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Describe the conquests of Alexander the Great and analyze the legacy of his empire

Alexander was prepared to succeed his father Philip II through careful tutelage. By the time his father died, he had tutored him in numerous ways and he had also set the ground for his conquests. Alexander inherited an urbanized people, a well-organized military, and philosophical and martial education and he utilized his knowledge to conquer Persia and other parts of Asia. His legacy consisted of his autocratic monarchies and use of military force as part of his political legacy. Entrenchment of Greek culture as part of his cultural legacy survived until the Western Roman Empire took over his conquests in 31 BC.

When Philip II assumed kingship over Macedonia in 359 BC, the land did not have a centralized government. It was composed of minor villages and small urban centers. The Aegean was strategically located in Macedonia, southern Macedon was the intermediary between Greece and Persia and Macedonia had numerous mineral resources. King Philip utilized these resources and Macedonia's strategic location to consolidate power of his government. Philip II and Alexander assumed ownership of all gold, silver, copper, iron among other mineral deposits. King Philip II also established a new coinage system and he eliminated all the dissident tribes and minor kings located around Macedonian Borders. He

established a military of professionally trained persons for the service of the King of Macedon (Foster, 2005).

The army used a combination of two units with different tactics to conquer the Greeks namely the Phalanx and Calvary units. Philip brought the Macedonian highlands under his control because they were previously not inclined to central rule. He also managed to bring Greek mainland under his power leaving the Persian Empire as his greatest threat. Persia was a threat because it had constantly sought to control Greek affairs. Philip was set on conquering Persia to amass its wealth for maintenance of the large armies. Uniting Macedonia and Persia was also strategic in the sense that it would alleviate anti-Macedonian sentiments as the two had a common strategy against the Greeks. However, Philip was unable to implement his plan to conquer Persia because he was assassinated in 336 BC (Foster, 2005).

Alexander was 20 years old at the time of his father's death and apart from his father's tutelage he had also received knowledge from Aristotle a great Greek philosopher. He first assumed leadership at the age of sixteen in 340 BC as a Regent. He led a successful attack on the Maedi and captured their city. He also established a Greek colony and named it Alexandroupolis. His next leadership position was that of a commander in the Macedonian Calvary unit. This unit was responsible for spying on the enemy's weaknesses and plotting how best to launch an attack. By the time of his father's demise, he had risen to the position of second in command after Philip II and he was an astute Calvary officer (Foster, 2005).

Before embarking on the pursuit for Persia, Alexander required containing unrest along Macedonia's frontiers as part of his base power. He conquered the Thracians,

Triballians, Getae, and the Pellium which was under the Illyrians rule. He also managed cowering Greek cities against revolting and assumed the status of the official hegemon of the Corinthian League (Foster, 2005). The league is composed of all the Greek states that Philip had conquered and consolidated before his assassination (Duiker & Spielvogel, 2010).

Alexander's invasion to capture Persia in 334 BC was in Asia Minor. He led a 37,000 army composed of Macedonians and Greeks. He conquered the western side of Asia Minor through a narrow win by spring 334 BC. This was followed by victory in the Battle of Issus in 333 before proceeding to the South of Asia Minor where he conquered Syria, Palestine and Egypt in 332. He named a few cities after himself in Egypt including Alexandria and self-proclaimed himself as the Pharaoh (Duiker & Spielvogel, 2010).

In 331 he pursued the land of ancient Mesopotamia and waged war at Guagamela, Babylon, Susa and Persepolis where amassed Persian minerals such as gold and silver. In 330, the fall of Darius led to his proclamation as the Great King of the Persians. Alexander's ambition also drove him to pursue Pakistan, northeastern India in 327 and 326 respectively (Farell, 2011). Many of his army men died en-route to Babylon after they had defied him in venturing further afield into Central Asia at Indus River. They returned to Babylon and their journey was characterized by harsh weather conditions and drought. On reaching Susa a Persian city, Alexander took Darius daughter as his second wife and coerced many military men to marry Persian women. He later succumbed to wounds and fever in June 323 BC (Duiker & Spielvogel, 2010).

Alexander's legacy is that one of a hero and that in a sense attained the status of a god owing to his prowess. He epitomized leadership qualities of his role models such as Achilles

a warrior hero and he also claimed that he was in the lineage of a Greek hero Heracles who was once worshipped as a god. (Duiker & Spielvogel, 2010). He desired to entrench the Greek way of life among his territory resulting in the Hellenistic era. The era was characterized by growth in Greek language and Greek way of life in all his conquests including the Middle East (Duiker & Spielvogel, 2010).

There followed an explosion of opportunities for Greek intellectuals, merchants and other professionals in in the Persian monarchy. His style of leadership also influenced his successors to adopt monarchical rule and military force in the monarchies of the Hellenistic era. The rulers led in autocracy as part of his political legacy (Duiker & Spielvogel, 2010). His generals squabbled over the territories that Alexander had conquered creating small empires. The different states or empires were in constant warfare and were marred by great suspicion until Rome conquest (Rennison, 2007).

Alexander also influenced the culture of his conquered territories. His desire to entrench the Greek culture led to the infiltration of Greek literature, architecture, art, and language into Middle East. His successors cemented the Greek culture further in the urban centers even after he had dies. The east also influenced the west which culminated into a blend of the two different cultures (Duiker & Spielvogel, 2010). Greek, Persian and other cultures fused and was evident in different aspects of life including government, and religion and very little was left unchanged. This Hellenistic age was a major step towards achieving international culture. The age lasted until 31 BC when Rome assumed rule over Ptolemaic Egypt (Alexander, 2000).

Indeed, Alexander's ambition and courage is displayed through his fervent commitment and desire to conquer many cities and states. He succeeded his father and

continued with his plan to conquer different lands and entrench the Greek culture among his subjects. He led his army in conquering Asia Minor and then proceeded to Central Asia until his army called an end to the conquering campaign. They retreated to Babylon where he married Persian women and ordered his high ranking officials to marry prominent women. He later succumbed to weakness at 32 years. His achievement is evidenced through the Hellenistic era that lasted from the time of his death to 31 BC.

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