

Notes on Quiz #9: The Rise of Macedon

1. How was Macedonian society unlike that of the Greeks? What did the two societies have in common?

This question arises in part because Alexander saw himself as the champion not only of the Greek peoples but of Greek culture, which he embraced and admired.

One way of looking at “being Greek” involves embracing Greek culture. As their interaction with the Greeks progressed the Macedonian nobility increasingly embraced and adopted elements of Greek culture, including art, architecture, education, and religion as well as facility with the Greek language alongside their own. Given that the Greeks themselves shared a common culture but pursued it in different ways, the Macedonians could be seen as being one of many different forms of Hellas. The Macedonians also pursued the Greek vendetta against the Persians despite their own history of alliance with them.

However, many elements of Macedonian society were decidedly and inherently un-Greek, starting with the feudal monarchy characteristic of the Thracian “barbarian” kingdoms but alien to Greece. The Macedonian nobility’s pastimes—drinking undiluted wine to excess, polygamy, and hunting—were also not characteristic of the Greeks, and their burial methods (a defining characteristic of any society) were different as well.

2. What do you think were the key factors that made possible Philip’s domination of Greece?

The Greeks exhausted themselves economically and culturally in the fourth century wars of hegemony. In the end Philip was the only force able to offer unity, which some Greeks wanted both to restore economic stability and to make possible the long-awaited offensive against Persia.

Philip’s fast and steady rise to power is a big part of this (see E2) below; Philip’s leadership inspired loyalty because of his personal strength and achievements as well as a canny ruthlessness when necessary.

EC1. All of the following were true of the Amphictyonic Council of Delphi (also called the Delphic Amphictyony) EXCEPT:

- (a) It supervised the Pythian Games
- (b) Philip gained a voting majority through his control of Thessaly and the break-up of Phocis
- ✓ (c) It was named after some guy named Amphictyos
- (d) It invited Philip to wage a sacred war, which led ultimately to the Battle of Chaeronea and the defeat of the Greeks

EC2. What do you think were Philip’s most important acts or reforms, and why?

A number of points could be discussed here, of which the most noticeable include:

- (a) Philip’s unification of Macedon at a moment of extreme crisis;
- (b) his pacification and dominion of the Balkans and Thrace, greatly elevating Macedon’s standing wealth in resources;
- (c) his revolutionary reforms of the military in terms of tactics, equipment, and specialized support as well as the effort to induce bonding with the king and leadership through the naming of companions and pages;
- (d) the means by which he brought about the domination of Greece through successive diplomatic maneuvers and surgical use of war as the opportunity dictated, playing the Greeks’ enmities of each other to his own advantage;
- (e) the preparation for marshaling sentiment and resources in both Macedon and Greece for war with Persia that Alexander assumed on his succession.