

BACKGROUNDING ALEXANDER < USING THIS TEXTBOOK

To be born into a royal family among the Macedonians was to begin a lifelong struggle, no Macedonian could opt out. The reward was kingship, a cost of failure was death ... The heir to the throne would not survive, much less keep his position, unless he could assume control of the army, defend the country, and eliminate rivals.

2 & 35

WHY IT MATTERS TODAY

In today's world we could do no better than to follow some of the more positive qualities inherent in Alexander and others that were part of the 'Great Soul Man' he sought to emulate: his insatiable curiosity about the world, his desire to explore the unknown; to 'go beyond' all others in excellence; to aim for practical thoughtfulness in everything he did; to respect loyalty, to seek honour through competition and to never be afraid to admit when he made mistakes.

KEY TERMS AND NAMES

- barbarian
- deification
- hegemony
- Hellenistic
- mole
- oligarchy
- panhellenic
- patricide
- peltast
- phalanx
- polygamy
- prostration
- sarissa
- trireme

Work in a group of at least 3 students to construct a GLOSSARY of important words and terms we have encountered thus far!

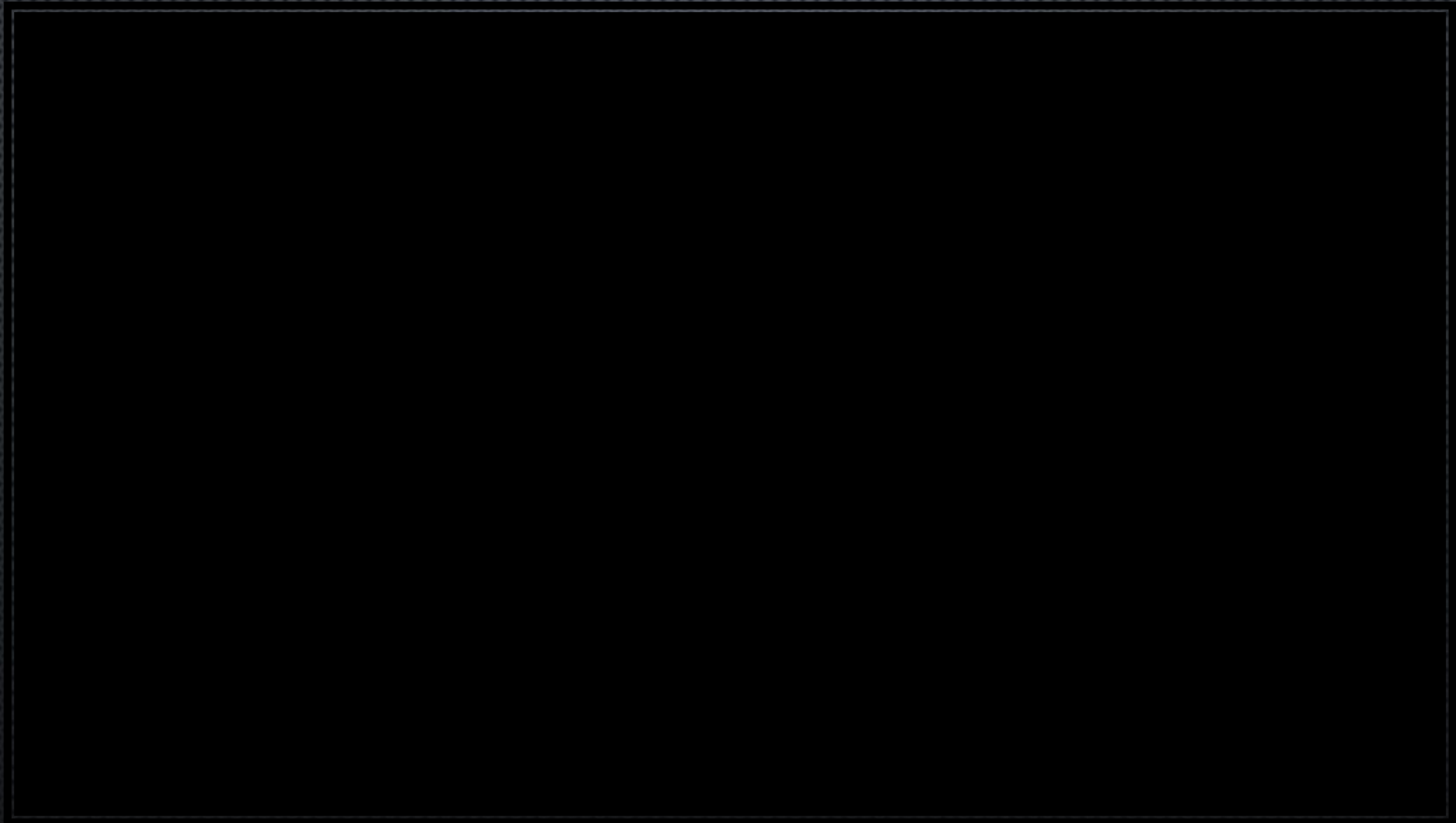


Let's go back to Pamela Bradley's glowing assessment of Alexander in a few weeks and see, then, what you think of it.



THE CHANGING MAP OF ANCIENT MACEDONIA

VIDEO - 3 MINUTES – AT [HTTPS://WWW.YOUTUBE.COM/WATCH?V=QHA0EOITRX0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QHA0EOITRX0)



WHAT DO YOU HAVE TO DO?

These 9 questions, the Q on slide 31, and then the 4 questions on slide 32 need to be completed by Wednesday.

- 1 Describe the main geographical features of Macedonia. *Use slide 3*
- 2 Identify the capital of Macedonia at the time of Alexander. *Too easy!*
- 3 Summarise what Sources 8.2 and 8.3 reveal about some of the most valuable resources of Macedonia and their ownership. *Use slide 12*
- 4 Describe the power of a Macedonian king and the role played by the nobles and *hetairoi*. *Use slide 17*
- 5 What does Source 8.4 and the comment on Macedonian succession say about the rigors of being a royal in Macedonia? *Use slide 18*
- 6 Describe the attitude of the Greeks towards Macedonians prior to the rise of Philip II. *Use slide 19*
- 7 Construct a diagram illustrating the new national army introduced by King Philip. *Use slide 20*
- 8 Identify the particular aspect of the army that Diodorus Siculus refers to in Source 8.5. *Use slide 20*
- 9 How was the new army used in Macedonia and Greece under Philip? *Use slides 20-21 & write 200 + wds*

For Q 1

According to Herodotus and Thucydides, Macedonia in the 5th century BC consisted of:

- 1 a fertile plain between the Axios and Haliacmon rivers known as Lower Macedonia, ruled by kings from their capital of Aegae and then later from Pella. This area was fertilised by long rivers and dotted with lakes and produced:
 - grain, vegetables, fruit trees, vineyards (wine) and olives
 - cattle and horses
 - fish
 - salt for goods ranging from medicine to glassmaking and an important trade item.
- 2 a wilder mountainous zone known as Upper Macedonia where the people were predominantly herders and subsistence farmers owing allegiance to clan chieftains. The mountains provided:
 - the valuable timber used for shipbuilding and traded to Greek maritime states
 - gold and silver from the mines of Mt Pangaeus (Mt Pangeo), from the time of Philip II, Alexander's father, in the mid-4th century BC.

Aegae = Aigai

2 Identify the capital of Macedonia at the time of Alexander.



What do you remember about Pella from our previous presentation (the one with the traditional Macedonian music)?



FIGURE 8.5 The location and extent of Upper and Lower Macedonia at the time of Phillip II



The so-called School of Aristotle, where Philip II sent Alexander to be tutored. (Myrto Papadopoulos)

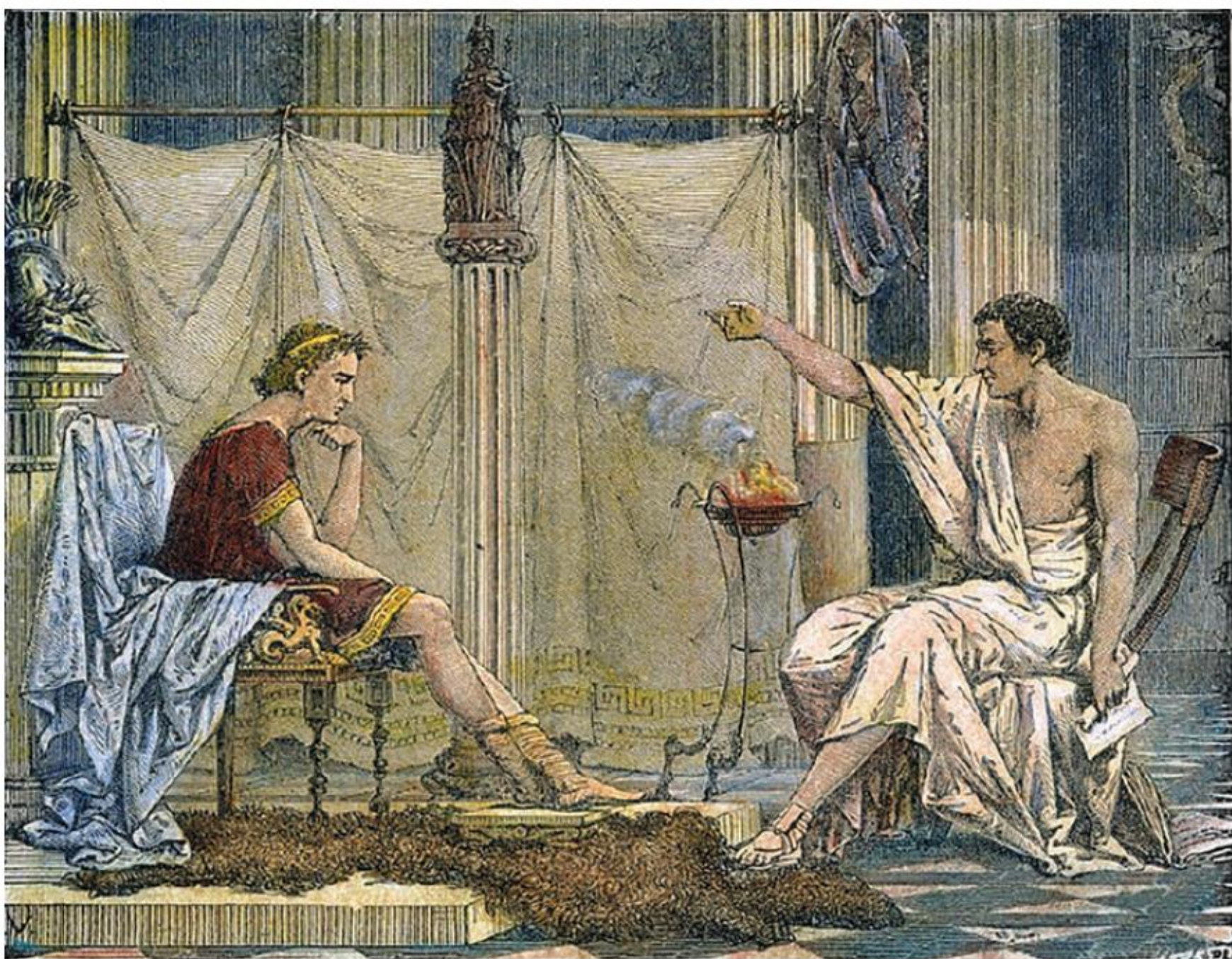


FIGURE 8.3 Alexander being instructed by Aristotle (philosopher, scientist and political theorist)

Painting the picture

Alexander III of Macedonia, later referred to as ‘The Great’, came to the throne in 336 BC at the age of 20. By the time of his death in 323 in Babylon, he had led an army more than 16 000 kilometres from western Asia and Egypt to India, ‘across mountains, broad plains and deserts, and into lands waterlogged by the monsoon’.¹ He was driven, not only by an insatiable curiosity and desire to explore the world, but by a need to go beyond everyone else in excellence. He overthrew the great Persian Empire, defeated every opponent he faced either in set battles, sieges or guerilla-style warfare (not always easily won), almost always leading his men from the front and suffering many serious wounds in the process. He founded cities (‘Alexandrias’) that spread Greek culture and language throughout the east, which eventually created the civilisation known as Hellenistic. Despite the general loyalty of his Macedonian troops, there were times when they questioned his motives and actions, and were unhappy with his adoption of Persian ways and his incorporation of Persians into his army. The criticisms of some of the Companions and generals seemed to lead to a form of paranoia about their loyalty and to the executions of some and the murder of one in a drunken brawl.

Hellenistic the merging of Greek (Hellenic) and eastern cultural elements after the time of Alexander the Great

There is no doubt that Alexander was one of the most dramatic and controversial personalities in world history. Opinions about him have always been divided due to the fact that:

- much of what was written about him during his life – and now lost – was what he wanted known about himself (propaganda)
- the major ancient sources such as Arrian, Plutarch, Curtius and Diodorus Siculus lived at the time of the Roman Empire, three to five centuries after his death, and the Alexander they created is a character ‘generated by the cultural politics of the Roman world’.²
- modern historians have evaluated him in the light of the values of their own day, ‘standards that Alexander and his contemporaries would not have recognized’.³

TABLE 8.1 Timeline of Alexander's life

356 BC	Alexander is born to Olympias and Philip II.
338	Philip and Alexander defeat the Greek alliance at the Battle of Chaeronea.
336	Philip is assassinated and Alexander becomes king.
335	Alexander destroys Thebes for rebelling against him.
334	Alexander begins his campaign to conquer the Persians with the Battle of Granicus.
333	Alexander defeats the Persian king, Darius III, at the Battle of Issus.
332	Alexander captures the impregnable fortress city of Tyre.

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332	Alexander captures the impregnable fortress city of Tyre.
331	Alexander is crowned pharaoh in Egypt, once again defeats Darius at the Battle of Gaugamela, and is welcomed into the ancient city of Babylon.
330	Alexander enters Susa, the administrative capital of the Persian Empire, and burns Persepolis, the empire's ceremonial centre. The execution of Philotas and Parmenio.
329	Alexander reaches Bactria (Afghanistan).
328	Alexander kills Cleitus, his Companion cavalry commander, in a drunken brawl.
327	Alexander marries Roxanne, daughter of a Sogdian ruler, moves into India and crosses the Hydaspes River (Punjab of modern-day Pakistan).
326	Alexander faces King Porus in his fourth and last great pitched battle. It was the closest he came to defeat. His men refuse to go any further east.
325	Alexander returns to Persia with part of his force by marching through the Gedrosian Desert.
324	Alexander and many of his commanders take Persian wives.
323	Alexander dies in Babylon aged 32.

ACTIVITY

- 1 Describe the main geographical features of Macedonia.
- 2 Identify the capital of Macedonia at the time of Alexander.
- 3 Summarise what Sources 8.2 and 8.3 reveal about some of the most valuable resources of Macedonia and their ownership.
- 4 Describe the power of a Macedonian king and the role played by the nobles and *hetairoi*.
- 5 What does Source 8.4 and the comment on Macedonian succession say about the rigors of being a royal in Macedonia?
- 6 Describe the attitude of the Greeks towards Macedonians prior to the rise of Philip II.
- 7 Construct a diagram illustrating the new national army introduced by King Philip.
- 8 Identify the particular aspect of the army that Diodorus Siculus refers to in Source 8.5.
- 9 How was the new army used in Macedonia and Greece under Philip?

3 Summarise what Sources 8.2 and 8.3 reveal about some of the most valuable resources of Macedonia and their ownership.

Herodotus mentioned that 'the Pangeo mountain, which is large and high, has gold and silver ore within it' while Strabo mentioned that 'there is much gold in Krines, where the city of Philippi was founded, close to the Pangeo mountain. And in Pangeo there are gold and silver mines, as well as in both the area up to river Strymon and the area beyond the river which expands to the borders of Paeonia ... Euripides, in his tragedy *Rhesus* names the Pangeo as 'the mountain with the blocks of gold, the soil of which hides silver'.

SOURCE 8.2 Mining Greece, *Gold Mines of Macedonia* (online)

The resources of the land belonged to the state, were managed by the king and their income was deposited in the royal treasury. In many cases the king rented out the right to exploit sources of royal revenue, such as timber, mines and harbours. ... Royal lands could also be donated to the king's friends.

SOURCE 8.3 S. Kremydi, 'The Resources of Macedonia' in *Ancient Macedon: Studies in the Archaeology and History of Macedon 650 BC – 300 AD*, p. 160–1

The gold and silver mines of Pangeon are mentioned by many ancient historians. At first, Thracians exploited them, while they were an apple of discord between Thassos and Athens, until Philip II's conquest. Tyrant of Athens, Peisistratos, who was in exile around 550 BC, acquired enough riches and know-how in order to pay mercenaries and return to Athens as a powerful man and exploit the Lavrion mines. Herodotus also mentions the "great and lofty" Mount Pangaion in which were "mines both of gold and of silver".
<https://www.archaeology.wiki/blog/2013/03/19/excavations-at-the-ancient-mines-of-pangeon/>





FIGURE 8.4 A mosaic of Alexander and one of his Companions hunting lions

Study Figures 8.3 and 8.4 carefully. What do they tell you about the upbringing and education of Alexander? What might these images suggest about their long-term influence on Alexander's personality and behaviour?



FIGURE 8.5 The location and extent of Upper and Lower Macedonia at the time of Phillip II

According to Herodotus and Thucydides, Macedonia in the 5th century BC consisted of:

- 1 a fertile plain between the Axios and Haliacmon rivers known as Lower Macedonia, ruled by kings from their capital of Aegae and then later from Pella. This area was fertilised by long rivers and dotted with lakes and produced:
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Overview of Macedonian political structure

Macedonia was an autocracy, ruled by a king who, according to the Athenian Demosthenes, was 'responsible to nobody: the absolute autocrat, commander and master of everyone and everything'.⁴

There appears to be no evidence of any formalised group that oversaw or disciplined the king, although he had to rally support from the fiercely proud aristocrats who thought of themselves as social equals of the royal family. A strong and charismatic king had almost boundless power, but a weak one soon lost his throne and his life. It appears that the king commanded the armies; declared war and made peace; directed foreign policy; and served as the intermediary between the gods and the people.

The king did not depend on a vast bureaucracy to govern, but rather ruled through the nobles and **hetairoi**, or Companions, who were mostly selected from the prominent Macedonian landed aristocracy. Their relationship with the king was personal, not part of an institution. Ties of personal loyalty were the foundations of Macedonian political power, and the social bonding between the king and his Companions took place at frequent gatherings that involved hours of heavy drinking, conversing and arguing that often led to violent, drunken clashes.

hetairoi royal Companions

The Companions also trained, hunted, sacrificed and fought with the king. They were his personal advisers, cavalry commanders, religious representatives and ambassadors.

There was no such thing as a court of the Persian model, 'no harem [although Philip was polygamous], no eunuchs, no severely limited access to the king'⁵ and no prostration before their king. Macedonians were able to address their king by name and were free to express their opinions openly. Any Macedonian could appeal to the king for a judgement.

Sons often followed their father onto the throne, but due to the royal practice of **polygamy**, there were often disputes over the royal title. Each of the king's wives – Philip II had seven – represented a political alliance with an important family, inside or outside the kingdom, and king's wives competed to promote their child in his father's eyes. Macedonian royal politics was a 'violently dangerous world'.⁶ When a new king was a boy, it usually fell to an adult relative to take on the role of the boy's guardian, as in the case of Philip who became the guardian king to Amyntas, the son of his deceased brother King Perdiccas. However, once a guardian had children of his own, he passed on the title to his own son.

polygamy the practice of having many or several wives at one time

To be born into a royal family among the Macedonians was to begin a lifelong struggle, no Macedonian could opt out. The reward was kingship, a cost of failure was death ... The heir to the throne would not survive, much less keep his position, unless he could assume control of the army, defend the country, and eliminate rivals.

SOURCE 8.4 E. M. Anson, *Alexander the Great: Themes and Issues*, pp. 12–13

A COMMENT ON...

Royal successions

Throughout most of Macedonian history, kings were chosen from among the leaders of the extended Argead clan in which there were factions and divisions. Any charismatic leading member of the clan could be the next king so that there were usually quite a number of pretenders to the throne, often leading to succession crises.

Most Macedonian monarchs died not from armed conflicts over the succession, but from palace 'conspiracies of a highly personal nature'.⁷ The predecessors of Alexander III ('the Great') were assassinated in such palace conspiracies: Archelaus, Amyntas II, Alexander II and Philip II.

The practice of polygamy added to these royal intrigues.

Macedonia's relationship to the Greek world

After Athens lost its pre-eminence in the Greek world in 404 BC, first Sparta, then Thebes held military leadership for a short time during the first half of the 4th century, but neither was capable of holding together the disunited Greek cities nor leading them peacefully.

To most of the inhabitants of the Greek city-states, Macedonia was marginal to what went on in Greece. It was regarded predominantly of interest as a region to exploit for its resources: minerals and the timber needed for shipbuilding and the growth of the navies of city-states like Athens and Corinth.

Even though Philip and his ancestors spoke a dialect of Greek and had a similar ethnic heritage to the Greeks, many Greeks, like Aristotle, regarded them as culturally inferior and some included them among the 'barbarians', a term originally applied to non-Greeks. That Macedonians were not permitted to

participate in many **panhellenic** games and activities held in Greece indicates that they were not regarded as 'true' Greeks, although kings were permitted to take part in the Olympic Games.

However, things began to change when the 24-year-old Philip II came to the throne in 359 BC and began developing a powerful national army.

panhellenic means
'all Greek'

peltasts lightly armed
missile troops

The impact of Philip's military reforms

A Macedonian king was expected, above all, to command an army and Philip began experimenting with developing new weaponry and tactics. He:

- 1 re-organised the army by forming battalions more on a local (territorial) basis than a clan one
- 2 increased the royal cavalry (originally 600 upper-class Companion horsemen) to 4000
- 3 invented the title 'Foot Companions' for the six battalions of 9000 heavy infantry
- 4 created the 'Shield Bearers', 3000 crack foot guards who on the battlefield were the link between the cavalry and infantry
- 5 formed an elite corps of 100, called the Royal Guard
- 6 introduced the institution of the Royal Pages (youths aged 14–18), to train future military commanders. The pages were the sons of prominent aristocratic Macedonians whose duties were 'to guard the king while he slept, mount the king on his horse, attend him in the hunt, guard him while dining, and during their final year as pages, serve with the king in combat'.⁸

Then there were the ancillary units of light cavalry, **peltasts**, slingers and engineers (who developed siege engines and catapults).

... and, having improved the organization of his forces and equipped the men suitably with weapons of war, he held constant maneuvers of the men under arms and competitive drills. Indeed, he devised the compact order and the equipment of the phalanx, imitating the close order fighting with overlapping shields of the warriors at Troy, and was the first to organize the Macedonian phalanx.

phalanx a massed body of heavily armed infantry

sarissa spears or pikes about 5 metres long

The Macedonian phalanx and a national army

Philip developed a much-improved **phalanx** in which each infantryman (pike-man) carried a 5.5-metre-long **sarissa** – much longer than those formerly carried by Greek heavy infantry. Since sarissas could only be held in two hands, the shields became smaller, slung on the left shoulder and arm. The flanks of the phalanx were protected by

other troops. Discipline was vital to maintain formation and this required constant and rigorous training, drills and manoeuvres.

With his powerful national army, Philip II was able to:

- check the disruptive tendencies in his own kingdom
- protect his frontiers from his northern enemies, the Illyrians and Thracians
- gain control of the Thermaic Gulf, outlets to the sea along the Thracian coast and control of the silver and gold mines of Mt Pangaeus, which yielded 1000 talents a year
- march into Greece and at the Battle of Chaeronea, just outside Thebes, in 338 decisively defeat an army of Greek states including Athens and Thebes.

Eventually he was able to do for the Greeks what they were never able to do for themselves. He united them under his leadership at a Congress of Corinth in 338 and 337 BC, and to maintain his **hegemony** he stationed garrisons in some cities and relied on pro-Macedonian oligarchies in others.

He then announced a panhellenic war of revenge against Persia and sent his commander Parmenion ahead with 10 000 troops into Asia.

Philip has been described as a political and military genius who turned Macedonia into the greatest power in the western world.



FIGURE 8.7 An artistic depiction of a Macedonian phalanx

hegemony political or military leadership or dominance of one state over another

Now, just read quietly for a while...



TABLE 8.2 Alexander's parents

Philip II	Olympias
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Philip's ancestors from the Aegid clan claimed descent from Herakles, the semi-divine hero and son of Zeus. He had two older brothers who each ruled for short periods. As a youth, he was taken as a hostage to the Greek city of Thebes, where he acquired a military and diplomatic education under Epaminondas, the greatest tactician and general of the time. In 359, he came to the throne unexpectedly at the age of 21 on the death of his brother Perdiccas. Initially, he was appointed as regent for his young nephew, but managed to take the kingdom for himself that same year. Faced with threats to his kingdom on all fronts, he took action: organised a powerful national army, united his kingdom, made Macedonia financially secure and attempted to seek a partnership with the Greeks to the south. Philip was an astute diplomat: a tough military leader able to operate on several fronts at once; ruthless when opposed; an impressive and effective orator; by nature, convivial and hospitable, attracting to his court at Pella men of letters and others of note, but like many Macedonians, he drank too much and was often drunk. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Olympias was the daughter of the King of Epirus, a country to the south-west of Macedonia. Her family traced its lineage back to that of Achilles, hero of the Trojan War and the 'best of the Greeks'. She became the fourth wife of Philip II as a result of a political alliance between Macedonia and Epirus. She was originally named Myrtale but received the name Olympias when Philip's horse won a race at the Olympic Games. According to the sources she appears to have had great strength of character and had a fiery temperament. She was also headstrong, meddlesome, manipulative, jealous and vindictive. According to Plutarch, she was a passionate devotee of the ecstatic Dionysiac cult and was believed to have kept tame snakes about her. She appears to have never been popular at court and her marriage to Philip became increasingly 'stormy'.



The birth of Alexander

Olympias fulfilled her duty to Philip by producing an heir. Alexander was born on 20 July 356 BC, but like everything about Alexander's future life, his birth was regarded as legendary.

A COMMENT ON...

Alexander's 'auspicious' birth

Ancient Greeks believed that the birth of a great man was accompanied by portents, and according to Plutarch, the following were some of those portents.

- 1 On the night before Philip and Olympias consummated their marriage, Olympias 'dreamed that there was a crash of thunder, that her womb was struck by a thunderbolt' followed by 'a blinding flash from which a great sheet of flame blazed up'.⁹ She believed that the thunderbolt was from Zeus and that the god had impregnated her.
- 2 Sometime after their marriage, Philip 'saw himself in a dream in the act of sealing up his wife's womb' and on the seal, he saw 'the figure of a lion',¹⁰ a sign that his son would have the nature of a lion.
- 3 On the day of Alexander's birth:
 - Philip won a victory over the city of Potidaea and his horses won a victory at the Olympic Games.
 - the *magi* (priests of Persia), visiting the city of Ephesus in Asia Minor, ran into the street when the Temple of Artemis burned down, shouting that the kingdoms of Asia were destined to fall.

His education

In his early years, the most influential person in Alexander's life was his mother, from whom he inherited a vivid, romantic imagination, a passionate and fiery nature, a strong will for power and a belief that he was set apart from other men with a special relationship with the gods.

It was natural that a great number of nurses, pedagogues, and teachers were appointed to take part in his upbringing but the man who supervised them all was Leonidas, a severe disciplinarian who was also a relative of Olympias.

SOURCE 8.6 Plutarch, *Alexander*, 5

- 1 Alexander was born into a court at Pella that featured great ethnic and linguistic diversity, and from a small child he came in contact with foreign diplomats, traders, soldiers, courtiers, exiles, Greek philosophers, artists and poets. He is supposed to have once impressed a group of visiting Persian ambassadors with his maturity and curiosity about their country and king.
- 2 From the age of seven or eight he entered a life of dangerous competition. As war was a normal part of life, Alexander's daily exercises as a boy were geared to train him as a superb warrior, particularly as a skilled horseman.
- 3 By the age of 12, Alexander had developed the skills of perception and deduction, and was full of unshakable confidence. This was borne out in the story of the black stallion, Bucephalus, which he later rode into the greatest battles of his career. The story goes that a horse trader brought a magnificent and extremely expensive horse to Philip for inspection, but it appeared to be completely wild and unable to be trained. When Philip prepared to send the horse away, Alexander remarked, 'What a horse they are losing, and all because they don't know how to handle him, or dare not to try!'¹¹

... Alexander went up to Bucephalus, took hold of his bridle, and turned him towards the sun, for he had noticed that the horse was shying at the sight of his own shadow, as it fell in front of him and constantly moved whenever he did. He ran alongside the animal for a little way, calming him down by stroking him, and then when he saw he was a light spring vaulted safely on to his back ... when Alexander dismounted he [Philip] kissed him and said, 'My boy, you must find a kingdom big enough for your ambitions. Macedonia is too small for you.'

SOURCE 8.7 Plutarch, *Alexander* 6

- 4 Early on, Alexander found inspiration in the feats of mythical heroes and gods. To the ancient Greeks – and to Alexander – the myths of the past were real stories of interactions between gods and humans that taught guiding principles of life, some harsh and violent, but always competitive. The most important story for Alexander was Homer's epic *The Iliad*, which focused on the exploits of Achilles, Alexander's supposed ancestor.
- 5 Philip decided that at 14 his strong-willed son needed guidance and control. He persuaded Aristotle, the great Athenian philosopher, scientist and political theorist, to come to Pella to instruct his son. Alexander, with a group of teenage 'companions', was sent to a secret location to be schooled by Aristotle. The great man taught a huge range of subjects including botany, zoology, geography, biology, mathematics, political history and rhetoric, as well as philosophy as a guide for living a life of excellence. However, his major focus was on the concept of the 'Man of Great Soul', a man who sought honour through competition throughout his life.

Under Aristotle's tutelage Alexander developed:

- an insatiable curiosity and a desire to explore the world
- a determination to go beyond everyone else in excellence
- a desire to become a 'Man of Great Soul'.

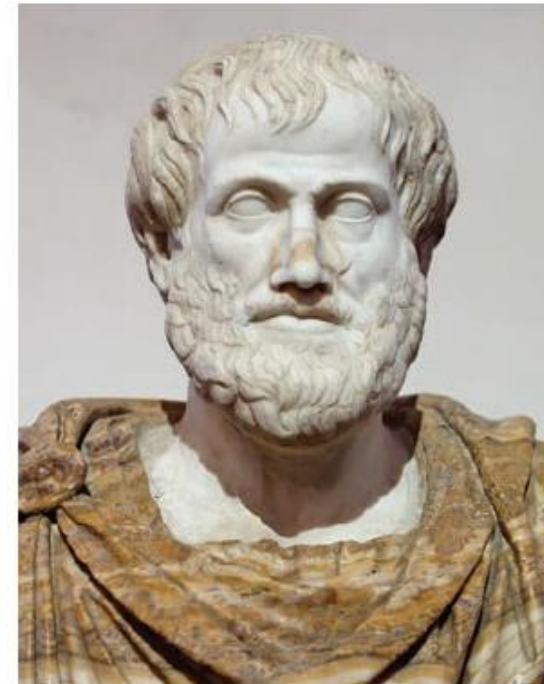


FIGURE 8.10 A bust of Aristotle

A COMMENT ON...

The features of a 'Man of Great Soul'

A 'Man of Great Soul':

- recognises his supreme standing among others
- has no tolerance for insults
- becomes angry at ungrateful and disloyal people
- craves knowledge
- employs practical thoughtfulness in everything he does
- endures misfortunes
- is a great benefactor
- deserves – and expects to receive – the greatest honour in return
- believes friendship is as important as honour
- hopes his accomplishments raise him to the level of the gods.¹²

In this society where the king of the Macedonians was required to prove his superiority at every moment, the son of a king was under unimaginable pressure to be the best at everything, every time ... The Macedonians did not shy away from putting their future leaders to the sternest tests over and over.

SOURCE 8.8 T. R. Martin and C. W. Blackwell, *Alexander the Great: The Story of An Ancient Life*, p. 16

Alexander's adolescent military successes

Alexander was addicted to winning renown and glory for himself, and when he heard that his father had captured a city or won a great victory, he would, according to Plutarch, complain to his friends 'my father will forestall me in everything. There will be nothing great or spectacular for you and me to show the world'.¹³

At the age of 16, he was left in charge of Macedonia while Philip was away fighting in Thrace and had been given the royal seal that empowered him to make political, economic and military decisions. When a tribe on the north-east of the country rebelled, Alexander seized his opportunity to act as a king. He marched into Maedi territory at the head of his troops, defeated the rebels and captured their main settlement. He re-founded it, named it Alexandropolis, the 'city of Alexander' and, like his father, populated it with new settlers: former soldiers and people from other nationalities.

By the time he was 18, Alexander had marched with his father into Greece to face an alliance of Greek states led by Thebes. At the Battle of Chaeronea, Philip placed his son and heir on the left wing opposite the famous and undefeated Theban force called the Sacred Band. Alexander charged at the elite Theban force and, according to the ancient sources, played a major role in the Macedonian victory.



FIGURE 8.11 A statue of a young Alexander taming Bucephalus

Problems with the succession

In the last years of Philip's reign, there was considerable strain in the relationship between father and son, and it appears that they saw each other as rivals. However, this strain turned into a complete upheaval in the royal family when the king decided to take a seventh wife, Cleopatra, the young niece of Attalus, a prominent Macedonian and one of Philip's leading generals. This would be the king's first true Macedonian wife.

It not only angered Olympias, Alexander's mother, but also caused a potentially dangerous rift between father and son. During the drunken celebrations of the marriage, Attalus toasted the couple with the wish that they produce a legitimate successor to the kingdom. Humiliated, Alexander threw a cup of wine at him and Philip, drunk and furious at his son's actions, drew his sword and approached Alexander.

When he tripped and fell to the floor, Alexander taunted him with: 'Here is the man who was making ready to cross from Europe to Asia and who cannot even cross from one table to another without losing his balance.'¹⁴

Alexander, his companions and his mother left the court. He took Olympias to Epirus and he went into voluntary exile in Illyria. This caused Philip a great deal of concern: his son had proved himself already a great commander and Illyria had always been his greatest threat. Would his son march on Macedonia, threaten all he had achieved and disrupt his plans to invade Asia?



10. But when Pixodarus, the satrap of Caria, trying by means of a tie of relationship to steal into a military alliance with Philip, wished to give his eldest daughter in marriage to Arrhidaeus the son of Philip, and sent Aristocritus to Macedonia on this errand, once more slanderous stories kept coming to Alexander from his friends and his mother, who said that Philip, by means of a brilliant marriage and a great connexion, was trying to settle the kingdom upon Arrhidaeus. Greatly disturbed by these stories, [2] Alexander sent Thessalus, the tragic actor, to Caria, to argue with Pixodarus that he ought to ignore the bastard brother, who was also a fool, and make Alexander his connexion by marriage. And this plan was vastly more pleasing to Pixodarus than the former. But Philip, becoming aware of this, went to Alexander's chamber, taking with him one of Alexander's friends and companions, Philotas the son of Parmenio, [3] and upbraided his son severely, and bitterly reviled him as ignoble and unworthy of his high estate, in that he desired to become the son-in-law of a man who was a Carian and a slave to a barbarian king. And as for Thessalus, Philip wrote to the Corinthians that they should send him back to Macedonia in chains. Moreover, of the other companions of Alexander, he banished from Macedonia Harpalus and Nearchus, as well as Erigyius and Ptolemy, men whom Alexander afterwards recalled and had in the highest honours.

[4] And so when Pausanias, who had been outrageously dealt with at the instance of Attalus and Cleopatra and could get no justice at Philip's hands, slew Philip, most of the blame devolved upon Olympias, on the ground that she had added her exhortations to the young man's anger and incited him to the deed; but a certain amount of accusation attached itself to Alexander also. For it is said that when Pausanias, after the outrage that he had suffered, met Alexander, and bewailed his fate, Alexander recited to him the iambic verse of the Medeia ¹:—

‘The giver of the bride, the bridegroom, and the bride.’

However, he did seek out the participants in the plot and punished them, and was angry with Olympias for her savage treatment of Cleopatra during his absence. ²

From
**'The giver of the bride,
the bridegroom, and the
bride': a study of the
murder of Philip II and its
aftermath (2017)**

by Waldemar Heckel,
Timothy Howe and Sabine
Müller

Answer this Question:
**What common explanation
for the assassination do
Plutarch, Diodorus and
Justin share?**

*You may or may not
remember the story. You
might refer back to Week
10's Assassination word doc.*

Plutarch, Diodorus and Justin on the murder of Philip II

The death of Philip II has been much discussed, primarily with the aim of trying to establish who instigated the king's assassination. The killer's identity is certain: he was a member of Philip's royal guard (σωματοφύλακες βασιλικοί), Pausanias son of Kerastos from Orestis. But modern scholars, like those who were contemporary with the events, believe that he did not act alone, and the list of accomplices or instigators includes Olympias, Alexander himself, the sons of Aëropos from Lynkestis (two of whom were executed on charges of complicity), and even the Persian King (who was thought to have attempted to preempt the invasion of his territory by means of the assassin's dagger). The truth cannot be known with certainty and it is, perhaps, futile to argue the case against any of the candidates. It is, furthermore, clear that all who tackle the problem rely heavily on the historiographic sources – particularly Plutarch, Diodorus and Justin, the three most extensive accounts – and base their conclusions on a variety of minor but important details, stressing all the while the importance of context.⁵

In what follows, we consider the accounts of the above-mentioned sources in that all-important context and attempt to present a coherent picture based on the points of agreement. Indeed, there are very few places where the sources *disagree* in any significant way. There is, however, one serious impediment to the development of a **cogent** argument concerning what actually happened and why, and that is the tendency of modern scholars to look for political and 'scientific' explanations, many of which involve the rejection of explicit statements by the biographer or the historians which speak of the human (psychological) aspects. Those who believe that the man who forged Macedonian power married for love or that his assassin was motivated by humiliation, outrage and the desire for revenge are often dismissed as naïve and insufficiently critical.⁶ Yet this is precisely what the three sources in question say.



FIGURE 8.12 A bust of young Alexander the Great

The young man had never remained idle and had been trained since childhood to act aggressively to shape his own world. The boy who would risk his life on a wager over an ill-tempered horse would hardly fail to seek revenge so horrible it drove him and his mother from their home. The insult denied Alexander's right to rule. ... The toxic combination of jealousy, ambition, anger and alcohol, stirred up in the superheated crucible of Macedonian royal politics, was on the verge of destroying everything Philip had worked for.

SOURCE 8.9 T. R. Martin & C. W. Blackwell, *Alexander the Great: The Story of an Ancient Life*, p. 33

Due to the intervention of Demaratus, a Corinthian Greek at the court of Pella, father and son were reconciled within months and the question of the succession did not become an issue as Philip's latest child by his new wife was a daughter.

ACTIVITY

1 ~~How did the following influence Alexander's character and upbringing?~~

- the lineage of his mother and father
- his mother's character and religious beliefs
- his contact with those who visited the court at Pella
- the Greek heroic myths
- Aristotle's teachings
- his father's achievements?

2 What does Source 8.7 reveal about Alexander's character?

3 What military abilities did Alexander reveal while still a teenager?

4 Assess the impact on Alexander of Philip's marriage to his seventh wife.

How might the following have influenced his character and actions thus far?



WHY IT MATTERS TODAY

In today's world we could do no better than to follow some of the more positive qualities inherent in Alexander and others that were part of the 'Great Soul Man' he sought to emulate: his insatiable curiosity about the world, his desire to explore the unknown; to 'go beyond' all others in excellence; to aim for practical thoughtfulness in everything he did; to respect loyalty, to seek honour through competition and to never be afraid to admit when he made mistakes.

KEY TERMS AND NAMES

- barbarian
- deification
- hegemony
- Hellenistic
- mole
- oligarchy
- panhellenic
- patricide
- peltast
- phalanx
- polygamy
- prostration
- sarissa
- trireme

Work in a group of at least 3 students to construct a GLOSSARY of important words and terms we have encountered thus far!



Let's go back to Pamela Bradley's glowing assessment of Alexander in a few weeks and see, then, what you think of it.

