The conquest of india by alexander the great essay sample

Countries, India

Introduction

Unlike the other countries of Great Britain, India is no new-discovered land, since at a time when the little island was still unknown, ships sailed from India’s shores, and caravans wound through the deserts laden with silks and muslins, with gold and jewels and spices. For through long ages, India has been a place of early commerce and trade wherein various tribes and nationalities travel in order to obtain the valuable Indian goods present in their land (Marshall, 2006 p. 428-489; Spielvogel, 2005 p. 89). However, during the length of 327 B. C, the great Greek conqueror Alexander the Great found his way of entering the Indian territories (Worthington, 2003 p. 303; Marshall, 2006 p. 428). The part of India that Alexander invaded is called Punjab, or the land of five rivers. At that time, it was ruled by a king called Porus, which was the overlord of the Punjab, and under him were many other princes, and between the two opposing parties, a war had occurred (Marshall, 2006 p. 428).

Alexander the Great is one of the most puzzling great figures in history. Historians relying on the same sources give vastly different pictures of him wherein some portray him as an idealistic visionary and others as a ruthless Machiavellian. Alexander left a cultural legacy as a result of Hellenistic conquest that involved vast major figures and kingdoms present in the historical perspective. As a result of his conquest, Greek language, art, architecture, and literature spread throughout the Near East. The urban centers of the Hellenistic age, many founded by Alexander and his successors, became springboards for the diffusion Greek culture (Marshall,

2006 p. 428; Spielvogel, 2005 p. 89). Alexander had established a number of cities and military colonies named Alexandria to guard strategic points and supervise wide areas. Most of the settlers were Greek mercenaries (Marshall, 2006 p. 428; Worthington, 2003 p. 303). It has been estimated that in the course of his campaigns, Alexander summoned some 60, 000 to 65, 000 additional mercenaries from Greece, at least 36, 000 of whom took up residence in the garrisons and new cities. While the Greeks spread their culture in the east, they were also inevitably influenced by eastern ways. Thus, Alexander's legacy became one of the hallmarks of the Hellenistic world: the clash and fusion of different cultures (Spielvogel, 2005 p. 89).

The greatness of Alexander the Great is relatively straightforward: from an early age he was an achiever, he conquered territories on a superhuman scale, established an empire until his times unrivalled, and he died young, at the height of his power. Thus, at the youthful age of 20, in 336 B. C, he inherited the powerful empire Macedon, which by then controlled Greece and has already started to make inroads into Asia (Spielvogel, 2005 p. 88; Worthington, 2003 p. 303). In 334 B. C, he invaded Persia, and within a decade he had defeated the Persians, subdued Egypt, and pushed on to Iran, Afghanistan and even India. As well, as his vast conquests Alexander is credited with the spread of Greek culture and education in his empire, not to mention being responsible for the physical and cultural formation of the Hellenistic kingdoms – some would argue that the Hellenistic world was Alexander's legacy (Worthington, 2003 p. 303).

The wisdom of Alexander the Great relates 34 riveting episodes from Alexander’s expansion through India and the Persian Empire, including Asia and Minor, Egypt, Mesopotamia, the Middle East, and other Asian territories (Worthington, 2003 p. 303; Burgess, 2007 p. 76). The early European knew virtually nothing of India until the discovery made by Alexander the Great. During those times, India was shrouded in fable and myth, based on the fifty-century B. C. writings of the Greek historian, Herodotus [1] . India, it was believed, was a place where huge ants dug for gold, and people lived for two hundred years; where men had feet back to front so that they could run fast; and others had one large foot, which, when lying on their backs, they could use as a shade against fierce sun (Burgess, 2007 p. 76). When Alexander the Great and his army reached India in 326 B. C., the civilization they encountered was already more than two millennia old (Worthington, 2003 p. 303).

The legacy of Alexander the great in the historical perspective has been part of the most valiant and extraordinary human force ever written. The philosophers of those times validated the claims of Alexander’s advance to vast territorial conquests, and some of these wise men provided their own historical scripts in order to tell the tale of Alexander’s great conquests (Burgess, 2007 p. 77;). The Indian conquest was one of the greatest conquests made by Alexander that shook the world’s view over Greeks. As with the Indian invasion, the philosophers, namely Plutarch, Arrian, and Quintus Curtius Rufus, provided their accounts on one of Alexander’s great stories, the Indian invasion (Worthington, 2003 p. 303).

Discussion

Alexander the Great: The Indian Invasion

Although several of those who marched east with Alexander wrote of their travels, and although other contemporaries and near-contemporaries compiled lives of Alexander and geographies based on his exploits, none of these survives (Worthington, 2003 p. 303; Keay, 2001 p. 78). Such accounts were, though, still current in Roman times and were used by authors, including Plutarch, the first-century A. D biographer, and Arrian, the second-century A. D military historian, to compile their own works on Alexander; moreover, these accounts do survive (Burgess, 2007 p. 77; Keay, 2001 p. 78; Spielvogel, 2005 p. 89). They do not always agree; scraps of information gleaned from other later sources are included indiscriminately; and when describing India, they often dwell on fantastic hearsay (Keay, 2001 p. 78; Marshall, 2006 p. 428).

To the Greeks before the age of Alexander, India was either a boundless territory that lay to the east of Persia, or simply the eastern most province of the Persian Empire. The historian and traveler Hecataeus of Miletus (500 B. C) was probably the first to write of India in his *Circuit of the Earth* , of which only fragments are extant. Scylax of Caryanda’s account of his voyage from the Indus to the Red Sea on behalf of Darius (521-486 B. C) was lost, and the *Periplus* attributed to him was probably written about century later (Keay, 2001 p. 78; Marshall, 2006 p. 428). The first dissertation on India, *De Rebus Indicis of Ctesias* (400 B. C) was known chiefly from the incomplete

translation of Photius (820-891), Patriarch of Constantinople. However, the first historians of India only provide very limited exploration accounts as well as detail in terms of the Indian way of life (Spielvogel, 2005 p. 89; Donkin, 1998 p. 65).

The first reports come from the companions or contemporaries of Alexander the Great. Both Nearchus and Androsthenes of Thasos wrote accounts of the naval expedition (326-325 B. C) from the mouth of the Indus to the Persian Gulf refer explicitly to the pearl of fisheries of the gulf (Burgess, 2007 p. 76; Donkin, 1998 p. 65-66; Keay, 2001 p. 78). To the gold-digging ants of Herodotus were now added a gallery of gargoyle men with elephant ears in which they wrapped themselves at night, with one foot big enough to serve as an umbrella, or with one eye, with no mouth and so on (Keay, 2001 p. 78;). Allowing for less obvious distortions, these accounts yet provide vital clues to the emergence after Alexander’s departure of a new north Indian dynasty, indeed of an illustrious empire, one to which the word classical is as readily applied as to those of Greece and Rome – and with good reason, in that it has since served India as an exemplar of political integration and moral degeneration (Keay, 2001 p. 78-79).

In 331 B. C, Alexander defeated the Persians decisively at Gaugamela[2], and followed up by capturing first Babylon, then Persepolis. His overall plan was to consolidate his new empire to the furthest limits of the Old Persian one, which would bring him to present-day Afghanistan, southern Russian and across the mountains to Pakistan and India. Alexander in fact greatly

underestimated the width of India; and he was unaware of the Indian Ocean, the landmass of Arabia and the Red Sea (Schofield, 2003 p. 17).

The next stage in Alexander’s progress was the invasion of India, with an army, which may have consisted of some 35, 000 fighting men. It must be remembered that the India at this time known to Alexander was much smaller than the real India. The India, which he invaded, was the country of the Indus. He never knew the Ganges or Eastern Hindustan (Box, 1992 p. 10; Marshall, 2006 p. 428; Schofield, 2003 p. 17). According to Arrian, after Gaugamela, the pattern of warfare changed. In Bactria and Sogdiana, Alexander found himself faced with a national resistance which, under the leadership of Bessus and then of Spitamenes, wisely avoided major conflicts and concentrated on widespread guerilla activity (Schofield, 2003 p. 17; Marshall, 2006 p. 428). It was probably to cope with this altered mode of fighting that in 329 B. C Alexander made an important change in the organization of his Companion rivalry[3] (Arrian, 1971 p. 38).

Alexander started from Bactria in the early summer of 327 B. C. In September 325, he dropped down the eastern arm of the Indus to its mouth. He proceeded to Susa, which he reached in the spring of 324 (Box, 1992 p. 10; Arrian, 1971 p. 38). For a time, Alexander believed that the Indus joined the Nile. His immediate aim was to capture and execute Bessus who had incurred his wrath by murdering the defeated Persian king, Darius Codomannus, and laying claim to the title of King of Asia. Bessus had fled north across the mountains of the Hindu Kush to the province of Bactria and the ancient city of Balkh (Schofield, 2003 p. 17).

When Alexander crossed the Hindu Kush Mountains in the summer 327 B. C, he believed he was approaching the end of the inhabited world (Marshall, 2006 p. 428; Plutarch, 1998 p. 364; Thapar, 2004 p. 158). For Greeks and Persians alike, India was the land of the Indus River, essentially modern Pakistan. Aristotle believed that beyond India there was a great desert and then ocean, which supposedly was visible from the peaks of the Hindu Kush mountains (Thapar, 2004 p. 159; Pomeroy, 1999 p. 419). Although, Darius I had conquered India and briefly made it a part of the Persian empire, Persian rule had long since ended when Alexander entered the region. It was virtually a new world that Alexander and his army entered in the summer of 327 B. C (Pomeroy, 1999 p. 419). Alexander's own feat in crossing the Hindu Kush over the 11, 640-foot Khawak pass set an example for future invaders, and at that point was accompanied by an army of some 30, 000 men (Marshall, 2006 p. 428; Pomeroy, 1999 p. 418).

Journeying in winter, Alexander surprised the local mountain tribes, but the cost was high: there was a shortage of supplies, famine spread through the army, and with no firewood, his men had to eat raw horsemeat. When he reached Balkh, he found that Bessus had fled across the River Oxus, leaving the people of Bactria to surrender to Alexander[4] (Schofield, 2003 p. 16; Thapar, 2004 p. 159; Pomeroy, 1999 p. 419). At Massaga in India, Alexander is said to have attempted to enlist Indian mercenaries in his army, but when they attempted to desert them, these Indian recruits were murdered[5] (Pomeroy, 1999 p. 419; Arrian, 1971 p. 38-39). The Greek campaign in northwestern India lasted for about two years (Arrian, 1971 p. 38-39). After

the fall of Massaga, Alexander advanced further, and in the course of a few months, hard fighting captured the important and strategic fortress of Ora, Bazira, Aornos, Peukelaotis, Embolima and Dyrta[6]. Thus, having subjugated the frontier regions and posted adequate Greek garrisons to maintain Alexander's' authority, he felt himself free to press onward. The odds were undoubtedly in his favor; since, the Punjab and Sind, which were to bear the brunt of his arms, presented the sorry spectacle of a disunited house. There was no towering personality of the type of Chandragupta Maurya, who successfully repelled the invasion of Seleukos Nikator two decades after (Arrian, 1971 p. 38-39; Thapar, 2004 p. 161).

On the other hand, Northwestern India was parceled out into a number of states, monarchies as well as clan oligarchies, engaged in petty internecine feuds and jealousies, in which some of them found their opportunity for seeking alliance with an alien aggressor (Tripathi, 1967 p. 122; Thapar, 2004 p. 159; Pomeroy, 1999 p. 418-419). Indeed, the gates of India were, so to say, unbarred by Raja of Taxila, who lost no time in proffering allegiance to Alexander, and who also rendered ever assistance to the advance body of the Macedonians under Perdiccas in bridging the Indus and in securing the submission of the tribes and chieftains, like Astes, whose territories lay on their route (Tripathi, 1967 p. 122).

Alexander came to India in order to reach the easternmost parts of Darius' empire. He also wished to solve the problem of Ocean, the limits of which were a puzzle to Greek geographers (Thapar, 2004 p. 160; Tripathi, 1967 p. 122). Moreover, he wanted to add what was already being described as the

fabulous country of India to list of conquests. The campaigns took him across the five rivers of Punjab, at the last of which his soldiers refused to go further. He then decided to follow the Indus to its delta, and from there return to Babylon, sending a part of his army be sea via the Persian Gulf and the remainder by land along the coast (Pomeroy, 1999 p. 419; Thapar, 2004 p. 158). The latter was a disastrous enterprise, since it was an exceptionally inhospitable coast. The campaign had involved some hard-fought battles, such as the now famous Battle of the Hydaspes against Porus, the king of the Jhelum region; the subduing of innumerable politics, both kingdoms and what the Greeks called *autonomous cities* , probably the *gana-sanghas* ; the wounding of Alexander by the Malloi, and his revenge; and the extreme hardships of the army traveling down the Indus and along the coast of Makran (Thapar, 2004 p. 158).

As the Macedonian army passed along the famous route through the Khyber Pass to the plain of the Indus River in the summer and fall of 327 B. C, it encountered some of the fiercest resistance in the campaign. Opposition ended only when the army reached the city of Taxilla, whose ruler called, Taxiles, had already solicited Alexander’s aid while he was still in central Asia (Pomeroy, 1999 p. 419-420). About the beginning of the spring of 326 B. C after offering the customary sacrifices and allowing his titled troops a short respite. Alexander crossed the Indus safely somewhere near Ohind (modern Und, a few miles above Attock), and was welcomed at Taxila by Omphis, son of deceased Taxiles, with rich and attractive presents consisting of silver, sheep, and oxen of a good breed[7]. Gratified at these gifts, Alexander

returned them, adding his own, and thus won not only the loyalty of the ruler of Taxila but also a contigent of 5000 soldiers from Alexander[8]. (Tripathi, 1967 p. 122).

Taxila was one of the principal centers of Indian religious thought. Throughout antiquity, Greek and Roman moralists continued to be fascinated by Alexander's sojourn there and his meeting with a group of *" naked philosophers"* – ascetic Indian holy men, one of whom, Calanus, even joined his expedition (Pomeroy, 1999 p. 419-420). Similarly, Abhisares, the astute king of Abhisara, and other neighboring princes, like Doxares, surrendered to Alexander of their own accord, thinking that resistance would be of no avail[9] (Tripathi, 1967 p. 122; Rufus, 1984 276). Taxiles had sought Alexander's aid against his eastern neighbors, Abisares, the ruler of Kashmir, and especially Porus, whose kingdom included all the territory between the Jhelum and Chenab rivers (Pomeroy, 1999 p. 419-420). When Abisares offered his submission, Alexander moved against Porus in early 326 B. C (Pomeroy, 1999 p. 419-420).

Alexander the Great crossed the Indus above Attock, and advanced, without a struggle, over the intervening territory of the Taxiles[10] to the Jehlam (Hunter, 2005 p. 164; Pomeroy, 1999 p. 419-420). However, when Alexander reached the Hydaspes or Jehlam, he found the great Poros on the other side of the river ready, no doubt, to meet Alexander in response to his summons from Taxila, but at the head of a vast army eager for the fray[11]. Alexander finds it difficult to cross the stream, and there ensures a battle of wits

between the two august opponents (Rufus, 1984 276; Pomeroy, 1999 p. 419).

Ultimately, the invader decided to steal a passage, which he did with about 11, 000 of his picked men near a sharp bend several up the river from his camp in the dead of night when a severe storm accompanied with rain and thunder had abated the vigilance of Poros (Rufus, 1984 276; Tripathi, 1967 p. 123). Furthermore, Alexander camouflaged his intentions and movements by leaving a strong force under Krateros in his camp and another with Meleager midway between it and the place where the river was crossed[12]. Detecting that he had been foiled in his attempt to prevent Alexander from landing his troops on the eastern side of the Hydaspes, Poros dispatched his son at the head of 2000 men and 120 chariots[13] to obstruct the advance of his audacious adversary. The young Poros was, however, easily routed and killed by Alexander (Tripathi, 1967 p. 123).

Alexander found the Punjab and divided it into petty kingdoms that were jealous of each other, Porus, disputed the passage of the Jehlam with a force which, substituting chariots for guns, about equaled the army of Ranjit Singh, the ruler of the Punjab in the present century[14] (Hunter, 2005 p. 164). The two armies met at the Hydaspes River, the modern Jhelum, using his infantry and his two hundred elephants to form a living wall along the east bank of the river (Pomeroy, 1999 p. 420; Titchener and Moorton, 1999 p. 67). Plutarch gives a vivid description of the battle from Alexander’s own letters. On the other hand, according to Arrian, Poros himself moved and opposed Alexander with 50, 000 foot, 3000 horse, above 1000 chariots, and 130

elephants. In the centre, elephants formed a sort of front wall, and behind them stood the foot-soldiers (Titchener and Moorton, 1999 p. 67; Tripathi, 1967 p. 123-124). The cavalry protected the flanks and in front of the horsemen were the chariots. As Alexander viewed the equipment on Indian forces and their disposition in the Karri plain, he was constrained to remark (Tripathi, 1967 p. 123-124):

“ I see at last a danger that matches my courage. It is at once with wild beasts and men of uncommon mettle that the contests now lies [15] .”

In the engagement, which opened with the furious charges of Macedonian horsemen, Indians fought with great vigor, and, as Plutarch says, “ Obstinately maintained”, their ground till the eighth hour of the day, but eventually the fates turned against them (Tripathi, 1967 p. 124; Hunter, 2005 p. 16). On the historical analysis, the main cause of Poros’ strength lay in the chariots[16] (Rufus, 1984 276; Hunter, 2005 p. 164). On this particular day, however, these chariots were of no use at all, for the violent storm of rain “ had made the ground slippery, and unfit for horses to ride over, while the chariots kept sticking in the muddy sloughs formed by the rain, and proved almost immovable from their great weight[17].” Besides owing to the slippery condition of the ground, it became difficult for the archers to rest their long and heavy bows on it and discharge arrows quickly and with effect[18] (Hunter, 2005 p. 164).

Having drawn up his troops at a bend of the Jehlam, about 14 miles west of the modern field of Chilianwala, the Greek general crossed under cover of a

tempestuous night. The chariots hurried out by Porus stuck in the muddy margin of the river (Hunter, 2005 p. 164). In 326 B. C, when Alexander was in the Panjab, “ Aggrames” or Xandrames” ruled over the Gangetic region according to these Graeco-Roman accounts. His was the prodigy army at which Alexander’s men had balked; and his father was the low-born son of a barber and a courtesan who had founded a dynasty with its capital at Pataliputra. Andrames was therefore a Nanda, probably the youngest of Mahapadma Nanda’s sons. According to Plutarch, Alexander had actually met the man who would usurp the Magadhan throne, and his name was Sandrokottos and in 326 B. C he was in Taxila, perhaps studying an already enjoying Taxilan sanctuary as he prepared to rebel against Nanda authority. No such person, however, is known to Indian tradition, the voluminous king-lists in the Puranas containing no mention of a Sandrokottos sound-alike[19] (Keay, 2001 p. 78).

Like Porus and Ophis, it looked as if Sandrokottos was either a minor figure or else someone whose name had been so hopelessly scrambled in its transliteration into Greek that it would never be recognizable in its Sanskritic original (Keay, 2001 p. 79; Titchener and Moorton, 1999 p. 67). an The historians find that the toughest of all his battles was that which he fought on the banks of the Hydaspes against Poros; that he had hot work in overcoming resistance of the Kathians before the walls of Sangla; that he was wounded near to death in his assault upon the Mallian stronghold; and that in the valley of the Indus he could only overpower the opposition instigated by the Brahmans by means of wholesale massacres and

executions (Hunter, 2005 p. 164; M’Crindle, 2004 p. 4-5). It may hence be safely inferred that is Alexander had found India united in arms to withstand his aggression, the star of Alexander’s good fortune would have culminated with his passage of Indus (Titchener and Moorton, 1999 p. 67; M’Crindle, 2004 p. 5). On the contrary, Alexander found the situation of India in a very favorable condition for invasion due to the presence of political divisions as presented by Sandrokottos and Poros. Moreover, the regions of the Indus and its great tributary streams were then divided into separate states – some under kingly and others under republican governments, but all from acting in concert against a common enemy and therefore all the more easy to overcome (M’Crindle, 2004 p. 4-5).

Invasion of India: Alexander and the Reign of Greeks

Alexander, in pursuance of his usual policy, sought to secure the permanence of his Indian conquests by founding cities[20], which he strongly fortified and garrisoned with large bodies of troops to overawe and hold in subjection the tribes in their neighborhood. The system of government also which he established was the same as that which he had provided for his other subject provinces, the civil administration being entrusted to native chiefs, while the executive and military authority was wielded by Macedonian officers (M’Crindle, 2004 p. 5).

The external history of India commences with the Greek invasion in 327 B. C led by Alexander the Great. Some indirect trade between India and the Mediterranean seems to have existed from very ancient of times. India to the

east of the Indus was first made known to Europe by the historians and men of science who accompanied Alexander in 327 B. C. Their narratives, although now lost, furnished materials to Strabo, Pliny, and Arrian. Soon afterwards, Megasthenes, as Greek ambassador resident at a court in the centre of Bengal (306-298 B. C), had opportunities for the closest observation. The knowledge of the Greeks concerning India practically dates his researches, 300 B. C (Hunter, 2005 p. 163).

According to Megasthenes' account, India did not participate to any great extent in these advantages[21]. On the other hand, other Asiatic nations in general submissively acquiesced in the new order of things, and after a time found no reason to regret the old order, which it has superseded. Under their Hellenic masters, they enjoyed a greater measure of freedom than they had ever before known; commerce was promoted, wealth increased, the administration of justice improved, and altogether, they reached a higher level of culture, both intellectual and moral, that they could possibly have attained under a continuance of Persian supremacy (M'Crindle, 2004 p. 5).

Alexander's return from India sparked turmoil throughout his vast empire. In short order, eight satraps and generals – both Macedonians and Iranians – were deposed and executed. One of Alexander's oldest friends, the royal treasurer, Harpalus, fled to Athens with a huge fortune looted from the king's funds and a private army of six thousand mercenaries. The ancient sources argued that the upheaval was caused by the deterioration of Alexander's character. Modern admirers cite his outrage at the reports of corruption and oppression by his officials while he was away. Some victims of the king's

wrath, such as the governors of the satrapies along his line of march through Gedrosia, clearly were victims of court politics and jealousies, most were guilty of the one unforgivable crime: they had assumed Alexander would not survive and had begun to exploit his empire for their own benefit (Pomeroy, 1999 p. 423).

Alexander’s actions were not limited to punishing overly ambitious and corrupt subordinates. He also attempted to prevent similar problems in the future. All satraps were ordered to disband immediately their mercenary forces. When the security of his Asian realm was threatened by roving bands of embittered cashiered soldiers, a further order was sent to the cities of European Greece requiring them to permit their exiles to return home. Fully twenty thousand exiles are said to have heard Aristotle’s son in law Nicanor read the royal decree at Olympia in the summer of 324 B. C (Pomeroy, 1999 p. 423-424). Almost as serious a threat to Alexander was posed by the dismay and suspicion of his veteran Macedonian troops at the changes in their relationship to their king. In the early spring of 324 B. C, Alexander celebrated the conquest of India in grand style with decorations and various ornaments distributed to officers of the army and fleet. The climax of the celebration was a grand marriage ceremony in which Alexander himself took two Persian wives, daughters respectively of Artaxerxes III and Darius III. Ninety of his principal officers took noble Persian and Median wives. Gifts were distributed to ten thousand of his soldiers who had followed Alexander’s example and married Asian women, and their debts were paid by the king (Pomeroy, 1999 p. 424).

The good feelings quickly dissipated when Alexander introduced into the army thirty young Iranian troops trained to fight in Macedonian style, which he referred to as his *Successors (* Titchener and Moorton, 1999 p. 67; Pomeroy, 1999 p. 424). Their name suggested that they were eventually to replace his Macedonians. It is not surprising, therefore, that when Alexander announced at Opis in the summer of 324 that he intended to discharge and send home veterans who were too old or too ill to fight, the army mutinied. The soldiers demanded that the king discharge them all and sarcastically urged that he henceforth rely on this father Ammon. Only after Alexander reassured them that his Macedonian were his only true *companions* did the mutiny subside (Pomeroy, 1999 p. 424).

Alexander left governors to rule his Indian conquests, but his death, following so close on his departure, caused a state of confusion in which his governors soon left India to seek their fortuned in west Asia (Thapar, 2004 p. 157; Pomeroy, 1999 p. 425). The problems of reintegrating them into the life of their various cities were to cause turmoil in Greece for years to come, sparking a last desperate attempt by the Greek cities to free themselves from Macedonian rule immediately after Alexander's death (Pomeroy, 1999 p. 423).

End of Empire: Alexander's Death and India's Freedom

In the midst of preparations for an Arabian expedition the autocrat was attacked by a fever, which he was unable to throw off. The final scene, in which his veterans filed through the room where the dying monarch lay, was

tragic and grand. He was just able to raise his head as they passed, in token of recognition and farewell. He died June 13th, 323, not yet 33 years old, having reigned 12 years and 8 months (Box, 1992 p. 10-11). After Alexander's death, there was anarchy among those garrisons of Greeks left behind in his Asian empire. The *War of the Successors* gave the opportunity for the Mauryas under Chandragupta from Bihar in India to conquer the north: the prize after which Alexander had yearned (Schofield, 2003 p. 22; Titchener and Moorton, 1999 p. 68). The political events which followed the short reign of Alexander the Great in India terminated with the founding of two great states – the kingdom of the Prasioi with its capital Pataliputra in the east; and the Greco-Baktrian kingdom, which retained for a time parts of India, such as Panjab, and the portions of the North- Western provinces of the current times (Burgess, 2007 p. 76). The Greeks under Seleucus were unable to hold on to northern India and Gandhara (Schofield, 2003 p. 22; Pomeroy, 1999 p. 426).

Alexander's Indian possessions had fallen to Seleukos Nikator, king of Syria; however, as the supremacy of Seleukos was immediately subjected to attack, and as he saw that western Asia (Hunter, 2005 p. 166) would call for his utmost exertions, convinced of the extreme difficulty of retaining the eastern lands of his empire – he ceded the Indian provinces to Chandragupta of Magadha in return for 500 supply of elephants (Schofield, 2003 p. 22; Burgess, 2007 p. 76).. Meanwhile, the heirs of the Greco-Baktrian kingdom and of its hybrid civilization, formed of Iranian and Greek elements, were the Yue-chi or Indo-Skythians. The struggles that the Indian states carried on

with them continued till the sixth century A. D, and thus, form the political background for the further development of Buddhism in Indian soil (Burgess, 2007 p. 76).

Conclusion

Alexander the great was one of the world's greatest leaders that conquered different cultures and dominated vast list of empires and kingdoms. As according to the historical accounts provided by Plutarch, Arrian, Curtius, and other historians, Alexander the great did conquered the land of Indus valley out of varying rationales, such as the curiosity of Alexander in the land of Indus valley and the myths accompanied by the place. The vast richness of its traditions, culture and the kingdom itself also motivated Alexander to capture the land of Indians. In 326 B. C, the overall invasion occurred and the prime antagonist that Alexander faced was Poros, who was one of the greatest leaders of the Indian tribe. Victory did landed on Alexander's hand as he was aided by Abisares and Taxiles; although, some accounts written by Curtius and Plutarch indicate that betrayal occurred with Abisares' exposure of Alexander's plan to Poros. One of the hardest battles was fought by Alexander at the Hydaspes River or Jhelum wherein Alexander was severely wounded to the point of critical state. Alexander managed to conquer the land of India, and from this point onward, the kingdom of Alexander in Asia expanded greatly; however, after his death, a great dispute occurred in terms of the next successors to handle the riches left by Alexander. As for India, the princes present divided the kingdom and took parts of their own;

hence, the kingdoms conquered by Alexander disintegrated right after his death.

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[1] All that Herodotus knew of India was that it was one of the farthest provinces of the Persian Empire towards the east, but of its extent and exact position, he had no very intimate knowledge. Most of the features he describes to India seem, rather, to have been borrowed from those of the neighboring mountainous districts. His description of the nation as devouring

raw flesh, even that of their closest friends, can be said to possess little authenticity unless it be taken to mean that this revolting practice prevailed among barbarous tribes on the borders of India proper, and not among the Aryan Indians. Herodotus, however, mentioned the existence of “ many nations of Indians,” all speaking different languages. This, together with the allusion to India’s being more populous that the rest of the world and yielding a larger revenue than Babylon, Assyria or any other kingdom subject to Persia, leaves the impression that India was then exactly the same country it has been ever since (Prasad, 1980 p. 21).

[2] According to Arrian (translated by Selincourt), soon after Gaugamela, Alexander received strong reinforcements of Macedonian troops, no fewer than 6, 000 infantry and 500 cavalry. Such situation enabled him to create a seventh battalion of infantry, which was certainly operating early in 330 B, C. The other battalions must have remained over strength for some time. This is the last draft of Macedonians he is known to have received until he returned to the west after his Indian campaign, and there is no compelling reason to think that he received any others (Arrian, 1971 p. 39).

[3] As noted by Arrian: We no loner hear of eight squadrons, but of eight regiments (Hipparchia), each of these squadrons, it seems likely, now included or consisted of the excellent Persian cavalry. Certainly, Alexander made use of Persian cavalry outside the Companions. As early as 330 B. C, we hear of a unit of Persian mounted javelin-men, and at the battle of the River Hydaspes in 326 B. C, he had in his army a body of Daae, mounted archers, as well as horsemen from Bactria, Sogdiana, Scythia, Arachotia, and

the Parapamisus, or Kindu Kush, region (Arrian, 1971 p. 38-39 translated by Selincourt).

[4] “ Alexander was poised to set out across the mountains into India, but he could see that his army was by now bogged down by the weight of all the booty they had taken. At dawn one day, therefore, after the baggage had been packed on to the carts, he began by burning the booty belonging to him and to the Companions, and then gave orders to set fire to his men’s takings. In the end, the deed proved to be considerably less imposing and formidable in the execution that it was in the planning” (Plutarch, 1998 p. 364 translated by Waterfield)

[5] Nor further recruitment of Indian mercenaries is recorded, and the only Indian troops that we hear of in his army are those provided by the rajahs Taxiles and Porus and the city of Nysa, some 11, 000 in all. However, if Nearchus is correct in saying that at the start of the voyage down the River of Hydaspes, Alexander had 120, 000 fighting men with him (a figure given by Curtius) for the army at that start of the Indian campaign and by Plutarch, for the infantry force with which Alexander left India), Alexander must have had a great many Indian troops in his army. But their presence was only temporary, since there is so indication that any Indians returned to the west with him (Arrian, 1971 p. 39).

[6] The Identification of these places is not quite certain. Minor towns of the lower Kophen (Kabul) valley were occupied with the help of local chiefs

named Kophanos and Assagetes (Arrian, IV, 28. p. 72 cited in Tripathi, 1967 p. 21)

[7] Arian, V, 3, M’crindle’s Invasion by Alexander, p. 83; Curtius, VIII, 12, Ibid., p. 202 cited in Tripathi, 1967 p. 122

[8] Arrian, V, 8, Ibid., p. 93 cited in Tripathi, 1967 p. 122

[9] Diodoros would, however, have us believe that Abhisares had made an alliance with Poros and was preparing to oppose Alexander (Arrian, XVIII, 87, Ibid., p. 274 cited in Tripathi, 1967 p. 122)

[10] The Takkas, a Turanian race, the earliest inhabitants of RAWAL PINDI DISTRICT. They gave their name to the town of Takshasila or Taxila, which Alexander found “ a rich and populous city, the largest between the Indus and Hydaspes”, identified with the ruins of Deri Shahan. Taki or Asasur, on the road between Lahore and Pindi Bhatiyan, was the capital of the Punjab in 633 A. D (Hunter, 2005 p. 164).

[11] Curtius, VIII, 13, Ibid., p. 203 cited in Tripathi, 1967 p. 123

[12] Guards were also posted all the war to ensure free communication (Ibid. 124)

[13] Arrian, V, 14, Ibid., p. 101. According to Curtius, the detachment was commanded by Poros’ brother Hages (VIII, 14, Ibid., p. 207) cited in Tripathi, 1967 p. 123

[14] Namely, “ 30, 000 efficient infantry; 4000 horse; 300 chariots; 200 elephants”. The Greeks probably exaggerated the numbers of the enemy. Alexander’s army numbered “ about 50, 000 including 5000 Indian auxillaries under Mophis of Taxila” (Hunter, 2005 p. 164).

[15] Curtius, VIII, 14, M’crindle’s Invasion by Alexander, p. 209 cited in Tripathi, 1967 p. 124

[16] According to Plutarch, “ each of which was drawn by four horses and carried six men, of whom two were shield-bearers, two, archers posted on each side of the chariot, and the other two, charioteers, as well as men-at-arms, for when the fighting was at close quarters they dropped the reins and hurled fart after dart against the enemy.” Curtius, VIII, 14, Ibid., p. 207 cited in Tripathi, 1967 p. 124

[17] Ibid., p. 208 cited in Ibid., p. 124

[18] Arrian deposes that the bow “ is made of equal length with the man who bears it. This they rest upon the ground, and pressing against it with their left foot thus discharge the arrow having faulty condition. (Ibid., p. 124)

[19] Although from the other Greek sources, especially the account of Megasthenes, an ambassador, who would visit India in 300 B. C, it was evident that someone called Sandrokottos had indeed reigned in the Gangetic valley, it was still not clear to which if any of the many listed Indian kings he corresponded, nor whether he ruled from Pataliputra, nor whether he could be the same as Plutarch’s Sandrokottos. (Keay, 2001 p. 78).

[20] According to Plutarch, seventy Asiatic cities at the least owed their origin to Alexander. Of those, forty can still be traced (M’Crindle, 2004 p. 5).

[21] Indians were too proud and warlike to brook long the burden and reproach of foreign thralldom, and within a few years after the Conqueror’s death, they completely freed themselves from the yoke Alexander imposed, and were thereafter ruled by their native princes (M’Crindle, 2004 p. 5).