources, who likely repeated data that was deliberately skewed to let the folks back home believe Alexander was winning great battles against immense opposition, and that he was doing so with minimal losses.

It is too bad that more accurate figures were not recorded, for Alexander truly was winning major victories against a great foe. Granicus really was a serious defeat for the Persians in Asia Minor.

Like the battle that occurred in 1861 on that other small river, Bull Run of Virginia, the contest that took place on the Granicus did not have the outcome that the defender assumed. Just as the United States imagined in 1861 that General Irvin McDowell's army would easily rout the rebel army of General P. G. T. Beauregard, the Persians had all confidence that they would decimate the Greeks. Had the assumptions been correct, both battles would have been anomalous incidents, not the opening events of campaigns that would change history.

Like Bull Run, Granicus was a monumental defeat for the defender, both tactically and in terms of morale and public opinion within the region. Unlike 1861, however, the victor chose to exploit his victory politically and militarily. Unlike the Confederate army of 1861, which chose not to press on toward a defenseless Washington, D.C., Alexander kept up his momentum, and reaped the rewards.

Throughout the summer of 334 BC, Persian satraps switched sides, and the Greek population welcomed Alexander as a liberator. Wealthy Sardis, the major city in Lydia, gave up without a fight, opening its gates to Alexander. So too did Ephesus.

Whether it was out of fear, intimidation or simply wanting to side with a winner, Alexander's reputation after Granicus opened many doors. As Justinus observes, "After this victory [at Granicus] the greater part of Asia [Minor] came over to his side. He had also several encounters with Darius's lieutenants, whom he conquered, not so much by his arms, as by the terror of his name." By establishing himself as an opponent to be feared, Alexander convinced many a would-be foe that resistance was counterproductive. Potential adversaries

decided that there was more to gain by surrendering and taking their chances than by putting up a fight they were sure to lose.

The Ionian port city of Miletus, with about 400 ships of the Persian fleet close at hand, chose to resist. Alexander, whose fleet was much smaller, avoided a naval contest and besieged Miletus by land. He gambled correctly that the Persians would not attempt to challenge him ashore, and troops under Parmenio's son Nicanor made quick work of taking the city. As at Granicus, the last holdouts were Greek mercenaries who fought bravely. Unlike at Granicus, however, Alexander did not single them out for punishment. Rather, respecting their bravery and tenacity, he invited them to join his army.

According to Arrian, Alexander now adopted a radical maritime strategy in the face of the superior Persian navy. Indeed, it was radical to the point of recklessness, but it was certainly an example of Alexander's ability to think outside the box. "Alexander now resolved to disband his fleet," Arrian writes. "Partly from lack of money at the time, and partly because he saw that his own fleet was not a match in battle for that of the Persians. On this account he was unwilling to run the risk of losing even a part of his armament. Besides, he considered, now that he was occupying Asia with his land force, he would no longer be in need of a fleet; and that he would be able to break up that of the Persians, if he captured the maritime cities; since they would neither have any ports from which they could recruit their crews, nor any harbor in Asia to which they could bring their ships."

It was a classic instance of avoiding an enemy at his strongest and exploiting his weakness. Alexander responded to the situation by doing something that was very far beyond the parameters of what the Persians expected. The lesson that can be learned from this audacious move is not so much one of simply thinking far outside the box, but one of looking for unexpected solutions that actually show the promise of working.

Like his decision to attack across the Granicus without pause, this decision manifested a brashness that could easily have backfired, but that can be considered brilliant in retrospect by measuring its eventual success. To undertake a comprehensive war against a major maritime power without a navy is counterintuitive, but his decision illustrates Alexander's ability to understand the broad strategic scope of the campaign. Strategically, Alexander's land-war plan called for an advance

into Asia Minor on a broad front. Sending Parmenio with one contingent into the interior, he himself worked his way around the west and south coasts of what is now Turkey, capturing port cities.

With Miletus now in Alexander's hands, the Persian fleet sailed down the coast to the old Dorian Greek port city of Halicarnassus. Now the Turkish city of Bodrum, in 334 BC it was the principal city of the Persian satrapy of Caria. Here Alexander faced Orontobates, Caria's satrap, who was supported by Memnon of Rhodes, the mercenary commander against whom he had done battle at Granicus.

In turn, Alexander formed an alliance with Ada, the daughter of a former satrap, Hacatomnus. Having married her brother Idrieus when he became the ruler, Ada became satrap herself when he died. She was then deposed by another brother, whose son-in-law, Orontobates, took over from him. Ada was still in possession of the nearby hilltop fortress of Alinda, and this she surrendered to Alexander.

Young Alexander and the 43-year-old former queen became close friends, and she went so far as to adopt him as a son not long after meeting him. She then lined Alexander up with some of the best chefs in Asia Minor, and these became part of his entourage as he campaigned onward.

Alexander proceeded to besiege Halicarnassus, proving himself a better master of siege tactics than his father had been. Alexander approached the siege as an engineering project. He made his initial attack using infantry under cover of darkness without bringing up ladders or siege engines. His plan was to use his phalanx troops to undermine the city wall. According to Arrian, they brought down one of the towers in the wall, which, however, "in its fall did not make a breach in the wall."

Next, Alexander had his men back fill the trench that the defenders had dug around the wall, so that he could bring up his siege towers. The defenders, however, launched a counterattack outside the walls, torching the towers and attacking the Macedonian troops. Over the next several days, the two sides battled, with Alexander's engineers continuing to undermine the walls, collapsing both wall sections and a second tower, and with the Persians continuing to set fire to the siege engines.

The Persian construction battalions were also hard at work, constructing new inner walls to replace sections of the city wall that the miners had managed to collapse. All of this was interspersed with bloody hand-to-hand skirmishes that took place as one side or the other took advantage of a situation by attacking, then quickly withdrawing.

At one point, a large number of defenders were killed in a bridge collapse. Arrian recalls that these troops, "in their retreat were fleeing over a narrow bridge which had been made over the ditch, [but] they had the misfortune to break it down by the weight of their multitude. Many of them fell into the ditch, some of whom were trampled to death by their own comrades, and others were struck by the Macedonians from above. A very great slaughter was also made at the very gates, because they were shut before the proper time from a feeling of terror. For the enemy, being afraid that the Macedonians, who were close upon the fugitives, would rush in with them, shut many of their friends out, who were slain by the Macedonians near the very walls."

When at last Orontobates and Memnon decided that their position was untenable and that "they could not hold out long against the siege, seeing that part of the wall had already fallen down and part had been battered and weakened, and that many of their soldiers had either perished in the sorties or been wounded and disabled," a decision was made to simply torch the city.

In the final push, Alexander's army prevailed. Orontobates was killed, but once again, as at Granicus, Memnon got away. Alexander rewarded Ada for her kindness and friendship by restoring her to the throne at Halicarnassus, where she reigned until her death in 326 BC.

Installing Ada to rule Halicarnassus was a template for the way that Alexander would rule the areas that he was conquering from the Persian Empire. Though he did not go so far as to accept other former Persian satraps as surrogate parents, he did adopt the Persian practice of satrapies, setting up subservient locals to rule the cities and states that he conquered. Often he reappointed former Persian satraps who switched sides. As skilled as Alexander was as a military leader, it is worth noting that he also had a keen understanding of politics. He knew that his satrapies were best ruled by someone who understood the complexities and nuances of local politics rather than by someone whom Alexander imposed from the outside. Like any good chief executive, Alexander operated under the principle that so long as his

satraps were loyal to him and were competent managers, they were allowed to keep and execute their jobs.

Darius, who was impressed with Memnon's success in eluding Alexander twice, decided to make the Greek turncoat the centerpiece of a grand scheme of counterattack into Alexander's rear. As Arrian describes, the Persian monarch appointed Memnon, the leader of the Greek mercenaries fighting for the Persians, as "commander of the whole fleet and of the entire seacoast, with the design of moving the seat of war into Macedonia and Greece."

Using what Arrian calls "treachery," Memnon took control of the Aegean islands of Chios and most of Lesbos. The only stumbling block was the city of Mytilene on the latter island, which resisted Memnon's siege just as he became mortally ill. Mytilene eventually capitulated to Memnon's successor, Autophradates, but with Memnon's death in 333 BC, the Persian offensive ran out of steam. Antipater, Alexander's regent in Greece, organized a naval force that successfully blunted the Persian initiative.

Marching down the western coast of Asia Minor with his army, Alexander welcomed the news from the Aegean. As Plutarch relates, "on hearing of the death of Memnon on the seaboard, who was thought likely to give Alexander abundant trouble and infinite annoyance, he was all the more encouraged for his expedition into the interior."

If Memnon had lived and been successful in using captured Aegean islands as stepping-stones for an assault against Greece, Alexander's campaign in Asia Minor would have sputtered to a halt, as he would have had to backtrack to protect his rear.

Persian aspirations in the Aegean had been stymied, but the Persian fleet had by no means been eliminated as a challenge. Alexander's army may have been unstoppable ashore, but his deliberate decision not to develop an equally formidable navy meant that the Persian fleet under Autophradates retained a presence in the Aegean and eastern Mediterranean.

Pursuing the campaigning season into the winter, and into the early months of 333, Alexander continued to add new satrapies to his crown. Plutarch casually relates that he "subdued Paphlagonia and

Cappadocia," as easily as mentioning that he saddled Bucephalas. Many satrapies, like Sardis and Ephesus, were only too happy to welcome him as a liberator. Some resisted, but none presented the same challenge to the Macedonian siege engines as had Halicarnassus. As Arrian records in his *Anabasis Alexandri,* almost in checklist fashion, the former Greek colonies were restored to Hellenic rule one by one. There were the coastal cities of Lycia and Pamphylia, and Hyparna, which resisted in vain. Next came "Pinara, Xanthus, Patara, and about thirty other smaller towns [that] were surrendered to him."

After Granicus, Halicarnassus and the death of Memnon, Darius had to have perceived Alexander as the greatest threat ever faced by the Achaemenid Persian Empire. The Persian monarch, who had chosen not to attack Alexander's army at the Hellespont because he considered it not to be chivalrous, now resorted to subterfuge involving a paid turncoat. The man in question was Alexander, the son of Aeropus, who was one of Alexander's trusted officers, and a commander of Thessalian cavalry. His brothers had been involved in the assassination of Philip II.

Alexander III learned from an informer that Darius had made Alexander, the son of Aeropus, an offer to reward him with the monarchy of Macedonia if he would kill the king. Having discovered the plot, Alexander had the would-be assassin arrested.

Early in 333 BC, Alexander linked up once again with Parmenio, this time in the ancient Greek state of Phrygia in central Asia Minor, the land once ruled by the mythical King Midas of the "golden touch." Specifically, Alexander's objective here was the Phrygian capital of Gordium. Located about 50 miles southwest the modern city of Ankara, the capital of Turkey, Gordium itself was the centerpiece of one of antiquity's great legends.

The founder of Gordium was said to have been a peasant farmer turned king named Gordias, who may have been the father of Midas. An artifact, thought to be from his ancient rule, still survived in Alexander's time. According to historians, a story well known throughout the known world told of an ox-cart that had been owned by Gordias that was still on display in the city. Located in either a palace or a temple—there are variations on the story—the cart was at-

tached to its yoke by an elaborate knot of twine made from the bark of a cornel, or dogwood, tree. The legend held that whoever could figure out how to untie the Gordian Knot would, as Justinus tells, be "destined to become king of the whole world." Through the centuries, many had tried, but all had failed, owing to the complexity of the knot and the fact that neither end of the twine was visible.

As Plutarch writes, Alexander was at a loss how to proceed, but "finally loosened the knot by cutting it through with his sword, and that when it was thus smitten many ends were to be seen."

Arrian agrees, stating that Alexander "was unwilling to allow it to remain unloosened, lest this should exercise some disturbing influence upon the multitude, [so] he struck it with his sword and cutting it through, said that it had been loosened."

The knot was not actually untied, but Arrian notes that Alexander "departed from the wagon as if the oracular prediction concerning the loosening of the cord had been fulfilled."

The first year of Alexander's campaign against the Achaemenid Persian Empire had been an extraordinary one. On its eve, the oracle of Delphi had promised that he was invincible. Now, his smiting of the Gordian Knot confirmed, at least in his self-perception and the perception of those around him, that his destiny was to rule the world.

CHAPTER 4

Turning Point at Issus

By the summer of 333 BC, the Asia Minor campaign was essentially won. Persian hegemony over that region, which had prevailed since the days of Cyrus the Great, was over. Strategically, Alexander's next move was to continue south along the Mediterranean shore, through Syria and toward Egypt. For Darius III, the next move was to muster an unbeatable army and confront Alexander in a decisive battle. After that, he could roll back the Greco-Macedonian invaders—all the way to Greece itself.

When Alexander had crossed the Hellespont, the Persian king had laughed the haughty laugh of arrogance. As Justinus observed, Darius had "confidence in his strength." A year later, after seeing so much of Asia Minor slip away, Darius should not have been laughing, but he was.

In the early stages of Alexander's offensive campaign, Darius chose to let his satraps, the subservient potentates of the constituent states of his empire, take the lead in thwarting the young Macedonian. However, if you want something done right, the adage goes, you must do it yourself. This thought must have been on Darius's mind as he rode out of Susa in the fall of 333. Spithridates and Mithridates had failed to defeat Alexander at the Granicus River and had paid