

Alexander the Great Documents

READ AND ANALYZE THE FOLLOWING DOCUMENTS RELATING TO ALEXANDER THE GREAT. FOR EACH PRIMARY SOURCE DOCUMENT, YOU MUST READ THE EXCERPT AND ANSWER THE UNDERLINED QUESTION BELOW. WHEN YOU FINISH WITH EACH OF THE FOUR DOCUMENTS, ANSWER THE FINAL ESSAY QUESTION. HAPPY HISTORY!

Document 1: Arrian: Speech of Alexander the Great to his troops, copied selection from The Campaigns of Alexander

Originally scanned by: JS Arkenberg, Department of History, California State Fullerton.

“I could not have blamed you for being the first to lose heart if I, your commander, had not shared in your exhausting marches and your perilous campaigns; it would have been natural enough if you had done all the work merely for others to reap the reward. But it is not so. You and I, gentlemen, have shared the labor and shared the danger, and the rewards are for us all. The conquered territory belongs to you; from your ranks the governors of it are chosen; already the greater part of its treasure passes into your hands, and when all Asia is overrun, then indeed I will go further than the mere satisfaction of your ambitions: the utmost hopes of riches or power which each one of you cherishes will be far surpassed, and whoever wishes to return home will be allowed to go, either with me or without me. I will make those who stay the envy of those who return.”

Question: What does Alexander’s speech show about his relationship with his troops?

Document 2: Plutarch’s Lives – A Selection from the Biography of Alexander the Great

From: John Langhorne and William Langhorne, eds. *Plutarch’s Lives*, Translated from the Original Greek. Cincinnati: Applegate, Pounsford and Co., 1874, pp. 434-439.

“[Alexander] was only twenty years old when he succeeded to the crown, and he found the kingdom torn into pieces by dangerous parties and implacable animosities. The barbarous nations, even those that bordered upon Macedonia, could not brook subjection, and they longed for their natural kings... Alexander was of opinion that the only way to security, and a thorough establishment of his affairs, was to proceed with spirit and magnanimity. He therefore quieted the commotions, and put a stop to the rising wars among the barbarians, by marching with the utmost expediency as far as the Danube, where he fought a great battle... The barbarians, we are told, lost in this battle twenty thousand foot and two thousand five hundred horse, whereas Alexander had no more than thirty-four men killed, nine of which were the infantry. To do honor to their memory, he erected a statue to each of them in brass, the workmanship of Lysippus...”

Question: What does the selection from Plutarch’s Lives tell about Alexander as a leader?

Document 3: Diodorus of Sicily about the Destruction of Persepolis

From: Diodorus of Sicily’s *History of the World*

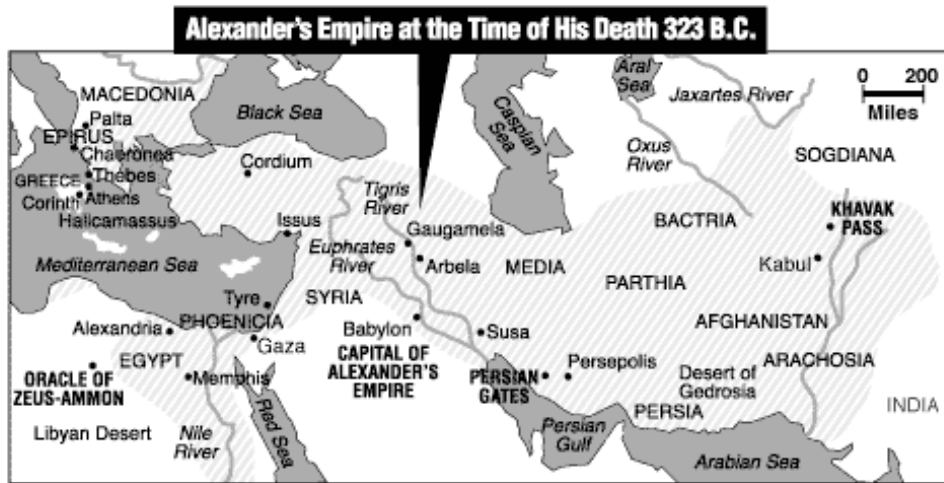
“Alexander went up to the citadel and took possession of the treasures stored there. They were full of gold and silver. Reckoning gold in terms of silver, 2,500 tons were found there. Alexander wanted to take part of the money with him, for the expenses of war and to deposit the

rest at Susa under close guard. He had all the treasure conveyed to the chosen places. He was very hostile to the local people and did not trust them, and wished to destroy Persepolis utterly... Alexander held games to celebrate his victories; he offered magnificent sacrifices to the gods and entertained his friends lavishly..."

Question: Why is Alexander's treatment of his troops and those he conquered significant?

Document 3: Map of Alexander's Empire:

From: The Discovery Channel School Online



Question: What territories were included in Alexander's empire?

Secondary Source Reading – Extra help for the short answer!

From: *World History the Easy Way* by Charles A. Frazee, Ph.D.

"Alexander's achievements as a military leader were remarkable. No general ever accomplished more. He also wanted to be seen as someone who would fuse the Greek world with other "barbarian" societies.... He bears the name Great because many people feel he deserves to be remembered as one of history's noble personalities that changed the world. Others see him as an ambitious man whose life was dedicated to his own aggrandizement no matter what is cost in blood and suffering for others."

Essay Question: Using these primary source documents and your knowledge of Alexander the Great, answer the following question in a well-developed 3 to 5 paragraph essay.

Do you think that Alexander deserves his title "the Great?"