



MINOOKA COMMUNITY HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT # 111

Mission: To Inspire and motivate our students with an educational experience that leads to achievement and success.

January 18, 2017

Dear Incoming Freshman and Parents/Guardians:

Welcome to Minooka Community High School! The MCHS staff wants you to experience four successful years of high school that will prepare you for whatever future path you choose--college, vocational training, or career. This memo and packet are intended to provide the background and requirements for application to an honors-level course. You and your child will also receive the materials needed to enroll in Minooka Community High School District #111 for 2017-18 when our counselors visit your child's school, and during Incoming Freshman Night scheduled for January 17, 2017.

One of the first decisions you will need to make regarding your high school education involves choosing the appropriate classes. The English, Math, Science, Social Studies, and World Languages Departments offer both regular and honors courses to fulfill students' needs and challenge their academic abilities. These courses will prepare students for college and professional/vocational fields. Each honors course is designed to challenge those students who excel.

If you elect to take regular classes, you need only complete the registration forms provided by the high school counselors when they visit your school. If you wish to enroll in honors courses, you need to complete these steps:

1. Obtain an application packet by doing the following:
 - Downloading & printing a 2017 Honors Application Packet at www.mchs.net. Available on January 18, 2017.
2. Register online for the Math and/or Science Skills test by January 25, 2017 at 3pm.
 - Visit www.mchs.net and select the link to "Incoming Freshman Info" in the Quick Links menu on the left side of the page. Once on the page, scroll to the "Downloads, Mailings & More" section at the bottom of the page and click on the provided link for the "Mandatory Skills Test for 2017-2018 Incoming Freshman."
3. Complete the student profile, student survey, and parent survey.
4. Complete the Honors Program Math Application and return the application with your current 8th grade math teacher's signature.
5. Complete the essays/questions if you are applying for Honors English I and/or Honors World History.
6. Complete a Science skills test by registering online at www.mchs.net (see Step 2) for Chemistry Honors placement.
7. If you wish to apply for any of the honors courses, your application materials must be received by January 30, 2017 at MCHS – South Campus. You may also mail all completed forms to:

Ms. Marci Jordan
Minooka Community High School – South Campus
26655 W. Eames St.
Channahon, IL 60410

MCHS - CENTRAL CAMPUS
301 S. Wabena Ave.
Minooka, Illinois 60447
815-467-2140

DISTRICT 111 OFFICE
26655 W. Eames Street
Channahon, IL 60410
815-467-2557

MCHS - SOUTH CAMPUS
26655 W. Eames Street
Channahon, Illinois 60410
815-521-4001

www.mchs.net

General criteria considered for acceptance into the honors program are:

1. Maintain at least a B average for the current academic school year in the subject area(s) for which you are applying.
2. Be recommended by your 8th grade teacher(s).
3. During review of applications, additional information may be requested.

Specific criteria required for acceptance into the honors program (by course) are as follows:

Subject	Skills Test Date and location	Recommended Minimum PSAT 8/9 Score	Written Prompt Response Required
Chemistry	Jan. 20, 2017 Channahon Junior High (CJH students only) 12:45 - 1:30 p.m. Jan. 27, 2017 Minooka Junior High (MJH students only) 1:00 - 1:45 p.m. Jan. 28, 2017 Minooka Community High School - Central Campus 9:45 a.m. - 10:30 a.m. Feb. 2, 2017 Make-up at Minooka Community High School - South Campus 3:00 - 3:30 p.m.	430 - Math 24 - Reading	Skills Test
English	N/A	390 - Reading & Writing	Yes
Geometry Honors Geometry or Advanced Algebra I	Jan. 20, 2017 Channahon Junior High (CJH students only) 11:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. Jan. 27, 2017 Minooka Junior High (MJH students only) 2:00 - 3:30 p.m. Jan. 28, 2017 Minooka Community High School - Central Campus 8:00 a.m. - 9:30 a.m. Feb. 2, 2017 Make-up at Minooka Community High School - South Campus 3:30 - 5:00 p.m.	430 - Math	Skills Test
Social Studies	N/A	24 - Reading	Yes
Spanish Honors	Feb. 6 & 7, 2017 Minooka Junior High 3:00 - 3:45 p.m. Feb. 8, 2017 Troy Middle School 12:55 - 1:45 p.m. Feb. 8, 2017 Channahon Junior High 1:00 - 2:45 p.m. Feb. 9, 2017 Minooka Community High School - South Campus room 120 3:00 - 3:45 p.m.	N/A	N/A

After your credentials have been reviewed and evaluated, you will be notified of your recommended placement.

We hope that you, along with your parents/guardians, will consider the available options before making choices. Your high school experience will be greatly enhanced by selecting classes that will not only challenge you, but also adequately prepare you for the future. Please feel free to contact any of the MCHS Guidance Department members, your junior high counselors, or us if you have questions about these important decisions. We look forward to having you join us at MCHS next fall!

Sincerely,

Sean Hackney
Instructional Leader
English Department
Phone: 815-521-4060
E-mail: shackney@mchs.net

Trent Bontrager
Instructional Leader
CTE & World Languages Department
Phone: 815-521-4022
E-mail: tbontrager@mchs.net

Glenda Smith
Instructional Leader
Social Studies & Art Department
Phone: 815-521-4201
E-mail: gsmith@mchs.net

Jill Nehring
Math Instructor
Math Department
Phone: 815-521-4053
E-mail: jnehring@mchs.net

Donna Engel
Instructional Leader
Science Department
Phone: 815-521-4388
E-mail: dengel@mchs.net



MINOOKA COMMUNITY HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT # 111

Freshman Honors Program Parent Survey

Applicant Name (please print) _____

(Last)

(First)

Your son/daughter is a potential candidate for honors classes at MCHS. Please answer the following questions about your child in order to assist us in properly placing him/her in classes for next year.

Please Circle
(4 being the highest)

- | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Is your child a self-starter? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Does your child work carefully and accurately? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Does your child complete his/her work on time? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Is your child a goal setter? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Does your child demonstrate responsible planning and follow-through in daily assignments and special projects? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Is your child a good problem solver? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Is your child willing to persevere on a problem? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Does your child demonstrate creativity? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Does your child have a positive attitude toward school and learning? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Does your child demonstrate confidence when approaching new or challenging projects or materials? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Does your child have a good attendance record? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Does your child communicate (listen & speak) well? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Does your child communicate ideas well in writing? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Is your child organized? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Does your child readily and thoroughly complete reading assignments? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Does your child study in a systematic way? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Does your child readily read books, magazines, or newspapers for pleasure? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Do you feel that your child has the academic ability and drive to successfully participate in our honors program? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

Mail or deliver this form, along with your application, by Monday, January 30, 2017.

**MS. MARCI JORDAN
MCHS - SOUTH CAMPUS
26655 W. EAMES ST.
CHANNAHON, IL 60410**

Note: South Campus closes at 3:00 p.m.



Applicant Name (please print) _____
(Last) (First)

Please answer the following questions to assist us in properly placing you in classes for next year.

	Please Circle (4 being the highest)			
<u>Work Ethic</u>				
Are you a self-starter?	1	2	3	4
Do you work carefully and accurately?	1	2	3	4
Do you complete work on time?	1	2	3	4
Are you a goal setter?	1	2	3	4
Do you demonstrate responsible planning and follow-through in daily assignments and special projects?	1	2	3	4
<u>Problem-Solving Ability</u>				
Are you a good problem solver?	1	2	3	4
Are you willing to persevere on a problem?	1	2	3	4
Are you creative?	1	2	3	4
<u>Attitude</u>				
Do you have a positive attitude toward school and learning?	1	2	3	4
Do you work well in a group?	1	2	3	4
Do you demonstrate confidence when approaching new or challenging projects or materials?	1	2	3	4
Are you open to input of others?	1	2	3	4
Do you demonstrate consideration toward others?	1	2	3	4



Please answer the following questions to assist us in properly placing you in classes for next year.

<u>Skills</u>	Please Circle (4 being the highest)			
Do you communicate (listen & speak) well?	1	2	3	4
Do you communicate your ideas well in writing?	1	2	3	4
Do you take notes?	1	2	3	4
Do you thoroughly complete reading assignments?	1	2	3	4
Are you organized?	1	2	3	4
Do you study in a systematic way?	1	2	3	4
Do you routinely read books for pleasure?	1	2	3	4
Do you routinely read magazines or newspapers?	1	2	3	4
Do you feel that you have the academic ability and drive to successfully participate in our honors program?	1	2	3	4

Mail or deliver this form, along with your application, by Monday, January 30, 2017.

**MS. MARCI JORDAN
MCHS-SOUTH CAMPUS
26655 W. EAMES ST.
CHANNAHON, IL 60410**

Note: South Campus closes at 3:00 p.m.



MINOOKA COMMUNITY HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT # 111

Freshman Honors World History Application

Honors World History Application

Directions:

1. Read the packet on Alexander the Great.
2. Use the evidence in the packet to: fill in the chart, complete the multiple -choice questions and write a three -paragraph essay .
3. Turn in pages 1, 3-4 in packet and your essay/works cited.

Chart: Check agree or disagree for each statement then defend your position.

Statement	Agree	Disagree	Why? - Cite specific reasons why; do not just repeat what the articles tell you. Can be listed as bulleted facts
Alexander's bust conveyed "greatness"			
Alexander was a great general, not a great political leader			
Alexander was the embodiment of pure human ambition			
Alexander was bloodthirsty and tyrannical			
The question of Alexander's greatness is complicated.			

Was Alexander Deserving Of The Title 'Great'? Thesis and Essay-Writing Instructions:

1. After reading the packet that includes the perspectives on Alexander the Great, decide if you will take the stance that he deserves to be called great or not. In three paragraphs, defend your opinion with a clearly defined thesis and detailed historical information to support your thesis. Your essay should be typed, double-spaced, 12-point font in Cambria or Times New Roman.
2. In paragraph one of your essay start off with a grabber statement that hints at your opinion and gets the reader's attention. Then write your thesis statement. Your thesis statement should say yes he is deserving of the title great or no he does not deserve to be called great AND give three categories/reasons as to why or why not. Spend the last couple of sentences of your first paragraph previewing details/facts that will support the three categories/reasons you are using.
3. Paragraph two will be spent discussing/supporting your thesis and your three categories/reasons with specific points that are backed up by historical facts. Be sure to evenly discuss each of the three categories that go towards supporting your thesis with relevant historical facts. Remember that all of the facts that you use should be analytical in nature (just not listing facts for the sake of listing facts). They should be used and explained in a way that proves your thesis. *This is your chance to show us your analytical abilities and individual thought process with how you can explain the facts you are using and then tie them to your thesis with why, how, because, statements.
4. Paragraph three will be the last paragraph of your essay. Restate your thesis in a different way from your first paragraph and then discuss the three categories you used to support your thesis with pertinent historical information that backs up your thesis. Your last sentence of the paragraph should wrap up your paragraph with a commentary or statement of fact that is based in related-history and relates to the position you have taken in your paper. It should be thought provoking and grab the reader's attention.
5. Uses the information provided in the packet and provide internal/parenthetical citations (MLA format) for either direct quotes or paraphrasing within the body of your paper. Remember that any thought that you did not come up with yourself has to be cited otherwise that is committing plagiarism!! Please be aware that if you are using direct quotes they should not be longer than one line/sentence in your paper. Over-quoting that is too long does not impress the reader of your paper...instead choose a specific quote/selection from the reading materials that you feel as an excerpt can help support you thesis and explain why/how your thesis is correct. The goal is to have a paper that is analytical and argues successfully your thesis instead of a paper that is merely descriptive and just lists facts with no thought to tying your thoughts and evidence to proving your thesis.
6. Your paper should have a separate works cited page attached that is also in MLA format. You will notice that at the end of every page in the packet there are automatic MLA citations for each essay read at the bottom of the paper. Use these as a direct example and copy the exact format into your works cited page. Your works cited page should be arranged in alphabetical order starting with the alphabetical order of the author's last name.

Multiple Choice/Comprehension questions

1. Ian Worthington best describes the “greatness” of Alexander III in which of the following ways?
 - a. Alexander was a great king, but was not a competent leader in combat
 - b. Alexander excelled in both political and military leadership
 - c. Alexander was a poor political leader and a poor military leader
 - d. Alexander was a great general, but was a poor king
2. What was NOT one of the main reasons for considering Alexander III not deserving of the title “the Great” according to Ian Worthington?
 - a. Alexander would make decisions based on personal reasons, not strategic
 - b. His father, Philip II, did much more for expanding Greece than Alexander
 - c. When challenged, Alexander would react harshly, executing allies
 - d. Alexander died leaving the Macedonian empire with no heir, eventually leading to its break-up
3. What does Ian Worthington infer was the main reason for the decline in Alexander’s popularity among his military?
 - a. Alexander’s belief in his own divinity
 - b. Continued military failures on the battlefield
 - c. Refusal to expand the Empire eastward after the defeat of the Persians
 - d. Alexander’s refusal to lead “from the front” as a general
4. Phillip Freeman argues that Alexander’s greatness should be determined by his actions spreading Hellenic culture across the world. Which of the following was NOT a consequence of Alexander’s conquests according to Freeman?
 - a. Depictions of the Buddha influenced by Greek art
 - b. The speed of the spread of Christianity
 - c. The spread of democracy across the conquered lands
 - d. The formation of cities that became lasting centers for Greek civilization
5. How would Freeman counter the claims that historians make that Alexander was a “bloodthirsty dictator”?
 - a. Alexander was under constant threat so he had to act in extraordinary ways
 - b. He was a man of his time, and no different than any other ruler
 - c. His actions are justified because of his accomplishments
 - d. Those accounts are over exaggerated and false
6. The main purpose of Keyne Cheshire’s article is to argue which of the following.
 - a. Where Alexander was first referenced as “the Great” in history and its validity
 - b. Stating that Alexander gave the title to himself because of his views of self-divinity
 - c. This title was given to him for his conquering of the Persians who used the title “Great King”
 - d. The title was given to him by his military for his benevolence towards his soldiers
7. What was NOT an achievement of Alexander to have earned him the title “the Great” according to Cheshire?
 - a. His conquests of vast territories
 - b. His ruthlessness towards his enemies, both foreign and native
 - c. Integration of Persian traditions into long-standing Macedonian ones
 - d. His suppression of dissidents in his own military ranks

8. According to Cheshire, what was the first reference to Alexander as “the Great” in recorded history?
- a. Persian records following his conquering of the Persian empire
 - b. In a Roman comedy by Platus
 - c. Contemporary Macedonian scholars who gave him the title
 - d. Medieval kings wanting to use Alexander as an example for rule

9. Which of the following authors would more than likely agree with the following statement.

“Alexander was not deserving of the title ‘the Great’ because he failed to maintain the empire he created following his death.”

- a. Ian Worthington
- b. Phillip Freeman
- c. Keyne Cheshire

10. Which of the following authors would more than likely agree with the following statement.

“The title of ‘the Great’ has had a variety of meanings throughout history and its application towards Alexander is still a hotly debated topic.”

- a. Ian Worthington
- b. Phillip Freeman
- c. Keyne Cheshire

Ancient Greece, 2000-30 B.C./Was Alexander Really Great?/Does Alexander deserve the title “the Great”?



This image, a third-century-BCE bust discovered at the Macedonian capital of Pella, is a portrait of Macedonian king Alexander III, known as “the Great.” The bust likely reflects the techniques used by the sculptor Lysippos in creating Alexander’s portraits; Lysippos was the only artist authorized to portray the king during Alexander’s lifetime. Lysippos’s images of Alexander were marked by their idealized style and specific traits suggesting Alexander’s youth, authority, and aspiration to greatness; such features are seen in this bust, including Alexander’s turned head, upward gaze, and thick tousled hair. Scholars consider that such images were part of Alexander’s propaganda campaign to cultivate the public’s perception of him as a semidivine, powerful ruler and conqueror.

Between 334 and 324, Alexander led his army to victory over the once-mighty Persian Empire and pressed on to explore and conquer eastern lands as far away as India. By the time he died at age 33, his military successes had won him an enduring reputation for greatness, both as a military leader and as a forceful personality. Nevertheless, modern scholars also consider Alexander’s failings as a ruler and his personal excesses as they investigate the question: Does Alexander deserve the title “the Great”?

end main content

MLA Citation

“Was Alexander Really Great?: Key Question.” World History: Ancient and Medieval Eras. ABC-CLIO, 2015. Web. 8 Dec. 2015.

Entry ID: 1525034

Ancient Greece, 2000-30 B.C./Was Alexander Really Great?/A Great General vs. a Great King

Alexander III (“the Great”) became king of Macedonia at age 20 in 336 when his father Philip II of Macedon was assassinated. Two years later in 334 he invaded Asia, and when he died in 323 the Persian Empire was no more and he had even invaded and for a time conquered Bactria and Sogdiana and made inroads into what the Greeks called India (present day Pakistan). It is easy to see why Alexander was commonly referred to as “great” in antiquity to the present day. He defeated numerically greater Persian and Indian armies in spectacular battles, prosecuted some brilliant sieges, and fought over two years of tough guerilla warfare in Bactria and Sogdiana. He created a vast empire from Greece in the west to India in the east, including Egypt, Syria, and the Levantine coast, in only a decade, and he was ready to invade Arabia when he died. Moreover, some of his subjects worshipped him as a god and some ancient writers attributed to him a desire to unify the races. Hence Alexander came to be seen as not only a great and victorious general but also a philosophical idealist and so a great man and king.



Was Alexander, however, “great”? A lot depends on how “greatness” is defined, and what ancient writers and peoples considered great may be quite different from us, given how our Western values have evolved. But the question is an important one as it affects our appreciation of Alexander and hence the role he played in Greek history.



On the battlefield Alexander was a genius. At the Battle of Issus, for example, in 333 (the first battle at which the Great King Darius III was present), Alexander was hopelessly outnumbered. Precise numbers are not known, but the Macedonians had some 26,000 infantry and 5,300 cavalry and Persian casualties alone from the battle were said to be 100,000. However, by concentrating his strategy on the capture or killing of Darius, Alexander caused him to flee, and once that news permeated the ranks of the Persians they lost heart and fled. The Macedonians gave pursuit and massacred so many that one source speaks of them crossing over a ravine on a “bridge of corpses.”

Furthermore, Alexander always led by example from the front, as was expected of a Macedonian warrior king, and he willingly endured the same trials and tribulations as his men. For example, during a march through the harsh conditions of the Gedrosian Desert in 325, his men were suffering terribly from thirst and many were dying. Alexander led his men on foot rather than on horseback to encourage them to continue with the march. Some of his men found a trickle of water; they filled a helmet with it, and brought it to Alexander to drink. In front of everyone he poured it out, saying he would drink only when all of his men could.

Military successes and stories like these are a testament to Alexander’s generalship. However, he was not just a general; he was a king, and generalship was only part of his kingship. When we evaluate Alexander as king, a different picture emerges that affects his greatness.

To begin with, once Alexander had added the Persian empire to the Macedonian it was time for him to return to Greece. He did not, preferring to march eastwards for personal reasons as opposed to strategic ones. As a result, he would lose thousands of his own men in arguably needless fighting and eventually the respect of his army, which twice mutinied on him (see below). His character would change for the worse: in Central Asia and India in particular he put down opposition in the most brutal fashion and was guilty of genocide.



Alexander would also grow to believe in his own divinity, and his paranoia became evident in his reaction to any who criticized him. Thus in 330 he gave orders for the execution of two senior generals (Philotas and Parmenion) who had a history of challenging his growing favoritism of oriental practices at the expense of Macedonian ones. Motivating Alexander's desire to win military renown and be seen as a god was his desire to outdo his father Philip II, but elevating Philip over him could be fatal. Thus in 328 after a drunken altercation with another senior general (Cleitus) who had praised Philip, Alexander murdered him in cold blood.

Even aspects of his great generalship can be questioned. Alexander won all his battles and sieges, but in continuously marching eastwards for largely personal reasons and with no end in sight his army eventually mutinied on the Hyphasis River in India (in 326), forcing him to retrace his steps. Two years later in 324 at Opis Alexander was faced by another mutiny, this time over his policy of integrating foreigners in to his army and his pretensions to personal divinity. Then there was the march through the Gedrosian Desert, which Alexander undertook for personal reasons, but as a result about a third of the men with him perished. Although Alexander successfully ended the two mutinies and reconciled his army, they plus the logistical blunder of the Gedrosian Desert march must be taken into account when considering Alexander's greatness.

The image that has been presented of Alexander the idealist trying to unite the races is likewise flawed. When Alexander used foreigners in his army and administration, for example, this was for the pragmatic reason of assisting his rule over the conquered peoples and had nothing to do with trying to integrate the races. The same is true of his marriage to the Bactrian princess Roxana, whose influential father would prove useful to Alexander's attempt to control Bactria. Other examples that appear to indicate Alexander was this idealist can also be exploded.

Finally, comparing the legacy of Philip II to that of Alexander reveals a quantum difference. When Philip died in 336 he left his son a united and secure Macedonia, the best trained army in the Greek world, no pretender threats to the throne, and a stable economy, all of which were a stark contrast to the problems Philip and Macedonia faced when he came to power in 359. The army that Philip created allowed Alexander to win the success that he did in Asia: without Philip there would have been no Alexander the Great. Alexander's legacy on the other hand came nowhere near to that of his father. The dissatisfaction of his people and especially his failure to produce an heir (despite the insistence of his top generals when he became king) led to the disintegration of the Macedonian empire. His generals divided it up among them but then fought each other for three decades.

The appellation "great" can be used to distinguish a king who had several namesakes but who did more than them. There is no question that Alexander the Great did more than Alexander I, II, or IV (his son, who was put to death during the wars of the generals); he was a great general, but that does not make him a great king for Macedonia.

About the Author

Ian Worthington

Ian Worthington is a professor of history at the University of Missouri. He has published 14 sole-authored and edited books and over 80 articles on Greek history, epigraphy, and oratory, including, most recently, the biographies *Alexander the Great: Man and God* (London, 2004) and *Philip II of Macedonia* (New Haven, CT, 2008). He is currently writing a book on Demosthenes and is Editor-in-Chief of Brill's *New Jacoby*, a new edition, with translations and commentaries, of 856 fragmentary Greek historians involving a team of 120 scholars in 16 countries. In 2008 his course *The Long Shadow of the Ancient Greek World* was released on DVD and CD by The Teaching Company. In 2005 he won the Chancellor's Award for Outstanding Research and Creativity in the Humanities and in 2007 the Student-Athlete Advisory Council Most Inspiring Professor Award.

MLA Citation

Worthington, Ian. "Was Alexander Really Great?: A Great General vs. a Great King ." *World History: Ancient and Medieval Eras*. ABC-CLIO, 2015. Web. 8 Dec. 2015.

Entry ID: 1525039

Ancient Greece, 2000-30 B.C./Was Alexander Really Great?/Alexander: His Empire and Legacy

In the year 323 BCE, Alexander died in Babylon at the age of 32. During his short life he expanded his father Philip II of Macedon's kingdom from the southern Balkans into Asia Minor, Mesopotamia, Egypt, Persia, Central Asia, and the Indus River valley. With little money and only a small army, he took on the empire of the Persian king Darius III and repeatedly defeated his superior forces in battle. His kingdom stretching from the Adriatic Sea to the plains of India was short lived, but his influence on later centuries was enormous.



Alexander was victorious when the odds were heavily against him because of a combination of innovative technology and unfettered ambition. He used the long sarissa spears of his Macedonian infantry to outreach the weapons of his enemies in battle. He also was among the first to employ a professional engineering corps in his army and to use siege engines to take resistant cities. Alexander could move his army faster over rough terrain and through adverse weather than any general before him. When the Persians blocked him in a narrow mountain pass outside their capital Persepolis in the middle of winter, he led his men around them over snow-covered goat trails that would have been unthinkable for an army even in summer. In the towering Hindu Kush range, local warriors told him he would never conquer them unless his men had wings, yet he took every fortress. Through the deserts of Egypt, the monsoons of India, and the mountains of Afghanistan, Alexander was absolutely relentless in his drive to conquer the known world. If he is to be judged on purely military terms, even his harshest critics in ancient and modern times would have to concede that he deserves to be called “the Great.”



But as remarkable as Alexander was as a general, it is his importance to subsequent cultures that truly earns him his title. Although Alexander was Macedonian and not Greek, his fascination with and embrace of Hellenic culture led him to spread Greek language, literature, and culture throughout his empire and beyond. Yet this was primarily a tool for controlling the indigenous population, not the result of a desire to make the world a better place. He founded a number of cities—all modestly named “Alexandria”—from the Mediterranean to India, many of which became lasting centers of Greek civilization, especially the great coastal city of Alexandria in Egypt, home of the fabled library. Rome, although never conquered by Alexander, embraced the Hellenistic culture that grew from his campaigns and spread it throughout Europe. Because of his conquests in India, images of the Buddha still show the influence of Greek art. Alexander appears in the Hebrew Bible and the Koran, as well as being an important figure in medieval literature from Iceland and Armenia to West Africa. And without the unifying force of Greek language and culture that Alexander brought to the Near East and Mediterranean, it is unlikely that Christianity would have spread as far or as fast as it did.

Not everyone in history has viewed Alexander in a positive light or would add “the Great” after his name. The Italian poet Dante Alighieri placed him in the seventh circle of Hell boiling forever in the very blood of others he so freely shed. Many others since have readily agreed that Alexander was a nothing more than a murderous tyrant with a gift for winning difficult battles. Views of Alexander have swung back and forth like a pendulum over the centuries depending on the flow of history and the predisposition of those who have written his story. For the British Victorians, he was a mirror of themselves as enlightened purveyors of civilization to the world through a superior culture backed by a powerful military. This rosy view collapsed with the devastating wars of the 20th century when the horrific reality of absolute power swept away any romantic notions of benevolent tyranny. Today many modern scholars prefer to see him as little more than a bloodthirsty dictator.

This view of Alexander is much too simplistic. He was a man of his own violent times, no better or worse in his actions than Julius Caesar or Hannibal. He killed tens of thousands of civilians in his campaign and spread terror in his wake, but so did every other general in the ancient world. If he were alive today, he would undoubtedly be condemned as a war criminal—but he did not live in our age. As repulsive as it may sound to us, Alexander conquered much of the ancient world simply because he could. If his rival the Persian king Darius could have crossed into Europe and slaughtered every Macedonian in his path to add their land to his empire, he would have done the same without remorse.



As for his motives, we err greatly when we try to make Alexander anything more than a man of supreme military ability who wanted passionately to rule the world. Views of the Macedonian king as Prometheus bringing the light of Greek civilization to the poor masses of Asia are both unsound and insulting to the advanced cultures of the ancient east. To truly understand Alexander we must realize that—perhaps more than any man in history—he hated to lose. Alexander was and is the absolute embodiment of pure human ambition with all its good and evil consequences. We can shake our heads at the death and destruction he left in his wake as he strode across the world like a colossus, though in the end we can't help but admire a man who dared such great deeds.

end main content

About the Author

Philip Freeman

Philip Freeman completed his undergraduate degree and MA in Classics at the University of Texas at Austin, where he studied Latin, Greek, ancient history, and classical archaeology. He then earned a joint PhD in Classics and Celtic studies from Harvard University in 1994, with a dissertation on the early interaction of classical and Celtic civilizations. After completing a National Endowment for the Humanities Postdoctoral Fellowship at Boston University, he taught in the Classics Department at Washington University in St Louis for seven years before accepting a position as the endowed Qualley Professor in Classics and chair of the Classics Department at Luther College in 2004. He has been a visiting scholar at the Harvard Divinity School and has held fellowships at Princeton University and the American Academy at Rome.

MLA Citation

Freeman, Philip. "Was Alexander Really Great?: Alexander: His Empire and Legacy." World History: Ancient and Medieval Eras. ABC-CLIO, 2015. Web. 8 Dec. 2015.

Entry ID: 1525040

Ancient Greece, 2000-30 B.C./Was Alexander Really Great?/ The “Great”-ness of Alexander III of Macedon

Alexander III may have been the first Greek king to receive the epithet “Great” (ho megas in Greek) and since then many others have been so honored. Such subsequent uses of the epithet, often bestowed on political or military leaders, naturally hearkened back to Alexander himself, the idea being that the individual dubbed “Great” had attained a level of achievement that recalled the famous Macedonian king. Alexander the Great himself, however, was most likely not called ho megas during his lifetime, a fact that may lead moderns to wonder at the appropriateness of this posthumous title.



There are two plausible origins for the epithet’s application to Alexander III. When Alexander launched his campaign against the Persian empire of Darius III in 336 BCE, the Persian monarchs had been going by the title “Great King” at least as early as the reign of Darius I (522–485 BCE). As his invasion proved successful, Alexander assumed this Persian title himself, to legitimize his rule over the native population. There is no evidence, however, that Alexander ever went by a corresponding title in Greek, the language widely familiar to the eastern Mediterranean. The earliest extant reference to Alexander as “great” in fact appears not in Greek at all, but in Latin, in a comedy by Plautus. And even in that context, the word magnus does not appear to be a formal title at all, but a practical means of denoting the most famous Alexander, as opposed to one of the other three royal Macedonians by that name.

When considering whether or not Alexander III deserves the title “Great,” one should keep in mind the original intention behind the epithet. Although the English word “great” can mean “very good” and might sometimes imply moral or ethical superiority, the Greek and Latin terms (megas, magnus) denote only size or grandeur. Whether the epithet originally emphasized Alexander’s kingship over the former Persian Empire or merely distinguished Alexander from the other Alexanders, it was hardly intended to celebrate the man’s morality. Even in English, “the Great” carries a connotation far different from “the Good.”

There are many reasons why Alexander would not have received the latter title from Greeks or Macedonians. Alexander’s own army criticized him for adopting elements of Persian and Median culture, a practice that they interpreted as a lapse in morals and a perversion of their own traditions. For example, he selected 30,000 Persian boys for military training and incorporation into what had formerly been wholly Macedonian contingents. He began wearing a combination of Persian and Median clothing, and encouraged his men to honor him by proskynesis, a gesture used by Persians toward a king, but reserved for the gods alone by Macedonians and Greeks. In addition to marrying non-Macedonian women (Roxana, daughter of the Sogdian lord Oxyartes; Barsine, daughter of the former Persian king Darius III; and perhaps Parysatis, daughter of former Persian king Artaxerxes III Ochus), he held a mass wedding at Susa, with over 10,000 marriages (many apparently forced) of Macedonians to Persian noble women. And finally, there were indications that he meant to make Babylon (in modern Iraq) the capital of his new empire.



A modern mind, too, would find many of Alexander’s deeds reprehensible, perhaps most notably his harshly retributive actions toward those who opposed him. When Thebes rebelled against Macedonian control, Alexander razed the Greek city and sold the surviving opposition into slavery. On the surrender of the Phoenician island city Tyre after a seven-month siege, Alexander executed a reported 2,000 of its population. And still later, after marching into Persepolis, with his conquest of the Persian Empire already well in hand, Alexander set fire to the Persian palace, allegedly on the advice of an Athenian courtesan. But

Alexander practiced such acts of violent retaliation against his fellow Macedonians as well. In his teenage years he was exiled for insulting his father, King Philip II of Macedon, and although it cannot be proven, some

scholars believe that Alexander played some role in his father's assassination. On becoming king himself, Alexander continued to guard his rule jealously. He executed his commander Philotas on what many ancients believed were charges trumped up in order to eliminate the male members of the rival Macedonian family. On another occasion, in a fit of drunken rage Alexander murdered the openly critical Cleitus, a distinguished veteran commander who had previously saved the king's life in battle. Perhaps more insidious, he managed the arrest and death of the court historian and philosopher Callisthenes, allegedly for encouraging a conspiracy, but certainly for his outspoken criticism of Alexander's adoption of Persian customs.

While the above catalogue is hardly comprehensive, it suffices to show that those familiar with Alexander's reign would not have stressed his "goodness." But even Alexander's "greatness" might arguably be qualified to some extent, as some in Alexander's own day argued. The Persian Empire that Alexander would invade was already in disarray, after all, plagued by a series of revolts and the recent assassination of its king. Furthermore, Alexander's father Philip had significantly improved Macedon's territory, wealth, and power, subjugating the Greek city-states in the process and rallying their support for a common invasion of the Persian Empire.

Alexander certainly would not have achieved what he did without Philip to pave the way. And yet it seems likely that few but Alexander could have achieved what he did: the conquest of lands north to the Danube, south into Egypt, and east to the modern India-Pakistan border. His campaign required both bravery and intelligence, and while a great many of his actions will be morally offensive to moderns, and a great many more to his own Macedonians, his unscrupulous jealousy of his rule, his ruthlessness toward his enemies (foreign and native), and his willingness to integrate Persian traditions into long-standing Macedonian ones were vital ingredients to his success and consequently to the historical greatness that has earned him his enduring title.

end main content

About the Author

Keyne Cheshire

Keyne Cheshire is associate professor of Classics at Davidson College in North Carolina. His book on Alexander the Great offers selections from ancient authors, with notes and questions designed to encourage the reader's informed critique of the Macedonian king. Cheshire also publishes on Greek poetry and is currently writing a book on a collection of hymns by Callimachus, who lived and wrote in ancient Alexandria. In his spare time these days, Cheshire enjoys the company of his wife and daughter, practices the art of beekeeping, and tries his hand at casting a Sophoclean drama as a musical western.

MLA Citation

Cheshire, Keyne. "Was Alexander Really Great?: The "Great"-ness of Alexander III of Macedon." *World History: Ancient and Medieval Eras*. ABC-CLIO, 2015. Web. 8 Dec. 2015.

Entry ID: 1525032



MINOOKA COMMUNITY HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT # 111

Honors World History Application Checklist

If you wish to apply for any of the honors courses, your completed application packet must be received at MCHS – SOUTH CAMPUS by Monday, January 30, 2017 at 3pm.

Please use this checklist as a guideline to complete the Honors Registration packet.

_____ **Student Profile** *(complete and return)*

_____ **Parent Survey** *(complete and return)*

_____ **Student Survey** *(complete and return)*

_____ **Honors World History Writing Prompt** *(complete and return)*