

# Alexander the great or alexander the mad essay example

[Parts of the World, Asia](#)



## **Introduction**

Alexander was one of the most formidable generals and politicians of all time. He was the well-known king of Macedon, son of his father, also former king of Macedon, King Philip. He managed to lead and build up a strong kingdom from the remains of his father even though his father had already established a strong military presence on their region during his reign through an experienced battalion of troops that are mostly composed of cavalries. The companion cavalry, an elite group of troops that can go extremes with their horseback-riding skills partnered with spear-fighting must have been their edge over other Greek polis (Naiden 2008, 4). As a result, Alexander managed to be awarded with the generalship of Greece. Upon the start of his reign over Macedon and as the general of Greece, he became responsible and he was also given the authority to plan and execute actions for territorial expansion and other administrative and strategic procedures that a general as well as a politician handles during that time. However, there are indeed issues whether Alexander had really been an effective leader for his Greek countrymen or he just wasted the chance given to him because he was not able to maintain an intact empire although he managed to unite a huge fraction of the Persian Empire plus the Greek cities only at a certain time. Is he really that great? Or his political and military decisions just based on pure speculations without proper planning? It is known that when he died, his generals who have control over the individual cities that they captured broke away from the control of the empire and established their own. Thus, many cities were reformed and were not part of the former empire Alexander united anymore. This is the most prominent

sign how ineffective a leader Alexander may be and this is what this paper will be all about.

## **Alexander conquering the coast of Asia Minor and other Greek Cities**

In reality, it is not the Persians who are the real enemy of the Macedonians; it was the Greeks. Alexander, even when his father was still alive and he was just part of the senior generals responsible of a command post in Greece, experienced war between Macedonians and the Greeks and he knew all too well how troubled Greeks are because of the Macedonians. Fortunately however, Alexander was able to defeat even the strongest of their warriors even the famous and almost mythical Secret Band. The kingdom of Macedon was only a part of Asia Minor and Alexander took up the challenge if leading his army south first, where several Greek polis lie. It is well known how Alexander and his Macedonian army fought drastically Memnon, commander of the Greeks (Stoneman 2004, 27). Alexander lost a significant number of men during his campaign to the south of Asia Minor but as a reward for their hard work, they managed to take over the Greek cities of Halicarnassus, Mylasa, and Miletus, after considerably long sieges. After conquering the coast of Asia Minor, Alexander led his troops to fight the real battle and it will all start northward into the central of Asia Minor. Along their way, they managed to capture another settlement which was Gordium. There were legends and myths during that time about Gordium for there is a so called Gordian knot in that place. Folks say that anyone who could untie that knot will be the one destined to have ruled the entire world. True enough,

Alexander was able to untie the knot, although he used quite a brutal method in doing it; he slashed his sword towards the knot.

## **Implications of his decisions in the Coast of Asia Minor and towards Gordium**

Although it is an honor to conquer settlements, especially cities for an empire during that time, we could still consider some of Alexander's decisions as a leader as not optimal but rather selfish. A good example would be his decision of eradicating the Greek cities' forces first before fighting their real enemy which was the Persians. Macedonians and Greeks almost came from the same origins through their ancestors so they were technically brothers but Alexander still decided to continue executing the plans that his father formulated and push through the campaigns in Asia Minor even if it means conquering great races. Additionally, although his slashing of the Gordian knot was not that significant, the way he cut the rope was kind of harsh and for some people, it may show brutality or lack of diplomacy.

## **Alexander's Decisions that made him Conquer Persia**

Persia was a great and massive empire during the time of Alexander. Even his father had a hard time fighting the toughest men of Persia even if almost all of their infantries and troops do not carry much of an edge in fighting compared to the Greek warriors of Sparta and other polis. Regardless of the strength and volume of troops that the Persian army has, Alexander pushed through his plans to take over, as a start, portions of the Persian Empire. So Alexander set on to conquer portions and soon, the whole Persian Empire. Along their journey, hard battles with huge casualties were experienced.

Several days of sieges went on before they could finally fight the main army and finally, capture the settlement under siege. One of the most significant battles of Alexander and his army when they were up for the challenge to go against the huge Persian army was the sieges of Tyre. The siege for Tyre alone lasted for about seven months and the island-city was fully isolated. Even though the city walls was heavily fortified, Alexander did not consider leaving the settlement as it is and just continue on their journey, Alexander pushed through the campaign. After isolating the islands with battle ships and throwing huge rocks from fired by the catapults, the city walls finally broke down which gave access to the city defenders which were easily defeated.

### **Alexander's denial of the truce between Macedon and Persia**

Along way of capturing several Persian cities, Darius III, king of the Persian Empire, sent a letter to Alexander containing words offering a truce. Desperate that Alexander would accept the truce, the king even offered several western provinces as a gift. Alexander, with a burning desire to capture the entire empire refused to accept the truce and carried on with their campaigns.

### **Implications of Alexander's denial of truce and his pushing through with the siege of Tyre and other Persian Settlements**

Superficially, conquering cities for the sake of the Empire can really be a good sign of honor and royalty. However, what's mad about Alexander was when he still decided to push through with any plans even though his side is already suffering huge casualties. At the siege of Tyre, a lot of his men died

while preventing the defenders from breaking the siege, yet he could not decide to change the course. It's a sign of bravery yes but it can also show how careless a general is. Also, it would have been better if he just accepted the truce that the king offered because in reality, they will never be able to push the huge Persian Empire and its people into extinction.

## **References**

Stoneman, Richard. 2004. *Alexander the Great*. London: Routledge.

Naiden, Fred. 2008. *The Journal of Military History*. North Carolina: North Carolina Chapel Hill.