

# CLASSICAL STUDIES

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Classical Studies

HIGHER LEVEL

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## *Alexander the Great*

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_



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## Learning outcomes

### Time of Alexander

- 3.1. Recognise key historical events that shaped the world of Alexander (the late Classical period).
- 3.2. Identify key political and social tensions at the time in which Alexander came to power.
- 3.3. Compare maps showing the changes in political geography before and after the conquests of Alexander.

#### **The political and military exploits of Alexander**

- 3.4 Create an outline of the life of Alexander.
- 3.5. Examine key moments and events during Alexander's Persian Campaign.
- 3.6 Discuss the composition and tactics of the army of Alexander in light of its operation during at least one major military event.

#### **The characterisation of Alexander**

- 3.7 Critically examine how Alexander is characterised in the studied literary texts.
- 3.8 Examine the relevance of the test type of the studied literary texts (such as biography, autobiography, history) for the characterisation of Alexander.
- 3.9 Evaluate how literary texts select, present and assess actions and decisions that illustrate the character of Alexander.



**Timeline of Alexander the Great's life.**

<b>July 356 B.C.</b>	Born at Pella, Macedonia, to <b>King Philip II</b> and Olympias
<b>338 B.C. August</b>	Battle of Chaeronea
<b>336 B.C.</b>	Alexander becomes ruler of Macedonia
<b>335 B.C.</b>	Alex deals with the <b>Northern</b> Tribes. Siege of <b>Thebes</b>
<b>334 B.C.</b>	Wins <b>Battle of the Granicus</b> River against Darius III of Persia. Siege of <b>Miletus</b> . Siege of <b>Halicarnassus</b>
<b>333 B.C.</b>	Wins <b>Battle at Issus</b> against Darius
<b>332 B.C.</b>	Wins siege of <b>Tyre</b> ; attacks Gaza, which falls. Alex visits <b>Siwah</b> ; <b>Declared a son of Zeus via a pronunciation error.</b>
<b>331 B.C.</b>	Founds Alexandria. Wins <b>Battle of Gaugamela</b> against Darius
<b>330 B.C.</b>	Sacks and burns <b>Persepolis</b> ; trial and execution of <b>Philotas</b> ; assassination of <b>Parmenion</b> . Darius dies.
<b>329 B.C.</b>	Crosses Hindu Kush; goes to Bactria and crosses the Oxus river and then to Samarkand.
<b>328 B.C.</b>	Kills Black <b>Cleitus</b> for an insult at Samarkand. Death of <b>Callisthenes</b> .
<b>327 B.C.</b>	Marries Roxane; begins march to India. Siege of the rock of <b>Sogdiana</b>
<b>326 B.C.</b>	Wins Battle of river <b>Hydaspes</b> against Porus; Bucephalus dies. Mutiny at <b>Hyphasis</b> . Siege of <b>Mallians</b> . Siege of <b>Aornas</b>
<b>325 B.C.</b>	Alex crosses the <b>Gedrosian Desert</b>
<b>324 B.C.</b>	Marries Stateira and Parysatis at <b>Susa (mass weddings)</b> ; Troops mutiny at <b>Opis</b> ; <b>Hephaestion</b> dies
<b>June 11, 323 B.C.</b>	<b>Dies</b> at Babylon in the palace of <b>Nebuchadnezzar II</b>



## Society of Macedonia

Macedonian Society was somewhat different to the rest of Greek Poleis. They were perhaps closer to the kind of warrior society we associate with the Greeks of the Iliad. Philip II of Macedon is often credited with Hellenising his fellow countrymen having spent time in Thebes. The Macedonians were also a vassal kingdom of Persia during the Greco-Persian Wars of the early 5th century B.C. Thus, their “primitive” monarchic system, and their harsh accent often meant that other Greek cities didn’t consider their northern neighbours truly Greek – even if the royal family claimed to be Greek. This caused some tension between Greeks and Macedonians during Philip and Alexander’s rule.

Below is a table summarising the main question of How Greek were the Macedonians? Is there much difference?

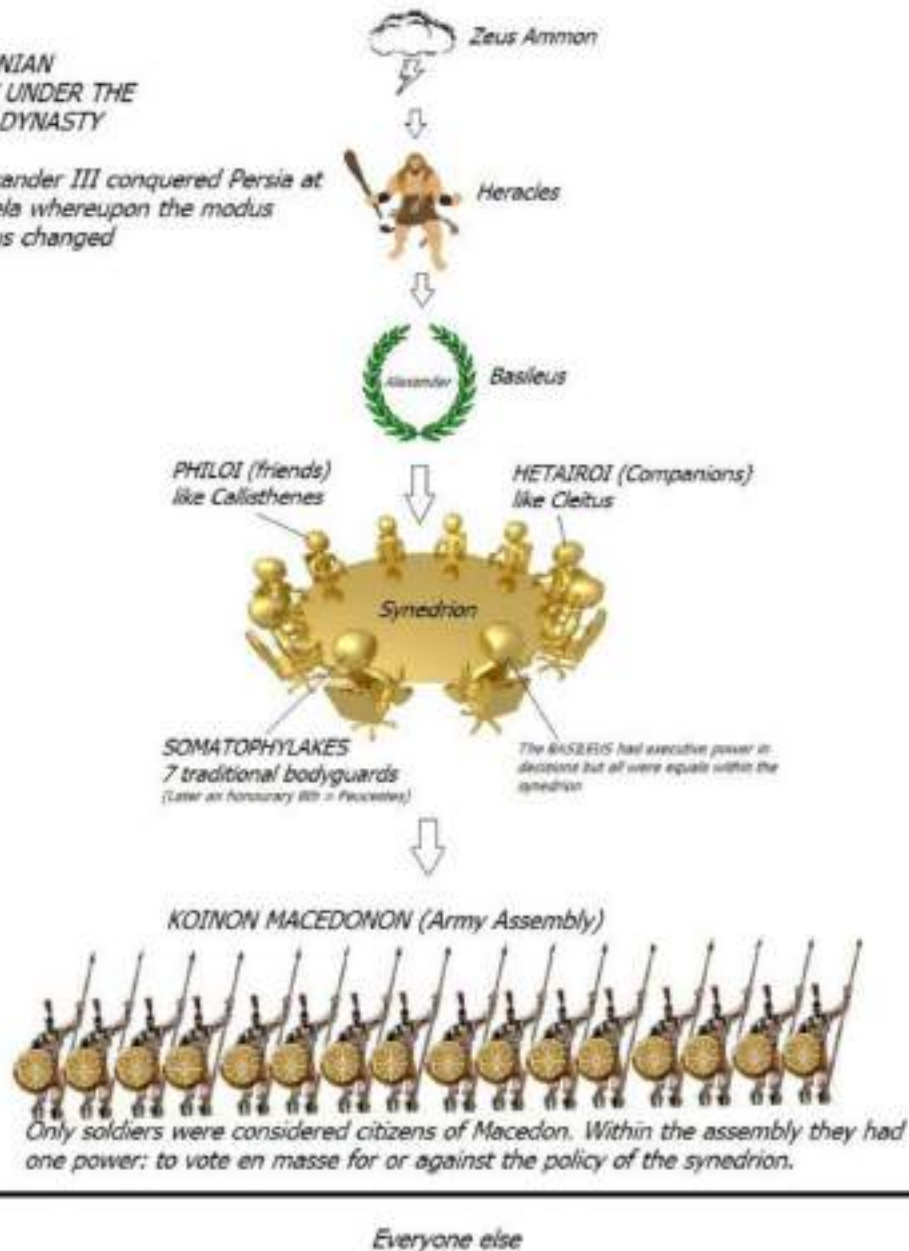
Where?	A Large region North of Mainland Greece.
What did they believe?	The same Gods and Heroes as the rest of Greece: Zeus, Hera, Apollo, Athena, Heracles, Jason, Achilles, etc.
Where did their people come from?	It is unclear whether the Macedonians claimed a similar origin as the rest of the Greeks; however, their royal family claimed ancestry from Argos – one of the oldest Greek cities just North of Sparta.
What did they Speak?	Greek with a harsh accent; similar to Hiberno-English or Scots-English.
What did they wear?	Similar clothing to other Greeks: Chiton/Tunic, cloak – no Trousers, only barbarians wore trousers. However, they also wore a cap called a <i>Kausia</i> .
How did they Build?	The Architecture was similar to the rest of Greece. Agora, Temples, columned buildings etc.
How did they fight?	Before Philip they would have fought like all other Greeks: Heavy Infantry called <b>Hoplites</b> , making a shield wall, called a <b>Phalanx</b> , with their 1m diameter shields
How did they Rule themselves?	They Ruled themselves by a single Monarchy and a ruling council.

Below is a diagram showing the political and social class system of Macedonian society. Note that Macedonia was not an absolute monarchy. This is vital to the question of whether Alexander would abuse his power; was he justified in executing his Companions, Bodyguards, or other noblemen who would be considered his peers.



**MACEDONIAN  
SOCIETY UNDER THE  
ARGEAD DYNASTY**

*until Alexander III conquered Persia at  
Gaugamela whereupon the modus  
operandus changed*



## The Foundation Set by Philip

Much of Alexander's success in his Persian campaign is owed to the groundwork of his Father Philip II. In particular Philip's restructuring of the Macedonian army and his introduction of standardised Phalanx units which used the two handed *Sarissa* long spear.

Below is a short timeline of key events in Philips life:

386 BC: Philip is born.

69-365 B.C.: Philip was an exile in Thebes where he was able to witness Greek politics and military tactics, being a student of Epaminondas and lover of Pelopidas (famous Theban generals)

364 B.C.: Philip returned to Macedonia now regent for his nephew, Amyntas IV, after the death of his brother Perdiccas III. Philip succeeds to gaining the throne for himself in 359 BC

359 BC. Philip reformed the Macedonian Army to use sarissa, phalanx, guards (light infantry), and Companion shock cavalry tactics.

359 – 340 B.C.: Philip re-conquered Macedonia; conquered Thrace and Paionia (Bulgaria), parts of Illyria (Balkans), Thessaly (North Greece), and the Hellespont.

357 B.C.: Married Olympias and formed alliance with Epirus (Albania)

356 B.C.: Alexander was born.

358 B.C.: Defeated combined forces of Thebes and Athens at the Battle of Chaeronea; Alexander led right wing and defeated Theban Sacred Band (elite group of soldiers)

357 B.C.: He formed the League of Corinth and alliance of all Greek cities (except Sparta) to invade Persia (Alexander would use same league).

356 B.C.: Sent Parmenion across the Hellespont as advanced force to invade Asia Minor.

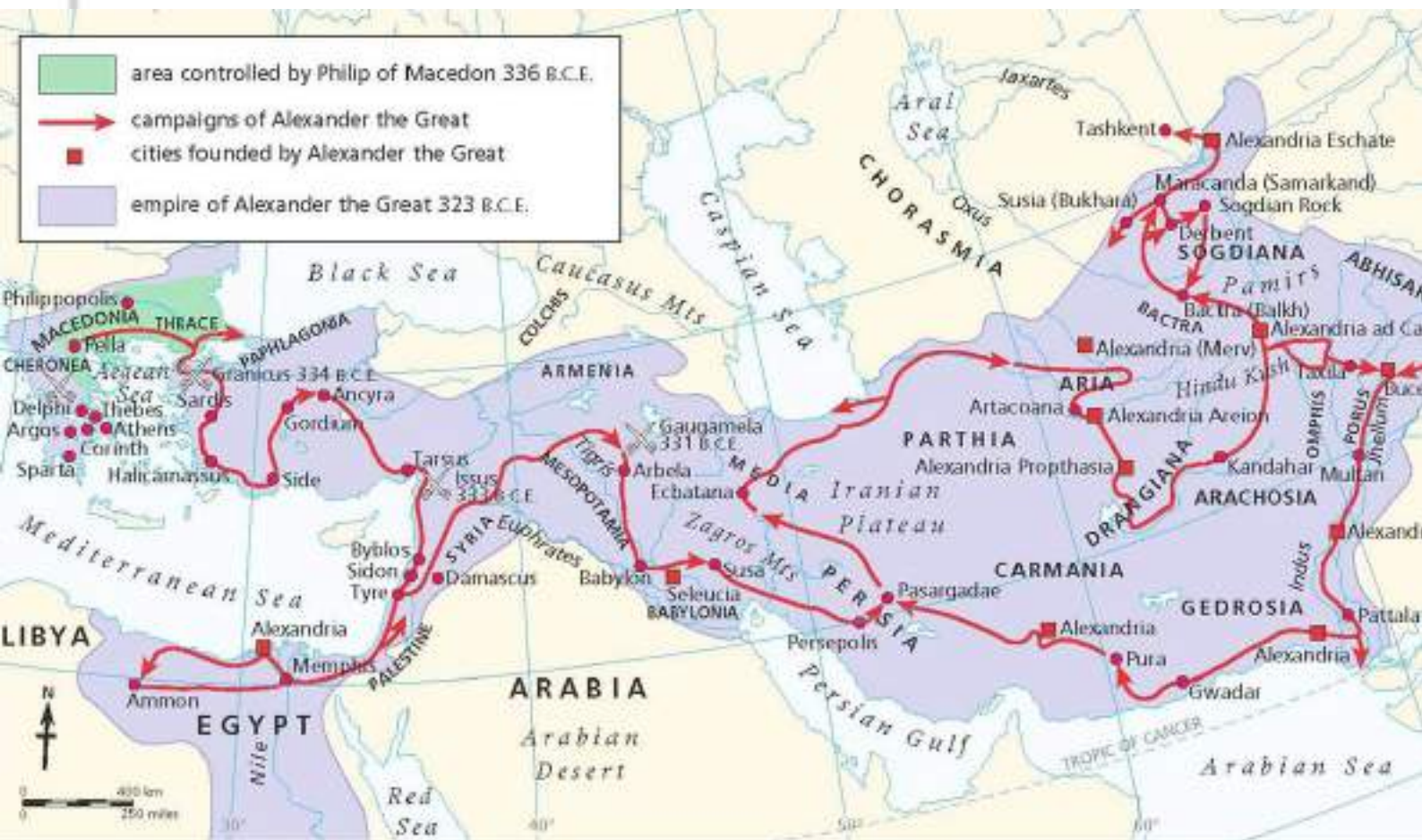
336 B.C.: Philip was assassinated at Aegae, the ancient capital of Macedon. The court had gathered to celebrate the marriage of Philip's daughter Cleopatra to Alexander I of Epirus.



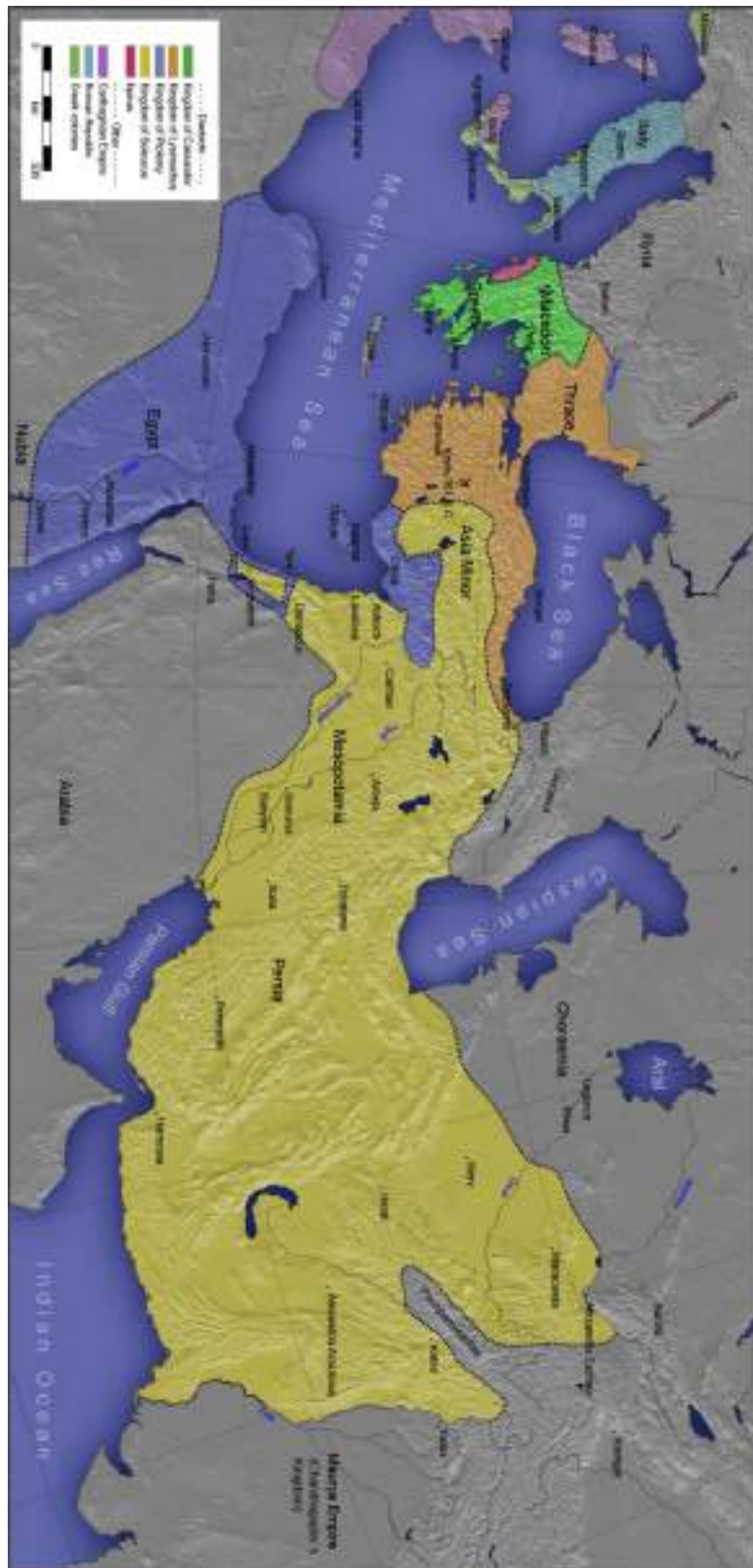
**Map of Macedonian controlled territory at the end of Phillip II reign-336BC**



Map of Macedonian Empire in 323BC



Map of Hellenistic Kingdoms after Alexander's death in 323BC.



### Early life

Born in Pella in 356BC to Phillip II of Macedon and Olympias of Epirus. From a young age Alexander was raised by his father to rule. Possessing a keen mind Philip sent Alexander to be educated by Aristotle.

Charmed by Alexander's intellect, Aristotle bestowed upon him, not just conventional wisdom but also his *esoteric* knowledge given only to a select few.

Alexander's intellect set him apart from an early age. A notable example is when, at just 16 years of age he was left in command of Pella while Philip was away and hosted a number of Persian dignitaries. Rather than bore his guests with trivial questions he impressed them with his courteous welcome and probing questions about their journey from Persia, the nature of the terrain, and the strength of their army.

Alexander's intellect also gave him a confidence that bordered on arrogance. According to Plutarch, in response to a question from his friends if he would take part in the foot race of the Olympic games: "Yes, if I have kings to run against me".

As he grew to manhood and his character emerged, so too did a growing discontent and restlessness with his position and prospects leading him to declare on more than one occasion to his friends, " boys, my father will forestall me in everything".

### The Bucephalas story:

- One day Philoneicus the Thessalian brought Philip a horse named Bucephalas and asked thirteen talents for the horse ( a ridiculous sum of money considering 1 silver talent= \$20,800 approx.)
- The King and his attendants went to watch the horse's trials and came to the conclusion that the horse was wild and unmanageable, as he would allow no one to mount him and reared up at anyone who approached him.
- Alexander remarked, "*What a horse they are losing , and all because they don't know how to handle him. Or dare not try!*"
- Rather than rebuke his son Philip put his son to the test saying, "*Are you finding fault with your elders because think you know more than they do, or can manager a horse better?*"
- Alexander told Phillip that he could manage this one better and stated that if he could not he would pay the price of the horse for his, "impertinence".
- The terms of the bet set, Alexander approached Bucephalas, took hold of his bridle and turned him towards the sun for he had noticed that the horse was afraid of its own shadow.
- Alexander ran alongside the horse for a little way and then sprang onto its back.
  - Philip exulting in his sons success, wept for joy and when Alexander had dismounted he kissed him and said, "*My boy you must find a kingdom big enough for your ambitions Macedonia is too small for you*"



IMPORTANT PEOPLE IN ALEXANDERS LIFE.



## Mother: Olympias of Epirus.

**Basic Info:**

**Birth:** 375 B.C

**Death:** 316 B.C.

**Country:** Epirus

**Family:** Daughter of Neoptolemus I of Epirus; descendent of Achilles

**Spouse:** 4th wife of Philip II of Macedon from 357 B.C.

**Children:** Alexander the Great, Cleopatra of Macedon

**Important Facts.**

- Member of orgiastic snake worshipping cult of Dionysus.
- Allegedly met Philip II while both initiated into mysteries concerned with the Cabeiri, earth-gods, at Samothrace.
- Married Philip II in 357 B.C. as part of Alliance between Philip and her father.
- 356 B.C. gave birth to Alexander.
- Apparently, her marriage to Philip was very volatile – especially because of her supposed mysticism and snake-worshipping.
- Gave birth to Cleopatra in 355/4 B.C.
- Apparently had Cleopatra/Eurydice (Philip’s 7th wife) murdered to secure Alexander’s place on the throne upon the death of her husband.
- Continued to correspond with Alexander while he was on his campaigns.
- Was involved in the wars of Alexander’s successors, but was eventually captured and executed in 316 B.C.





## Teacher: Aristotle

### Basic Info:

**Birth:** 384 B.C

**Death:** 322 B.C.

**Country:** Stagira, Chalcidice  
(near Macedon)

**Profession:** Philosopher.

### Important Facts.

- Aged 17/18 Aristotle joined Plato's Academy in Athens. He remained a pupil there until 347 B.C
- In 343 B.C. Philip II of Macedon requested Aristotle tutor Alexander. Aristotle came to Macedon and established a library in the Lyceum where he tutored Alexander and others.
- Aristotle's philosophy covers a variety of topics from Ethics, the Politics, and natural Philosophy
- Aristotle returned to Athens in 335 B.C. (a year after Philip's death) and established his own school, the Lyceum.
- Aristotle later fell out of favour with Alexander – partly because of the Callisthenes conspiracy but also because of Alexander's closer relationship with the Persians.
- Aristotle fled to Euboea in 322 B.C. having been accused of impiety and died there.



## The Macedonian Army

The Macedonian Army before Philip II was much the same as the rest of the Greek armies.

However, King Philip recreated the army and started a revolution in Greek warfare. Other Greeks like, Jason of Pherea from Thessaly had shown the importance of cavalry and the Theban army had innovated on the uses of Hoplite warfare earlier in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century B.C. However, it was Philip who combined these innovations and added some of his own to create the most powerfully and most advanced army of the Ancient World up to this point.

Below is an outline of the main Soldier Types of Alexander's army.

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### Heavy Infantry

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#### Hoplite



**Armour:** bronze or leather corselet (body armour); bronze grieves (shin guards); Corinthian Helmet covering face, cheeks, and neck.

**Shield:** 1 diameter, called a *Hoplion* or *Apsis*.

**Weapons:** short sword or *Xiphos*, long 2.4m spear.

**Formation:** Phalanx: close/compact line, overlapping shields.

These would have been the traditional fighters of early Macedonia.

They fought in a Phalanx; their shields would overlap the man to their left. This meant that the most vulnerable fighters were on the far right, where one column of fighters didn't have a man protecting them with their shield.

After Philip, Hoplites would have been used as support troops for the main phalanx of *sarissa* pikemen.

There were about 5,000 in Alexander's army from all the Greek cities in the *Corinthian League*.

Greek Hoplites were also hired as mercenaries (foreign soldiers fighting for money) by the Persians.



### Sarissa Pikemen (Foot Companions)



**Armour:** bronze or leather corselet; bronze grieves; Corinthian Helmet/bronze Phrygian Cap/ or *Kausia* Cap.

**Shield:** *Apsis* smaller than the Hoplite's *Hoplion* and strapped to their arm.

**Weapons:** 4-6m long pike called a *sarissa* – pointed at both ends and can be separated. A short sword called a *kopis*.

**Formation:** Phalanx: differing from the Hoplite Phalanx – rather than a wall of shields it was a wall of spears. First 5 rows with the *sarissa* pointed forward, the rows behind holding them first at a 45° or 90°

These were the backbone of the Macedonian army after the *sarissa* was introduced by Philip.

The main infantry line of pikes could hold the enemy line at a distance and thrust their pikes at anyone who got too close.

There would be about 1,500 men per battalion or *taxeis*.



## Medium Infantry

### Hypaspists or Guards



**Armour:** Medium: bronze Phrygian Cap; bronze grieves; leather or bronze corselet.

**Shield:** large *Apsis*, similar to the shield used by hoplites.

**Weapons:** sword and spear.

**Formation:** flexible phalanx on the flanks of the *sarissa* phalanx. They would be used to protect these flanks from missiles and cavalry.

The Hypaspists or guards – also known as the shield bearers – were an elite corps of infantry used to protect the main phalanx.

They could be used in a loose flexible formation – like light infantry or in a more condensed phalanx like the heavy infantry.

They would be organised into a Royal Battalion or *agema* and two ordinary battalions, *taxeis*, of about 1,000 men.

They would more important to Alexander's army as the campaigns progressed as they could move more quickly when facing rough terrain and highly defensible forts.



## Light Infantry

### Peltasts



**Armour:** Minimal: Helmet or Phrygian Cap.

**Shield:** a smaller *Apsis* shield.

**Weapons:** Javelins for throwing at the enemy and a short knife or sword.

**Formation:** a loose and flexible line for hit and run tactics

The Peltasts were usually on the wings of the Heavy Infantry phalanx, *Hypaspists* and *sarissa* pikemen.

They would usually be from Thrace (Bulgarian Coast) or Illyria (Serbia/Bosnia-Herzegovina).

There were about 7,000 in Alexander's army.

They could be very effective at disrupting the infantry line or picking off soldiers on the flanks.

They would be very vulnerable to a direct charge from cavalry, but their javelins could also be more effective against the larger target that cavalry made.



### Agrianian Mercenaries



**Armour:** Minimal: bronze helmet.

Agrianian infantry were used much the same as the Peltasts infantry.

**Shield:** Oblong *Apsis*.

**Weapons:** Javelins and sword.

**Formation:** a loose and flexible line for hit and run tactics.

Perhaps the only difference is that they were tougher. They were a more elite force of light infantry troops who served Alexander throughout his campaign.

There were roughly 1,000 troops in Alexander's army

They were usually used by Alexander to support the Guards or cavalry units. They could also be used for reconnaissance.



## Cretan Archers



**Armour:** Minimal

**Shield:** small if any.

**Weapons:** bow and possibly a knife.

**Formation:** a loose formation usually in front of the main infantry line.

Crete was one of the only places in the Greek world – aside from Thrace or Scythia – where archery was commonly practiced.

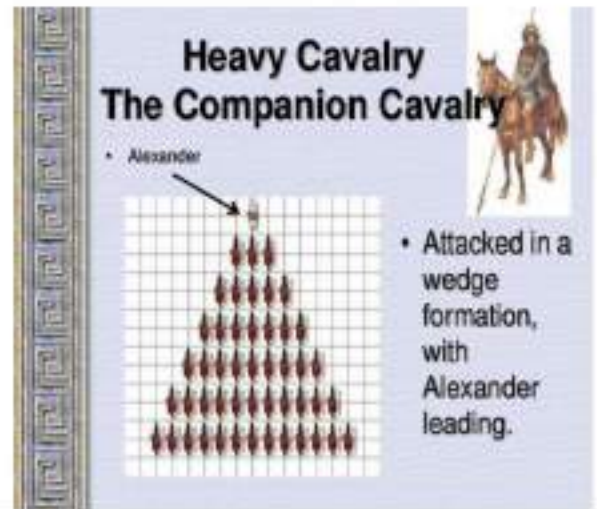
Archers were less effective in Greek warfare because infantry would usually wear so much armour.

Archers could be effective at disrupting infantry or cavalry lines however and were occasionally used by Alexander – especially in siege warfare.



## Cavalry

### Companion Cavalry



**Armour:** Medium: Corselet of leather or bronze; bronze grieves; a Boeotian Helmet.

**Shield:** None.

**Weapons:** a lance 3.5 -4.5m long and probably held by two hands called a *xyston*. They would also carry a sword: either a *kopis* (slashing sword) or *xiphos* (cutting or thrusting sword).

**Formation:** The Companions formed a wedge formation (see diagram above). This allowed all members of the squadron to see the leader and adjust their movements to match his directions.

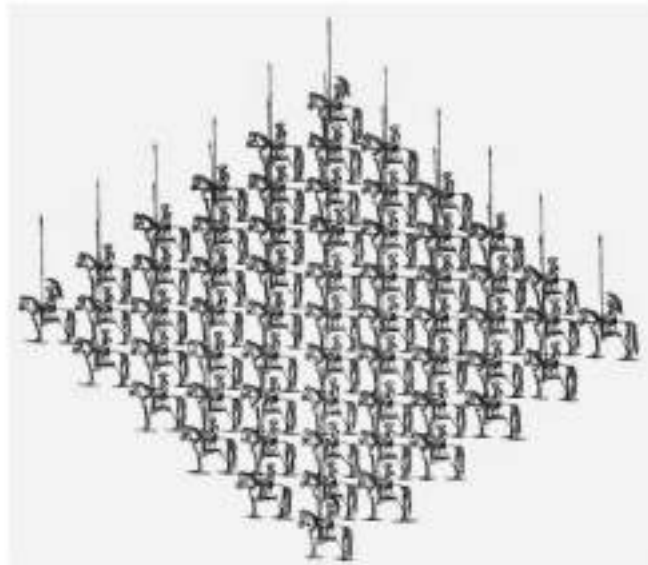
The Companions were made up of the noblemen of Ancient Macedonia, including Alexander's bodyguard.

Originally these 1,800 troops would have been divided into 8 squadrons or *ilai*. This however did change over time.

Their main purpose in the army was to act as "Shock Cavalry". This meant speeding towards a gap in the enemy line or flanking the enemy line to attack the flank or rear. They would **not** smash into the line as Medieval knights – since without stirrups, this would mean the rider likely falling from his horse. Instead, they would ride at high speed towards the weak spot in the enemy line or at the opposing cavalry and thrust out their long *xystons* at the enemy. It took great skill and coordination to achieve this.



## Thessalian/Allied Cavalry



**Armour:** Heavy: bronze corselet, grieves, and Boeotian helmet.

**Shield:** none.

**Weapons:** *xyston* and *kopis/xiphon*.

**Formation:** A Rhomboid Formation (see diagram above). Like the wedge this allowed each troop to see the leader, but it was perhaps more defensible.

The Thessalian Cavalry gained their fame from the time of the Thessalian Tyrant, Jason of Pherae. Originally, they may have used Javelins.

However, once Philip conquered Thessaly these cavalry were incorporated into his army.

There were also about 1,800 of them in Alexander's army at the beginning of his campaign.

Their main purpose was to hold the Macedonian right flank, while the Companion Cavalry manoeuvred around the battlefield.

At Ecbatana, in 330 B.C. (after Gaugamela but before Hydaspes) they were disbanded and sent home. Some stayed on as Mercenaries, but from that point on Alexander would use a combination of Allied cavalry – not all that different from the original Thessalian squadrons.



### Archer Cavalry



**Armour:** Minimal.

**Shield:** None.

**Weapons:** bow and arrows;  
sword or knife.

**Formation:** loose.

When Alexander was in Sogdiana in around 329/328 B.C., he formed a squadron of Archer Cavalry from various Iranian peoples.

There were about 1,000 men in all.

Persians and other ancient Iranian people were highly trained at the use of the bow and arrow and horse riding.

There main tactic would be to run up to the enemy units, fire their arrows, and then retreat to a safe distance, avoiding contact.

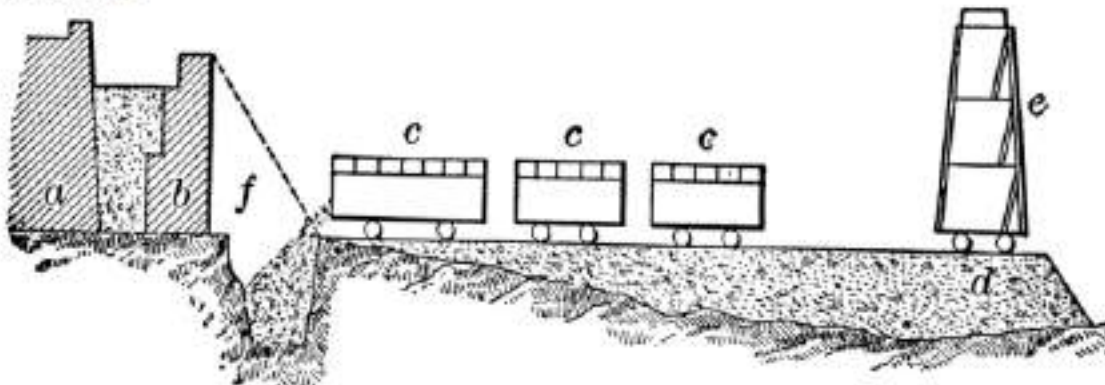
**Other Cavalry:** There were various other cavalry units used by Alexander throughout his campaign for example the *Promdromoi* (Scouts) and the *Sarissaphoroi* (Lancers) – who would use a shorter *sarissa*, and various allied cavalry from Paeonia, Thrace, and the Greek allies. He would also incorporate elephants into his army after the battle of Hydaspes

Alexander's tactics were often hinged on the use of cavalry: using their manoeuvrability, strength (a horse weighs about 1 ton), and speed (a horse can run on average about 48km/h; the maximum recorded is 88km/h).



**Siege Engines:**

Below are some examples of the types of engines used by Alexander when besieging a fort or city.



*a/b/f: wall and ditch.*

*c: protective containers for dirt to be carried up to wall for filling in the ditch.*

*d: a mound/mole used to either level the ground or create a causeway, fill in ravines (see Rock of Aoronas), or to create a bridge across the ocean to an island (see Tyre).*

*e. mobile siege tower to protect approaching troops or engineers.*



*Catapult: used to hurl missiles at or over city walls.*



*Ballista: used to hurl large darts at enemy on the walls.*



**Navy:**

Even though Alexander didn't make use of his navy much, except for Tyre, it is useful to know how ancient navies worked.

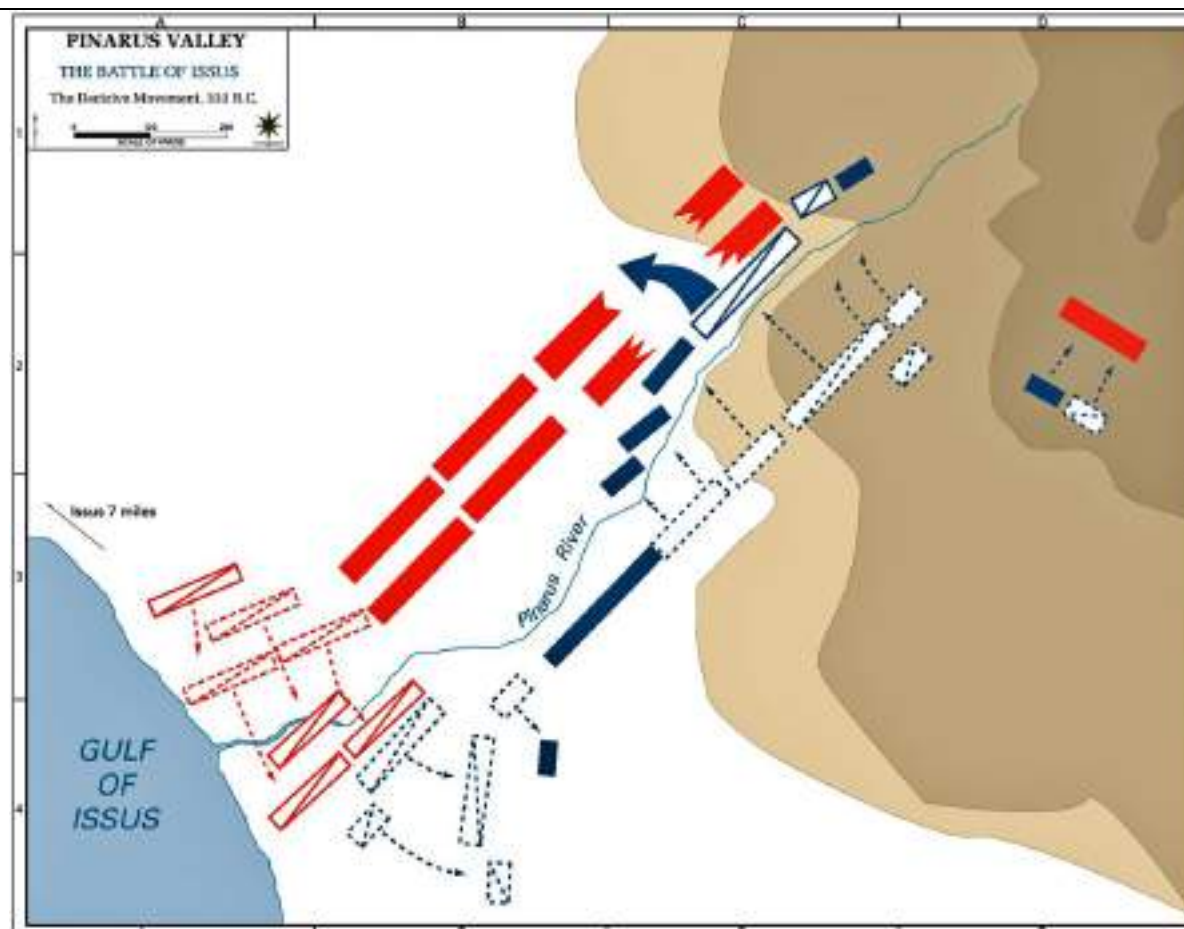
The most common ship was called a *Trireme* – these would have three rows of rowers. Ancient Greek ships would have sails and oars. However, the sails would not be used in battle.

In battle the ships would not attempt to board the enemy, but rather use long pikes to attach the enemy on the opposing ships deck, shoot arrows or missiles from the ships (see Tyre), or most often **ram** the enemy ship with the beaked shaped ram at the front of the ship.



Battle of Issus

Arrian 107-121. Plutarch ch. 20-21



**Main Factual Information:**

**Date:** November 333 B.C.

**Numbers:** Macedonians: 35,000 inf, 6,000 cavalry; Persians: according to Arrian and Plutarch, 600,000 strong. Modern estimates are considerably lower (50,000-60,000)

**Leaders:** Macedonian: Alexander, Parmenion; Persian: Darius III

**Losses:** Macedonians: about 400 killed, 5,000 wounded: Persians: apparently around 100,000 killed and over 10,000 of the cavalry.

**Lead up:**

- Having taken Miletus and Halicarnassus by siege, Alexander journeyed along the coast of Asia Minor and then up north, and inland; here he came to Gordium, the capital of Phrygia. In Phrygia there was a legend that the founding king – who was himself originally from Macedonia (according to some) – arrived in the city on a cart, which he then tied to the altar in the temple of Zeus. It was prophesied that whoever could detach the cart from the altar would rule all of Asia (Asia Minor/Turkey). It is said that Alexander hearing the tale, cut the knot with his sword; or in other versions he took out the pin which attached the rope to the yoke of the cart.
- Alexander then journeyed south, through the Cilician Gates, where he took ill at Tarsus and rested for some days.
- Darius, meanwhile, had assembled a large army, numbering approximately 600,000 (according to Arrian) in the plains of Assyria (modern day Syria, near Damascus). He chose the plain for its level ground and space, which would allow him to take advantage of his numbers and cavalry. However, Alexander's illness and delay meant that Darius was becoming restless, and apparently many of his advisors were advising him to move to meet Alexander. One, a Macedonian deserter



named Amyntas, advised against it, saying that Alexander would always come to seek Darius wherever he was and that their current location was to their best advantage. However, the ill advice of the others won out, and so Darius journeyed north via an inland route through the mountains.

- Meanwhile, Alexander had recovered from his illness and moved south along the coast. He stopped briefly in Issus, leaving some of his wounded behind, and went on again along the coast, close to the mountains. It is likely that the Macedonians and Persian armies passed closely to each other in the mountains by night, the former journeying south, the latter north.

- When Darius arrived in Issus and found the wounded, he was glad to discover that he had outflanked Alexander and could cut off his supply line. He then began moving south along the coast, following Alexander's rout, but only after slaughtering the wounded Macedonians in Issus.

- Alexander, hearing news that Darius was behind him, sent some of his guards north by ship to check the situation in Issus. And upon their return, began the journey back north the way he came

#### **Main Stages/Obstacles of Battle:**

**Stage 1:** Darius and his army were the first to arrive at the battle site, the river (stream) Pinarus, which flows from the mountains on Darius left, down to the sea and the flat open coast. Darius lined up his army in the following formation: All his cavalry on his right on the open, flat ground of the coast; his front-centre made up of the Greek mercenaries (30,000); flanking these were his light infantry and archers (20,000 on left; 20,000 on right); behind was a large cluster of troops both Persian (60,000) and foreign; he also had some Persian infantry across the river and in the foothills to the far left. Darius himself was in the centre surrounded by the strongest infantry. The narrowness of the terrain necessitated that Darius stack his units one behind another which severely limited his numerical advantage over Alexander.

**Stage 2:** When Alexander arrived, he set up his army in his normal formation: Parmenion leading the Macedonian left flank, made up of the Allied/Thessalian cavalry, the infantry units in a line across the centre, and Alexander on the far right with his Companion cavalry. However, he also placed a mixture of light infantry and cavalry to face the Persian infantry which had already crossed the river and were on his far right and behind his lines. Crucially, Alexander also gives orders to Parmenion not to allow a gap to form between the left flank and the sea, otherwise they would be outflanked and over-run.

**Stage 3:** Alexander began his approach slowly, stopping and starting to allow his men to rest as they approached, but as soon as they were in range of the Persian archers, he galloped. Simultaneously, several things happened. The Persian cavalry attacked across the open plain and engaged the Thessalian on the Macedonian left flank, the infantry lines met in the centre, and Alexander's Companion cavalry charged the Persian light infantry and archers on the Persian left.

**Stage 4:** The result of these three movements are as follows: Alexander's Companions smashed through the light infantry and were easily able to outflank the Persians – this rapid flanking manoeuvre meant that Darius' own position was exposed and so he fled. As Arrian says, "...he incontinently fled, indeed he led the race for safety". However, the Thessalian cavalry and the Macedonian infantry in the centre were struggling against the Greek mercenaries and Persian cavalry. In fact, the Macedonian line broke but didn't turn in full rout. Alexander was forced to bring his Companions around and away from Darius and charge the Greek mercenaries in the rear. They were routed. The Persian cavalry resisted for as long as they could, but now that Alexander had routed the Persian left and centre, the cavalry and the right flank could not resist for long.

#### **Aftermath:**



- The immediate aftermath of Issus was the capture of Darius' camp, his treasures/belongings, and members of his family: his wife, Stateira I, his daughters, Stateira II and Drypetis, and his mother, Sisygambis. Alexander would later marry Stateira II.
- The significance of the battle was that it was the first engagement between Darius and Alexander – Alexander proving the superior commander.
- It allowed Alexander to continue his campaign of subjugating the coastal cities; many more in Phoenicia (modern Lebanon) and Syria submitting to his authority.

**Evidence of Alexander's Leadership and Personality:**

- Alexander's overall strategy to approach in a stop-start manner proves his intelligence to give priority to resting his men. Then the pace of his charge and his leadership of the companions to not only break the line, but to hold them from pursuing Darius while the rest of his army was still in danger shows, bravery, restraint, and intelligence.
- The most famous and perhaps significant evidence for his personality was the way he treated Darius' family after the battle. Ensuring the crying women that Darius had survived and commanding that they be treated as royalty.

**Old course past paper questions:**

**Battle of Issus 333BC**

**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)

**The Coastal Policy:**

- The basis of the plan was to defeat the Persian fleet by taking control of the key ports on the Ionian coast and stalling any movements the Persian fleet could make in the Aegean

**Extracts from Arrian and Plutarch:**

*Arrian: pg 83 Plutarch: ch 17*

***Why did he disband his fleet after Miletus?\****

Alexander did this for 3 reasons:

- Firstly, the Persian navy was far superior to his own.
- Secondly, his own navy was too expensive to maintain and
- Thirdly, he didn't fully trust the Greeks, whose navy it was.

Arrian says that Alex was also convinced to concentrate on a land conquest by an omen. An eagle had landed near his ships. Parmenion took this to signify that Zeus was advocating a sea victory but because the eagle had landed on the wharf rather than on a ship's prow Alexander believed that the gods were advocating a land victory instead. That night Arrian says Zeus showed his approval of Alexander's decision because there was a thunderstorm over Miletus.

This led to Alexander implementing his **coastal policy**. He would conquer the Persian navy, not at sea, but from the land. This would be accomplished by capturing every fortified coastal port city capable of resupplying the Persian Navy, forcing them to range farther and further afield to resupply. Important towns along Alexander's route were Miletus, Halicarnassus and the island port fortress of Tyre.

Plutarch's account of Alexander's reasoning for the coastal policy: Plutarch (17)

*At this point Alexander hesitated as to what his next step should be. Time and again he was impelled to seek out Darius and risk everything upon the issue of a single battle, and then as often he would decide that he must build up his strength by securing the coastal region and its resources, and training his army, and only then strike inland against the King.*

Arrian's account of Alexander's reasoning: Pg. 83

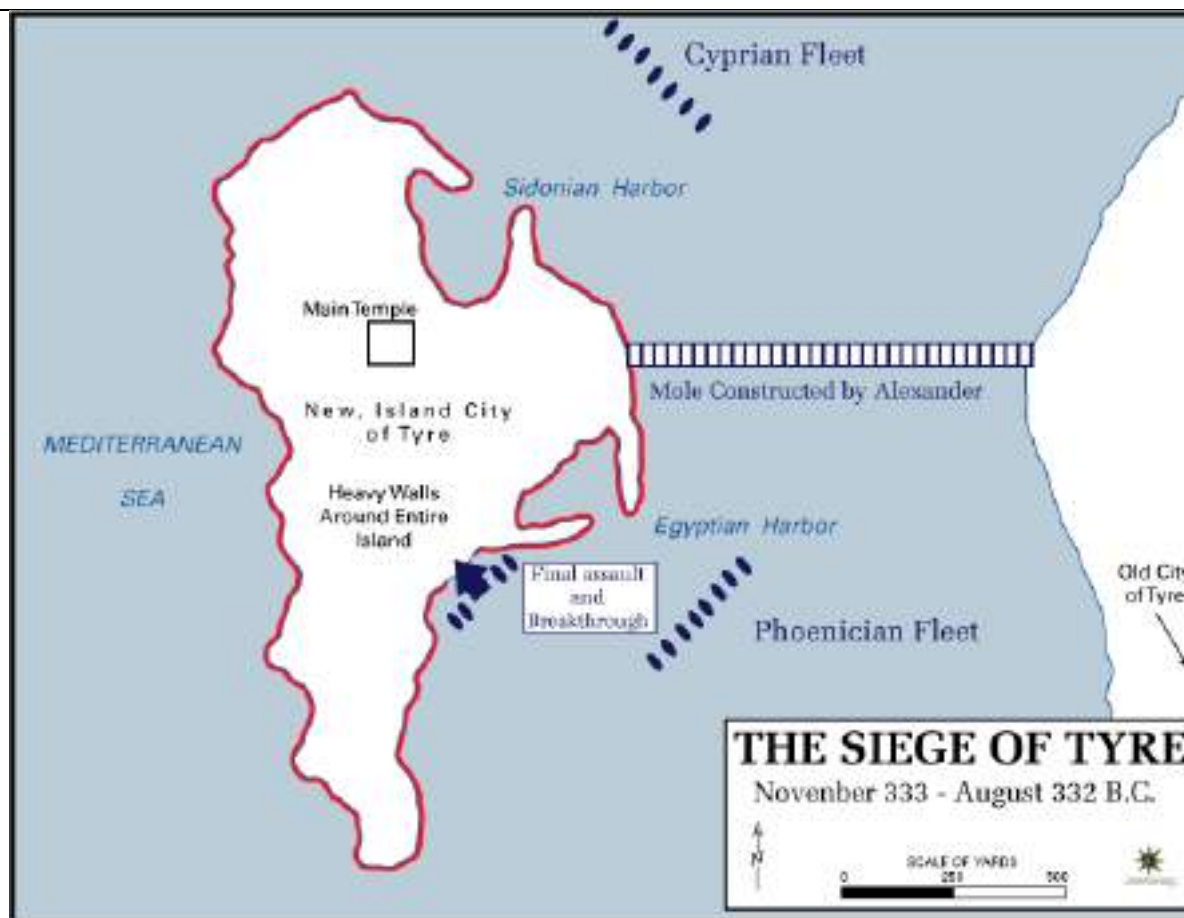
*Alexander now decided to disband his fleet. He had not, at the moment, the money for maintaining it; he had no wish to subject any part of his strength, in ships or men, to the risk of disaster. Moreover, now that his army master of the continent, he was aware that a fleet was no longer of any use to him; by seizing the coastal towns he could reduce the Persian navy to impotence, for they would then have no port on the Asian coast which they could use, and no source of replacement for their crews. Here, then, was the point of his interpretation of the omen of the eagle- it means that he would 'conquer the ships from the land.*

*\*Miletus was Alexander's first major siege in Persia. It takes place after his first battle, the battle of the Granicus river in 334BC.*



**The Siege of Tyre**

**Arrian: Pg 131-143. Plutarch ch.24-25**



**Main Factual Information:**

**Date:** 333-332 B.C.

**Numbers:** Macedonians: about the same as Issus plus 223 ships for Alexander's new fleet. Tyrians: approximately 40,000 residence in the city.

**Leaders:** Macedonian: Alexander; Tyrian: Azemilcus.

**Losses:** Macedonian: 400 killed; Tyrians: 8,000 massacred at taking of the city.

**Lead up:**

- In order to secure the coast and prevent the Persian fleet from being supplied, it was important for Alexander to take all the vital coastal cities. Tyre was one of the most vital of these cities in Phoenicia (Lebanon).
- Most cities in Phoenicia and Cyprus, joined Alexander after the Battle of Issus, abandoning the Persians. All except the Tyrians who decided to support neither the Persians nor Alexander; remaining independent – likely waiting to see the outcome of the war before choosing a side.
- Alexander identified the temple of Melqart on the island as a temple to Hercules and wished to make a sacrifice at the temple; however, the Tyrians refused any Persians and Macedonians entrance and refused Alexander's request, knowing that to allow him to enter would show Macedonians favouritism. They suggested Alexander make his sacrifice at the temple on the mainland. Alexander sent further envoys who were executed in full view of the army and thrown over the walls. Alexander decided to take the city.



**Main Stages/Obstacles of Battle:**

**Step 1:** - The Tyrians had retreated to the island part of the city, abandoning the port on the mainland. This island lay about a half a mile from the coast and had a 45.8m (150ft) wall surrounding it. There were two harbours, one on the north of the island (facing Sidon) and on the south (facing Egypt). In order to overcome the obstacle of the island without a fleet of his own, Alexander decided to build a mole. For the most part the sea between the mainland and the island was shallow and muddy, its deepest depth was 18ft/5.5m.

– The Macedonians had success initially and were able to bring their siege weapons closer to the walls; in response the Tyrians brought their warships close to the mole and prevented the Macedonian advance. To counter this the Macedonians set up towers on the mole and mounted their siege engines on them. They covered these towers with animal hides in order to prevent the fire arrows from the walls setting them alight.

- Ultimately, this initial attempt failed because the Tyrians constructed a bomb-ship: they rigged a cattle-ship with dry brushwood and various flammable material such as sulphur and pitch, built up the bulwarks and gave it two masts across its bow with a cauldron full of the flammable chemicals which when flung on the fire would increase its ferocity. The Tyrians then waited for a favourable wind and pulled the cattle-boat with two triremes and flung it at the edge of the mole – the men on board jumping overboard before the impact. The triremes stayed near the fire which had set the towers ablaze to prevent the Macedonians dowsing the flames. Then the Tyrians from the city swarmed out in their boats and destroyed the mole.

**Step 2:** - In response to this Alexander ordered that a fresh mole be constructed, broader and with more towers for protection and fresh siege engines. He set out for Sidon with his Guards and Agrianians in order to raise a fleet. Alexander managed to gather a surprisingly large fleet totalling 223 ships. The king of Cyprus sending his fleet of 120 ships to Alexander and the Phoenician fleet providing 80 more, with the remainder being made up of Greek ships. He was also joined by 4,000 Greek mercenaries in Sidon.

- Alexander returned expecting a sea-battle. Alexander commanding the right and Craterus the left. Instead of offering battle as intended, the Tyrians – seeing a much larger fleet than expected – decided to blockade their harbour with their ships facing bow-on (the front facing out of the harbour) in order to repel any Macedonians ships attempting to enter the harbour. Alexander surrounded the harbours, the Cyprians under the command of Andromachus blockading the north harbour and the Phoenicians blockading the south harbour where he was stationed.

**Step 3:** - When the new siege engines had been completed Alexander moved them closer to the walls on the mole and onto transport vessels and began bombarding the 150ft high wall of large blocks cemented together. The Tyrians had built up wooden towers to protect the wall from Alexander's siege engines.

- Further difficulties obstructed Alexander's approach since large blocks of gypsum stone had been thrown into the water in front of the mole which prevented the ships getting close. Alexander tried to remove the blocks, but it proved difficult as the ship decks were unsteady and the Tyrians came out in small armoured boats and cut the anchor ropes. Alexander responded by armouring his own vessels and placing them broadside at the front of the ships protecting them. The Tyrians then sent divers to cut the anchor ropes, but Alexander responded by replacing the ropes with chains and was finally able to haul the blocks from the sea.

**Step 4:** - The Tyrians decided to try and break out from the harbours, now that the mole was able to reach the walls. The Tyrians attack the Cyprians to the north with 3 quinquiremes (5 decks), 3 quadriremes (4 decks), and 7 triremes (3 decks). They sailed out slowly and quietly only raising a



shout and cry when they were in sight of the Cyprian ships who were taken off guard and driven ashore. Alexander, who had retired, returned to the Phoenician fleet to the south, ordering them to be on guard for a sortie from the south harbour and took his quinquiremes and 5 or 6 triremes moved to the north harbour. The Tyrians, seeing that it was Alexander himself attacking fled back to the city. Most of the Tyrian squadron was disabled or captured

**Step 5:** - Now that the Tyrian fleet was less of a threat Alexander began probing the walls with his siege engines for a weak spot. He found one to the south and he began to bombard it and a small breach was made. Making an initial attack to test the defences, Alexander then waited 3 days for favourable weather, bombarded the opening till it was wider. He attacked the breach with himself leading his guards. Meanwhile triremes attacked the harbours north and south and transport vessels with archers and artillery attacked the wall at various locations; the Tyrians were attacked from every point.

- Alexander succeeded in gaining ground where his guards had assaulted the wall. The Phoenician and Cyprian fleets succeeded in breaking into the harbours.

- The Tyrians abandoned the walls and retreated to the shrine of Agenor. The Macedonians proceeded to slaughter the inhabitants; partially because they were sick of the length of the siege, partially because the Tyrians had murdered their ambassadors and flung them from the walls prior to the siege.

**Aftermath:**

- Some Carthaginians visiting the city, the King Azemilcus and his dignitaries had fled to the shrine of Melqart. These Alexander spared.

- 8,000 Tyrians were killed in the slaughter, 30,000 (mostly women and children) were sold into slavery.

- Alexander offered sacrifice to Heracles and held a ceremonial parade of his troops in full armour and there were athletic contests. The siege engine which had made the breach of the wall was dedicated at Heracles temple.

- Because Alexander had taken the city, he could now confidently journey south, his supply lines secure. When he finally took Gaza (another Persian stronghold) in a brief siege in October 332 B.C., Alexander had all the major ports along the Mediterranean coast and the Persian fleet was no longer a threat. Alexander could then journey into Egypt.

**Evidence of Alexander's Leadership and Personality:**

- Alexander proves highly determined and intelligent in his command of the siege of Tyre. Not only does he continue to attack despite the obstacles placed in his way and the initial setbacks, but he adapts to the circumstances and eventually succeeds in taking the highly impregnable city.

- We see a more merciless side to his character, however. Just as in the siege of Thebes, Alexander has many of the inhabitants slaughtered and sold into slavery. He could not tolerate any signs of weakness and would stamp his authority on any who believed they could deny his superiority.



**Siege of Tyre:**

**2004:**

The siege and capture of Tyre has been described as “perhaps the hardest task that Alexander’s military genius ever encountered.” (Bury and Meiggs)

- (a) What were the main challenges presented by Tyre and its defenders, and how did Alexander’s genius overcome those challenges? (40)
- (b) What is your opinion of Alexander’s treatment of the survivors after the capture of Tyre?(10)

**2012:**

- (a) Explain why the city of Tyre was so difficult to capture. (15)
- (b) How did Alexander overcome the difficulties presented by Tyre and its defenders? (25)
- (c) What do you learn about Alexander’s character from Arrian’s account of the siege and capture of Tyre? (10)

**2022:**

The siege and capture of Tyre in 332BC was, “perhaps the hardest task that Alexander’s military genius ever encountered”.(Bury and Meiggs)

- (a) What were the main challenges resented by Tryre and its defenders? (20)
- (b) The historian Paul Cartledge views the siege of Tyre as Alexander’s “Masterpiece” as a military commander. Do you agree with this opinion? Give reasons for your answer. (30)



## Letters Between Alexander and Darius.

After the siege of Tyre Alexander received a messenger from Darius attempting to come to terms on a number of key points:

- The cession of hostilities between Alexander and Darius.
- The end of Alexanders encroachment into the Persian Empire.
- The return of Darius's Family.

### 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 (battle of Gaugamela)



## Key moments of the Persian Campaign.

Below are a collection of events that take place across the Persian campaign. They are laid out in chronological order and are designed to give you a deeper understanding of the events of the Persian campaign beyond the two battles and sieges we have studied above. They are also intended to give you useful evidence and insight into Alexander's attitude and treatment of the barbarians as well as insights into his character.

### Siwah

#### Broader context:

Having taken Tyre and Gaza in an epic 9 months of combined sieging Alexander found himself gripped by a desire to visit the shrine of Zeus Ammon in Siwah, a desert oasis in the interior of Egypt. He began by moving west along the coast to Paraetonium and then turned south towards the interior. The way to Siwah is through a waterless desert but Alexander receives two pieces of divine help on the journey. The first is that it rains and the second is that due to the nature of the shifting sands obscuring tracks the guides get lost and two snakes lead them to the oracle and back again.

#### At the shrine of Siwah:

Once Alexander arrived at the site he “*Put his question to the oracle and received (or so he said) the answer which his heart desired*” It appears likely that the priest as a mark of courtesy wanted to greet Alexander with the Greek phrase “O Paidion” (O my son) but due to his accent mispronounced it as “O Pai Dios” or “Son of Zeus/Ammon”. Alexander was delighted with this slip of pronunciation and hence the legend grew up that the god had addressed him as “O, son of Zeus”.

#### Arrian pp. 151- 154

- Alex wanted to visit the shrine of Ammon in Libya
- He wanted to consult the oracle that had a reputation for infallibility
- Perseus and Heracles had consulted it
- He had a feeling that he was descended from Ammon
- He wanted more precise information on the subject
- Route there was sandy and waterless
- There was much rain when Alex crossed (a gift from god?)
- Guides got lost on the route
- Two snakes led the way
- Alex said to trust in them and follow



- More common version is that two crows led the way
- Shrine is located in a desert in the only spot that had moisture
- Arrian says Alex put a question to the oracle and that he received the answer that his heart desired
- They then began their journey back to Egypt.

### **Plutarch chp. 27**

- Plutarch highlights the difficulties potentially facing alexander if he decided to go to Siwah (lack of water + winds)
- Notes that his men were also aware of the dangers, but nothing would stop alexander from visiting
- Refers to assistance received from the gods;
- Abundant rain
- Pure air
- Ravens as guides
- Callisthenes wrote that the birds cawed to guide lost members of the party
- Priest of the shrine welcomed Alex ‘as a father welcomes a son’
- Alex asked if his father’s murderers were punished
- The priest said his father was not a mortal
- Alex asked if Philip had been avenged
- The priest said he had
- Alex asked if he was destined to rule over all mankind
- The priest said yes.
- Alex dedicated gifts to the gods and ‘large sums of money to his priests’
- Refers to letter sent to Olympias which referred to secret prophecies that Alex received and would confide to her only.
- Others say the priest miss-spoke a Greek term and instead of saying ‘o, my son’ said ‘O, son of Zeus’ and this slip of pronunciation delighted Alex and hence the legend grew that the god referred to him as son of Zeus



## The Burning of the Palace of Persepolis.

### Arrian Account:

*Thence he marched to Persepolis with such rapidity that the garrison had no time to plunder the city's treasure before his arrival. He also captured the treasure of Cyrus the First at Pasargadae. He appointed Phrasaortes son of Rheomithras, to the governorship of Persepolis. He burnt the palace of the Persian kings, though this act was against the advice of Parmenio, who urged him to spare it for various reasons, chiefly because it was hardly wise to destroy what was now his own property, and because the Asians would, in his opinion, be less willing to support him if he seemed bent merely upon passing through their country as a conqueror rather than upon ruling it securely as a king. Alexander's answer was that he wished to punish the Persians for their invasion of Greece; his present act was retribution for the destruction of Athens, the burning of the temples, and all the other crimes they had committed against the Greeks. My own view is that this was bad policy; moreover, it could hardly be considered as punishment for Persians long since dead and gone.*

### Arrian later says:

*He then went to the palace of the Persian kings (Persepolis), which on a previous occasion he had set on fire, as I have already related. I remarked, when I mentioned this act, that I could not commend it, and Alexander himself regretted it when he saw the place for the second time.*

### Plutarch Account (Ch. 37 & Ch 38):

**Ch37:** *Persis ( territory of Persepolis) was difficult to penetrate owing to its mountainous terrain and it was defended by the bravest of the Persians since Darius had fled. In spite of these obstacles, Alexander found a guide who showed him the way by making a short diversion. This man had a Lycian father and Persian mother and spoke both Greek and Persian, and it was to him, so the story goes, that the Pythian priestess had referred when she prophesied while Alexander was still a boy that a Lykos (wolf) would guide him in his march against the Persians. A terrible massacre of prisoners took place there, and Alexander himself writes that he gave orders for them to be slaughtered because he thought that this would help his cause...*

**Ch38:** *In the spring Alexander again took the field against Darius, but a short while before it so happened that he accepted an invitation to a drinking party held by some of his companions, and on this occasion a number of women came to meet their lovers and joined in the drinking. The most celebrated of these was Thais, an Athenian, at that time the mistress of Ptolmey who later became ruler of Egypt. As the drinking went on, Thais delivered a speech which was intended partly as a graceful compliment to Alexander and partly to amuse him. What she said was typical of the spirit of Athens, but hardly in keeping with her own situation. She declared that all the hardships she had endured in wandering about Asia had been amply repaid on that day, when she found herself revelling luxuriously in the splendid palace of the Persians, but that it would be an even sweeter pleasure to end the party by going out and setting fire to the palace of Xerxes who had laid Athens in ashes. She wanted to put a torch to the building herself in full view of Alexander, so that posterity should know that the women who followed Alexander had taken a more terrible revenge for the wrongs of Greece than all the famous commanders of earlier times by land or sea. Her speech was greeted with wild applause and the king's companions excitedly urged him on until at last he*



*allowed himself to be persuaded, leaped to his feet, and with a garland on his head and a torch in his hand led the way. The other revellers followed, shouting and dancing, and surrounded the palace, and those of the Macedonians who had heard what was afoot delightedly ran up bringing torches with them. They did this because they hoped that the act of burning and destroying the palace signified that Alexander's thoughts were turned towards home, and that he was not planning to settle among the barbarians. According to a number of historians it was in this way that the palace was burned down, that is on impulse, but there are others who maintain that it was an act of deliberate policy. However this may be, it is agreed that Alexander quickly repented and gave orders for the fire to be put out.*

**The discovery of Naphtha and the burning of ugly Stephanus: Plutarch 35:**

*In his advance through the whole of Babylonia, which immediately surrendered to him, he was particularly impressed by the fissure in the earth at Ecbatana from which fire continually poured forth as if from a spring, and by the stream of naphtha which gushed out so abundantly that it formed a lake not far from the chasm. This naphtha is in many ways like bitumen, but it is so flammable that a flame can set it alight by its very radiance without actually touching it, and it often kindles all the intermediate air. To demonstrate the nature of the liquid and the force of its action, the barbarians sprinkled a small quantity along the street which led to Alexander's quarters. Then standing at the far end they applied their torches to the trail of moisture as it was growing dark. The first drops instantly ignited, and in a fraction of a second, with the speed of thought, the flames darted to the other end and the whole street was ablaze.*

*Among the attendants who waited upon the king, whenever he bathed and anointed himself, was an Athenian named Athenophanes, who had the task of providing him with diversions and amusements. On one occasion a boy named Stephanus, who possessed and absurdly ugly face but an agreeable singing voice, was also in attendance in the bathroom, and Athenophanes asked the king, " would you care for us to try an experiment with the naphtha upon Stephanus? If it catches fire on him and is not immediately put out, then its strength must be extraordinary and irresistible" Surprisingly the boy agreed to try the experiment, and no sooner had he touched the liquid and anointed himself with it than the flames broke out and enveloped his body so completely that Alexander was appalled and began to fear for his life. If there had not happened to be many attendants close by holding pitchers of water for the bath he would have been burned to death before any help could reach him. Even as it was they had great difficulty in putting out the flames and his whole body was so severely burned that he was in a terrible state afterwards...*



### The Death of Darius:

**Arrian: Pg181-186 Plutarch: Ch 42-43**

Following Alexander second defeat of Darius at Gaugamela Darius fled east, first raiding the royal treasury at Ectabana in the hopes of raising another great army. However, as time went on and the gold dwindled, Darius' forces slowly deserted him until one of his generals, Bessus, betrayed Darius and had him taken prisoner.

Alexander pursued Darius across the Persian empire covering more than 375 miles in eleven days. The fast pace of the march was such that only 60 of his companion horsemen were able to keep up with Alexander when they burst into Darius' war camp and eventually caught up with the Persian vanguard only to find Darius lying in the back of a wagon riddled with javelins and at his last gasp.

*"He asked for a drink, and when he had swallowed some cold water, which a Macedonian named Polystratus brought him, he said, "This is the final stroke of misfortune that I should accept a service from you for your kindness, and the gods will repay him for his courtest towards my mother and my wife and my children. And so through you, I give him my hand"*

Darius promptly then dies without ever coming face to face with Alexander. Alexander for his part, displayed grief and distress at Darius' death and even went so far as to throw his own cloak over the body.

### The Death of Bessus:

**Arrian: Pg 212-213 Plutarch: Ch 43**

The Pursuit then became a hunt for Darius' murder Bessus who Alexander pursued further east across the Persian empire and even across the Hindu Kush. When he had finally had him captured accounts differ on his method of execution.

Plutarch claims that Alexander ordered Bessus torn limb from limb:

*"He had the tops of two straight trees bent down so that they met, and part of Bessus' body was tied to each. Then when each tree was let go and sprang back to its upright position, the part of the body attached to it was torn off by the recoil."*

Arrian has a slightly different account:

*"Alexander had Bessus brought before a full meeting of his officers and accused him of treachery to Darius. He then gave orders that his nose and the tips of his ears should be cut off and that thus mutilated he should be taken to Ecbatana to suffer public execution before his own countrymen, The Medes and the Persians"*

It should be noted here that Arrian goes one step further than Plutarch and offers us his own opinion of Alexander's treatment of Bessus where he says,



*"I do not myself approve the excessive severity of the punishment; for mutilation of that sort is, I think, a barbarous custom"*

## **The trial and execution of Philotas and Parmenion**

### **Plutarch 48-49**

Philotas was the son of Alexander's greatest general Parmenion who held the left flank in all of Alexander's major battles in Asia minor until the death of Darius. Philotas was by all accounts a well-liked member of the companions with a reputation for courage and generosity. However, he was also said to have displayed an arrogance and an ostentation of wealth and a degree of luxury in his personal habits and his way of living which could only cause offence in his position as a private subject. His efforts to imitate a lofty and majestic presence came across as clumsy and uncouth, lacking conviction and succeeded only in provoking envy and mistrust amongst his peers, to such a degree that his father once remarked to him;

*"My son, do not make so much of yourself".*

Complaints about Philotas had been reaching Alexander for many years. Alexander decided to act when a friend of Philotas' lover came to him expressing concerns of what his lover had confided to them. Alexander chose to meet with this lover, a Persian girl named Antigone who had been gifted to Philotas after the battle of Issus. Antigone confessed to Alexander how, when drunk, Philotas would remark that all the greatest achievements in the campaign had been the work of his father and himself. Then he would speak of Alexander as a mere boy who owed his title of ruler to their efforts. Alexander ordered her to continue visiting Philotas and to report everything she learnt from him.

The trap was now set and Philotas was none the wiser often uttering many indiscretions and speaking slightingly of the king, sometimes through anger or boastfulness. Alexander endured these insults and restrained himself in spite of what Plutarch refers to as , *"overwhelming evidence"*.

While Alexander was biding his time a Macedonian named Nicomachus learned that his lover Dimnus was involved in a plot to assassinate Alexander. He told his brother Cebalinus of the plot who went to tell the king at once, but was instead met by Philotas and asked him to arrange an audience with the King as the matter was most urgent. Philotas, for some unknown reason, did not arrange the meeting, not once but twice. This caused the brothers to become suspicious of Philotas and so they gained an audience with the king another way. They informed Alexander of the plot against his life, being planned by Dimnus and then made several insinuations against Philotas. Alexander ordered the arrest of Dimnus and became enraged when he learned that Dimnus had resisted arrest and been killed. He became even more disturbed because he had lost the chance to uncover the plot against him.



He also became all the more ready to listen to those who had long hated Philotas, who whispered that Dimnus must have been only an instrument and not the mastermind of the plot. Alexander had Philotas arrested, interrogated and tortured in the presence of the companions while Alexander listened behind a curtain.

Philotas was executed and immediately afterwards Alexander sent messengers to Media and had Parmenion put to death as well.



The Death of Black Cleitus

**Arrian: pg 214-217 Plutarch: Ch 50.**

**Broader context:**

Alexander has defeated Darius and taken control of the vast majority of the Persian Empire and has now crossed the Hindu Kush. He has begun in earnest to promote his fusion policy where he attempts to bring the Persian and Greek cultures together by example, adopting Persian dress and customs. One of these customs, Obesinance (Bowing with your head to the floor) is particularly difficult for Greeks to accept. Alexander, also at this time, incorporates an increasing number of Persians into his inner circle as advisers and courtiers. The tensions that this policy cause, build until during one night of heavy drinking, one of Alexanders companions takes offence at these perceived slights against the Greeks speaks his mind. In a fit of rage Alexander murders him.

**The death of Cleitus:**

During a night of heavy drinking at Samarakand while deep in their cups, a song about a recent humiliating defeat of the Macedonians by the barbarians gets sung. This displeased some of the older members of Alexanders retinue but Alexander and those sitting near him are amused and ask for the song to continue, this enrages many of the Macedonians but most remain silent, all except one...Black Cleitus, one of Alexanders Companions who had previously saved Alexanders life at the battle of the Granicus years previously.



Cleitus cries out that it is not right for Macedonians to be insulted in the presence of barbarians and enemies, even if they had met with misfortune. Alexander responds that, “*if he was trying to disguise cowardice as misfortune, he must be pleading his own case*”. Already drunk Cleitus springs to his feet and replies, “*Yes, it was my cowardice that saved your life, you who call yourself the son of the gods. When you were turning your back to Spithridates sword. And it is the blood of these Macedonians and their wounds which have made you so great that your disown your farther Philip and claim to be the son of Ammon!*”. The crowd erupts, with those gathered around Alexander screaming abuse at Cleitus and the older Macedonians trying to calm down both sides. Cleitus continues to insult Alexander, this time calling into question his fusion policy saying that he, “*should not invite to his table free-born men who spoke their minds: it would be better for him to spend his time among barbarians and slaves who would prostrate themselves before his white tunic and his Persian girdle*”.

Alexander flies into a rage and throws an apple at Cleitus and then wildly begins searching for his dagger which a bodyguard, Aristophanes, had taken out of easy reach. The other companions frantically try to drag Cleitus out of the room as he screams insults at Alexander. Alexander orders for his bodyguard to turn out and ordered his trumpeter to sound the alarm (an order which, if it had been obeyed, would have roused the entire camp to action). The other companions drag Cleitus from the room only for Cleitus to enter from another door still spewing taunts and insults at Alexander, reciting in a loud and contemptuous voice the line from Euripides’ *Andromache*,

**“Alas, what evil customs reign in Greece”**

In a choleric rage Alexander grabs a spear from a bodyguard and before anyone can react, has run Cleitus through the stomach. In an instant, the rage leaves Alexander and he is forced to stare in horror at the consequences of his rash actions as his friend groans, bleeds and finally breaths his last on the floor.

Plutarch blames Cleitus for this incident claiming that it was, “*...a misfortune rather than a deliberate act, and that it was Cleitus’ evil genius which took advantage of Alexander’s anger and intoxication to destroy him*”.

### **Arrian’s account:**

The broad strokes of this event are recounted much the same in Arrian as in Plutarch, with a few notable differences.

### **The aftermath**

Distraught by his actions Alexander falls into a deep depression and refuses to be seen by anyone.



**The Pages plot and the death of Callisthenes:**

**Arrian: 224-226 Plutarch: Ch52-55**

Callisthenes was one of two philosophers brought to help console Alexander from his grief at killing Cleitus. He was the great nephew of Aristotle. His approach to the king's grief was gentle and he skirted around the subject in order to spare the king's feelings.

The other philosopher was Anaxarchus of Abdera who took a drastically different approach and upon entering the room exclaimed,

*“here is this Alexander whom the whole world now looks to for an example, and he is lying on the floor weeping like a slave, terrified of the law and of what men will say of him. And yet all the time it should be he who represents the law and sets up the criterion of justice. Why else did he conquer, unless it was to govern and command? It was certainly not to allow himself to submit like a slave to the foolish opinions of others. Do you not know that Zeus has justice and law seated side by his side to prove that everything that is done by the ruler of the world is lawful and just?”*

This argument and others like it is said to have much relieved Alexander's suffering but as Plutarch points out, *“Made him in many ways more proud and autocratic than before”*. Plutarch also notes that it was thanks to these speeches by Anaxarchus that Callisthenes' company, which was never very welcome to begin with due to his austerity, even more disagreeable.

Plutarch also notes several incidents that increasingly lost Callisthenes favour with the King remarking that, *“Callisthenes possessed great eloquence, but lacked common sense”*.

Certainly, one of the blackest marks against Callisthenes concerned the matter of obeisance. A policy newly implemented by Alexander after fashion of the Persian where suppliants would have to bow to the ground and kiss their superior. The story goes that one evening at banquet one of Alexander's sycophants made obeisance to Alexander, kissed him and then resumed his place on a couch, handing his cup to the next guest in turn. All the guests did the same, passing the cup after making obeisance. The cup finally came to Callisthenes and after he had drunk he came forward to kiss Alexander, only for another hanger on by the name of Demetrius son of Pheido to exclaim, *“sire, do not kiss him; he is the only one who has not made obeisance to you.”* Alexander there for refused to kiss him and Callisthenes exclaimed in a loud voice, *“Very well then, I shall go away the poorer for a kiss”*. Importantly, Arrian comments that this incident is deplorable as it reflects upon Alexander's growing arrogance and Callisthenes' bad manners.

These remarks opened Alexander's ear to the slander spread by sycophants like Lysimachus and Hagnon who put about that Callisthenes went about giving himself airs and that young men flocked to him wherever he went.

This was made all the more damning when the plot against Alexander's life by Hermolaus and his fellow pages was discovered.



## The Pages Plot

This was an attempt made on Alexander's life by a group of young noblemen who at the time were working as grooms and pages for Alexander's Companions. The story goes that one of the young men, Hermolaus had an interest in philosophy which brought him into close contact with Callisthenes. While on a hunt with Alexander, Hermolaus struck and killed a boar that had charged the king but in doing so he forestalled the king's own strike. Furious at missing his opportunity to land the killing blow, Alexander ordered Hermolaus to be whipped in front of the other boys and then took his horse from him.

This slight is what set young Hermolaus against Alexander. Bitterly hurt he went to his bosom friend Sostratus and told him that life would not be worth living until he has had his revenge. Sostratus adored Hermolaus and so was easily persuaded to take part in the plot. The two boys then obtained the support of four others, Antipater son of Asclepiodorus, Epimenes son of Arseus, Anticles son of Theocritus, and Philotas son of Carsis. They agreed that when it was Antipater's turn at night duty that they should murder Alexander in his sleep.

Their plan ended in failure however as on the night in question Alexander stayed up drinking until dawn. One of the conspirators, Epimenes told his bosom friend Charicles son of Menander the whole plan the next day. Charicles then told Epimenes' brother, Eurylochus who in turn passed everything on to Ptolemy son of Lagus, one of the king's guard. Alexander ordered the arrest of all the boys, who admitted under torture (according to Arrian) that Callisthenes had urged them to commit the crime. Plutarch disagrees with this however, stating that even under torture none of the boys denounced Callisthenes. In fact, the opposite, Alexander records himself in personal letters to his companions Craterus, Attalus and Alectas that the boys had confessed under torture that the plot had been entirely their own and no one else knew of it. Indeed, Arrian states that when brought to stand trial, Hermolaus openly confessed his guilt, declaring that it was no longer possible for an honourable man to endure Alexander's inhuman arrogance. He went on to include a list of his crimes including the lawless killing of Philotas, the arbitrary killing of Parmenion and the death of Cleitus. Furthermore, he lists elements of Alexander's fusion policy such as his adoption of Persian dress and the indignity of obeisance. Alexander had Hermolaus and the other boys stoned to death on the spot.

Whatever the case, Alexander was ready enough to believe the worst about Callisthenes as he already disliked him for past slights, real or imagined and had him arrested. Reports of his death differ. According to Arrian, Callisthenes was either dragged in chains wherever the army went until his health broke and he died, or he was first tortured and then hanged. Plutarch says that he was kept in prison for seven months until he could be tried by the council of Corinth in the presence of Aristotle but that about the same time that Alexander was wounded in India Callisthenes died of excessive corpulence and lice.



**The Mutiny at Hyphasis**

**Arrian – PP. 291-298**

- Alexander had no intention of turning back. He wanted to cross the river Hyphasis. Why?
- He heard that the land there was fertile, the people were good farmers, brave in war and had a good political system.
- The Macedonians were tired, fed up taking one risk after another and meetings were held in the camp to voice their opposition.
- Alexander heard of this and ordered a meeting with his Officers and spoke to them to try to persuade them to carry on.

**ALEXANDER'S SPEECH**

- He reminded them of past victories and the vast territory they had conquered, and asked 'why do you hesitate to extend the power of Macedon – your power'
- He said that there was not much land left for them up to the river Ganges and the eastern Sea. He was convinced that the Indian Ocean, the Persian Gulf and the Hyrcanian Sea all flowed into one another.
- He told them that if they turned back now the remaining warlike tribes would revolt and all their hard work will have been wasted.
- He told them to stand fast, that glorious achievements come to those who strike and take risks. To live bravely and to leave an everlasting reputation when one dies is true happiness.
- He reminded them of his ancestor Heracles' bravery and also Dionysus.
- He tells them again to add what remains of Asia to what you have already conquered.
- He reminded them of the risks he had personally taken sharing the hardships with them.
- They would have the greatest share of the money when they have overrun Asia – 'the rewards are for all of us'
- He says he will then either send them home or lead them there himself – 'I will make those who stay the envy of those who return'



## THE REPLY

- Silence followed, then Coenus spoke.
- Coenus told Alexander that he was not speaking on behalf of the Officers of the majority of the ordinary soldier. He told Alexander that he would tell the truth.
- He said that yes they had achieved very many great successes but that it was time to set a limit to the tasks they will undertake.
- He told Alexander that not as many Greeks and Macedonians were left compared to the numbers when they set out from Macedonia.
- The Macedonians were still facing the work and dangers, but many men have been lost in battle, others have been disabled, many have died of disease and the men were broken in spirit.
- The men were homesick and longed to see their families and take their riches back with them.
- He told Alexander ‘do not try to lead men who are unwilling to follow.’
- He said to Alexander to go back to Macedonia and then make a fresh start and organise another expedition. Younger men would follow him. They would not be afraid of war because they have never been in battle before and would be eager for action.
- They will be more likely to follow you if they see the veterans returning with great wealth.

## ALEXANDER’S REACTION

- The men applauded the speech. Alexander was angry that Coenus had spoken so freely and dismissed the meeting.
- The next day he called the Officers together and said that he would continue but would not force any Macedonians to go against their will. Those who wanted to return home could do so – ‘I shall have others who will need no compulsion to follow their King’
- He went to his tent and stayed there for three days refusing to speak to any of the Companions.  
He was waiting to see if the men would change their minds. The men were angry at his show of temper and would not back down.
- Alexander sacrificed for favourable omens for a crossing, the omens were bad and he called his Officers and said he would turn back – ‘all circumstances combined to dissuade him.’ His men were delighted, he gave orders to build twelve altars to thank the gods who had brought them so far victoriously. **‘The only defeat he had ever**



suffered'

- He sacrificed and held games. He sent Porus to rule over the land up the river Hyphasis.
- He now planned to sail down the river Indus to the Indian Ocean.

**Plutarch (Chp. 62)**

- When Alexander insisted on crossing the Ganges his men outright refused.
- They believed an army of 300,000 were waiting to oppose them
- Alexander was devastated and locked himself away from everyone believing that unless he crossed the Ganges he 'owed no thanks to his troops'
- He saw turning back as 'an admission of defeat'
- He eventually relents to the pleas
- Has oversized horses mangers and bits produced that exceeded normal height left all over the area in order to exploit the primitive nature of the locals.



## The Gedrosian Desert

### Arrian pp. 333-34

- Alexander and his army are on the way to Babylon

### Initial difficulties:

- Not enough water:
- No supplies
- Covered great distances at night
- Had to go inland
- Alex wanted to stick to the coast to keep contact with the fleet but could not
- He sent Thoas to scout the coast
- They found only a few fishermen living off scraps
- The army then reached a part of the trail where they were fully resupplied
- Due to the suffering they had endured the men took officially sealed supplies and distributed them amongst those suffering the most
- Alex, demonstrating his shrewd leadership, pardoned them

### Entering the Gedrosian Desert:

- The march to Gedrosia (capital city), through the desert, took 60 days
- It has been remarked that the sufferings of the men during this time were greater than anything else they had endured in Asia
- Arrian says that Alex knew the difficulty of the crossing and only chose to undertake the route because he believed Serimaris was the only one to complete the crossing
- He also wanted to keep contact with the fleet and keep it supplied.

### Difficulties:

- heat
- no water
- casualties
- dead animals
- terrain
- length of marches



**Events:**

- The men killed animals to eat
- Alex feigned ignorance in order to avoid having to discipline them
- They had to leave the ill and weak behind
- On one of the days a rainstorm caused a huge stream to develop which swept away women and children and destroyed the royal tent
- Other problems arose when water was found as many of the men, in desperation drank too much and died as a result
- Following this Alex then decided to stop a couple of miles before water to prevent the men from spoiling the water and drinking it excessively
- One incident is mentioned in which the men approached Alex with a helmet full of water but he poured it out in full view of the men to show that he was willing to suffer as they do

**Getting out:**

- As more time passed, the guides admitted they had lost their way
- Alex then took control of the situation
- He ventured left with a small mounted troop and found fresh water at the coast.
- The rest of the army then followed
- After the 60 days, when they finally reached Gedrosia, the troops were given a rest

**Plutarch chp. 66**

- Says alex lost more than three quarters of his fighting force during the crossing.

**Problems:**

- disease
- wretched food
- heat
- hunger

**Aftermath:**

- Plutarch says the army was well provided for by the local satraps and rulers when they arrived in Gedrosia
- He agrees with Arrian in saying that following the ordeal, Alexander rested his force



**The Mutiny at Opis**

**ARRIAN PP. 359-367**

- Alex calls an assembly of Macedonian troops
- He announces the discharge of those unfit to continue through age or disability
- He wants to send them home with enough wealth to make those at home envious and wanting to join his army.
  
- The Macedonians already felt undervalued and resented his remarks
- They were already upset by his adoption of Persian dress, issuing Macedonian equipment to the 'epigoni' and the inclusion of foreign troops in the companions
- They called for the discharge of all Macedonian soldiers
- They jested that Alex should take his father (Ammon) with him on campaigns
- Alex is furious (Arrian acknowledges a change in his character)
- Alex pointed out the leaders of the mutiny, had them arrested and then had them executed (13 in all).
  
- Alex says that they can go after he details what he has done for them
- He mentions Philips role in raising Macedonia to greatness
- He says that Philips achievements were 'small compared with my own'
- He mentions the money he had to borrow and his achievements in Persia
- Alex claims to have kept nothing for himself.
  
- He eats and sleeps as the men do.
- He says in fact that others eat better and sleep better than he does.
- Alex claims to have struggled as his men have.
- 'there is no part of my body but my back which has not a scar'
- 'all for your sakes: for your glory and your gain'
- Says that he has paid off people's debts
- He looked after the dead and their families.
  
- He reiterates that the men were being sent home to be envied and admired not as a punishment.
- He tells the men to leave if they wish and to tell those at home that they deserted their king, 'out of my sight'
- Alex goes to his palace and refuses to eat or to speak.
  
- In the following days he sends for Persian soldiers and divides up the army units between them
- Only 'designated kinsmen' were now allowed to give him the customary kiss
- The Macedonians remained rooted to the spot in silence
- When they found out about the new prominence given to the Persians within the army they went to Alex as a sign of supplication and begged to be let in
- They offered to give up the ring leaders of the mutiny and to stay outside the door as long as they had to.



- Alex was deeply moved by this
- He agreed to meet them
- He had tears in his eyes
- Alex now refers to the Macedonians as his kinsmen
- He allowed them kiss him
- He had a feast and offered sacrifice that the Macedonians and Persians would rule in harmony
- 10,000 Macedonians too old for service were sent home
- They were discharged of their own request
- They were paid well
- Their Asian children were left with Alex and the army.

### **Plutarch chp. 71**

- Macedonians concerned by the growth and progress of the 30,000 epigoni
- They felt their future was threatened
- They feared that Alex would have less regard for them
- When Alex orders the sick and disabled to return to the coast, the protest
- They felt he was deliberately humiliating them
- Felt their situation was being made worse
- They want to be sent to Macedonia
- Alex rebukes the Macedonians
- He dismisses his guards
- Security duties were given to Persians
- Macedonians are barred from his presence and treated as a disgrace
- Macedonians are humbled and realised they acted out of jealousy and rage
- After three days of standing out his tent Alex 'reproached them gently' for their behaviour
- Alex dismissed those unfit for service with 'generous gratuities'
- Antipater was told that the men were to occupy the best seats at all public contests and theatres
- Orphaned children were to receive their fathers pay



## The Death of Alexander

### Arrian: pg 391-398

- After a night of heavy drinking in the palace of Nebuchadnezzar II in Babylon Alexander fell ill.
- Having left the main party, Alexander visited the table of a Persian Companion, Medius, “who at that time was the Companion most closely in his confidence”.
- They continued to drink into the night until Alexander bathed, went to sleep and then “supped with Medius and again set to drinking”, after which he bathed again, ate, and went back to sleep, “with the fever already on him”.
- The following nine days Alexander slowly deteriorated from his fever, struggling to carry out his duties and religious observations.
- He died 114<sup>th</sup> Olympiad in the Archonship of Hegesias at Athens, or 11 June 323BC.
- Arrian includes an interesting anecdote in his account of Alexander's final days:  
*“ One writer has even had the face to declare that when he knew his death was imminent he went out with the intention of throwing himself into the Euphrates, in order to disappear without trace and make it easier for posterity to believe that one of the gods was his father and he had gone away to join them. His wife Roxane, this writer continues, happened to see him as he left the building, and stopped him, where upon he gave a great cry and bitterly reproached her for grudging him the eternal fame of divine birth .*

### A note on superstition and omens

- Alexander became increasingly superstitious towards the end of his life below are some examples.
- Arrian:  
 The hat bands ( Arrian: 387): As Alexander is sailing through lakes and marshland near Babylon  
*‘...suddenly a strong gust of wind blew the hat off, which fell into the water, but the light band went flying away and caught on a reed in a reed-bed near one of the ancient royal tombs. This in itself was a presage, but there was more to come: one of the sailors swam off after the hat-band and, finding when he had taken it off the reed that he could not bring it back in his hands without wetting it as he swam, he bound it round his head. Most historians state that Alexander gave the man a talent by way of reward for his willing service and then had him beheaded in obedience to the prophecy which warned him not to leave untouched the head which had worn the diadem...Aristobulus, though he confirms the gift of money states that the punishment for putting on the band was only a flogging.*



Plutarch:

The Ass, the lion and the man on the throne

*‘Many more omens now occurred to trouble (Alexander). For instance, a tame ass attached the finest lion in his menagerie and kicked it to death. On another occasion, Alexander took off his clothes for exercise and played a game of ball. When it was time to dress again, the young men who had joined him in the game suddenly noticed that there was a man sitting silently on the throne and wearing Alexander’s diadem and royal robes. When he was questioned, he could say nothing for a long while, but later he came to his senses and explained that he was called Dionysus and was a native of Messenia, he had been accused of a some crime, brought to Babylon from the coast and kept for a long time in chains. Then the god Serapis had appeared to him, cast off his chains and brought him to this place, where he had commanded him to put on the king’s robe and diadem, take his seat on the throne and hold his spear. When he had heard the man’s story, Alexander **had him put to death, as the diviners recommended.**’*

Plutarch ch 75 pg 359

*‘ Alexander had become overwrought and terrified in his own mind, and now abandoned himself to superstition. He interpreted every sign or unusual occurrence, no matter how trivial, as a prodigy or a portent, with the result that the palace was **filled with soothsayers, sacrifices, purifiers and prognosticators. Thus, disbelief or contempt for the power of the gods is a terrible thing, but superstition is also terrible; like water, it constantly gravitates to a lower level. So unreasoning dread filled Alexander’s mind with foolish misgivings, once he had become a slave to his fears.***



## Additional Military Events

This section contains the other military events from Alexanders Persian Campaign. You may wish to study these in detail as sources of further evidence for Alexanders character, leadership, and foreign policy. A good general knowledge of his actions during these events is advised.

### THEBES

This was Alexanders first real siege after ascending to the throne of Macedonia. And takes place in the first year of his reign. He had previously put down revolts in the north and west in Illyria, when the news reaches him of Thebes revolt...

Arrian:54-62 Plutarch:11-12

#### Build-Up

Whilst he was tidying things up at Pelium in Illyria against Cleitus & Glaucias Alexander received news that certain anti-Macedonian exiles (**Demosthenes**) had returned to Thebes and encouraged the city assembly into open revolt against Macedon. They were encouraged by a rumour that Alexander had been killed in Illyria and were besieging the Macedonian garrison on the Cadmeia (high ground which contained civic buildings).

Alexander immediately ended his business in Illyria, turned around and marched south to Boeotia appearing outside Thebes 15 days later with his full army. He had managed to travel 300 miles in 13 days, a telling sign of his **determination** to deal with Thebes.

#### Siege Outline

Arrian tells us that initially he encamped just west of the city at the sanctuary to the hero Iolaus and hoped to settle the revolt diplomatically until the Thebans made a sortie of infantry and cavalry and Alexander was forced to check them with light infantry and archers.

The next day he moved his army round to the south cutting off the road to Athens. Here the Thebans had built a double palisade (essentially a wooden defensive wall) around the steep southern slope of the Cadmeia. Alexander merely waited again hoping for a peaceful resolution.

Arrian tells us that inside the citizens were divided but that the anti-Macedonian faction dominated.

Perdiccas opened hostilities on his own authority leading a battalion of guards against the palisade. He was followed by Amyntas' infantry battalion. Seeing Perdiccas thus engaged Alexander sent the Agrianes and archers to support him. During his assault on the second inner palisade Perdiccas was seriously wounded and had to be carried to safety. He almost died from his wounds.

Gradually the Macedonians pushed the Thebans back towards the Heracleum but then the Thebans stopped retreating and pushed the Macedonians back instead. Seeing his army in full retreat was too much for Alexander who ordered a general assault. His heavy infantry advanced now in support of the guards and pushed the Thebans back inside the nearest gate. The Thebans now made a fatal mistake. In their hurry to get back inside the city they forgot to close the gate



and the Macedonians turned on their heels and got inside the city. One party made contact with the garrison on the Cadmeia. The other pressed up against the city wall by the Thebans inside gave their comrades outside an opportunity to scale the walls. The Macedonians thus gained access to the city and a bitter hand-to-hand combat ensued. Being attacked on every side the Theban cavalry fled to the countryside whilst the infantry fought on.

Arrian here absolves the Macedonians from guilt of massacring the Thebans. He blames the Plataeans, Phocians and other Boeotians (Theban neighbours) who bore grievances against the Thebans for the massacre.

### Consequences

Alexander had the captured soldiers executed, the rest of the citizens sold into slavery and the city razed to the ground. He did however, according to Plutarch, spare the house and family of the Poet Pindar. Later on in Asia, Alexander is said to have regretted his harsh treatment of the Thebans and was always careful to give Theban delegates whatever they asked for and attributed his drunken murder of Cleitus on the curse of Dionysus, who was born in Thebes.

Athens is said to have cancelled the Eleusinian mysteries to take in the Theban refugees. Alexander next marched to Athens and using Thebes as a precedent secured Athens' capitulation. Thus he secured the loyalty and co-operation of the southern Greek city states that looked to Athens for leadership but he was ever after always careful to keep the Athenians satisfied.

Plutarch states that Alexander allowed the sack of Thebes **'to frighten the rest of the Greeks into submission by making a terrible example.'** Plutarch also highlights the story of Timocleia, who was raped by a Thracian leader and her revenge against him by tricking him into climbing down a well and stoning him to death. When she is taken to Alexander for punishment he was **'filled with admiration'** for her actions and ordered that she and her children should be freed.

### The Crossing of the Hellispont. (Plutarch 15)

After resolving the uprisings in the wake of his father Philip's assassination Alexander decided to move east and invade Persia.

The army Alexander left Greece with is estimated at between 30,000-43,000 infantry and 4,000 cavalry with the money available for the army's supply amounting to no more than 70 talents. This is estimated by Douris as only enough to supply the army for 30 days. Furthermore, it is reported that Alexander was already 200 talents in debt at this time.

Despite such meagre resources and precarious financial position, Alexander refused to board his ship before he learned of the circumstances of each of his companions and assigned an estate to one, a village to another, or the revenues of some port or community to a third. He gave away so much of the property of the crown to his companions that Perdicas, one of his companions asked him,

*"But your majesty, what are you leaving for yourself? My hopes!, replied Alexander"*.



Once Alexander arrived in Asia he made a trip to Troy and made sacrifices to Athena and visited the grave of Achilles.

### **Battle of the Granicus 334 BC**

**Build-up: Arrian: 12-13(pg. 68-70) Plutarch: 16.**

#### **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.

#### **Parmenion'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.
- Parmenion 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: Arrian: 13(pg.71) Plutarch: n/a**

#### Macedonians

- Parmenion takes control of the left wing
- Alexander takes control of the right wing.
- **Right:** Command given to Parmenion’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 Parmenion’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**.

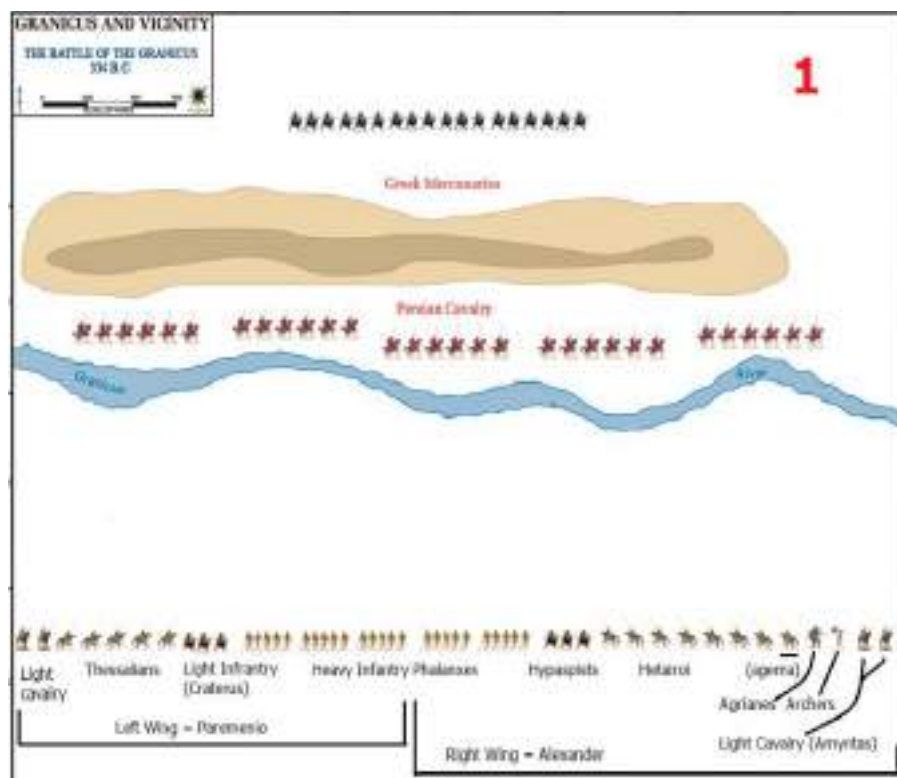
Looking down on the Macedonian army at Granicus the allied Greek light cavalries supported the Thessalian heavy cavalry on the left wing. Craterus’ light infantry unit connected the cavalry to the central heavy infantry phalanxes. Parmenion held command on the left wing. Moving towards the right commanded 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 their left because they could see Alexander and the threat he posed.



### The Battle: Arrian: 15-17(pg. 72-76) Plutarch: 16

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.

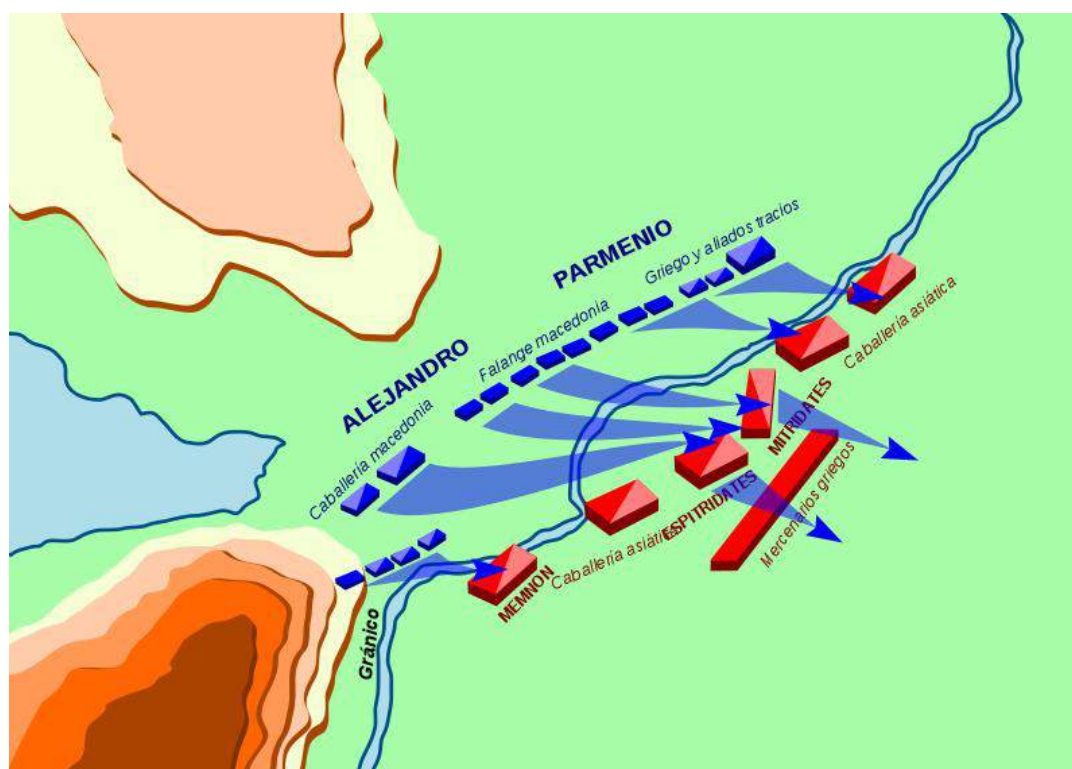
Events soon turned in Alexander's favour as their experience, the weight of their attack and perhaps most importantly their long cornel wood spears, over the light lances of the Persians, gave them the advantage.

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: Arrian: 17(pg. 76) Plutarch 16 ( pg. 296)**

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 Sarissas.

### **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



## Battel of Gaugamela

**ARRIAN: Pg. 160-171. Plutarch: 31-34 (pg. 314-320)**

### **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. They 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 Agrianians 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 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 a 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 Macedonians. 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.

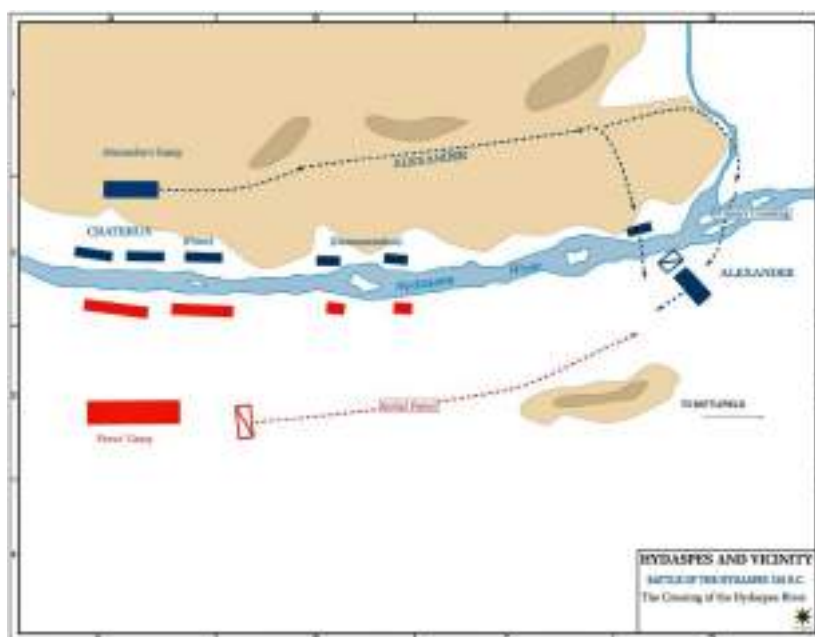
About 30 kilometres from base camp, Alexander's scouts found a potential crossing place. This was a large wooded island with only a narrow channel on either side of it. Alexander decided that this was a good spot because Porus' scouts would not be able to see them. Alexander also heard that an ally of 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.

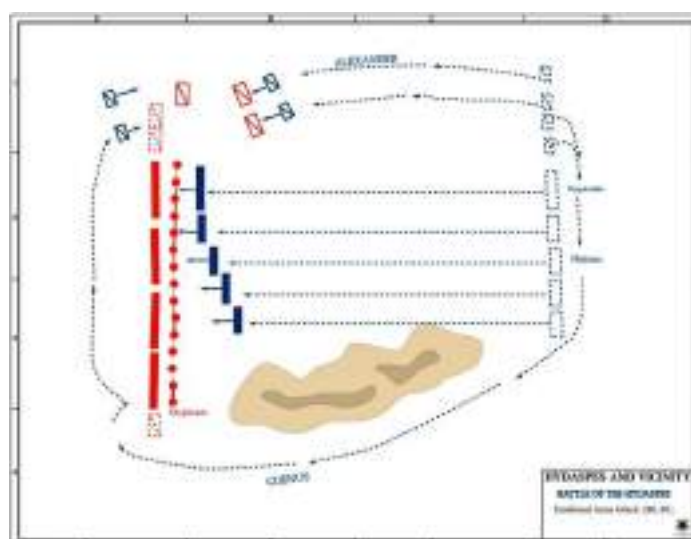
The attack on the left wing began with mounted archers against the chariots. Alexander then charged at the head of his cavalry and Porus did exactly as he had hoped, he moved his right-wing cavalry around to his hard-pressed left. At once Coenus led the two division in reserve right around behind the 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.



Past questions

2023:

- Evaluate how the leadership shown by Alexander **or** Julius Caesar influenced the outcome of **at least one** major military event. Include relevant military details in your answer.

