

Alexander the Great's Conquests and Battles



Alexander the Great, portrayed as the horned bull god Amun, c. 300 BC, on a coin of Lysimachus, one of the successor kings.

Major Battles

Granicus River (334 BC)--his forces moved into Asia and faced a Persian frontier guard.

Issus River (333 BC)--Darius showed up in person, and took a position in Alexander's line of retreat, but flees.

Gaugamela (331 BC)--Darius again leads the battle, this time with elephants and scythed chariots, but again flees. Alexander chases Darius until he is killed by the nobles he was fleeing with.

Hydaspes River (326 BC)--against Porus, a local king in India (modern-day Afghanistan).

After his forces refused to go on, he marched them westward through the Gedrosian Desert in southern Iran, and then back to Babylon. There he died in 323 BC, leaving his kingdom "to the strongest."

Themes in Alexander's brief rule

1. transformation of monarchy from Macedonian to imperial, Greek-Persian
2. cultivation of a Greek-Persian army
3. failure to establish succession—left the Hellenistic world at war for the next 150 years (until Rome conquered them all piecemeal)
4. Macedonians failed to transform (in four decades) from regional victim to regional super-power, but insisted on fighting amongst themselves over Alexander's conquests, destroying the empire he built up in the process

Four Hellenistic dynasties were established in Alexander's wake: the Antigonids in Macedonia, the Ptolemies in Egypt, the Seleucids in Syria, and later, the Attalids in Pergamum (western Asia Minor). Although a couple (Antiochus III and Antigonus) attempted to re-establish Alexander's empire, the successors to Alexander mostly fought each other to a standstill, until the Romans entered the picture in the early 100s BC and conquered everyone.