



The Legacy of Alexander

Civilizations of the Ancient World | Meeting #20

1

Four things today

- Philip and Alexander
- Alexander's conquests
- Cultural synthesis
- The Hellenistic East

2

Questions about whatever

A background image featuring a dark blue and red gradient with several white question marks scattered across it.

3




4



The debate

- Famous turning point in *Clouds*
 - Rewritten to be more emphatic
- Scathing indictment
 - of sophists (who teach people to speak falsely)
 - of philosophers like Socrates (who teach people to abandon tradition and the gods)
- Different tactics
 - Just Argument uses logic and expected beliefs
 - Unjust Argument uses attacks and emotional response
- Unjust Argument wins
 - Declares the Athenians to be already morally corrupted
 - Just Argument: "I can't argue with that"

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Pheidippides's attack

- Son beating up father
the most shocking moment in the play
- Direct demonstration of the consequences of New Thinking eroding traditional morals

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The burning of the Thinkery

- Strepsiades throws off the New Thinking and acts according to his core beliefs (tradition)
- On the way there he apologizes to the gods for forsaking them
- Call to action
- Resolution of philosophical conflict with violence

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Nomos vs. physis

- How do we know what is just?
 - Athenians believe in democracy = the people bearing the burden of society
 - This requires a protocol for deciding what is just and unjust, instead of being told by the gods (religion) and ancestors (tradition)
- Nomos (convention) = the real Sophists
 - Is morality merely arbitrarily dictated by society?
 - Protagoras: *'Man is the measure of all things'*
 - The truth is what people will believe; sophists taught the ability to argue regardless of morality
 - Effective speeches—not just true speeches—can change what people believe
- Physis (nature)
 - Is there a higher sanction to be found in something else, like the natural world?
 - A search for ways to identify natural laws of morality and justice—*universal truths*
 - Truth is inherent in nature — cannot be changed regardless of human or divine will
- Aristophanes believed in gods and tradition, and so *rejected both*
 - Used *Clouds* to try to destroy both relativists like the sophists and universalists like Socrates

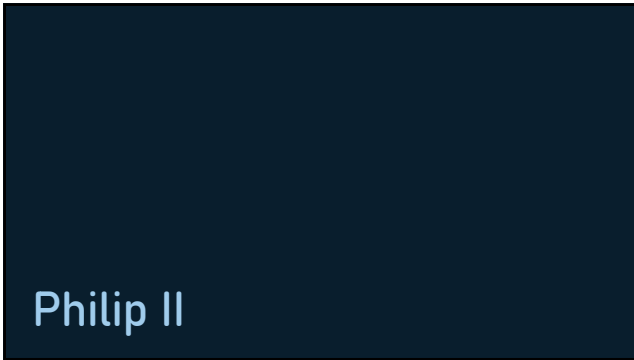


the fake "Socrates" and the Sophists




the real Socrates

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Dominion over Hellas

- The Greeks wear themselves out through constant war
- Philip uses their divisions against them to gain political power in Thessaly
- Many Greeks want Philip as the only possible leader against Persia
- Only one actual battle, and the rest Greece is Philip's control

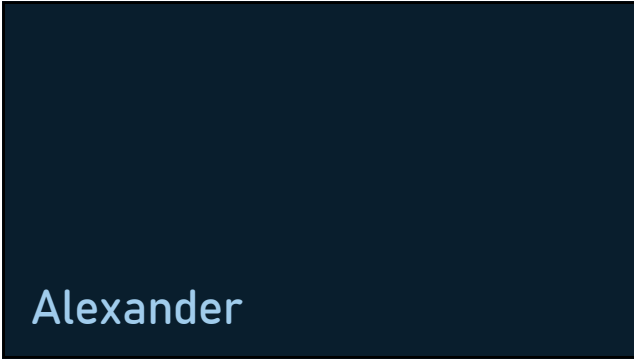
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Philip is killed

- Sudden and unexpected assassination
- Philip had prepared Alexander, but he is still only 20 years old

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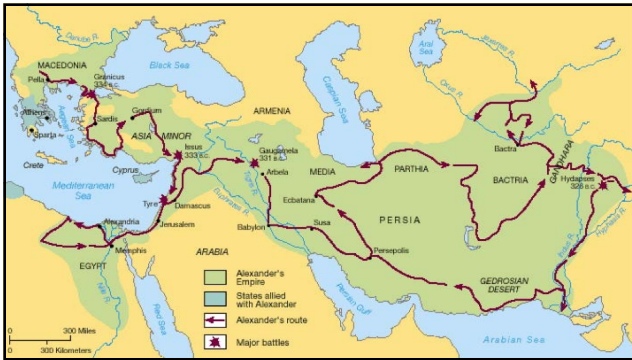
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Alexander's youth

- Philip had multiple wives and sons
 - Choosing Alexander worsened rivalries between mothers and tribes
- Educated to think and strategize as a Greek
 - Trained by Aristotle
- Philip intended a transition and an evolution
 - from barbarian king (himself) to the ideal king (Alexander)
 - From Macedon's barbarian past to its evolved and civilized future

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Cultural synthesis

- Destroys Persepolis and makes Babylon his capital as "King of Asia"
- Sets about trying to merge Greek, Mesopotamian, and Egyptian achievements and culture
- Alexander's goal is to create the ultimate civilization

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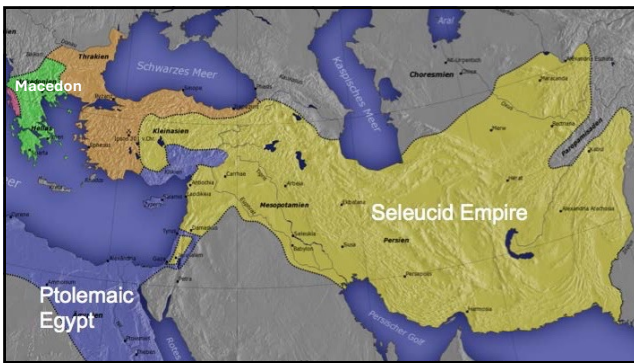
"To the strongest"

- Dies unexpectedly of illness at 32 years old
- Planned heir not yet born
- Supposedly answered "to the strongest"
- Death launches years of wars between Alexander's generals to control parts of his empire


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The Hellenistic East

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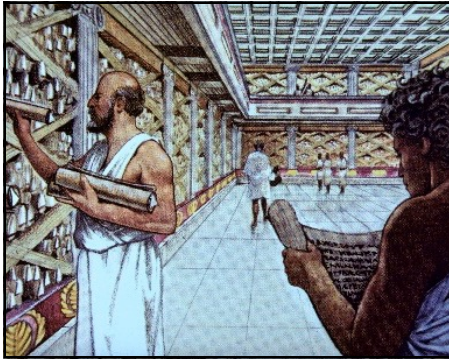
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The Cosmopolis

- No longer limited by the horizon
- Sense of connectedness between great cities of different Hellenistic lands
- Drive to share and develop ideas and innovations

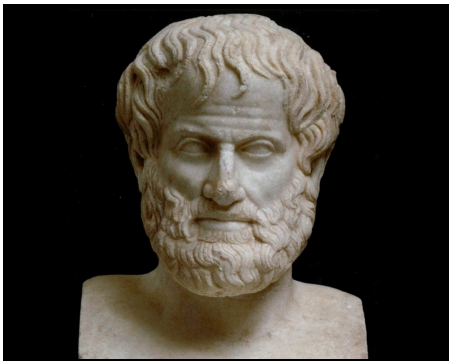
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Alexandria

- Not just storage of information
- Catalyzing new ideas through discussion and diversity

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Hellenistic philosophy

- Aristotle
 - Applied reasoning, systematic
 - Taught Alexander
- Stoicism
 - Austerity, valor, virtuous deeds
 - Greatly influential on Romans

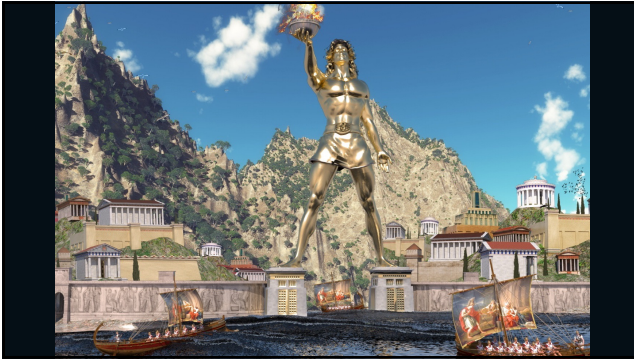
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Technology

- New knowledge creates new possibilities
- Siege of Syracuse
 - Invaders held off by the inventions and ingenuity of Archimedes

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