

Alexander the Great and His Empire



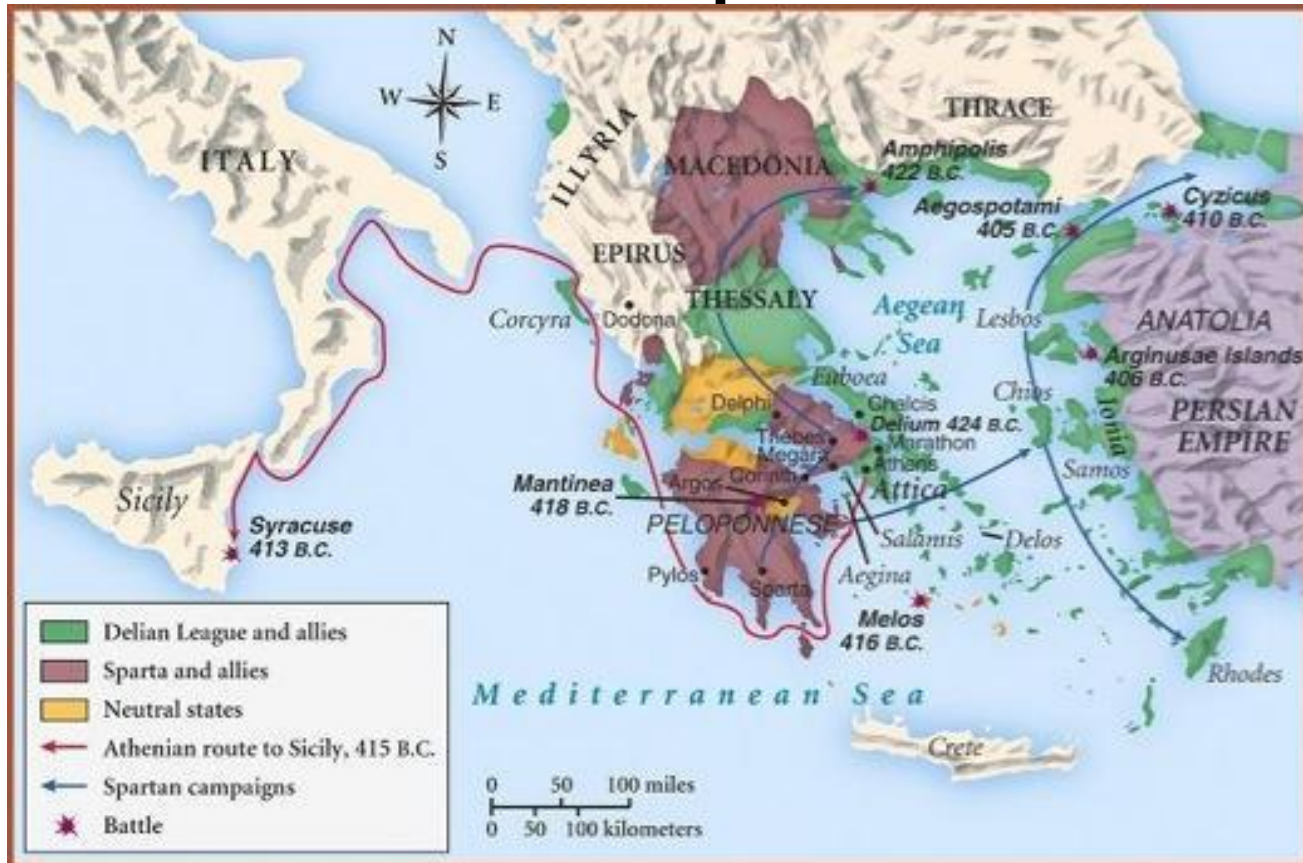
The Peloponnesian War

- For decades after the Persian Wars, tension built between Athens and its allies and Sparta and its allies.
- Mutual fear led Athens and Sparta to declare war on each other in 431 BC. The resulting conflict, known as the Peloponnesian War, lasted many years.



Sparta Defeats Athens

- The Peloponnesian War nearly destroyed Athens.
- After their victory, Sparta's wealth and resources were badly strained, and its power had worn down and it could not keep control of Greece.



Chaos

- The city-state of Thebes defeated Sparta, but it could not maintain control either.
- The Peloponnesian War led to a long cycle of warfare that left all of Greece vulnerable to attack.



The Rise of Macedonia

- The Macedonians were a primitive people from the north of Greece.
- Philip II took the throne in 359 BCE, and reorganized the Macedonian army.
- The Macedonians quickly conquered every major city-state in Greece.
- Philip's conquests might have continued, but he was assassinated in 336 BCE. His title and his plans for conquests fell to his son Alexander.



Alexander Becomes King

- Alexander was only 20 years old, when he became king.
- Alexander had learned both warfare and politics from several teachers: his father, his clever mother, and the philosopher Aristotle.



Alexander Faces Rebellion

- Almost as soon as Alexander took over the kingdom, he was faced with revolts in Greece.
- He immediately set out to reestablish his control there, using harsh measures to show the Greeks that he would not tolerate rebellion. For example, when Thebes rebelled, Alexander totally crushed its army, sold the people into slavery, and burned the city to the ground.



Alexander Creates an Empire

- In 334 BC he led his army into Asia to take on the Persians.
- Within a year, Alexander's army had won a major victory against the Persians in Asia Minor. From there, Alexander led his troops south into Phoenicia and Egypt and was welcomed as a liberator.



Alexander Defeats the Persians

- From Egypt, Alexander marched into what is now Iraq. In a huge battle near the city of Gaugamela, the Macedonians destroyed the Persian army and caused the Persian emperor, Darius III, to flee.
- Darius was later murdered by one of his own officers.
- With the defeat of Darius, Alexander was essentially master of the Persian world. His troops marched to Persepolis, one of Persia's capitals, and burned it to the ground as a sign of their victory.



Alexander's Plan to Unite His Empire

Alexander's plan had 3 key parts.

1. Spread Greek culture and ideas.
2. Use religious tolerance to inspire loyalty.
3. Show respect for conquered cultures. (He often left local leaders in power.)



How Alexander Spread Greek Ideas

- Alexander spread Greek ideas by establishing many cities that were like Greek cities with marketplaces, temples, and theaters.
- Greeks who moved to these cities brought with them Greek laws, art, and literature.
- Alexander also wanted local soldiers and government officials to speak only Greek.



How Alexander Used Religion

- Alexander believed that people would be more willing to accept him as a leader if he respected their religion by honoring their gods.
- He also encouraged the idea that he was a god so that people would obey his orders.



How Alexander Adopted the Ways of Conquered Cultures

Alexander

- adopted the Persian system of government, but appointed Macedonians to the key posts.
- began wearing Persian-style clothes.
- received official visitors in a luxurious tent as Persian kings did.
- demanded visitors greet him in the Persian way by kneeling and touching the head to the ground.
- married the daughter of a Persian king.



The Empire Expands

- Alexander led his army deeper into Asia, winning more victories against the peoples of Central Asia.
- Alexander led his army to the Indus, perhaps intending to conquer India. His soldiers, however, had had enough. When they refused to proceed any farther from home, Alexander was forced to turn back to the west.



Alexander Dies

- In 323 BC while in the city of Babylon, Alexander fell ill. After a few days, he died.
- At the time of his death, Alexander was only 33 years old.



The Empire Crumbles

- After Alexander's death, the empire crumbled.
- Alexander's generals fought for power.
- The empire is divided in three: Egypt, Asia, and Macedonia/Greece.
- Greek culture continued to influence the conquered lands.

