

CLASSICAL STUDIES

Tadhg MacHugh

Classical Studies

HIGHER LEVEL

2020/21

ALEXANDER THE GREAT-GREAT BATTLES



CONTENTS

FORMAT NOTE	1
PAST QUESTIONS BREAKDOWN	2
BATTLE OF GRANICUS	3-10
BATTLE OF ISSUS	11-19
BATTLE OF GAUGAMELA	20-26
BATTLE OF HYDASPES	27-32
LETTERS FROM DARIUS TO ALEXANDER	33-34



Format:

- The booklet has been broken into sub-categories based on past questions.
- Each category will be presented with a breakdown of past questions.
- It is important to utilize apps such as *pocket papers* or <https://www.examinations.ie/exammaterialarchive/?i=115.120.111.100.99>

Sub-Categories:

- Battles
- Key Events
- Sieges
- **NB:** Character: we will be building evidence of Alexanders character from these other sub-categories.
- **Character is based on three concepts; what a character does, says, and what others say about them.**
-



ALEXANDER THE GREAT BATTLES

1996: Hydaspes

1997: N/A

1998: Gaugamela

1999: N/A

2000: Granicus

2001: N/A

2002: Issus

2003: N/A

2004: N/A

2005: Gaugamela

2006: Issus

2007: Hydaspes

2008: Issus

2009: Granicus

2010: Gaugamela

2011: Hydaspes

2012: N/A

2013: Issus

2014: Granicus

2015: Gaugamela

2016: N/A

2017: Hydaspese

2018: Issus

2019: Granicus

Advisable to know Gaugamela and Hydaspes equally well



Battle of Granicus 334 BC

PAST QUESTIONS:

2000:

The Persian leaders including Memnon of Rhodes, met to decide how to deal with Alexander shortly after his arrival in Asia Minor.

- (a) What options did they discuss, and why did they decide to meet Alexander in battle at the river Granicus? (20)
- (b) Give a brief outline of the course of this battle (30)

2009:

At the Granicus River Alexander won his first victory over a Persian army.

- (a) Give a brief account of the course of the battle (30)
- (b) What do we learn about Alexander's qualities of leadership from this battle? (20)

2014:

(a) Discuss the view that it was Alexander's qualities as a leader and as a strategist that ensured victory over the Persians at the Granicus River. (35)

- (b) What do we learn about Alexander's character from his behaviour after the battle? (15)

2019:

(a) Describe how Alexander and his army defeated the Persians at the Granicus River. (30)

- (b) What did you learn about Alexander's leadership qualities from the lead up to the battle, the battle itself and its aftermath? (20)



Build-up

Persian Council at Zeleia

- Memnon of Rhodes, a Greek mercenary commander, warned satraps **NOT** to engage the Macedonians in battle because ...
 - The Macedonian infantry had greatly superior numbers
 - Alexander was there in person whilst Darius was not
- Memnon advised a retreat into Phrygia followed by a scorched earth policy to force Alexander to withdraw back to Greece for want of provisions
- Arsites rejected Memnon's advice because it would ruin the economy of his province: Phrygia. He would not consent to a single house of one of his subject being burned.
- The other Persian satraps supported Arsites. They didn't trust Memnon because ...
 - He was Greek not Persian
 - They suspected he was afraid of losing the position he held from Darius.

Parmenio's advice rejected

- Alexander's prodromoi (scouts) reported the Persians' position on the Granicus and the nature of the river. It had steep muddy banks, almost sheer in places and an uneven river bed.
- Parmenio advised Alexander against crossing the river to attack the Persians immediately. He argued that because the enemy infantry were outnumbered he didn't believe they would run the risk of staying so close to Alexander's army throughout the night. He also advised that the army would not be able to get across in a broad front because of the deep and sheer banks. He explained that if they were to do so the most likely outcome would be that they would advance in a loose column order which would give the Persian cavalry a huge advantage as the infantry struggled out of the water. He ended his argument by warning Alexander that a failure at the outset would be serious and 'highly detrimental to our success in the long run.'
 - Instead he advised making camp and intimidating the Persians into a withdrawal during the night
 - They would cross the river at dawn the next day safely
 - They would then take the Persians by surprise
- Alexander rejected Parmenio's advice saying, "I should be ashamed if a little trickle of water like this were too much for us to cross without further preparation, when I had no difficulty whatever in crossing the Hellespont' - meaning that having crossed the Hellespont successfully the Macedonians should not be afraid of a Persian army on the far bank of a stream.
- He argued that hesitancy now would be 'unworthy of the fighting fame of our people' and of his own 'promptitude in the face of danger.' He believed hesitancy would give



the ‘Persians added confidence’ as if nothing had yet happened they would begin to believe they were as good as soldiers as the Macedonians. Plutarch refers to Alexander’s plans to cross the Granicus as the act of a ‘desperate madman’ rather than that of a ‘prudent commander.’

- Plutarch states that most of the Macedonians were alarmed at the ‘depth of the river and of the rough and uneven slopes of the banks on the opposite side.’ He also states that others wanted Alexander to observe the Macedonian tradition under which Macedonian kings didn’t make war during the May-June period which was the gathering of the harvest. Alexander dismissed this.

Battle Formations

Macedonians

- Parmenio takes control of the left wing
- Alexander takes control of the right wing.
- **Right:** Command given to Parmenio’s son **Philotas** with the Companion Cavalry, archers and Agriane spearmen. **Amyntas** was attached to him with the lancers, the Paeonians and Socrates’ squadron.
- **Centre Right:** The Guard’s battalions. Under the command of Parmenio’s other son **Nicanor**. Joined by the infantry battalions of **Perdiccas, Coenus, Amyntas** and **Philip**, in that order.
- **Left:** Advanced position held by the **Thessalian Cavalry**. Supported in the following order by allied cavalry and the **Thracians**.
- **Left Centre:** Infantry battalions of **Craterus, Meleager** and **Philip**.

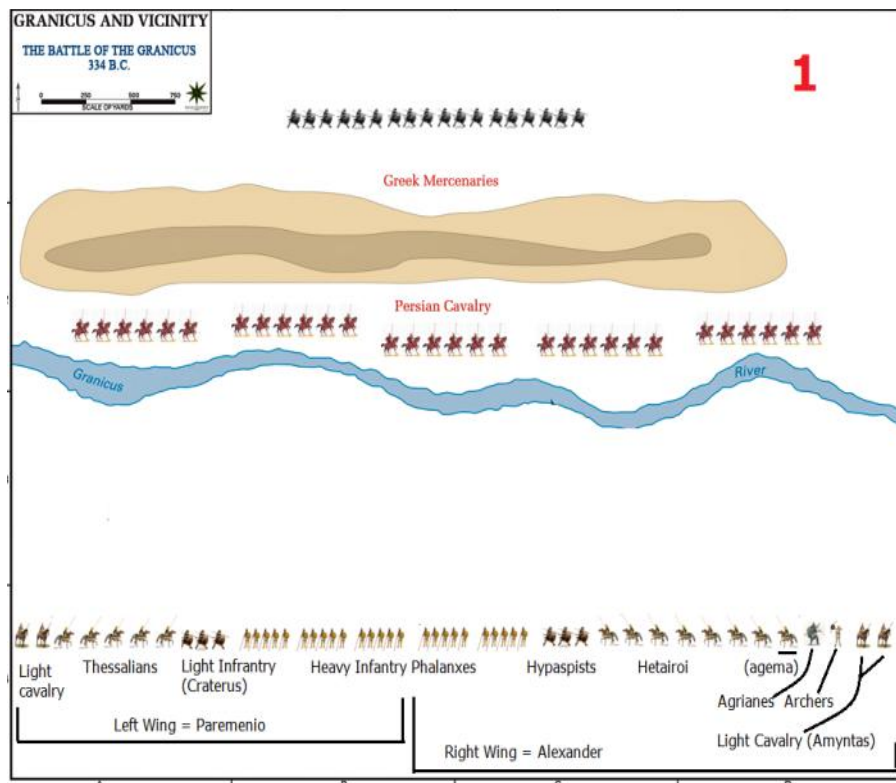
Looking down on the Macedonian army at Granicus the allied Greek light cavalries supported the Thessalian heavy cavalry on the left wing. Craterus’ light infantry unit connected the cavalry to the central heavy infantry phalanxes. Parmenio held command on the left wing. Moving towards the right commanded by Alexander himself Nicanor’s Hypaspists supported the phalanxes and connected them to Alexander’s heavy Hetairoi (Companion cavalry) commanded by Philotas and these were supported on the extreme right by the Agrianes, the archers and the prodromoi (scouts) and Paeonian light cavalries commanded by Amyntas.

Persians

The Persians had about 20,000 cavalry and about the same number of foreign Greek mercenaries. The Persian cavalry lined the banks of the Granicus on a very broad front. Memnon and the other satraps occupied a central command position on the ridge. Memnon’s Greek mercenary phalanxes were posted in reserve behind the hill making them redundant in



the battle. The Persians had massed their squadrons in strength on the their left because they could see Alexander and the threat he posed.



The Battle

There was a profound hush before the battle began when Alexander leapt on his horse and began to give the commands.

He ordered **Amyntas** to lead off on the right into the water with the advance scouts, Paeonians and one infantry company. They were preceded by Ptolmey and Socrates' squadron.

Alexander, at the head of the right wing, with trumpets blaring, moved forward into the river. He kept his line oblique to the pull of the current in order to prevent a flank attack when they emerged from the water and to ensure as solid a line as possible when they emerged.

The initial attack by Amyntas and Socrates was thwarted by a heavy Persian resistance. They were heavily outnumbered and according to Arrian, 'suffered severely.' They were no match for the Persians on the high ground and with the insecure foothold they had. Added to this was the fact that they were facing the might of Memnon and his sons.

The first to engage the Persians 'died a soldiers death' but Alexander was now on his way across and was soon 'in the thick of it.' Arrian states that Alexander was charging right for where the ranks of Persian commanders and horses were 'thickest.' A bloody struggle ensued in what Arrian called a 'cavalry battle' with 'infantry tactics.' Plutarch notes that many of them charged at Alexander himself because he was easily recognisable owing to his shield and tall white plume.

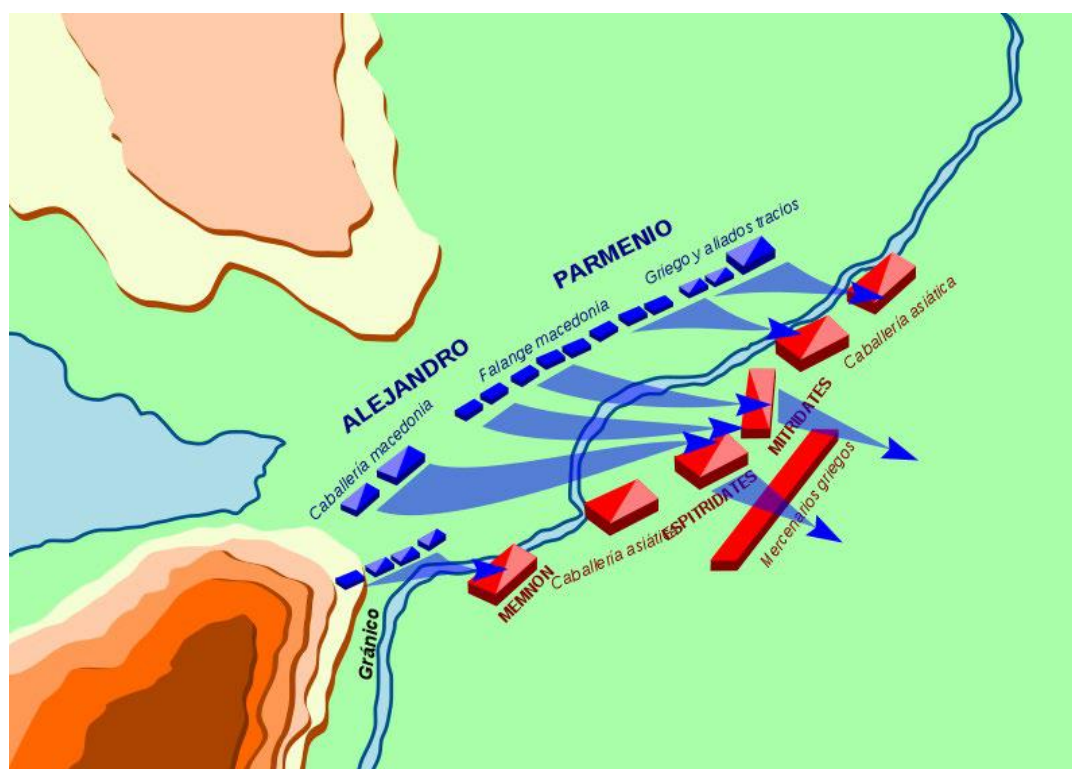
Events soon turned in Alexander's favour as their experience, the weight of their attack and perhaps most importantly their long cornel wood spears, over the light lances of the Persians, gave them the advantage.

At one stage during the battle Alexander did come close to death. His spear was broken and struggled to get a replacement but soon Demaratus, one of his personal bodyguard, gave him a replacement and so he made straight for Darius' son in law, Mithridates. He struck Mithridates in the face with his spear but Rhoesaces rode at Alexander and managed to strike his helmet with his scimitar. The helmet took the brunt of the blow and Alexander then managed to strike Rhoesaces down with a spear thrust. Sphithridates, however, was now in a position to strike the vulnerable Alexander. With his scimitar raised and ready to strike Alexander from behind, Cleitus came to his rescue and severed Sphithridates shoulder, thus saving Alexander's life. Plutarch states that Spithridates actually struck and split Alexanders helmet with a strike of his battle axe and then as he went for another attack 'Black' Cleitus ran him through with his spear, not severing his arm, as Arrian states.

By this stage the majority of Alexander's troops were now successfully getting up the riverbank. The Persians were struggling to hold their position and Arrian states that it was at the point where Alexander himself was 'bearing the brunt of things' that the Persians began to break. When the centre collapsed both wings broke. The Macedonians began a pursuit, but



Alexander checked that in order to turn his attention to the Greek mercenaries who had not yet engaged in the fight. Arrian states that they had not moved from their position as the suddenness of the destruction of the Persian forces had 'deprived them of their wits.' Alexander ordered his infantry and cavalry surround them and had them quickly 'butchered to a man.' Plutarch tells this differently. He states that the mercenaries held their ground and prepared to make a stand. He says that they sent a message to Alexander 'asking for quarter.' Plutarch states that in this instance Alexander was 'guided by passion rather than by reason' and led a charge against them, losing his horse in the process. Plutarch goes on to say that it was against the mercenaries that the Macedonians actually suffered their greatest losses.



Aftermath:

About 2,000 prisoners were taken and many Persian commanders had also been killed. Arsites managed to escape but we are told that he killed himself because the Persians held him responsible for the defeat. Plutarch says the Persians lost 20,000 infantry and 2,500 cavalry.

Macedonian losses included about 25 of the Companion Cavalry, more than 60 of the mounted troops and about 30 infantrymen.

Alexander had bronze statues of the 25 Companions constructed by Lysippus to stand in Dium. The dead were buried with their arms and equipment. Their parents and children were granted immunity from local taxes and all other forms of personal service or dues payable on property.



Alexander 'showed deep concern' for the wounded, visiting them all, asking them how they were wounded and allowing them to exaggerate the stories as much as they pleased.

Alexander gave the Persian commanders and Greek mercenaries rites of burial and sent the Greek prisoners to hard labour in Macedonia. He then sent 300 suits of Persian armour to Athens as an offering to Athena.

Alexander then replaced Arsites with Calas as satrap. His orders were to maintain local tax and allow those who were in hiding to return to their homes. He gave the people of Zeleia a free pardon as he understood that they fought against him under pressure. Plutarch states that the victory 'brought about a great and immediate change in Alexander's situation.' Sardis, the principal seat of Persian power on the Asiatic seaboard surrendered as did most of the rest of the region. Only Miletus and Halicarnassus held out and his sieges against these towns would then lead him to adopt his coastal policy.

ALEXANDERS LEADERSHIP AND STRATEGY:

Brave:

- At the centre of things
- Risked his life
- Went where the fighting was thickest
- Killed Persian commanders

Determined/Stubborn/Confident:

- Ignored Parmenio's warnings
- Ignored fears of other Macedonian commanders

Inspiring:

- Trusted in the strength and discipline in his army to cross the river

Ruthless:

- His treatment of the mercenaries (Arrian)

Strategist:



- Focusing his attack on the right
- The initial attack to engage the Persian right
- Turning focus to the centre to break the wings
- Going straight for the commanders
- The oblique line to try and keep formation
- The longer sarissa's

BEHAVIOUR AFTER THE BATTLE:

Reckless: *would depend on the question and parameters

- Plutarch's mention of the attack on the Greek mercenaries and the losses
- Putting himself in danger and having to be saved by Cleitus *during battle*

Empathetic:

- Visits the wounded and lets them tell their stories
- Absolves the dead men's families of taxes
- Statues for the Companions
- Burial of the men with equipment

Ruthless: *again depends on parameters

- Arrian's version of the attack on the Greek mercenaries
- Greek mercenaries hard labour

Merciful:

- Pardons the people of Zeleia
- Allows the Persian commanders and mercenaries burial rites

Piety:



- Offering to Athena

Battle of Issus 333BC

PAST QUESTIONS:

2002:

- (a) How did it happen that Issus became the site of the battle between Alexander and Darius? (15)
- (b) Explain why Darius lined up his forces as he did? (15)
- (c) Briefly outline the course of the battle (20)

2006:

- (a) Describe the main components of Alexander's army. (25)
- (b) In the battle of Issus, what use did Alexander make of his cavalry and infantry? (25)

2008:

- (a) Describe how Alexander and the Macedonians defeated Darius and the Persians at the Battle of Issus in 333BC. (35)
- (b) What were the main consequences of Alexander's victory? (15)

2013:

In 333BC at the river Issus, the armies of Alexander and Darius met for the first time.

- (a) Describe the course of the battle. (35)
- (b) What do you learn about Alexander from his conduct during and after the battle? (15)

2018:

- (a) Describe how Alexander and his Macedonians defeated Darius at the battle of Issus in 333BC. (35)
- (b) What did you learn about Alexander's character from his behaviour in the aftermath of the Battle of Issus? (15)



PRELIMINARIES:

Darius gives up his advantageous position:

- Darius had initially chosen a flat, open part of Assyria for his position. This had the advantage that it was good for cavalry action and suited manoeuvring the vast numbers that he had. A deserter from Alexander's side, Amyntas, urged Darius not to move from the position as it perfectly suited the Persians numbers and equipment. Darius initially heeded the advice.
- Alexander had been held up for various reasons. He was delayed at Tarsus by illness, by the grand parade and religious ceremonies at Soli and finally by his expeditions against the hill tribes of Cilicia.
- The delay of Alexander's arrival gave Darius confidence as flattering courtiers convinced him that Alexander no longer wished to advance into Asia and was in fact intimidated by Darius. They further convinced him that Persian cavalry would 'trample' the Macedonian army to pieces.
- Amyntas tried to convince Darius otherwise. He told Darius that Alexander would seek him out no matter where he was and 'urged him not to shift ground.' Darius ignored Amyntas' pleas and decided to move his army. Arrian states that some 'supernatural power' must have led Darius to make such a poor tactical decision, a sure sign that destiny was handing Persia to the Macedonians.
- Darius began his move and made for Issus and was not at Alexander's rear. When he arrived in Issus he mutilated and put to death every Macedonian who had been left there unfit for service. After this he then moved towards the Pinarus river.
- Alexander sent scouts to confirm that Darius was in his rear and when this was confirmed turned back to face him.



Alexander inspires his commanders to fight:

Macedonian Advantages:

- Alexander meets his infantry and cavalry commanders. He reminded them of the previous dangers they had overcome. He affirmed that Darius moving away from such an advantageous position was a sign that God was on their side. He reminded them that they would have enough room to employ their infantry, whereas Darius will see his numerical advantage nullified. He told them that the Persians were no match for their infantry in 'bodily strength or resolution' and declared that whereas the Persians were soft and lived luxurious lives, the Macedonians have been trained in the dangers of war and above all were an army of free men fighting slaves.
- He reminded his commanders that the Persians were fighting for pay but they were fighting for Greece. He mentioned also that even their foreign troops, such as the Agrianes, were the best of Europe and should have no problems with the Persians.
- He finished by reminding his commanders that 'You have Alexander, they – Darius!'
-

Rewards of Victory:

- Alexander argues that a victory at Issus would be a victory over the 'fine flower' of the Persian army, with Darius present to see its destruction. It would 'crown their many labours with sovereignty of Asia'
- He reminded his men of their previous victories and picked out examples of individual courage among his men which he had previously witnessed.
- He reminded them of the historical victory of Xenophon over The Ten Thousand and informed them that he did not have the same advantages that they now have.
- Alexander successfully inspired his men and they marched forward to shake his hand and lead them into battle without delay.

Alexander approaches the Pinarus:

- Alexander ordered his men to eat and sent a small party of mounted men and archers to the narrow pass to scout the road by which they had to return. As soon as it was dark, he led the whole army to take control of the narrow gateway. They secured the passage by midnight and Alexander then allowed his men to rest where they were. In the morning the army moved forward along the coast towards the Pinarus with the sea to his left and hills to his right.



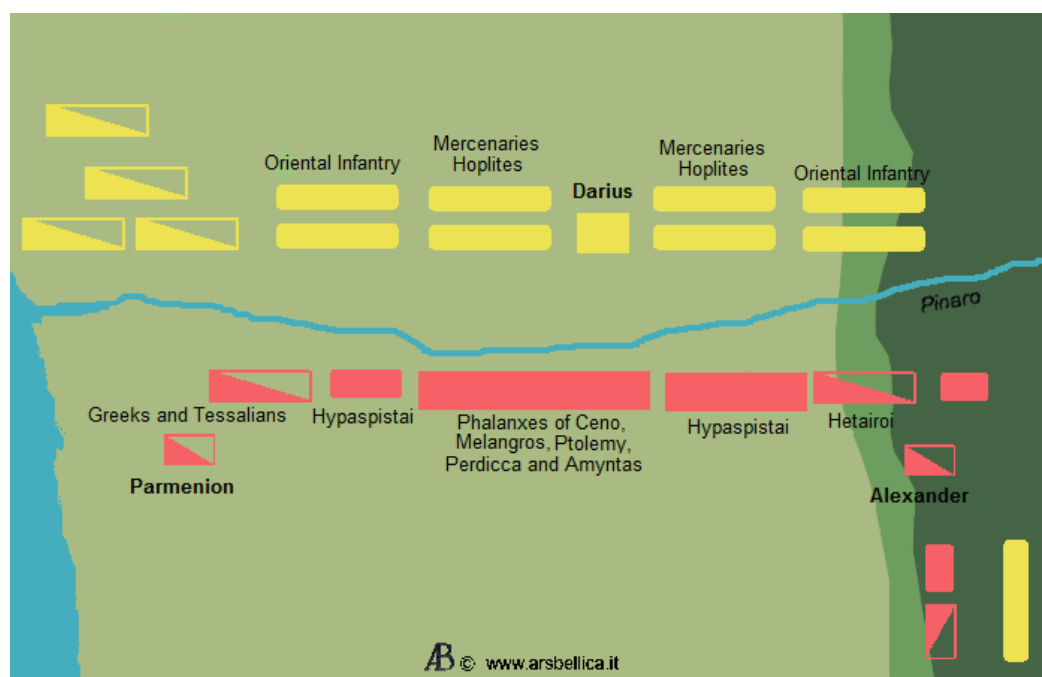
Alexander lines up his army:

- Command of the left as a whole is given to Parmenio
- Alexander takes command of the right as a whole.
- **Right Wing:** Nicanor commands three battalions of the Guards on the nearby rising ground. Coenus' battalion is on their left. Perdicaeus' men are in close touch to them. These, together, form a whole line to the centre.
- **Centre:** The heavy infantry
- **Left Wing:** On the extreme left is Amyntas and beside them working across to the centre are Ptolemy and his battalion and then Meleager. Craterus led the infantry on the left. Parmenio was given the instruction to, under no circumstances, allow a gap develop between the left and sea as it would allow the Persians use their numerical superiority to outflank the Macedonians.

Darius lines up his army:

- Darius initially sent 30,000 cavalry and 20,000 light infantry across the river to allow him time to get his army into position.
- **Centre:** 30,000 Greek mercenaries at the van with 60,000 Persian heavy infantry (Kardakes) split either side of them to support. Drawn up in a line, the ground could not support a larger number. Darius is located in the centre.
- **Left (facing Alexander's right):** On the rising ground a division about 20,000 strong which worked around to the rear of Alexander's right wing.
- **Rest:** The remaining soldiers supported on either flank at the rear of the mercenaries and Persian infantry. They were organised by the country of their origin. They were lined up in depth as the ground would not allow more. Arrian says the army numbered about 600,000.





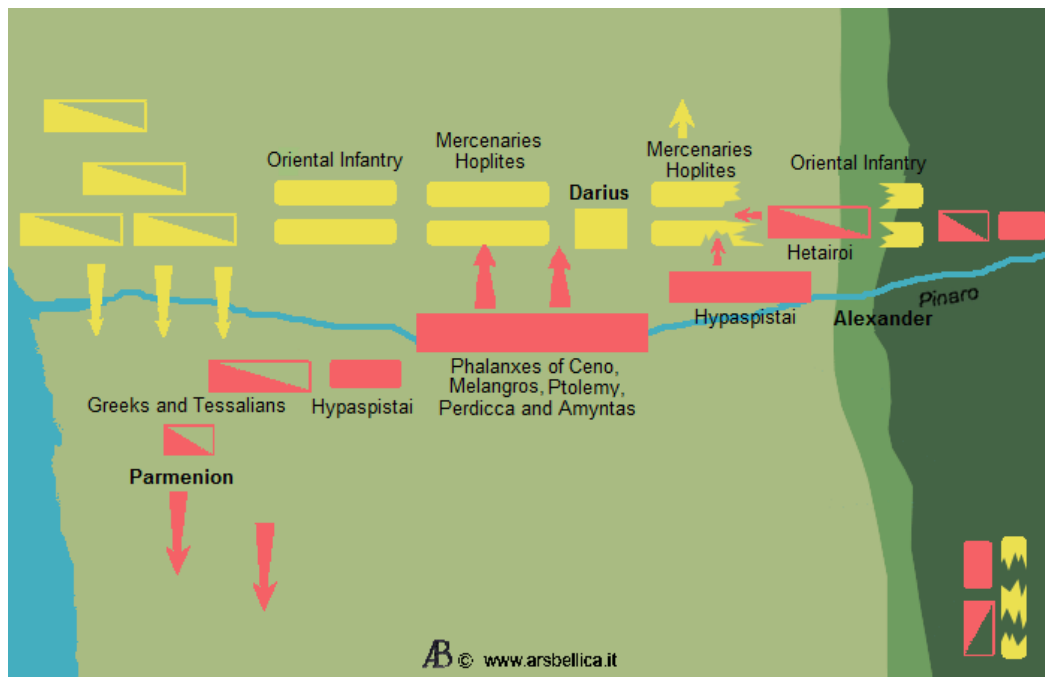
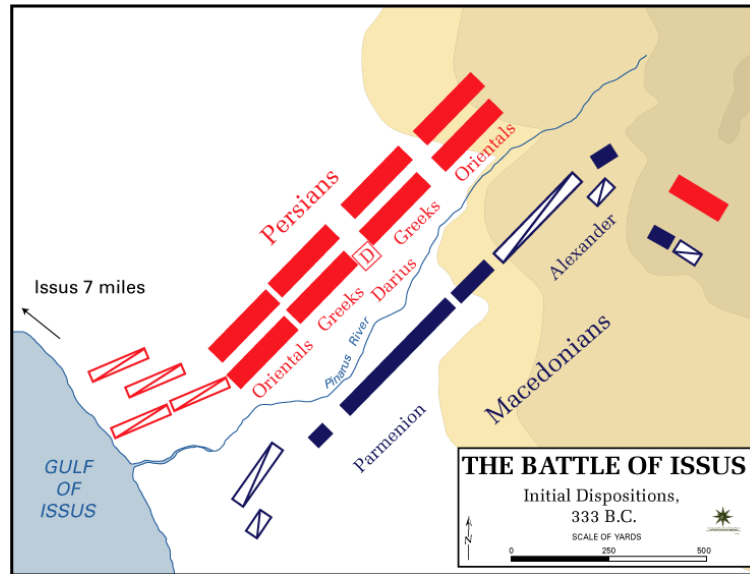
Alexander & Darius begins their moves:

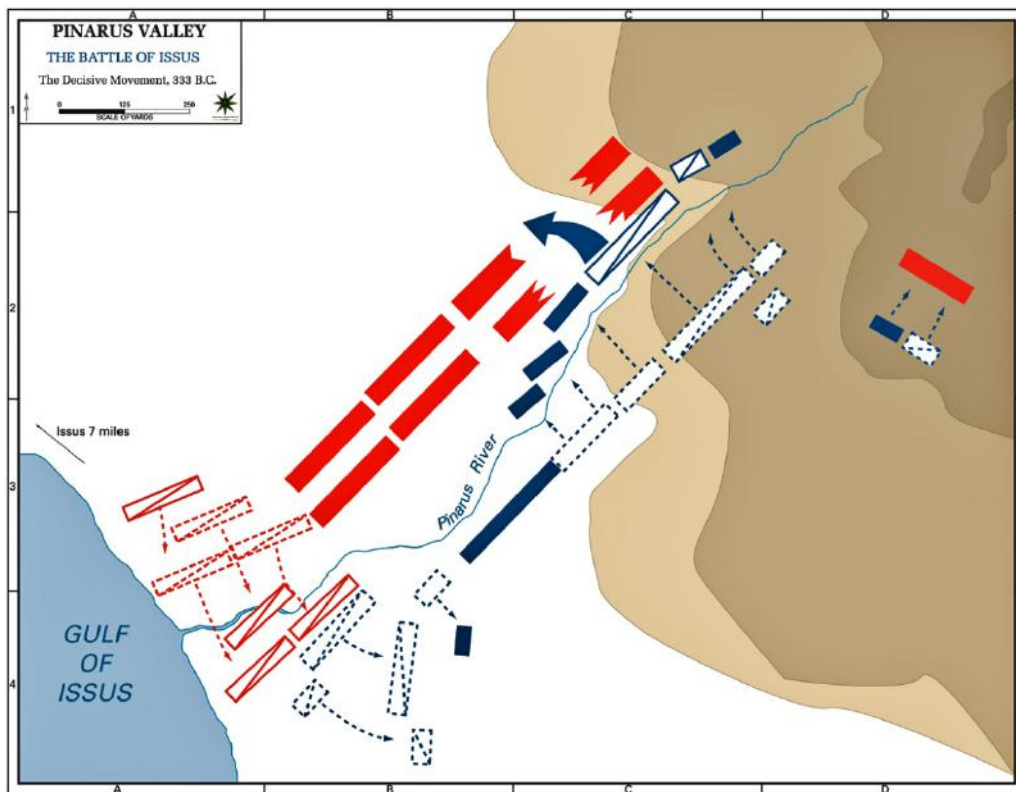
- Alexander brings his Thessalian and Macedonian cavalry divisions, plus the Companions, to the right wing under his command.
- Sends the Peloponnesian and other allied troops to Parmenio on the left.
- Darius recalls the troops he had sent across the river and sent the majority to his right to threaten Parmenio. The ground was more suited to cavalry here.
- The majority of Persian cavalry was now facing Alexander's left.
- Alexander only had his allied and Peloponnesian cavalry facing them and so sent the Thessalians cavalry over to support them. They passed at the rear of massed infantry battalions to conceal their movement.
- Alexander ordered his advanced scouts forward.
- He ordered Attalus and his Agrianes out at an angle to face the high ground in order to deal with Darius' divisions that had worked their way around.
- Having seen a weakness on his right (possible outflanking) he ordered two squadrons of Companions from the centre out to the right with the order to conceal their movement. He also moved a contingent of Agrianes and Greek mercenaries in a line to outflank the Persian left.
- Alexander ordered a raid on the Persians in the hill and when they fell easily decided that 300 would be enough to defend the position and so used the remainder to strengthen his attack force.

THE BATTLE:

- Alexander's initial movements were slow and deliberate
- Darius and his army did not move
- As the armies approached each other Alexander moved up the line giving words of encouragement and picking out names and reminding individuals of their past feats.
- Alexander continued to keep the pace of his move slow and deliberate. He wanted to ensure the line stayed solid and did not break.
- Once they came within range of enemy missiles Alexander, at the head, led the gallop into the stream.
- Arrian says the Persian left collapsed the minute they landed on them.
- In the centre, however, the Macedonians were in great difficulty. Some troops had left a gap in the line and were unable to maintain an unbroken front on the steep banks of the river.
- Darius' Greek mercenaries attacked right where the gap was widest. They had seen their left collapse and were trying to force the Macedonian infantry back into the water. The Macedonians, however, had seen Alexander's success and were determined to equal his feat. Arrian says the intensity of the fight in the centre was heightened by the traditional racial rivalry between Greek and Macedonian.
- 120 Macedonians die at this point in the battle.
- Alexander's right wing now swung towards the centre to help their infantry and managed to conduct a flank attack on them and 'were soon cutting them to pieces.'
- The Persian right now charged forward against the Thessalians. The fighting was desperate and the Persians only broke once they saw their centre collapse and that Darius was now in flight.
- There was now a desperate retreat by the Persians. Arrian says that as many Persians were trampled by their own men retreating as were cut down by the pursuing Macedonians.
- Arrian says that once the Persian left collapsed Darius 'led the race for safety.' Alexander pursued him but once he saw his centre in trouble turned back and would not leave until he saw the Greek mercenaries and Persian cavalry pushed back from the riverbank.







RESULTS OF ALEXANDERS VICTORY:

- Arrian says up to 100,000 Persians were killed.
- Darius' headquarters were stormed and captured.
- Darius' mother, wife (sister), two daughters and two infant sons were taken.
- Alexander had received a sword thrust to the thigh. Plutarch cites Chares as saying that Darius gave him the wound when they engaged in hand to hand combat. He also states that Alexander made no mention of this in a letter to Antipater.
- Alexander visited the wounded and gave military funerals to the dead, attended by the whole army in full equipment. Alexander spoke at the ceremony and spoke in praise of every man.
- Balacrus made governor of Cilicia.
- Sent Parmenio to take Darius' treasury in Damascus.
- Cancelled the debt owed by the Soli and returned their hostages.
- Alexander now has a victory over Darius and his army and views himself as lord of Asia.
- Plutarch states that whereas the terrain certainly suited Alexander better that it was 'his own generalship which did most to win the victory'

Alexanders treatment of Darius' family:

- Sent Leonnatus to inform them that Darius was in fact not dead. Also, told them the fight was not personal and he wished for them to retain everything that goes with their royalty.
- Plutarch states that Alexander was 'evidently more affected by the women's grief than by his own triumph.' He also says he allowed them to bury the Persian dead and keep whatever of the plunder they wished. He further ensures that they need have no fear of mistreatment by any of his army
- Arrian mentions the story of Darius' mother prostrating herself to Hephaestion, as she believed he was Alexander. He recalls Alexander handling the situation well and referring to Hephaestion as an Alexander also because he too was a protector of men. Arrian states his overwhelming admiration of Alexander's handling of this situation.
- This all subsequently led to the exchange of letters between Darius and Alexander.



GAUGAMELA 331 BC

1998:

Treat the Battle of Gaugamela under the following headings:

- (a) Alexander's rejection of a night attack;
- (b) The course of the battle itself
- (c) The immediate consequences of Alexander's victory

2005:

At the Battle of Gaugamela in 331 BC, Alexander's forces defeated the Persians under Darius.

- (a) Describe the preparations of both sides for the battle. (10)
- (b) Give an account of the battle. (25)
- (c) Comment on the tactics employed by Darius and Alexander. (15)

2010:

Give an account of the Battle of Gaugamela under the following headings:

Preparations by Alexander and Darius for the battle; (15)

The course of the battle; (25)

The consequences of Alexander's victory for his campaign to conquer the Persian Empire (10)

2015:

- (a) Compare the preparations made by Alexander with the preparations made by Darius before the Battle of Gaugamela (15)
- (b) How did Alexander's tactics lead to success in the battle? (25)
- (c) What were the immediate consequences of the battle? (10)



MARKING SCHEMES

2005:

- (a) One essential point is Darius's preparation of the battleground for his cavalry and chariots. On the Macedonian side, Alexander undertook an extensive reconnaissance of the terrain. Darius also kept his troops on the alert the previous night. The line-up of the armies is also acceptable.
- (b) Candidates need not provide a very detailed of what is a quite complex battle. Knowledge of the main moves is what is required. These include;
- (i) Alexander's steady move to the right to try to nullify Darius' chariots and Darius' sending his mounted troops to check this attempt
 - (ii) Alexander's charge into the gap created by these manoeuvres. He made for Darius who turned and fled.
 - (iii) Breakthrough of Persian cavalry held by Alexander's deployments
 - (iv) Parmenio under fierce pressure sends to Alexander for help thus forcing him to break off his pursuit of Darius
 - (v) Final victory of the Macedonians.
- (c) Tactically, as at Issus, Darius was static and defensive, relying on his numerical superiority and on the terrain. This left the initiative to Alexander whose formation and timing were brilliantly planned and executed. The tactics of each leader must be covered though not necessarily at equal length. Examiners will look for **comment** showing a good knowledge of tactics used by both e.g.
- Alexander's tactic of moving steadily right to draw Darius' forces away from prepared ground
 - Darius' attempts to outflank Alexander's smaller forces
 - Alexander's echeloning his left and right wings to prevent encirclement
 - Alexander's second line in anticipation of a breakthrough of his phalanx



2010:

Preparation: On both sides should include Darius' preparation of the ground to suit his scythe-chariots and his decision to keep his men at battle stations all night. On the Macedonian side, there is Alexander's determination not to fight at night and his rejection of Parmenio's advice to fight at night. He also accepted Parmenio's advice to have a careful reconnaissance of the terrain before engaging. Candidates may use the line-up of the two armies as part of the preparations.

Course: Candidates must show a clear understanding of the way the battle developed from the early manoeuvres to its conclusion after the flight of Darius. Important points include: Alexander's steady move rightwards to draw the Persian chariots onto rough ground and Darius' attempt to stop this; this was followed by close fighting and the attack of the chariots which was overcome by the Macedonians; Alexander then crashed through a gap and made for Darius who fled. On the left, things were more difficult and some of the enemy broke right through but the reserves stationed behind came to the rescue. Parmenio, hard pressed, sent to Alexander for help. Alexander abandoned his pursuit of Darius and went to help. On the way, he encountered some of the fiercest fighting before cutting his way through. Meanwhile, Parmenio and his Thesalians had held firm.

Consequences: By his victory, Alexander had more or less finished the power and position of Darius whose flight laid open the way for the Macedonians into the heartland of Persia and the cities of Babylon, Susa and Persepolis. He was now the undisputed lord of Asia.

2015:

Engagement, 20; Development, 20; Overall evaluation, 10. (50 marks)

(a) Compare is the operative word here, so candidates must comment on the similarity and/or difference in tactics. Darius prepared a wide open site for the battle near the River Bumodus. He had engineers level the area for the better use of cavalry and Scythian chariots. He had an army of 40,000 cavalry, one million infantry (historians differ as to exact numbers here) and 200 chariots. He also had 15 elephants. He mistakenly felt that this would avoid a similar defeat as at Issus. He also kept his troops standing all night in case of a night attack which left them demoralised and exhausted. Darius placed himself in the centre with the Persian bodyguards. 50 chariots and 15 elephants were in front as well as Bactrian cavalry on the left wing with Scythian horsemen. On the right he positioned more cavalry and mounted archers. On the other hand, Alexander brought his troops to within four miles of the enemy and then took Parmenio's advice to encamp and scout out the land. He did not accept his advice to run a night attack as he felt that this would be way too risky and also that it might mean that a victory would not be seen as valid later. He spoke to his men about their past glories and how courage was in their hearts from birth. He emphasised how the success of all depended on the valour of each and that this was the battle which would determine who would rule all Asia. Alexander put the Companion cavalry on his right, the Guards in the center with the heavy infantry and the Thessalian cavalry on the left. N.B. candidates may use the Parmenio advice either in section (a) or (b) of this question, it is equally valid in both. **Four brief points (4, 4, 4, 3) (15 marks)**



(b) Alexander led the Companions at an oblique angle screened by light troops which forced Darius's army to move across with him. Afraid of getting onto uneven ground, Darius ordered the chariots to outflank Alexander's right wing, but he was waiting for this and sent the cavalry against them. The overall plan seems to have been the formation of a hollow rectangle which meant that even if they were outflanked, they were still not defeated. This was a very clever tactic facing an army of superior size, but poorer quality soldiers. The Scythian chariots were met with the Agrianians and javelin throwers and their drivers were pulled down by the reins, also the lines parted to allow some of them through. Meanwhile Alexander's infantry advanced on Darius's centre and the cavalry companions launched a swift attack on Darius's own position. When the Persian left was scattered Darius turned and fled. Meanwhile, Parmenio's wing was drawn back onto the defensive and was falling back badly, but Alexander, responding to a request for aid, abandoned his pursuit of Darius and headed for Parmenio's flank. En route he encountered more of the Persian army which he defeated. His tactics here: the hollow rectangle, the advance at an oblique angle, the tactics for disabling the 5 chariots and the flexibility of his troops, able to move quickly to trouble-shoot (e.g. on the left wing) all won this battle for Alexander. **A coherent explanation of how the tactics led to success in this battle. (25 marks)**

(c) Darius was pursued by Alexander once he was defeated but he escaped. All of his possessions were taken, money, shield, chariot and bow. Alexander had lost 100 men and about 1,000 horses. The Persian dead were reckoned at 300,000. Alexander now took the great city of Babylon. Darius became a fugitive, was held hostage by his own people and left for dead. Wealth gained by Alexander at Susa a valid point here. Treatment of what the consequences were for both protagonists required for full marks here.



ARRIAN:

Background;

- Alexander advances through Aturia
- He engages with some Persian cavalry and the prisoner captured inform him that Darius was nearby with a powerful force

Darius' army;

- Had been reinforced by the likes of the Sogdians and Bactrians (led by Bessus)
- Overall numbers; 40,000 cavalry, 1,000,000 infantry, 200 scythe chariots and some elephants

Land;

- 'level and open' ground
- Ground that may have caused an obstruction to Persian chariots was worked on so that it was good for chariots and cavalry
- Darius had been told that his failure at Issus was due to the lack of open ground, hence the preparations being put in place

Alexander initial steps;

- Allows his men to rest for four days (important)
- Fortifies camp and proposes to leave pack and animals and those unfit for service behind in the camp
- The rest make their way to the battlefield
- Alexander holds a meeting of his officers and Alexander accepts Parmenio's advice to stay where they were and engage in a reconnaissance mission
- Alexander's gives an inspiring speech to his men in which he tells them they are fighting for the 'sovereignty for the whole continent of Asia'
- Parmenio advises Alexander to engage in a night attack but Alexander refuses by stating that he had no intention of 'stealing victory like a thief'
- Arrian states that the logical reason behind his refusal was that it would be very risky and that it would also give Darius a chance to escape

Darius pre-battle;

- Keeps his men on guard throughout the night in the event of a night attack and because they had no regular defence works
- Arrian believes this was a mistake by Darius as it tired his men and mentally must have been anguish as the expected attack never happened but was brooded over by the Persian for hours



Darius line-up;

- Bactrian cavalry on the left as well as other forces. The Scythian cavalry were ahead of them.
- The right consisted of the Medes, Parthians and other forces. 50 scythe chariots were ahead of them
- Darius was in the centre with his royal Persian bodyguard. Greek mercenaries on either side of Darius and his bodyguard

Alexander's line-up;

- Right wing consisted of the Companion cavalry, led by Philotas and they were led by the Royal Squadron, under the command of Cleitus
- Parmenio led the Thessalian cavalry on the left
- Infantry in the centre
- Reserves placed behind the infantry in the event that the Persians broke through
- Army was made up of 7,000 cavalry and 40,000 infantry.

Battle;

- Alexander inclines his right, the Persians counter as they outflank the Macedonian right
- Alexander leads them out towards the uneven ground so Darius' chariots would be useless. Darius attempt to counter this by calling for the Persian left to encircle the Macedonian right
- An engagement ensued of the advanced cavalries of both sides which resulted in the Persian formation on their left being broken
- The Persians sent their Scythe chariots towards Alexander but the Agrianes kept them at bay
- The Persians continued to attempt to encircle the Macedonians but unwittingly left a gap. Alexander made for the gap and brought his Companions and heavy infantry with him. He went straight for Darius
- Darius fled from the battle
- At the same time the Macedonian left was in trouble. Some of the Persian army had broken through and made it to the supplies and pack animals. The Macedonian reserves turned and attacked the Persians as they attacked the camp
- Parmenio sent an urgent message to Alexander for help on the right. Alexander broke his pursuit of Darius and returned to the Persian right. According to Arrian this is where the fiercest fighting took place. Alexander lost 60 Companions but was victorious in the end.

The Thessalian Cavalry had successfully fended off the Persian right



- Alexander took up his pursuit of Darius once again but failed, He did however come across Darius' treasure, chariot and shield

Aftermath;

- 100 men killed, 1,000 horses on Macedonian side
- Persians lost 300,000 men
- Alexander had defeated Darius and the Persian Empire was essentially now his
- It opened the way for him to make his way to Babylon

Plutarch;

- Agrees with Arrians figure of 1 million men
- Officers had to wake him on the morning of the battle – Parmenio finally awakened him
- Emphasises weakness of Parmenio on the left against the Bactrian cavalry
- Aristander notices an eagle flying above Alexander's head before the battle
- Plutarch takes digs at Parmenio and claims he was 'sluggish' in his defence of the left flank
- Notes that when Alexander is on his way to help Parmenio, he learns that the Persians had been utterly defeated (difference to Arrian)
- Plutarch focuses very much on the consequences. He claims Persia was now overthrown and that Alexander was now king of Asia.



The Battle of Hydaspes

1996:

- (ii) (a) How did Alexander manage to cross the river Hydaspes unopposed?
- (b) Briefly describe the battle with Porus which followed.
- (c) What do we learn of Alexander's character from his treatment of Porus after the battle?

2007:

- (a) Describe how Alexander tricked the Indian leader Porus and succeeded in crossing the river Hydaspes. (15)
- (b) Give an account of the Battle of the Hydaspes. (25)
- (c) In your opinion, why did Alexander treat Porus so well after this battle? (10)

2011:

- (a) Describe how Alexander succeeded in crossing the Hydaspes River unopposed. (20)
- (b) Analyse the reasons for Alexander's victory over Porus in the Battle of the Hydaspes. (30)

2017:

- (a) Describe how Alexander managed to cross the River Hydaspes unopposed. (20)
- (b) Give an account of the Battle of the Hydaspes explaining why Alexander won it. (20)
- (c) What did you learn about the character of Alexander from his treatment of Porus? (10)



The Battle of the River Hydaspes, India, May 326 B.C. (Arrian pgs. 266-282 Plutarch Chp.60)

It was the monsoon season of 326 B.C. The river, swollen with rainwater, was around 800 meters wide.

Alexander and his army crossed the River Indus into India. He was met by Taxiles, a prince who controlled this area, who gave him gifts. It was there that Alexander was told that Porus, King of the Pauravas, whose kingdom extended from the Hydaspes to the Punjab, was waiting for him with a large army on the far bank of the river Hydaspes, barring the entrance to his kingdom. Taxiles reinforced Alexander's army with 5,000 troops.

Porus' army comprised (estimates only) 50,000 infantry (mostly archers), 4,000 cavalry, 300 war chariots, and 200 elephants, which were unknown to the Macedonians as being used as weapon of war.

Alexander ordered that the ships he had used to cross the River Indus should be cut into sections and brought over land by ox carts to the banks of the River Hydaspes and re-assembled. The Macedonian army positioned directly opposite Porus' army.

On the banks of the river followed a war of nerves. It looked like a stalemate and Alexander had a huge consignment of grain and other supplies brought to the camp. Porus probably believed that the Macedonians would not attack until the monsoon was over; the high waters and the elephants were quite a deterrent.

The Crossing

Porus sent groups of troops to every point across the river where he thought Alexander might cross. Alexander, on the other hand, kept his enemy on their toes, keeping his army moving up and down the river constantly, even at night, and making as much noise as possible.

Porus had his troops and elephants move up and down his side of the river following the sound of the Macedonian's. This went on for a long time until eventually Porus gave up sending his men. Porus was lulled into a false sense of security. His men could not remain on the alert indefinitely and so he allowed them to relax.

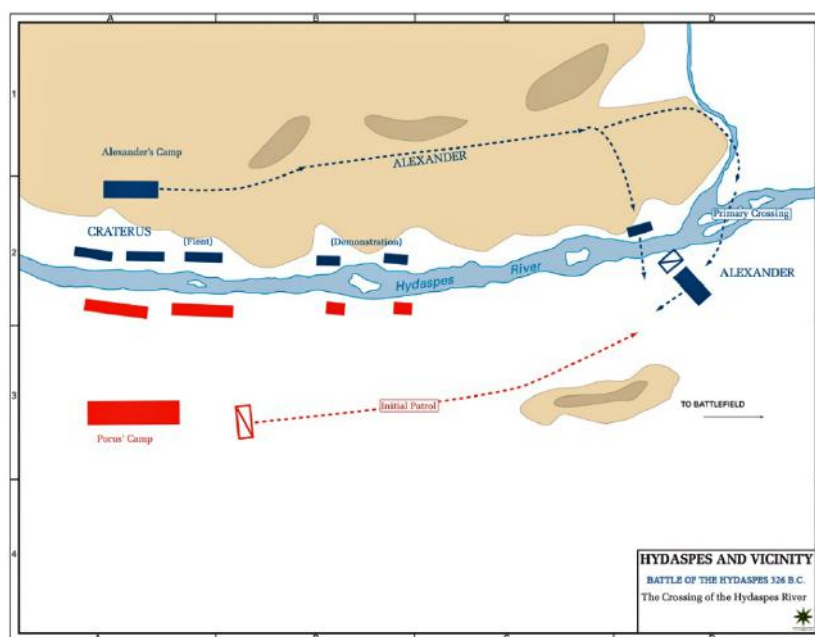
About 30 kilometres from base camp, Alexander's scouts found a potential crossing place. This was a large wooded island with only a narrow channel on either side of it. Alexander decided that this was a good spot because Porus' scouts would not be able to see them. Alexander also heard that an ally of Porus was not far off with a large army and he knew that he had to attack soon rather than letting them join forces.

The element of surprise was only of so much use as once he started to cross, Porus would know about it. A division of forces was necessary to keep Porus guessing. Alexander left Craterus in charge of the troops in the camp opposite Porus, with orders not to cross the river until Porus had moved from his position to attack Alexander or if Craterus was sure that Porus was in retreat and the Macedonians had won the day. Also, Craterus was not to cross the river if the elephants were still there, as they would frighten the horses making a successful landing unlikely.



Alexander left three groups of mercenary cavalry and infantry at different points along the riverbank between Craterus' troops and the spot opposite the island where he was going to cross. They had orders to cross the river as soon as the battle between Alexander and Porus' main force had started to fight.

At night Alexander took his troops inland, so that he could move them down to the spit of land opposite the island without letting Porus know they were planning an attack. Alexander had already had ships and floats moving upstream to the spot where he was going to cross and had them hidden in the trees.



Under his command for the crossing Alexander had Companion cavalry, the Bactrian cavalry, the Scythian cavalry and the mounted archers. He also had the Guards infantry, the archers and the Agrianes. In total 5,000 cavalry and 10,000 infantry.

Alexander's troops crossed the river in terrible storm conditions in the middle of the night. The daring and skill needed for this operation was astounding and the logistics involved were daunting. In one way the storm was good because of the noise but conditions were appalling.

On disembarking a terrible mistake was discovered. When they had reached the opposite side of the wooded island, they realized they had landed on a second island, and they would have to cross another section of the river. Because of the storm the level of the river had risen, and they had to look for a ford. They had to cross with the water up to the men's armpits and the horse's necks.

Once they had reached to opposite bank of the river Alexander's force formed up in battle positions. He had the mounted cavalry on the right with the mounted archers' in front of them as a screen. Behind them he positioned the infantry. The Agrianes and the javelin men were to protect both flanks of the phalanx. Alexander moved ahead quickly with 5,000 cavalry and the infantry were to follow as quickly as they could.



Arrian gives three different accounts of what happened when Alexander crossed from the second island to the mainland:

1. Porus' son arrived with 60 chariots just as Alexander first troops were crossing on to the mainland. These troops could have had a serious effect on Alexander' troops if they had gotten off their chariots and attacked on foot. Instead they drove off. Alexander sent his mounted archers after them and many of them were wounded.
2. Porus' son attacked Alexander's cavalry and during this engagement Porus' son wounded Alexander and killed Bucephalus, Alexander's horse.
3. Arrian thinks that this story is more likely to be true. Porus' son had 2,000 cavalry and 200 chariots, (a small enough force, considering that the ground was muddy and the chariots all but useless). He arrived after the Macedonians had reached the riverbank and landed his troops. Alexander sent the mounted archers against them because he thought that they were the vanguard of Porus' army and that the whole Indian army was just close behind them. When Alexander realized that they were on their own and Porus was behind them he attacked with the Companions. The Indian's broke and ran. 400 Indian cavalry were killed including Porus' son, all the chariots were destroyed.

Porus left a small section of his army and some of his elephants to fight Craterus as he tried to cross the river. At the same time a Macedonian force under Meleager had crossed the river and had joined up with Alexander who was pressing ahead with the cavalry.

The Battle

Porus now decided correctly that the main battle had to be fought on his side of the river and moved to meet Alexander. Moving along the bank he picked his place carefully, a level sandy plain, free from mud. Porus drew his army in a wide, central front with the elephants stationed every 25 meters or so. On either wing he placed a row of chariots with infantry and cavalry behind them, amassed at the centre of the field. The overall line was probably over 5 kilometres long, of which most was infantry and its biggest drawback was probably lack of flexibility.

Alexander could not risk bringing the horses face up to the elephants, so he had to think of something else. He decided to send his cavalry against the Indians' left wing and hope that Porus would shift his right-wing cavalry around to help of his left wing. Meanwhile, he left two cavalry division's (under Coenus and Demetrius) out of sight ready to sweep around behind enemy lines and attack from the rear.

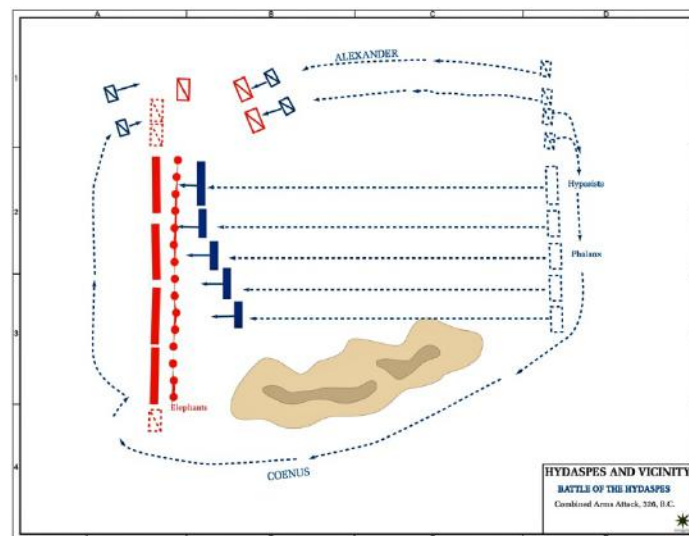
The attack on the left wing began with mounted archers against the chariots. Alexander then charged at the head of his cavalry and Porus did exactly as he had hoped, he moved his right-wing cavalry around to his hard-pressed left. At once Coenus led the two division in reserve right around behind the enemy. Soon afterwards the infantry charged on Porus' centre, which was already unsettled from the Companion cavalry attack on the left.

The elephants were, by then, surrounded by infantry and Indian cavalry on all sides and they were trampling Indians and Macedonians alike. The Macedonians, though, had more room to manoeuvre and could move out of the elephants' way better than the Indian who were confined by the Macedonian phalanx and cavalry attack. The elephants soon grew tired and stopped



charging. Alexander decided that the best way to deal with them was first to let the archers shoot the mahouts, then throw spears and javelins at the animal themselves and then finishing them off with swords and axes. The sarissas proved very useful too. Once the momentum of the attack was maintained the elephants proved to be just as much of a problem to their own side.

Finally, Craterus crossed the river and attacked the camp. The final stage of the battle was hand to hand fighting at which the Macedonians were far more experienced and effective. Eventually when it was clear that there was no hope, Porus left the battlefield badly wounded on his elephant.



Porus' Losses: 20,000 Infantry, 3,000 Cavalry, 300 Chariots, Two of Porus' sons, all the commanders of the elephants, chariots and cavalry.

Alexander' Losses: 20 Infantry, 10 Mounted Archers, 20 Companion Cavalry, 200 Other cavalry.

The Aftermath

Alexander was very impressed by Porus, because unlike Darius he had not run away to try to save himself but had remained fighting until the last when he was wounded in the shoulder, and only then did he retreat. He had also sacrificed the life of two of his sons for the protection of his kingdom.

Alexander wanted to save the life of his opponent. He sent the Indian prince Taxiles to speak to Porus. Porus and Taxiles had been enemies and Porus charged his elephant at Taxiles and tried to kill him with his lance. Taxiles moved out of the way in the nick of time. Alexander sent another group of Indians to speak to Porus, including Meroes who was a friend of Porus.

Porus got off his elephants and had a drink before he went to meet Alexander. Porus was very tall, Arrian says he was over two meters high, towering over the not-so-tall Alexander. Alexander asked him how he wanted to be treated. Porus replied that he wanted to be treated like a king. Alexander agreed to his demand. Alexander also asked Porus if he wanted anything else. Porus replied: 'Everything is contained in this one request'. Alexander was so impressed by this exchange that he restored Porus' kingdom to him and increased the territory under Porus' control.

Alexander founded two cities near the site of the battle, one he called Nicaea and the other Bucephala after his horse who died either from battle wounds or old age according to which story it is to believe. Soon afterwards Alexander continued eastwards to the river Hyphasis where the Macedonians mutinied out of sheer exhaustion.



Letters from Darius to Alexander

Letter 1

After the battle of Issus Alexander marched south to Phoenicia. While he was in Marathus messengers from Darius came with a request for the release of his mother, wife and children.

DARIUS' LETTER

- Artaxerxes and Philip were on good terms of friendship. Then when Artaxerxes son Arses took over, Philip was guilty of aggression against him. Now with Darius in control Alexander has sent no representative to his court to confirm friendship and alliance, but he has crossed into Asia and with his soldiers and done much damage to the Persians.
- Now Darius asks that Alexander give him back his wife, mother, children and is willing to make friends with him and be his ally. He further urges Alexander to send representatives so that guarantees may be exchanged.

ALEXANDER'S REPLY

- Your ancestors invaded Macedonia and Greece and caused havoc in our country even though we had done nothing to provoke them. I invaded Persia to punish Persia for this.
- You also sent aid to the people of Perinthus in their rebellion against my father.
- Ochus (Persian general) sent an army into Thrace, which is part of Macedonian territory.
- You said yourself in letters that you hired assassins to kill Philip my father.
- You murdered Arses and unjustly took the Persian throne.
- You sent the Greeks false information about me in the hope of making them my enemies
- You attempted to give the Greeks money.
- Your agents tried to wreck the peace I had established in Greece – it was because of this I decided to attack Persia.
- I defeated your generals and satraps (Granicus) – now I have defeated the army you led.
- By the gods help I am master of your country.



- I have made myself responsible for the survivors of your army and they are now serving in my army.
- Come therefore to me as you would come to the *Lord of Asia*, come and ask yourself for your wife, children and anything else you want.
- In future in any further communication address it to the king of all Asia. Do not write to me as an equal. Everything you own is now mine. If you want your throne back, you have to fight for it – do not run away. Wherever you may hide be sure I shall seek you out.

Letter 2

During the siege of Tyre Alexander received another letter from Darius

Darius to Alexander

- Darius offered Alexander 10,000 talents of gold in exchange for his mother, wife and children
- He offered all territory west of the river Euphrates to the Aegean Sea to Alexander.
- He offered his daughter's hand in marriage.
- Parmenio declared if he were Alexander he would accept.
- Alexander replied, '*That is what I should do were I Parmenio, but since I am Alexander I shall send Darius a different answer.*'

Alexander to Darius

- He had no need of Darius' money.
- All Asia including its treasure was already his.
- If he wished to marry Darius' daughter, he could do it.
- If Darius wanted kindness and consideration, he must come in person
- Darius now abandons all thought of peace with Alexander and prepares for battle.

