

Notes on Quiz #9: Alexander the Great

1. All of the following are true about Alexander's sack of Thebes EXCEPT:
 - a. Athens voted military aid for Thebes but held back from fighting alongside them
 - b. News of Thebes's destruction caused widespread uprising against Alexander and weakened his rule in Greece
 - c. Alexander got his army to Thebes after days of forced marches from Illyria
 - d. The decision whether to destroy Thebes was technically not Alexander's, but that of Thebes's own Boeotian neighbors

The destruction of Thebes caused the rest of Greece to abandon resistance to Alexander; many already supported him because of his plans to eliminate the threat of Persia using the combined might of the Aegean.

2. On coming to Egypt, Alexander
 - a. had to fight the most brutal battles of his campaign against the Egyptian satrap's forces
 - b. consulted the famous oracle of Zeus-Ammon
 - c. established a great city of the Nile delta that he called Philippiopolis, in honor of his father
 - d. denied his divine ancestry and swore he was merely "man, general, and king"

In Egypt, Alexander consulted the oracle of Zeus-Ammon and Siwat; founded the great city of Alexandria; and confirmed his divine ancestry, a necessary qualification to be accepted as pharaoh.

3. Alexander achieved all of the following at the Battle of Issus EXCEPT:
 - a. A decisive victory against Darius
 - b. The first defeat of a Persian army led by its king
 - c. The capture of Darius's wife, mother, and daughters
 - d. The annexation of the Punjab

The major battles of Alexander's campaign were: Granicus — Alexander's army enters Anatolia after the satraps' plan staking everything on killing Alexander fails; Issus — A decisive victory against Darius; the first defeat of a Persian army led by its king. Darius's wife, mother, and daughters are captured; Gaugamela — Despite being outnumbered Alexander's army decisively defeats the Persians, leading directly to the fall of the Persian empire; Hydaspes — Alexander achieves a very costly victory in India, annexing the Punjab, but his armies will fight no further.

4. To signal the end of Persian rule, and in vengeance for the Persian desecration of Athenian temples in 480 BCE, Alexander destroyed
 - a. Susa
 - b. Persepolis
 - c. Babylon
 - d. Hoboken

Babylon was an ancient center of culture and religion, and Susa was the city Persians identified with; protecting them and ingratiating himself with their inhabitants, priests, and nobles was crucial to winning over the Persians as their new ruler. — Persepolis, however, was the center of rituals associated with the Persian great king, and had to be destroyed to demonstrate the end of the old rule. It also allowed him to exact revenge on behalf of the Greeks for the destruction of the temples of Athens during Xerxes's invasion of the Aegean in 480.

5. Alexander's death came after he had

- a. executed his doctor for failing to save Hephaestion
- b. conquered everything and everyone he'd ever planned to conquer
- c. forced the Macedonian veterans to stay in Asia rather than return home as they wished
- d. painted his entire body in gold

Optional Extra Credit

EC. Gosh, Alexander sure was great, wasn't he? (Agree or disagree, and defend your answer.)

The answer will be subjective, so you can argue either way. Arguments in favor of Alexander being "Great" include (a) the inspiration provided by being a hellenized king of Macedon, representing a more advanced and prosperous future for Macedon than his traditional father; (b) his military accomplishments in defeating the greatest empire on earth at the time, the Persians; and (c) the lasting legacy of his hellenization of Persia, Mesopotamia, Canaan, and Egypt. — The arguments against might include such factors as (a) the military successes were made possible by advancements in technology, tactics, and leadership introduced by Philip; (b) similarly, the conquest of Persia was Philip's plan and would have been accomplished by him had he lived; (c) Alexander killed vast numbers of people, and in his excesses led his own army into disaster and a long retreat through a desert that killed off many of his own men; (d) he did not provide for his own succession, leaving his empire to devolve into a warscape of rabid rivals.