

= Alexander the Great =

Alexander III of Macedon ( 20 / 21 July 356 BC ? 10 / 11 June 323 BC ) , commonly known as Alexander the Great ( Greek : ?????????? ? ????? , Aléxandros ho Mégas [ a.lék.san.dros ho mé.gas ] ) , was a King ( Basileus ) of the Ancient Greek kingdom of Macedon and a member of the Argead dynasty . Born in Pella in 356 BC , Alexander succeeded his father , Philip II , to the throne at the age of twenty . He spent most of his ruling years on an unprecedented military campaign through Asia and northeast Africa , and by the age of thirty he had created one of the largest empires of the ancient world , stretching from Greece to northwestern India . He was undefeated in battle and is widely considered one of history 's most successful military commanders .

During his youth , Alexander was tutored by the philosopher Aristotle until the age of 16 . After Philip 's assassination in 336 BC , Alexander succeeded his father to the throne and inherited a strong kingdom and an experienced army . Alexander was awarded the generalship of Greece and used this authority to launch his father 's Panhellenic project to lead the Greeks in the conquest of Persia . In 334 BC , he invaded the Achaemenid Empire , ruled Asia Minor , and began a series of campaigns that lasted ten years . Alexander broke the power of Persia in a series of decisive battles , most notably the battles of Issus and Gaugamela . He subsequently overthrew the Persian King Darius III and conquered the Achaemenid Empire in its entirety . At that point , his empire stretched from the Adriatic Sea to the Indus River .

Seeking to reach the " ends of the world and the Great Outer Sea " , he invaded India in 326 BC , but was eventually forced to turn back at the demand of his troops . Alexander died in Babylon in 323 BC , the city he planned to establish as his capital , without executing a series of planned campaigns that would have begun with an invasion of Arabia . In the years following his death , a series of civil wars tore his empire apart , resulting in several states ruled by the Diadochi , Alexander 's surviving generals and heirs .

Alexander 's legacy includes the cultural diffusion his conquests engendered , such as Greco @-@ Buddhism . He founded some twenty cities that bore his name , most notably Alexandria in Egypt . Alexander 's settlement of Greek colonists and the resulting spread of Greek culture in the east resulted in a new Hellenistic civilization , aspects of which were still evident in the traditions of the Byzantine Empire in the mid @-@ 15th century and the presence of Greek speakers in central and far eastern Anatolia until the 1920s . Alexander became legendary as a classical hero in the mold of Achilles , and he features prominently in the history and mythic traditions of both Greek and non @-@ Greek cultures . He became the measure against which military leaders compared themselves , and military academies throughout the world still teach his tactics . He is often ranked among the most influential people in human history , along with his teacher Aristotle .

= = Early life = =

= = = Lineage and childhood = = =

Alexander was born on the sixth day of the ancient Greek month of Hekatombaion , which probably corresponds to 20 July 356 BC , although the exact date is not known , in Pella , the capital of the Kingdom of Macedon . He was the son of the king of Macedon , Philip II , and his fourth wife , Olympias , the daughter of Neoptolemus I , king of Epirus . Although Philip had seven or eight wives , Olympias was his principal wife for some time , likely a result of giving birth to Alexander .

Several legends surround Alexander 's birth and childhood . According to the ancient Greek biographer Plutarch , Olympias , on the eve of the consummation of her marriage to Philip , dreamed that her womb was struck by a thunder bolt , causing a flame that spread " far and wide " before dying away . Some time after the wedding , Philip is said to have seen himself , in a dream , securing his wife 's womb with a seal engraved with a lion 's image . Plutarch offered a variety of interpretations of these dreams : that Olympias was pregnant before her marriage , indicated by the sealing of her womb ; or that Alexander 's father was Zeus . Ancient commentators were divided

about whether the ambitious Olympias promulgated the story of Alexander 's divine parentage , variously claiming that she had told Alexander , or that she dismissed the suggestion as impious .

On the day Alexander was born , Philip was preparing a siege on the city of Potidea on the peninsula of Chalcidice . That same day , Philip received news that his general Parmenion had defeated the combined Illyrian and Paeonian armies , and that his horses had won at the Olympic Games . It was also said that on this day , the Temple of Artemis in Ephesus , one of the Seven Wonders of the World , burnt down . This led Hegesias of Magnesia to say that it had burnt down because Artemis was away , attending the birth of Alexander . Such legends may have emerged when Alexander was king , and possibly at his own instigation , to show that he was superhuman and destined for greatness from conception .

In his early years , Alexander was raised by a nurse , Lanike , sister of Alexander 's future general Cleitus the Black . Later in his childhood , Alexander was tutored by the strict Leonidas , a relative of his mother , and by Lysimachus of Acarnania . Alexander was raised in the manner of noble Macedonian youths , learning to read , play the lyre , ride , fight , and hunt .

When Alexander was ten years old , a trader from Thessaly brought Philip a horse , which he offered to sell for thirteen talents . The horse refused to be mounted and Philip ordered it away . Alexander however , detecting the horse 's fear of its own shadow , asked to tame the horse , which he eventually managed . Plutarch stated that Philip , overjoyed at this display of courage and ambition , kissed his son tearfully , declaring : " My boy , you must find a kingdom big enough for your ambitions . Macedon is too small for you " , and bought the horse for him . Alexander named it Bucephalas , meaning " ox @-@ head " . Bucephalas carried Alexander as far as India . When the animal died ( due to old age , according to Plutarch , at age thirty ) , Alexander named a city after him , Bucephala .

= = = Adolescence and education = = =

When Alexander was 13 , Philip began to search for a tutor , and considered such academics as Isocrates and Speusippus , the latter offering to resign to take up the post . In the end , Philip chose Aristotle and provided the Temple of the Nymphs at Mieza as a classroom . In return for teaching Alexander , Philip agreed to rebuild Aristotle 's hometown of Stageira , which Philip had razed , and to repopulate it by buying and freeing the ex @-@ citizens who were slaves , or pardoning those who were in exile .

Mieza was like a boarding school for Alexander and the children of Macedonian nobles , such as Ptolemy , Hephaestion , and Cassander . Many of these students would become his friends and future generals , and are often known as the ' Companions ' . Aristotle taught Alexander and his companions about medicine , philosophy , morals , religion , logic , and art . Under Aristotle 's tutelage , Alexander developed a passion for the works of Homer , and in particular the Iliad ; Aristotle gave him an annotated copy , which Alexander later carried on his campaigns .

= = Philip 's heir = =

= = = Regency and ascent of Macedon = = =

At age 16 , Alexander 's education under Aristotle ended . Philip waged war against Byzantion , leaving Alexander in charge as regent and heir apparent . During Philip 's absence , the Thracian Maedi revolted against Macedonia . Alexander responded quickly , driving them from their territory . He colonized it with Greeks , and founded a city named Alexandropolis .

Upon Philip 's return , he dispatched Alexander with a small force to subdue revolts in southern Thrace . Campaigning against the Greek city of Perinthus , Alexander is reported to have saved his father 's life . Meanwhile , the city of Amphissa began to work lands that were sacred to Apollo near Delphi , a sacrilege that gave Philip the opportunity to further intervene in Greek affairs . Still occupied in Thrace , he ordered Alexander to muster an army for a campaign in Greece .

Concerned that other Greek states might intervene , Alexander made it look as though he was preparing to attack Illyria instead . During this turmoil , the Illyrians invaded Macedonia , only to be repelled by Alexander .

Philip and his army joined his son in 338 BC , and they marched south through Thermopylae , taking it after stubborn resistance from its Theban garrison . They went on to occupy the city of Elatea , only a few days ' march from both Athens and Thebes . The Athenians , led by Demosthenes , voted to seek alliance with Thebes against Macedonia . Both Athens and Philip sent embassies to win Thebes ' favor , but Athens won the contest . Philip marched on Amphissa ( ostensibly acting on the request of the Amphictyonic League ) , capturing the mercenaries sent there by Demosthenes and accepting the city 's surrender . Philip then returned to Elatea , sending a final offer of peace to Athens and Thebes , who both rejected it .

As Philip marched south , his opponents blocked him near Chaeronea , Boeotia . During the ensuing Battle of Chaeronea , Philip commanded the right wing and Alexander the left , accompanied by a group of Philip 's trusted generals . According to the ancient sources , the two sides fought bitterly for some time . Philip deliberately commanded his troops to retreat , counting on the untested Athenian hoplites to follow , thus breaking their line . Alexander was the first to break the Theban lines , followed by Philip 's generals . Having damaged the enemy 's cohesion , Philip ordered his troops to press forward and quickly routed them . With the Athenians lost , the Thebans were surrounded . Left to fight alone , they were defeated .

After the victory at Chaeronea , Philip and Alexander marched unopposed into the Peloponnese , welcomed by all cities ; however , when they reached Sparta , they were refused , but did not resort to war . At Corinth , Philip established a " Hellenic Alliance " ( modeled on the old anti @-@ Persian alliance of the Greco @-@ Persian Wars ) , which included most Greek city @-@ states except Sparta . Philip was then named Hegemon ( often translated as " Supreme Commander " ) of this league ( known by modern scholars as the League of Corinth ) , and announced his plans to attack the Persian Empire .

= = = Exile and return = = =

When Philip returned to Pella , he fell in love with and married Cleopatra Eurydice , the niece of his general Attalus . The marriage made Alexander 's position as heir less secure , since any son of Cleopatra Eurydice would be a fully Macedonian heir , while Alexander was only half @-@ Macedonian . During the wedding banquet , a drunken Attalus publicly prayed to the gods that the union would produce a legitimate heir .

At the wedding of Cleopatra , whom Philip fell in love with and married , she being much too young for him , her uncle Attalus in his drink desired the Macedonians would implore the gods to give them a lawful successor to the kingdom by his niece . This so irritated Alexander , that throwing one of the cups at his head , " You villain , " said he , " what , am I then a bastard ? " Then Philip , taking Attalus 's part , rose up and would have run his son through ; but by good fortune for them both , either his over @-@ hasty rage , or the wine he had drunk , made his foot slip , so that he fell down on the floor . At which Alexander reproachfully insulted over him : " See there , " said he , " the man who makes preparations to pass out of Europe into Asia , overturned in passing from one seat to another . "

Alexander fled Macedon with his mother , dropping her off with her brother , King Alexander I of Epirus in Dodona , capital of the Molossians . He continued to Illyria , where he sought refuge with the Illyrian king and was treated as a guest , despite having defeated them in battle a few years before . However , it appears Philip never intended to disown his politically and militarily trained son . Accordingly , Alexander returned to Macedon after six months due to the efforts of a family friend , Demaratus , who mediated between the two parties .

In the following year , the Persian satrap ( governor ) of Caria , Pixodarus , offered his eldest daughter to Alexander 's half @-@ brother , Philip Arrhidaeus . Olympias and several of Alexander 's friends suggested this showed Philip intended to make Arrhidaeus his heir . Alexander reacted by sending an actor , Thessalus of Corinth , to tell Pixodarus that he should not offer his daughter 's

hand to an illegitimate son , but instead to Alexander . When Philip heard of this , he stopped the negotiations and scolded Alexander for wishing to marry the daughter of a Carian , explaining that he wanted a better bride for him . Philip exiled four of Alexander 's friends , Harpalus , Nearchus , Ptolemy and Erigyus , and had the Corinthians bring Thessalus to him in chains .

= = King of Macedon = =

= = = Accession = = =

In summer 336 BC , while at Aegae attending the wedding of his daughter Cleopatra to Olympias 's brother , Alexander I of Epirus , Philip was assassinated by the captain of his bodyguards , Pausanias . As Pausanias tried to escape , he tripped over a vine and was killed by his pursuers , including two of Alexander 's companions , Perdikkas and Leonnatus . Alexander was proclaimed king by the nobles and army at the age of 20 .

= = = Consolidation of power = = =

Alexander began his reign by eliminating potential rivals to the throne . He had his cousin , the former Amyntas IV , executed . He also had two Macedonian princes from the region of Lyncestis killed , but spared a third , Alexander Lyncestes . Olympias had Cleopatra Eurydice and Europa , her daughter by Philip , burned alive . When Alexander learned about this , he was furious . Alexander also ordered the murder of Attalus , who was in command of the advance guard of the army in Asia Minor and Cleopatra 's uncle .

Attalus was at that time corresponding with Demosthenes , regarding the possibility of defecting to Athens . Attalus also had severely insulted Alexander , and following Cleopatra 's murder , Alexander may have considered him too dangerous to leave alive . Alexander spared Arrhidaeus , who was by all accounts mentally disabled , possibly as a result of poisoning by Olympias .

News of Philip 's death roused many states into revolt , including Thebes , Athens , Thessaly , and the Thracian tribes north of Macedon . When news of the revolts reached Alexander , he responded quickly . Though advised to use diplomacy , Alexander mustered 3 @, @ 000 Macedonian cavalry and rode south towards Thessaly . He found the Thessalian army occupying the pass between Mount Olympus and Mount Ossa , and ordered his men to ride over Mount Ossa . When the Thessalians awoke the next day , they found Alexander in their rear and promptly surrendered , adding their cavalry to Alexander 's force . He then continued south towards the Peloponnese .

Alexander stopped at Thermopylae , where he was recognized as the leader of the Amphictyonic League before heading south to Corinth . Athens sued for peace and Alexander pardoned the rebels . The famous encounter between Alexander and Diogenes the Cynic occurred during Alexander 's stay in Corinth . When Alexander asked Diogenes what he could do for him , the philosopher disdainfully asked Alexander to stand a little to the side , as he was blocking the sunlight . This reply apparently delighted Alexander , who is reported to have said " But verily , if I were not Alexander , I would like to be Diogenes . " At Corinth , Alexander took the title of Hegemon ( " leader " ) and , like Philip , was appointed commander for the coming war against Persia . He also received news of a Thracian uprising .

= = = Balkan campaign = = =

Before crossing to Asia , Alexander wanted to safeguard his northern borders . In the spring of 335 BC , he advanced to suppress several revolts . Starting from Amphipolis , he traveled east into the country of the " Independent Thracians " ; and at Mount Haemus , the Macedonian army attacked and defeated the Thracian forces manning the heights . The Macedonians marched into the country of the Triballi , and defeated their army near the Lyginus river ( a tributary of the Danube ) . Alexander then marched for three days to the Danube , encountering the Getae tribe on the

opposite shore . Crossing the river at night , he surprised them and forced their army to retreat after the first cavalry skirmish .

News then reached Alexander that Cleitus , King of Illyria , and King Glaukias of the Taulanti were in open revolt against his authority . Marching west into Illyria , Alexander defeated each in turn , forcing the two rulers to flee with their troops . With these victories , he secured his northern frontier .

While Alexander campaigned north , the Thebans and Athenians rebelled once again . Alexander immediately headed south . While the other cities again hesitated , Thebes decided to fight . The Theban resistance was ineffective , and Alexander razed the city and divided its territory between the other Boeotian cities . The end of Thebes cowed Athens , leaving all of Greece temporarily at peace . Alexander then set out on his Asian campaign , leaving Antipater as regent .

= = Conquest of the Persian Empire = =

= = = Asia Minor = = =

Alexander 's army crossed the Hellespont in 334 BC with approximately 48 @, @ 100 soldiers , 6 @, @ 100 cavalry and a fleet of 120 ships with crews numbering 38 @, @ 000 , drawn from Macedon and various Greek city @-@ states , mercenaries , and feudally raised soldiers from Thrace , Paionia , and Illyria . ( However , Arrian , who used Ptolemy as a source , said that Alexander crossed with more than 5 @, @ 000 horse and 30 @, @ 000 foot ; Diodorus quoted the same totals , but listed 5 @, @ 100 horse and 32 @, @ 000 foot . Diodorus also referred to an advance force already present in Asia , which Polyaeus , in his Stratagems of War ( 5 @. @ 44 @. @ 4 ) , said numbered 10 @, @ 000 men . ) He showed his intent to conquer the entirety of the Persian Empire by throwing a spear into Asian soil and saying he accepted Asia as a gift from the gods . This also showed Alexander 's eagerness to fight , in contrast to his father 's preference for diplomacy .

After an initial victory against Persian forces at the Battle of the Granicus , Alexander accepted the surrender of the Persian provincial capital and treasury of Sardis ; he then proceeded along the Ionian coast , granting autonomy and democracy to the cities . Miletus , held by Achaemenid forces , required a delicate siege operation , with Persian naval forces nearby . Further south , at Halicarnassus , in Caria , Alexander successfully waged his first large @-@ scale siege , eventually forcing his opponents , the mercenary captain Memnon of Rhodes and the Persian satrap of Caria , Orontobates , to withdraw by sea . Alexander left the government of Caria to a member of the Hecatomnid dynasty , Ada , who adopted Alexander .

From Halicarnassus , Alexander proceeded into mountainous Lycia and the Pamphylian plain , asserting control over all coastal cities to deny the Persians naval bases . From Pamphylia onwards the coast held no major ports and Alexander moved inland . At Termessos , Alexander humbled but did not storm the Pisidian city . At the ancient Phrygian capital of Gordium , Alexander " undid " the hitherto unsolvable Gordian Knot , a feat said to await the future " king of Asia " . According to the story , Alexander proclaimed that it did not matter how the knot was undone and hacked it apart with his sword .

= = = The Levant and Syria = = =

In spring 333 BC , Alexander crossed the Taurus into Cilicia . After a long pause due to illness , he marched on towards Syria . Though outmanoeuvred by Darius ' significantly larger army , he marched back to Cilicia , where he defeated Darius at Issus . Darius fled the battle , causing his army to collapse , and left behind his wife , his two daughters , his mother Sisygambis , and a fabulous treasure . He offered a peace treaty that included the lands he had already lost , and a ransom of 10 @, @ 000 talents for his family . Alexander replied that since he was now king of Asia , it was he alone who decided territorial divisions .

Alexander proceeded to take possession of Syria , and most of the coast of the Levant . In the following year , 332 BC , he was forced to attack Tyre , which he captured after a long and difficult siege . Alexander massacred the men of military age and sold the women and children into slavery .

== = Egypt == =

When Alexander destroyed Tyre , most of the towns on the route to Egypt quickly capitulated . A later tradition recorded his entry into Jerusalem : according to Josephus , Alexander was shown the Book of Daniel 's prophecy , presumably chapter 8 , which described a mighty Greek king who would conquer the Persian Empire . He spared Jerusalem and pushed south into Egypt . However , Alexander met with resistance at Gaza . The stronghold was heavily fortified and built on a hill , requiring a siege . When " his engineers pointed out to him that because of the height of the mound it would be impossible ? this encouraged Alexander all the more to make the attempt " . After three unsuccessful assaults , the stronghold fell , but not before Alexander had received a serious shoulder wound . As in Tyre , men of military age were put to the sword and the women and children were sold into slavery .

Alexander advanced on Egypt in later 332 BC , where he was regarded as a liberator . He was pronounced son of the deity Amun at the Oracle of Siwa Oasis in the Libyan desert . Henceforth , Alexander often referred to Zeus @-@ Ammon as his true father , and after his death , currency depicted him adorned with rams horn as a symbol of his divinity . During his stay in Egypt , he founded Alexandria @-@ by @-@ Egypt , which would become the prosperous capital of the Ptolemaic Kingdom after his death .

== = Assyria and Babylonia == =

Leaving Egypt in 331 BC , Alexander marched eastward into Mesopotamia ( now northern Iraq ) and again defeated Darius , at the Battle of Gaugamela . Darius once more fled the field , and Alexander chased him as far as Arbela . Gaugamela would be the final and decisive encounter between the two . Darius fled over the mountains to Ecbatana ( modern Hamedan ) , while Alexander captured Babylon .

== = Persia == =

From Babylon , Alexander went to Susa , one of the Achaemenid capitals , and captured its treasury . He sent the bulk of his army to the Persian ceremonial capital of Persepolis via the Persian Royal Road . Alexander himself took selected troops on the direct route to the city . He then stormed the pass of the Persian Gates ( in the modern Zagros Mountains ) which had been blocked by a Persian army under Ariobarzanes and then hurried to Persepolis before its garrison could loot the treasury .

On entering Persepolis , Alexander allowed his troops to loot the city for several days . Alexander stayed in Persepolis for five months . During his stay a fire broke out in the eastern palace of Xerxes and spread to the rest of the city . Possible causes include a drunken accident or deliberate revenge for the burning of the Acropolis of Athens during the Second Persian War by Xerxes I. Years later upon revisiting the city he had burnt , Alexander would regret the burning of Persepolis . Plutarch recounts an anecdote in which Alexander pauses and talks to a fallen statue of Xerxes the Great as if it were a live person :

Shall I pass by and leave you lying there because of the expeditions you led against Greece , or shall I set you up again because of your magnanimity and your virtues in other respects ?

== = Fall of the Empire and the East == =

Alexander then chased Darius , first into Media , and then Parthia . The Persian king no longer controlled his own destiny , and was taken prisoner by Bessus , his Bactrian satrap and kinsman .

As Alexander approached , Bessus had his men fatally stab the Great King and then declared himself Darius ' successor as Artaxerxes V , before retreating into Central Asia to launch a guerrilla campaign against Alexander . Alexander buried Darius ' remains next to his Achaemenid predecessors in a regal funeral . He claimed that , while dying , Darius had named him as his successor to the Achaemenid throne . The Achaemenid Empire is normally considered to have fallen with Darius .

Alexander viewed Bessus as a usurper and set out to defeat him . This campaign , initially against Bessus , turned into a grand tour of central Asia . Alexander founded a series of new cities , all called Alexandria , including modern Kandahar in Afghanistan , and Alexandria Eschate ( " The Furthest " ) in modern Tajikistan . The campaign took Alexander through Media , Parthia , Aria ( West Afghanistan ) , Drangiana , Arachosia ( South and Central Afghanistan ) , Bactria ( North and Central Afghanistan ) , and Scythia .

Spitamenes , who held an undefined position in the satrapy of Sogdiana , in 329 BC betrayed Bessus to Ptolemy , one of Alexander 's trusted companions , and Bessus was executed . However , when , at some point later , Alexander was on the Jaxartes dealing with an incursion by a horse nomad army , Spitamenes raised Sogdiana in revolt . Alexander personally defeated the Scythians at the Battle of Jaxartes and immediately launched a campaign against Spitamenes , defeating him in the Battle of Gabai . After the defeat , Spitamenes was killed by his own men , who then sued for peace .

= = = Problems and plots = = =

During this time , Alexander adopted some elements of Persian dress and customs at his court , notably the custom of proskynesis , either a symbolic kissing of the hand , or prostration on the ground , that Persians showed to their social superiors . The Greeks regarded the gesture as the province of deities and believed that Alexander meant to deify himself by requiring it . This cost him the sympathies of many of his countrymen , and he eventually abandoned it .

A plot against his life was revealed , and one of his officers , Philotas , was executed for failing to alert Alexander . The death of the son necessitated the death of the father , and thus Parmenion , who had been charged with guarding the treasury at Ecbatana , was assassinated at Alexander 's command , to prevent attempts at vengeance . Most infamously , Alexander personally killed the man who had saved his life at Granicus , Cleitus the Black , during a violent drunken altercation at Maracanda ( modern day Samarkand in Uzbekistan ) , in which Cleitus accused Alexander of several judgemental mistakes and most especially , of having forgotten the Macedonian ways in favour of a corrupt oriental lifestyle .

Later , in the Central Asian campaign , a second plot against his life was revealed , this one instigated by his own royal pages . His official historian , Callisthenes of Olynthus , was implicated in the plot ; however , historians have yet to reach a consensus regarding this involvement . Callisthenes had fallen out of favor by leading the opposition to the attempt to introduce proskynesis .

= = = Macedon in Alexander 's absence = = =

When Alexander set out for Asia , he left his general Antipater , an experienced military and political leader and part of Philip II 's " Old Guard " , in charge of Macedon . Alexander 's sacking of Thebes ensured that Greece remained quiet during his absence . The one exception was a call to arms by Spartan king Agis III in 331 BC , whom Antipater defeated and killed in the battle of Megalopolis . Antipater referred the Spartans ' punishment to the League of Corinth , which then deferred to Alexander , who chose to pardon them . There was also considerable friction between Antipater and Olympias , and each complained to Alexander about the other .

In general , Greece enjoyed a period of peace and prosperity during Alexander 's campaign in Asia . Alexander sent back vast sums from his conquest , which stimulated the economy and increased trade across his empire . However , Alexander 's constant demands for troops and the migration of

Macedonians throughout his empire depleted Macedon's manpower, greatly weakening it in the years after Alexander, and ultimately led to its subjugation by Rome.

= = Indian campaign = =

= = = Forays into the Indian subcontinent = = =

After the death of Spitamenes and his marriage to Roxana ( Raokshna in Old Iranian ) to cement relations with his new satrapies, Alexander turned to the Indian subcontinent. He invited the chieftains of the former satrapy of Gandhara, ( a region presently straddling eastern Afghanistan and northern Pakistan ) to come to him and submit to his authority. Omphis ( Indian name Ambhi ), the ruler of Taxila, whose kingdom extended from the Indus to the Hydaspes ( Jhelum ), complied, but the chieftains of some hill clans, including the Aspasioi and Assakenoi sections of the Kambojas ( known in Indian texts also as Ashvayanas and Ashvakayanas ), refused to submit. Ambhi hastened to relieve Alexander of his apprehension and met him with valuable presents, placing himself and all his forces at his disposal. Alexander not only returned Ambhi his title and the gifts but he also presented him with a wardrobe of " Persian robes, gold and silver ornaments, 30 horses and 1000 talents in gold ". Alexander was emboldened to divide his forces, and Ambhi assisted Hephaestion and Perdikkas in constructing a bridge over the Indus where it bends at Hund ( Fox 1973 ), supplied their troops with provisions, and received Alexander himself, and his whole army, in his capital city of Taxila, with every demonstration of friendship and the most liberal hospitality.

On the subsequent advance of the Macedonian king, Taxiles accompanied him with a force of 5000 men and took part in the battle of the Hydaspes River. After that victory he was sent by Alexander in pursuit of Porus, to whom he was charged to offer favourable terms, but narrowly escaped losing his life at the hands of his old enemy. Subsequently, however, the two rivals were reconciled by the personal mediation of Alexander; and Taxiles, after having contributed zealously to the equipment of the fleet on the Hydaspes, was entrusted by the king with the government of the whole territory between that river and the Indus. A considerable accession of power was granted him after the death of Philip, son of Machatas; and he was allowed to retain his authority at the death of Alexander himself ( 323 BC ), as well as in the subsequent partition of the provinces at Triparadisus, 321 BC.

In the winter of 327 / 326 BC, Alexander personally led a campaign against these clans; the Aspasioi of Kunar valleys, the Guraeans of the Guraeus valley, and the Assakenoi of the Swat and Buner valleys. A fierce contest ensued with the Aspasioi in which Alexander was wounded in the shoulder by a dart, but eventually the Aspasioi lost. Alexander then faced the Assakenoi, who fought in the strongholds of Massaga, Ora and Aornos.

The fort of Massaga was reduced only after days of bloody fighting, in which Alexander was wounded seriously in the ankle. According to Curtius, " Not only did Alexander slaughter the entire population of Massaga, but also did he reduce its buildings to rubble. " A similar slaughter followed at Ora. In the aftermath of Massaga and Ora, numerous Assakenians fled to the fortress of Aornos. Alexander followed close behind and captured the strategic hill @-@ fort after four bloody days.

After Aornos, Alexander crossed the Indus and fought and won an epic battle against King Porus, who ruled a region lying between the Hydaspes and the Acesines ( Chenab ), in what is now the Punjab, in the Battle of the Hydaspes in 326 BC. Alexander was impressed by Porus' bravery, and made him an ally. He appointed Porus as satrap, and added to Porus' territory land that he did not previously own, towards the south @-@ east, up to the Hyphasis ( Beas ). Choosing a local helped him control these lands so distant from Greece. Alexander founded two cities on opposite sides of the Hydaspes river, naming one Bucephala, in honor of his horse, who died around this time. The other was Nicaea ( Victory ), thought to be located at the site of modern @-@ day Mong, Punjab.



= = = Revolt of the army = = =

East of Porus ' kingdom , near the Ganges River , were the Nanda Empire of Magadha and further east the Gangaridai Empire ( of modern @-@ day Bengal region of the Indian subcontinent ) . Fearing the prospect of facing other large armies and exhausted by years of campaigning , Alexander 's army mutinied at the Hyphasis River ( Beas ) , refusing to march farther east . This river thus marks the easternmost extent of Alexander 's conquests .

As for the Macedonians , however , their struggle with Porus blunted their courage and stayed their further advance into India . For having had all they could do to repulse an enemy who mustered only twenty thousand infantry and two thousand horse , they violently opposed Alexander when he insisted on crossing the river Ganges also , the width of which , as they learned , was thirty @-@ two furlongs , its depth a hundred fathoms , while its banks on the further side were covered with multitudes of men @-@ at @-@ arms and horsemen and elephants . For they were told that the kings of the Ganderites and Praesii were awaiting them with eighty thousand horsemen , two hundred thousand footmen , eight thousand chariots , and six thousand war elephants .

Alexander tried to persuade his soldiers to march farther , but his general Coenus pleaded with him to change his opinion and return ; the men , he said , " longed to again see their parents , their wives and children , their homeland " . Alexander eventually agreed and turned south , marching along the Indus . Along the way his army conquered the Malhi ( in modern @-@ day Multan ) and other Indian tribes and sustained an injury during the siege .

Alexander sent much of his army to Carmania ( modern southern Iran ) with general Craterus , and commissioned a fleet to explore the Persian Gulf shore under his admiral Nearchus , while he led the rest back to Persia through the more difficult southern route along the Gedrosian Desert and Makran . Alexander reached Susa in 324 BC , but not before losing many men to the harsh desert .

= = Last years in Persia = =

Discovering that many of his satraps and military governors had misbehaved in his absence , Alexander executed several of them as examples on his way to Susa . As a gesture of thanks , he paid off the debts of his soldiers , and announced that he would send over @-@ aged and disabled veterans back to Macedon , led by Craterus . His troops misunderstood his intention and mutinied at the town of Opis . They refused to be sent away and criticized his adoption of Persian customs and dress and the introduction of Persian officers and soldiers into Macedonian units .

After three days , unable to persuade his men to back down , Alexander gave Persians command posts in the army and conferred Macedonian military titles upon Persian units . The Macedonians quickly begged forgiveness , which Alexander accepted , and held a great banquet for several thousand of his men at which he and they ate together . In an attempt to craft a lasting harmony between his Macedonian and Persian subjects , Alexander held a mass marriage of his senior officers to Persian and other noblewomen at Susa , but few of those marriages seem to have lasted much beyond a year . Meanwhile , upon his return to Persia , Alexander learned that guards of the tomb of Cyrus the Great in Pasargadae had desecrated it , and swiftly executed them . Alexander admired Cyrus , from an early age reading Xenophon 's Cyropaedia , which described Cyrus 's heroism in battle and governance as a king and legislator . During his visit to Pasargadae Alexander ordered his architect Aristobulus to decorate the interior of the sepulchral chamber of Cyrus ' tomb .

Afterwards , Alexander traveled to Ecbatana to retrieve the bulk of the Persian treasure . There , his closest friend and possible lover , Hephaestion , died of illness or poisoning . Hephaestion 's death devastated Alexander , and he ordered the preparation of an expensive funeral pyre in Babylon , as well as a decree for public mourning . Back in Babylon , Alexander planned a series of new campaigns , beginning with an invasion of Arabia , but he would not have a chance to realize them , as he died shortly thereafter .

= = Death and succession = =

On either 10 or 11 June 323 BC , Alexander died in the palace of Nebuchadnezzar II , in Babylon , at age 32 . There are two different versions of Alexander 's death and details of the death differ slightly in each . Plutarch 's account is that roughly 14 days before his death , Alexander entertained admiral Nearchus , and spent the night and next day drinking with Medius of Larissa . He developed a fever , which worsened until he was unable to speak . The common soldiers , anxious about his health , were granted the right to file past him as he silently waved at them . In the second account , Diodorus recounts that Alexander was struck with pain after downing a large bowl of unmixed wine in honour of Heracles , followed by 11 days of weakness ; he did not develop a fever and died after some agony . Arrian also mentioned this as an alternative , but Plutarch specifically denied this claim .

Given the propensity of the Macedonian aristocracy to assassination , foul play featured in multiple accounts of his death . Diodorus , Plutarch , Arrian and Justin all mentioned the theory that Alexander was poisoned . Justin stated that Alexander was the victim of a poisoning conspiracy , Plutarch dismissed it as a fabrication , while both Diodorus and Arrian noted that they mentioned it only for the sake of completeness . The accounts were nevertheless fairly consistent in designating Antipater , recently removed as Macedonian viceroy , and at odds with Olympias , as the head of the alleged plot . Perhaps taking his summons to Babylon as a death sentence , and having seen the fate of Parmenion and Philotas , Antipater purportedly arranged for Alexander to be poisoned by his son Lollas , who was Alexander 's wine @-@ pourer . There was even a suggestion that Aristotle may have participated .

The strongest argument against the poison theory is the fact that twelve days passed between the start of his illness and his death ; such long @-@ acting poisons were probably not available . However , in a 2003 BBC documentary investigating the death of Alexander , Leo Schep from the New Zealand National Poisons Center proposed that the plant white hellebore ( *Veratrum album* ) , which was known in antiquity , may have been used to poison Alexander . In a 2014 manuscript in the journal *Clinical Toxicology* Schep suggested Alexander 's wine was spiked with *Veratrum album* , and that this would produce poisoning symptoms that match the course of events described in the *Alexander Romance* . *Veratrum album* poisoning can have a prolonged course and it was suggested that if Alexander was poisoned , *Veratrum album* offers the most plausible cause . Another poisoning explanation put forward in 2010 proposed that the circumstances of his death were compatible with poisoning by water of the river Styx ( modern @-@ day Mavroneri in Arcadia , Greece ) that contained calicheamicin , a dangerous compound produced by bacteria .

Several natural causes ( diseases ) have been suggested , including malaria and typhoid fever . A 1998 article in the *New England Journal of Medicine* attributed his death to typhoid fever complicated by bowel perforation and ascending paralysis . Another recent analysis suggested pyogenic ( infectious ) spondylitis or meningitis . Other illnesses fit the symptoms , including acute pancreatitis and West Nile virus . Natural @-@ cause theories also tend to emphasise that Alexander 's health may have been in general decline after years of heavy drinking and severe wounds . The anguish that Alexander felt after Hephaestion 's death may also have contributed to his declining health .

== After death ==

Alexander 's body was laid in a gold anthropoid sarcophagus that was filled with honey , which was in turn placed in a gold casket . According to Aelian , a seer called Aristander foretold that the land where Alexander was laid to rest " would be happy and unvanquishable forever " . Perhaps more likely , the successors may have seen possession of the body as a symbol of legitimacy , since burying the prior king was a royal prerogative .

While Alexander 's funeral cortege was on its way to Macedon , Ptolemy seized it and took it temporarily to Memphis . His successor , Ptolemy II Philadelphus , transferred the sarcophagus to Alexandria , where it remained until at least late Antiquity . Ptolemy IX Lathyros , one of Ptolemy 's final successors , replaced Alexander 's sarcophagus with a glass one so he could convert the original to coinage . The recent discovery of an enormous tomb in northern Greece , at Amphipolis ,

dating from the time of Alexander the Great has given rise to speculation that its original intent was to be the burial place of Alexander . This would fit with the intended destination of Alexander 's funeral cortege .

Pompey , Julius Caesar and Augustus all visited the tomb in Alexandria , where Augustus , allegedly , accidentally knocked the nose off . Caligula was said to have taken Alexander 's breastplate from the tomb for his own use . Around AD 200 , Emperor Septimius Severus closed Alexander 's tomb to the public . His son and successor , Caracalla , a great admirer , visited the tomb during his own reign . After this , details on the fate of the tomb are hazy .

The so @-@ called " Alexander Sarcophagus " , discovered near Sidon and now in the Istanbul Archaeology Museum , is so named not because it was thought to have contained Alexander 's remains , but because its bas @-@ reliefs depict Alexander and his companions fighting the Persians and hunting . It was originally thought to have been the sarcophagus of Abdalonymus ( died 311 BC ) , the king of Sidon appointed by Alexander immediately following the battle of Issus in 331 . However , more recently , it has been suggested that it may date from earlier than Abdalonymus ' death .

= = = Division of the empire = = =

Alexander 's death was so sudden that when reports of his death reached Greece , they were not immediately believed . Alexander had no obvious or legitimate heir , his son Alexander IV by Roxane being born after Alexander 's death . According to Diodorus , Alexander 's companions asked him on his deathbed to whom he bequeathed his kingdom ; his laconic reply was " τὸν κρατίστῳ " ? " to the strongest " .

Arrian and Plutarch claimed that Alexander was speechless by this point , implying that this was an apocryphal story . Diodorus , Curtius and Justin offered the more plausible story that Alexander passed his signet ring to Perdiccas , a bodyguard and leader of the companion cavalry , in front of witnesses , thereby nominating him .

Perdiccas initially did not claim power , instead suggesting that Roxane 's baby would be king , if male ; with himself , Craterus , Leonnatus , and Antipater as guardians . However , the infantry , under the command of Meleager , rejected this arrangement since they had been excluded from the discussion . Instead , they supported Alexander 's half @-@ brother Philip Arrhidaeus . Eventually , the two sides reconciled , and after the birth of Alexander IV , he and Philip III were appointed joint kings , albeit in name only .

Dissension and rivalry soon afflicted the Macedonians , however . The satrapies handed out by Perdiccas at the Partition of Babylon became power bases each general used to bid for power . After the assassination of Perdiccas in 321 BC , Macedonian unity collapsed , and 40 years of war between " The Successors " ( Diadochi ) ensued before the Hellenistic world settled into four stable power blocks : Ptolemaic Egypt , Seleucid Mesopotamia and Central Asia , Attalid Anatolia , and Antigonid Macedon . In the process , both Alexander IV and Philip III were murdered .

= = = Testament = = =

Diodorus stated that Alexander had given detailed written instructions to Craterus some time before his death . Craterus started to carry out Alexander 's commands , but the successors chose not to further implement them , on the grounds they were impractical and extravagant . Nevertheless , Perdiccas read Alexander 's will to his troops .

The testament called for military expansion into the southern and western Mediterranean , monumental constructions , and the intermixing of Eastern and Western populations . It included :

Construction of a monumental tomb for his father Philip , " to match the greatest of the pyramids of Egypt "

Erection of great temples in Delos , Delphi , Dodona , Dium , Amphipolis , and a monumental temple to Athena at Troy

Conquest of Arabia and the entire Mediterranean Basin

## Circumnavigation of Africa

Development of cities and the " transplant of populations from Asia to Europe and in the opposite direction from Europe to Asia , in order to bring the largest continent to common unity and to friendship by means of intermarriage and family ties . "

= = Character = =

= = = Generalship = = =

Alexander earned the epithet " the Great " due to his unparalleled success as a military commander . He never lost a battle , despite typically being outnumbered . This was due to use of terrain , phalanx and cavalry tactics , bold strategy , and the fierce loyalty of his troops . The Macedonian phalanx , armed with the sarissa , a spear 6 metres ( 20 ft ) long , had been developed and perfected by Philip II through rigorous training , and Alexander used its speed and maneuverability to great effect against larger but more disparate Persian forces . Alexander also recognized the potential for disunity among his diverse army , which employed various languages and weapons . He overcame this by being personally involved in battle , in the manner of a Macedonian king .

In his first battle in Asia , at Granicus , Alexander used only a small part of his forces , perhaps 13 000 infantry with 5 000 cavalry , against a much larger Persian force of 40 000 . Alexander placed the phalanx at the center and cavalry and archers on the wings , so that his line matched the length of the Persian cavalry line , about 3 km ( 1 @. 86 mi ) . By contrast , the Persian infantry was stationed behind its cavalry . This ensured that Alexander would not be outflanked , while his phalanx , armed with long pikes , had a considerable advantage over the Persian 's scimitars and javelins . Macedonian losses were negligible compared to those of the Persians .

At Issus in 333 BC , his first confrontation with Darius , he used the same deployment , and again the central phalanx pushed through . Alexander personally led the charge in the center , routing the opposing army . At the decisive encounter with Darius at Gaugamela , Darius equipped his chariots with scythes on the wheels to break up the phalanx and equipped his cavalry with pikes . Alexander arranged a double phalanx , with the center advancing at an angle , parting when the chariots bore down and then reforming . The advance was successful and broke Darius ' center , causing the latter to flee once again .

When faced with opponents who used unfamiliar fighting techniques , such as in Central Asia and India , Alexander adapted his forces to his opponents ' style . Thus , in Bactria and Sogdiana , Alexander successfully used his javelin throwers and archers to prevent outflanking movements , while massing his cavalry at the center . In India , confronted by Porus ' elephant corps , the Macedonians opened their ranks to envelop the elephants and used their sarissas to strike upwards and dislodge the elephants ' handlers .

= = = Physical appearance = = =

Greek biographer Plutarch ( c . 45 ? 120 AD ) describes Alexander 's appearance as :

<sup>1</sup> The outward appearance of Alexander is best represented by the statues of him which Lysippus made , and it was by this artist alone that Alexander himself thought it fit that he should be modelled . <sup>2</sup> For those peculiarities which many of his successors and friends afterwards tried to imitate , namely , the poise of the neck , which was bent slightly to the left , and the melting glance of his eyes , this artist has accurately observed . <sup>3</sup> Apelles , however , in painting him as wielder of the thunder @-@ bolt , did not reproduce his complexion , but made it too dark and swarthy . Whereas he was of a fair colour , as they say , and his fairness passed into ruddiness on his breast particularly , and in his face . <sup>4</sup> Moreover , that a very pleasant odour exhaled from his skin and that there was a fragrance about his mouth and all his flesh , so that his garments were filled with it , this we have read in the Memoirs of Aristoxenus .

Greek historian Arrian ( Lucius Flavius Arrianus ' Xenophon ' c . 86 ? 160 ) described Alexander as :

[ T ] he strong , handsome commander with one eye dark as the night and one blue as the sky .

The semi @-@ legendary Alexander Romance also suggests that Alexander suffered from heterochromia iridum : that one eye was dark and the other light .

British historian Peter Green provided a description of Alexander 's appearance , based on his review of statues and some ancient documents :

Physically , Alexander was not prepossessing . Even by Macedonian standards he was very short , though stocky and tough . His beard was scanty , and he stood out against his hirsute Macedonian barons by going clean @-@ shaven . His neck was in some way twisted , so that he appeared to be gazing upward at an angle . His eyes ( one blue , one brown ) revealed a dewy , feminine quality . He had a high complexion and a harsh voice .

Ancient authors recorded that Alexander was so pleased with portraits of himself created by Lysippos that he forbade other sculptors from crafting his image . Lysippos had often used the contrapposto sculptural scheme to portray Alexander and other characters such as Apoxyomenos , Hermes and Eros . Lysippos ' sculpture , famous for its naturalism , as opposed to a stiffer , more static pose , is thought to be the most faithful depiction .

= = = Personality = = =

Some of Alexander 's strongest personality traits formed in response to his parents . His mother had huge ambitions , and encouraged him to believe it was his destiny to conquer the Persian Empire . Olympias ' influence instilled a sense of destiny in him , and Plutarch tells us that his ambition " kept his spirit serious and lofty in advance of his years " . However , his father Philip was Alexander 's most immediate and influential role model , as the young Alexander watched him campaign practically every year , winning victory after victory while ignoring severe wounds . Alexander 's relationship with his father forged the competitive side of his personality ; he had a need to out @-@ do his father , illustrated by his reckless behavior in battle . While Alexander worried that his father would leave him " no great or brilliant achievement to be displayed to the world " , he also downplayed his father 's achievements to his companions .

According to Plutarch , among Alexander 's traits were a violent temper and rash , impulsive nature , which undoubtedly contributed to some of his decisions . Although Alexander was stubborn and did not respond well to orders from his father , he was open to reasoned debate . He had a calmer side ? perceptive , logical , and calculating . He had a great desire for knowledge , a love for philosophy , and was an avid reader . This was no doubt in part due to Aristotle 's tutelage ; Alexander was intelligent and quick to learn . His intelligent and rational side was amply demonstrated by his ability and success as a general . He had great self @-@ restraint in " pleasures of the body " , in contrast with his lack of self control with alcohol .

Alexander was erudite and patronized both arts and sciences . However , he had little interest in sports or the Olympic games ( unlike his father ) , seeking only the Homeric ideals of honor ( timê ) and glory ( kudos ) . He had great charisma and force of personality , characteristics which made him a great leader . His unique abilities were further demonstrated by the inability of any of his generals to unite Macedonia and retain the Empire after his death ? only Alexander had the ability to do so .

During his final years , and especially after the death of Hephaestion , Alexander began to exhibit signs of megalomania and paranoia . His extraordinary achievements , coupled with his own ineffable sense of destiny and the flattery of his companions , may have combined to produce this effect . His delusions of grandeur are readily visible in his testament and in his desire to conquer the world , in as much , he is by various sources described as having boundless ambition , an epithet , the meaning of which , has descended into an historical cliché .

He appears to have believed himself a deity , or at least sought to deify himself . Olympias always insisted to him that he was the son of Zeus , a theory apparently confirmed to him by the oracle of Amun at Siwa . He began to identify himself as the son of Zeus @-@ Ammon . Alexander adopted

elements of Persian dress and customs at court , notably proskynesis , a practice of which Macedonians disapproved , and were loath to perform . This behavior cost him the sympathies of many of his countrymen . However , Alexander also was a pragmatic ruler who understood the difficulties of ruling culturally disparate peoples , many of whom lived in kingdoms where the king was divine . Thus , rather than megalomania , his behavior may simply have been a practical attempt at strengthening his rule and keeping his empire together .

#### = = = Personal relationships = = =

Alexander married three times : Roxana , daughter of the Bactrian nobleman Oxyartes , out of love ; and the Persian princesses Stateira II and Parysatis II , the former a daughter of Darius III and latter a daughter of Artaxerxes III , for political reasons . He apparently had two sons , Alexander IV of Macedon of Roxana and , possibly , Heracles of Macedon from his mistress Barsine . He lost another child when Roxana miscarried at Babylon .

Alexander also had a close relationship with his friend , general , and bodyguard Hephaestion , the son of a Macedonian noble . Hephaestion 's death devastated Alexander . This event may have contributed to Alexander 's failing health and detached mental state during his final months .

Alexander 's sexuality has been the subject of speculation and controversy . No ancient sources stated that Alexander had homosexual relationships , or that Alexander 's relationship with Hephaestion was sexual . Aelian , however , writes of Alexander 's visit to Troy where " Alexander garlanded the tomb of Achilles and Hephaestion that of Patroclus , the latter riddling that he was a beloved of Alexander , in just the same way as Patroclus was of Achilles . " Noting that the word *eromenos* ( ancient Greek for beloved ) does not necessarily bear sexual meaning , Alexander may have been bisexual , which in his time was not controversial .

Green argues that there is little evidence in ancient sources that Alexander had much carnal interest in women ; he did not produce an heir until the very end of his life . However , he was relatively young when he died , and Ogden suggests that Alexander 's matrimonial record is more impressive than his father 's at the same age . Apart from wives , Alexander had many more female companions . Alexander accumulated a harem in the style of Persian kings , but he used it rather sparingly ; showing great self @-@ control in " pleasures of the body " . Nevertheless , Plutarch described how Alexander was infatuated by Roxana while complimenting him on not forcing himself on her . Green suggested that , in the context of the period , Alexander formed quite strong friendships with women , including Ada of Caria , who adopted him , and even Darius ' mother Sisygambis , who supposedly died from grief upon hearing of Alexander 's death .

#### = = = Legacy = = =

Alexander 's legacy extended beyond his military conquests . His campaigns greatly increased contacts and trade between East and West , and vast areas to the east were significantly exposed to Greek civilization and influence . Some of the cities he founded became major cultural centers , many surviving into the 21st century . His chroniclers recorded valuable information about the areas through which he marched , while the Greeks themselves got a sense of belonging to a world beyond the Mediterranean .

#### = = = Hellenistic kingdoms = = =

Alexander 's most immediate legacy was the introduction of Macedonian rule to huge new swathes of Asia . At the time of his death , Alexander 's empire covered some 5 @,@ 200 @,@ 000 km2 ( 2 @,@ 000 @,@ 000 sq mi ) , and was the largest state of its time . Many of these areas remained in Macedonian hands or under Greek influence for the next 200 ? 300 years . The successor states that emerged were , at least initially , dominant forces , and these 300 years are often referred to as the Hellenistic period .

The eastern borders of Alexander 's empire began to collapse even during his lifetime . However ,

the power vacuum he left in the northwest of the Indian subcontinent directly gave rise to one of the most powerful Indian dynasties in history , the Maurya Empire . Taking advantage of this power vacuum , Chandragupta Maurya ( referred to in Greek sources as " Sandrokottos " ) , of relatively humble origin , took control of the Punjab , and with that power base proceeded to conquer the Nanda Empire .

= = = Founding of cities = = =

Over the course of his conquests , Alexander founded some twenty cities that bore his name , most of them east of the Tigris . The first , and greatest , was Alexandria in Egypt , which would become one of the leading Mediterranean cities . The cities ' locations reflected trade routes as well as defensive positions . At first , the cities must have been inhospitable , little more than defensive garrisons . Following Alexander 's death , many Greeks who had settled there tried to return to Greece . However , a century or so after Alexander 's death , many of the Alexandrias were thriving , with elaborate public buildings and substantial populations that included both Greek and local peoples .

= = = Hellenization = = =

Hellenization was coined by the German historian Johann Gustav Droysen to denote the spread of Greek language , culture , and population into the former Persian empire after Alexander 's conquest . That this export took place is undoubted , and can be seen in the great Hellenistic cities of , for instance , Alexandria , Antioch and Seleucia ( south of modern Baghdad ) . Alexander sought to insert Greek elements into Persian culture and attempted to hybridize Greek and Persian culture . This culminated in his aspiration to homogenize the populations of Asia and Europe . However , his successors explicitly rejected such policies . Nevertheless , Hellenization occurred throughout the region , accompanied by a distinct and opposite ' Orientalization ' of the successor states .

The core of the Hellenistic culture promulgated by the conquests was essentially Athenian . The close association of men from across Greece in Alexander 's army directly led to the emergence of the largely Attic @-@ based " koine " , or " common " Greek dialect . Koine spread throughout the Hellenistic world , becoming the lingua franca of Hellenistic lands and eventually the ancestor of modern Greek . Furthermore , town planning , education , local government , and art current in the Hellenistic period were all based on Classical Greek ideals , evolving into distinct new forms commonly grouped as Hellenistic . Aspects of Hellenistic culture were still evident in the traditions of the Byzantine Empire in the mid @-@ 15th century .

Some of the most pronounced effects of Hellenization can be seen in Afghanistan and India , in the region of the relatively late @-@ rising Greco @-@ Bactrian Kingdom ( 250 BC @-@ 125 BC ) ( in modern Afghanistan , Pakistan , and Tajikistan ) and the Indo @-@ Greek Kingdom ( 180 BC - 10 CE ) in modern Afghanistan and India . There on the newly formed Silk Road Greek culture apparently hybridized with Indian , and especially Buddhist culture . The resulting syncretism known as Greco @-@ Buddhism heavily influenced the development of Buddhism and created a culture of Greco @-@ Buddhist art . These Greco @-@ Buddhist kingdoms sent some of the first Buddhist missionaries to China , Sri Lanka , and the Mediterranean ( Greco @-@ Buddhist monasticism ) . Some of the first and most influential figurative portrayals of the Buddha appeared at this time , perhaps modeled on Greek statues of Apollo in the Greco @-@ Buddhist style . Several Buddhist traditions may have been influenced by the ancient Greek religion : the concept of Bodhisattvas is reminiscent of Greek divine heroes , and some Mahayana ceremonial practices ( burning incense , gifts of flowers , and food placed on altars ) are similar to those practiced by the ancient Greeks ; however , similar practices were also observed amongst the native Indic culture . One Greek king , Menander I , probably became Buddhist , and was immortalized in Buddhist literature as ' Milinda ' . The process of Hellenization also spurred trade between the east and west . For example , Greek astronomical instruments dating to the 3rd century BC were found in the Greco @-@ Bactrian city of Ai Khanoum in modern @-@ day Afghanistan , while the Greek concept of a spherical earth

surrounded by the spheres of planets eventually supplanted the long @-@ standing Indian cosmological belief of a disc consisting of four continents grouped around a central mountain ( Mount Meru ) like the petals of a flower . The Yavanajataka ( lit . Greek astronomical treatise ) and Paulisa Siddhanta texts depict the influence of Greek astronomical ideas on Indian astronomy .

= = = Influence on Rome = = =

Alexander and his exploits were admired by many Romans , especially generals , who wanted to associate themselves with his achievements . Polybius began his Histories by reminding Romans of Alexander 's achievements , and thereafter Roman leaders saw him as a role model . Pompey the Great adopted the epithet " Magnus " and even Alexander 's anastole @-@ type haircut , and searched the conquered lands of the east for Alexander 's 260 @-@ year @-@ old cloak , which he then wore as a sign of greatness . Julius Caesar dedicated a Lysippean equestrian bronze statue but replaced Alexander 's head with his own , while Octavian visited Alexander 's tomb in Alexandria and temporarily changed his seal from a sphinx to Alexander 's profile . The emperor Trajan also admired Alexander , as did Nero and Caracalla . The Macriani , a Roman family that in the person of Macrinus briefly ascended to the imperial throne , kept images of Alexander on their persons , either on jewelry , or embroidered into their clothes .

On the other hand , some Roman writers , particularly Republican figures , used Alexander as a cautionary tale of how autocratic tendencies can be kept in check by republican values . Alexander was used by these writers as an example of ruler values such as amicitia ( friendship ) and clementia ( clemency ) , but also iracundia ( anger ) and cupiditas gloriae ( over @-@ desire for glory ) .

= = = Legend = = =

Legendary accounts surround the life of Alexander the Great , many deriving from his own lifetime , probably encouraged by Alexander himself . His court historian Callisthenes portrayed the sea in Cilicia as drawing back from him in proskynesis . Writing shortly after Alexander 's death , another participant , Onesicritus , invented a tryst between Alexander and Thalestris , queen of the mythical Amazons . When Onesicritus read this passage to his patron , Alexander 's general and later King Lysimachus reportedly quipped , " I wonder where I was at the time . "

In the first centuries after Alexander 's death , probably in Alexandria , a quantity of the legendary material coalesced into a text known as the Alexander Romance , later falsely ascribed to Callisthenes and therefore known as Pseudo @-@ Callisthenes . This text underwent numerous expansions and revisions throughout Antiquity and the Middle Ages , containing many dubious stories , and was translated into numerous languages .

= = = In ancient and modern culture = = =

Alexander the Great 's accomplishments and legacy have been depicted in many cultures . Alexander has figured in both high and popular culture beginning in his own era to the present day . The Alexander Romance , in particular , has had a significant impact on portrayals of Alexander in later cultures , from Persian to medieval European to modern Greek .

Alexander features prominently in modern Greek folklore , more so than any other ancient figure . The colloquial form of his name in modern Greek ( " O Megalexandros " ) is a household name , and he is the only ancient hero to appear in the Karagiozis shadow play . One well @-@ known fable among Greek seamen involves a solitary mermaid who would grasp a ship 's prow during a storm and ask the captain " Is King Alexander alive ? " . The correct answer is " He is alive and well and rules the world ! " , causing the mermaid to vanish and the sea to calm . Any other answer would cause the mermaid to turn into a raging Gorgon who would drag the ship to the bottom of the sea , all hands aboard .

In pre @-@ Islamic Middle Persian ( Zoroastrian ) literature , Alexander is referred to by the epithet gujastak , meaning " accursed " , and is accused of destroying temples and burning the sacred texts



of Zoroastrianism . In Islamic Iran , under the influence of the Alexander Romance ( in Persian : ?????????? Iskandarnamah ) , a more positive portrayal of Alexander emerges . Firdausi 's Shahnameh ( " The Book of Kings " ) includes Alexander in a line of legitimate Iranian shahs , a mythical figure who explored the far reaches of the world in search of the Fountain of Youth . Later Persian writers associate him with philosophy , portraying him at a symposium with figures such as Socrates , Plato and Aristotle , in search of immortality .

The Syriac version of the Alexander Romance portrays him as an ideal Christian world conqueror who prayed to " the one true God " . In Egypt , Alexander was portrayed as the son of Nectanebo II , the last pharaoh before the Persian conquest . His defeat of Darius was depicted as Egypt 's salvation , " proving " Egypt was still ruled by an Egyptian .

The figure of Dhul @-@ Qarnayn ( literally " the Two @-@ Horned One " ) mentioned in the Quran is believed by some scholars to represent Alexander , due to parallels with the Alexander Romance . In this tradition , he was a heroic figure who built a wall to defend against the nations of Gog and Magog . He then traveled the known world in search for the Water of Life and Immortality , eventually becoming a prophet .

In Hindi and Urdu , the name " Sikandar " , derived from Persian , denotes a rising young talent . In medieval Europe he was made a member of the Nine Worthies , a group of heroes who encapsulated all the ideal qualities of chivalry .

= = Historiography = =

Apart from a few inscriptions and fragments , texts written by people who actually knew Alexander or who gathered information from men who served with Alexander were all lost . Contemporaries who wrote accounts of his life included Alexander 's campaign historian Callisthenes ; Alexander 's generals Ptolemy and Nearchus ; Aristobulus , a junior officer on the campaigns ; and Onesicritus , Alexander 's chief helmsman . Their works are lost , but later works based on these original sources have survived . The earliest of these is Diodorus Siculus ( 1st century BC ) , followed by Quintus Curtius Rufus ( mid @-@ to @-@ late 1st century AD ) , Arrian ( 1st to 2nd century AD ) , the biographer Plutarch ( 1st to 2nd century AD ) , and finally Justin , whose work dated as late as the 4th century . Of these , Arrian is generally considered the most reliable , given that he used Ptolemy and Aristobulus as his sources , closely followed by Diodorus .

= = Ancestry = =

= = Annotations = =