

One of the few ancient Greeks that the majority of the people can mention is Alexander the Great. Perhaps they've watched a movie about him or heard about him during a conversation. However, do you truly understand anything about Alexander? Or the reason he was really great?

During the death of Alexander, his empire was the largest the world had ever witnessed. Even by the current standards, the quantity of land he succeeded to conquer is huge, extending from Macedonia in Europe to Afghanistan. This success has made him the prototype of the winning king. Let's look at the situations that made this king as well as his empire, and follow him on a path really full of adventure it would make anybody great.

Chapter 1 - Alexander the Great was born into the Macedonian royal family, and his gifts were recognized early on.

Alexander was given birth to during the 356 BC, in the northern area of Greece called Macedonia.

Philip II of Macedon who was Alexander's father was a legendary conqueror who achieved the remarkable victory of bringing almost the entire Greek states under his control.

Although a striking father figure, Philip was immediately impressed by Alexander.

One day, a horse dealer offered Philip a very majestic horse for a very expensive price. This horse was supposed to be untameable, but, Philip rejected the offer. However, the young Alexander was about 13 years during the time, and he intervened, beseeching his father not let go of such an opportunity.

Alexander's public flare-up made Philip angry; however, he offered a deal: If Alexander could go on the animal, he would purchase it.

Alexander was somewhat clever, and he understood the horse only got when it saw its own shadow. Therefore, Alexander basically took the horse into the sun and, as soon as the horse was calm, skillfully climbed on it.

This horse name was Bucephalus – and the horse became one of the most popular animals in history.

Everybody, as well as his father, was stunned. Philip proudly stated, "My son, you have to look for a kingdom similar to yourself – Macedonia is not really big for you!"

But, Philip's pride didn't last for long; certainly, the young Alexander's gifts made his father feel threatened more and more.

When Alexander did better than his father on the field of battle, Philip had gotten enough and started attempts to curb his son's increasing fame.

In order for Philip to punish Alexander, he divorced Alexander's mother, Olympias, and remarried immediately. But, in an attempt to make things somewhat calm, Philip called Alexander to the wedding feast, where everybody went on to drink, according to custom, huge amounts of wine.

When a guest proposed to make a toast to the happy couple and the likelihood of a new heir, Alexander threw his cup across the table in a drunken fury. Philip took out his sword, however, with a stomach full of wine, he quickly fell to the floor.

To run from this circumstance, Alexander and his mother ran to her homeland in the mountains of Epirus. Happily, but, intervention efforts were successful, and they went back home not long after.

Chapter 2 - Alexander's ardent military mind assisted him to move quickly through Asia Minor.

Alexander didn't have any interest in wasting time with triumph celebrations. He immediately processed to capture the cities of Sardis and Ephesus before attaining the ancient city of Miletus, which is now called southwestern Turkey.

Because Miletus was a base for the Persian navy, it was a significant aspect of Alexander's strategy. Also, because the city offered to surrender at first, it looked like it would be captured

easily. However, the word immediately came out that a Persian fleet was fast coming, and another fight started.

Once more, Alexander succeeded in challenging the advice of Parmenion.

While devising a strategy of attack, they saw an eagle hovered upon one of their ships. Parmenion considered this as a symbol that the gods preferred a naval attack and recommended to first attack the Persian navy, and then storm the city of Miletus.

However, Alexander understood the sign in another way. Because the eagle was facing landward, he chose to capture the city first and then handle the Persian navy.

This led to a key victory. The city fell really fast that the Persian navy was never able to dock its ships.

After capturing Miletus, Alexander made a curious choice that historians have been discussing ever since: he broke up the Greek navy.

Arrius, one of Alexander's modern historians, recommended that Alexander was aware that his fleet couldn't compete with the Persian navy; therefore he evaded defying it completely and concentrated instead on defeating the entire eastern Mediterranean coastline – a plan that would leave no place for the Persians to dock their ships.

Alexander kept on confronting conventional military wisdom by declining to rest and moving his campaign forward with the harsh winter of 334 BC, carrying on his streak of wins.

Furthermore, Alexander made use of rare approach to take the port city of Telmessus.

With small assistance from inside the city, he succeeded to sneak a group of female dancers past the gate so they could perform for the Persian soldiers.

After much drinking, the soldiers, drowsy with drink, let go of their guard, and the dancers killed the entire garrison, letting Alexander take the city.

Chapter 3 - Unexpected illness and death extremely transformed the course of history.

Alexander's campaign proceeded, and during the spring of 333 BC, he together with his army had gotten to central Anatolia.

This was the time that Alexander got some disturbing information: The great Persian general Memnon's fleet was getting close to southern Greece and seemed to be close to initiating an attack.

Alexander was aware that, in spite of Persia's cruel attack of Greece in the former century, the current hatred of Macedonian rule signified that Memnon's advances would be very welcomed.

Alexander encountered a problem: Keep on defeating or go home? Nevertheless, what good would his present campaign be if the Persians captured his homeland?

However, maybe the gods were really on Alexander's side, for, at that point, Memnon suddenly died after his health quickly worsened on the Greek island of Lesbos.

Now it was the Great King of Persia, Darius who had to make a choice. And with the general he trusted the most died, he chose to cancel his attack of Greece and take his troops home in order for them to fight Alexander face-to-face.

This is when Alexander's fortune changed for the worse.

The extreme summer heat beat down on Alexander's army as they got to southern Turkey, and Alexander, boiling, took off his clothes and jumped in the Cydnus River.

However, the water was really cold that Alexander eventually felt feverish and sick. It got really worse that a lot of people thought he wouldn't live.

Fortunately, there was a doctor called Philip among the troops whom Alexander had known since he was a child. Philip suggested a risky medicinal treatment, which Alexander accepted, understanding that, or else, he might die.

But, just before the treatment started, Alexander got a notice: the Persians might have bribed Philip to poison him!

Alexander encountered yet another problem: Put his trust in Philip, or risk dying by not taking the treatment?

Alexander decided to cleverly. He took the drugs and was well again within a few days, set to carry on his campaign.

Chapter 4 - In November, 333 BC Alexander first met Darius at the Battle of Issus.

During this, the only thing separated the 23-year-old Alexander and King Darius's Persian armies were a little Turkish mountain range.

Darius wished to meet Alexander on a big, open battlefield, where his greater number of troops could overpower him. Rather, The Battle of Issus happened on a narrow stretch of land close to the Pinarus River.

What happened after would go down in history as one of the largest battles in history.

At first, Alexander's forces were pushed back, however, during a brutal counterattack, his right-wing cut through the Persian army, making Alexander start fighting the last of Darius's forces.

This changed the events of the battle, and because Alexander was fighting across two fronts now, the Persian army started to crumble, and Darius knew that the fight was lost.

At this moment, Darius and Alexander's eyes met, and Alexander charged him.

This climactic instant has been memorialized forever in a mosaic that is shown in the city of Pompeii. With bodies scattered on the battlefield, the two kings looked at each other down, and, instead of anger, Darius's face betrays shock.

But, in spite of this epic battle, Darius succeeded to flee from the battlefield without any harm.

Now conquering, Alexander was in charge of a lot of Persian captives, as well as Darius's mother and son, and they were both sure that would be killed immediately.

But, Alexander humbly greeted Darius's mother and assured to raise the Great King's son as his own son.

Shortly after, Darius sent on a peace treaty that offered to give Alexander the entire Asia Minor and a large ransom for his captive family.

It was a large offer, and Alexander was aware that his generals would suggest that he accept it, however, Alexander was not about to put a stop to this. Rather, he forged another type of Darius's treaty that took out the concessions and included insulting remarks.

His advisors took the bait, and Alexander met no confrontation in carrying on his campaign to defeat the entire Persia.

Chapter 5 - The time Alexander used in Egypt showed to be a crucial milestone in his life.

After the Battle of Issus, Alexander proceeded down the eastern Mediterranean coastline, and he got to Egypt after he traveled for a year.

On his way, he didn't meet any resistance, since the local population didn't love the Persians, who had been governing Egypt now and then for centuries.

During Alexander's stay in Egypt, he ensured that the Egyptians knew his aims to govern their land as a kind king who would respect their lifestyle.

After going to the ancient pyramids of Giza, Alexander chose to establish an Egyptian city that would end up functioning as a permanent connection to Greece.

Although Egypt's Mediterranean coast had a modest port already, Alexander understood that he would have to construct a considerably bigger city that could serve as the main center for trade and provide a safe port for military vessels.

More inspiration appeared to him in a dream, where an elderly man told him of the island of Pharos. When Alexander woke up the following morning, he knew where to construct the city of Alexandria: on the Egyptian coast next to the island of Pharos.

In order to mark the city's borders, Alexander's soldiers started placing barley on the ground; however, they were immediately descended on by thousands of hungry birds. Alexander was concerned that this might be a terrible omen from the gods; however, his soothsayer, Aristander, assured him that the birds were a wonderful sign that predicted how the city would thrive and assist feed the whole world.

From this moment, Alexander used weeks trekking across the barren Sahara to see an oracle at the sanctuary of Ammon. This occurrence had a major effect on his life.

Historians have varied on the reason he embarked on this risky journey; however, it's clear that, at this point in his life, he was searching for some solutions and wishing to know the significance of his journey.

Alexander inquired the oracle if he was fated to conquer the world. The oracle answered with a nod and said to him that he would definitely end up transforming the course of history.

Chapter 6 - After conquering Darius once again, Alexander captured the ancient Mesopotamian city of Babylon.

Alexander started out from Egypt toward the ancient city of Babylon. However, after crossing both the Euphrates and Tigris rivers, he was again challenged by King Darius's army, which had formed a camp on the plain of Gaugamela.

The time was set for another of history's biggest battles.

Still, Darius's forces were a lot greater than Alexander's army, and, this time around, they added remarkable Indian war elephants, a view that Alexander had never witnessed before.

The battlefield was fully open. Darius's had the edge, and Alexander realized he had to devise a smart strategy.

It appeared to him, the night before the Battle of Gaugamela: he would ride his cavalry parallel to Darius's front line, which, optimistically, would push his men away from the middle of the battle and form a space that he could then attack directly through!

It was an enormous risk –however, Alexander was really able to ride straight through the center of the Persian army and straight toward Darius.

However, before Alexander got to Darius, Alexander was told that the Persians had also gotten through his line of defense and were killing his men.

Obliged to allow Darius to run away, Alexander turned to help his troops and conquer the rest of the Persian army.

Eventually, Alexander was free to proceed with his trip to Babylon.

As he got close, his eyes caught a city the likes of which he had never thought of: the extraordinary walls – which modern sources say were a minimum 300 feet tall – towered above him. Also, there was the city itself, structured in a great grid system, with hundreds of bronze gates functioning as entrances.

This time around, there was no battle or bloodshed. The people of Babylon welcomes Alexander with music, flowers, and presents. As with the Egyptians, it's possible they were really happy to be released from cruel Persian rule.

With the addition of Babylon, Alexander's empire now included three continents and had lots of ethnicities.

Chapter 7 - After a humiliating obstacle, Alexander eventually defeated the capital of Persia, Persepolis.

From Babylon, Alexander traveled through the harsh and snowy mountains of Persia before eventually getting to the Persian Gates, a thin mountain pass that led straight to the Persian capital, Persepolis

This was where the rest of the Persian army ambushed his men and caused huge losses.

While regrouping, Alexander found another lesser-known route through the mountains that let him sneak up behind the Persians under the cover of night and kill the rest of the forces.

The way to Persepolis was now open for Alexander.

After years of journey and bloodshed, a lot of his fidgety soldiers considered the conquering of Persepolis as the grand finale to their trials. Therefore, when the city gave, Alexander didn't do anything to stop the horrible pillaging that followed.

Although this action went against Alexander's personality, he was aware that if he attempted to stop his men, he'd have a full uprising on his hands and everything would be lost.

However, at Persepolis, Alexander himself made a destructive blunder.

According to one description of situations, Alexander, drunk at the Palace of Persepolis, was persuaded by an Athenian woman that it would be a good thing to burn down the entire palace. Nevertheless, it would be reasonable payback for the Persians' burning of Athens a century before.

Alexander accepted drunkenly and went on to light the first flame. He immediately came back to his senses as the fire spread, and attempted to put off the fire; however, it was already too late then.

This incident is an unpleasant one for a lot of historians, and the fact that they put the blame on the wine and women is suggestive of how past Greeks blamed Helen for the errors at Troy.

After the horrible behaviors at Persepolis, Alexander began his journey to eventually lay his hands on Darius, who'd been captured as a prisoner after a successful rebellion by Bessus, one of Darius's family members, who was now the new king of Persia.

But, when Alexander caught up with him, Bessus immediately murdered Darius before fleeing.

This cowardly murder extremely made Alexander sad, who at this point had grown to admire Darius as a worthy enemy.

Chapter 8 - In the hunt for Bessus, Alexander started a deceitful march that would ultimately take him to India.

In spite of the feelings of Alexander, his army was really happy by the death of Darius. Naturally, a lot of them took this news as an indication that their fights were over and they could now return home.

However, Alexander had a new aim: to ensure that Bessus was disciplined for his cowardly betrayal of Darius.

Aside from that, also Alexander had a persistent passion for campaigning that forced him to continue pushing his empire further east.

Therefore, he gave an inspiring and stirring speech to his men that unbelievably persuaded them to carry on with their march.

But, he didn't know that with Bessus as their new aim of pursuit, they were about to experience the deceitful Hindu Kush mountains, found in modern-day Afghanistan.

At that point, Alexander had already crossed beyond his fair share of mountains; however, none of these could have made him ready for the Hindu Kush.

Not just is the usual height of these Himalayan mountains about 15,000 feet; however, the passage as well is really thin that the army had to walk straight and single file – and all of this was done in the middle of winter!

But, the only good news was that Bessus didn't assume that Alexander was really wild to try this climb; therefore, he didn't attempt to place any troops at the end of the pass.

Alexander's army used five hard days to get to the other side of the range and go into the land of Bactria.

Eventually, during the summer of 329 BC, Alexander caught up with Bessus and the village where he was hiding out in immediately handed him over to the Macedonians.

When Alexander confronted Bessus, he was keen to know the reason why he had king his own king and family in such a cowardly manner. Shockingly, Bessus said that he assumed Alexander would have liked what he did.

This wasn't the word Alexander wished to hear; therefore, he went ahead to flog and torture Bessus before sending him back to the family of Darius, who completed the work by killing him.

Chapter 9 - Alexander made it all the way to the banks of the Ganges in India before realizing his soldiers could not go on.

During 327 BC, Alexander together with his army had used seven years away from Macedonia. He even got married to a local nobleman's daughter named Roxane.

However, he wasn't ready to settle down: now, Alexander set his eyes on India. He had faith that, by defeating it, he would be able to be in history as King of the World.

Defeating this odd new world started off peacefully, although not without misunderstanding.

As he got to the settlement of Taxila, in modern-day Pakistan, he confused the large group of men and huge elephants who were riding out to come to him as a threatening army.

Fortunately, the king of Taxila, Omphis saw the mix-up and noticed that Alexander was planning an attack. He immediately rode to reassure Alexander the show was basically their means of welcoming foreign leaders.

However, some Indian kingdoms weren't really ready to submit.

When Alexander got to the kingdom of Pauravas, King Porus was ready to start a fight. Also, it was during this fight that Bucephalus, Alexander's trusty horse was murdered.

Alexander could only mourn after he won the fight. In honor of his dismissed friend, he built a city nearby and called it Bucephalus.

However, Alexander was as well losing another thing at this point in the campaign: the trust of his army. When they got to the Ganges, Alexander couldn't motivate them with one of his normal words.

This point was emphasized when one of his generals delivered a speech by himself. He said to Alexander that the men were fulfilled to have come really far and accomplished a lot; however, they desired to see their families and homeland once again. This was met with a loud cheer.

The general proceeded to persuade Alexander that the best thing to do would be to go back home and form a new army with new Macedonian soldiers.

He accepted after days of thinking deeply about it. Alexander was eventually returning home after seven long and bloody years.

Chapter 10 - At the age of 32, Alexander died just before he could achieve any of his future campaign strategies.

The walk home was a somewhat unexciting journey, in spite of the fact that Alexander nearly drowned in river rapids, and his army almost died in the Gedrosian desert.

By the time he went back home, it has already been ten years since he'd left Macedonia, and his empire had turned to the biggest the world had ever witnessed.

However, Alexander wasn't the kind of person to be contented with a thing like this.

While returning home, he made himself busy by making strategies for growing his empire more.

He visualized taking charge of the whole Arabian and North African coastline and being able to travel the whole distance of the African coastline, from Egypt to the western Mediterranean.

Furthermore, he began reasoning about how to react to current reports about a worrying tribe known as the Romans.

Unfortunately, Alexander did not live too long to accomplish his entire plans. Only three years after he left India, disturbing signs started to emerge.

One day, close to the city of Babylon, Alexander was met by Chaldean priests who cautioned him not to go to the city.

Alexander laughed at their warning; however, the priests insisted. At the very least, they said to him, don't go to the city while walking west near the setting sun. During that time, the setting sun was usually seen as a sign of death.

However, Alexander was doubtful of the priests and didn't listen to their advice. However, on getting to Babylon, bad signs from the gods started haunting him.

While Alexander was out sailing, the windswept away his crown. Also, worst of all, when he went back to his palace a few days after, an ex-convict was sitting on Alexander's throne and he was putting on his crown!

However, it wasn't until after a night of drinking heavily that Alexander started to become severely sick.

As his illness kept on deteriorating, it started to become clear to Alexander that he would not live.

When his companions inquired him who would succeed him, Alexander said his dying words, "To the strongest."

Chapter 11 - Alexander's legacy would proceed to have wide-reaching impacts on the universe.

Alexander's amazing ten-year campaign did much more than only cement Greek culture's power on a huge part of Eurasia. These impacts definitely outlived his empire, which started to fall immediately after his death.

Persia and India are the only two places that were forever transformed by Alexander.

A series of kingdoms that combined Greek and Indian cultures emerged in Alexander's wake and Hellenistic culture changed Indian art and architecture forever.

For instance, the rise of statues of Buddha in the human figure is obviously motivated by the statues of the god Apollo.

Though Alexander was hated by a lot in Persia, he was remembered for his philosophical nature as well. The Qur'an cites Alexander's philosophic bent, referring to him as a philosopher-king "whom God made strong in the land and provided the means to realize everything."

In this manner, he started a Greek philosophical culture in the area that carried on influencing the Islamic age and its religious philosophy.

However, the area that Alexander's legacy flourished the most was really a place he never went to; Rome.

As the Roman Empire was beginning, they accepted Greek as one of their intellectual languages, and Greek art and architecture severely impacted their own work.

Also, the Jews and early Christians utilized the Greek language to copy the Gospels. Also, because Greek was the main language of the Mediterranean after Alexander's campaign, this signified that Christianity had a ready audience. Therefore, one could say that, without Alexander, Christianity would never have reached beyond Roman Palestine.

Also, although other conquerors such as Julius Caesar, Augustus and Napoleon looked up to Alexander as a hero to compete with, nobody succeeded to extend an empire more than the empire of Alexander the Great.

Alexander the Great by Philip Freeman Book Review

Alexander the Great was one of the greatest military commanders of the old era. He prolonged a little Macedonian empire from Greece down to India. By merging military experts with an ardent political mind, Alexander became king of the biggest empire the olden world had ever witnessed.

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