

ALEXANDER THE GREAT

b. July 20, 356 B.C.E – d. June 10, 323 B.C.E

“There is nothing impossible to him who will try.”

At age 16, Alexander became a regent when his father, Philip the King of Macedon, was commanding his army in war. Alexander inherited the throne of Macedon and Greece at age 20. Beginning with no money and a small army, he conquered much of the known world and accumulated one of the world's largest treasuries. He captured the Persian Empire, which stretched across Asia Minor, the Middle East, Mesopotamia, Egypt and modern-day Iran. After pushing all the way to India, he finally turned back, his men tired and his empire starting to weaken.

From an early age, Alexander showed great potential. He learned politics and warfare from his father; philosophy, ethics, politics and healing from Aristotle; and the importance of an ascetic lifestyle from Leonidis. Alexander became a brilliant ruler and a formidable military leader beloved by his soldiers.

Alexander and Aristotle experienced a falling out over the issue of foreigners. Like many other people at the time, Aristotle considered most foreigners barbarians. Alexander hoped to incorporate outsiders into his empire. His progressive method of appointing foreigners to army posts and encouraging native troops to marry foreigners helped create stability in his kingdom. Citizens welcomed Alexander as a liberator when he conquered Egypt in 332 B.C.E.

Although Alexander married women and conceived children with them, he also had male sex partners, including a eunuch named Bagaos. Alexander and his closest friend, Hephaestion, spent considerable time together. Scholars assume that their love was sexual. Although homosexuality was

common in Greece, same-sex relationships occurred mostly between men and slaves or men and younger boys who were not yet citizens. Love between two males of similar age and social class was stigmatized and may have jeopardized Alexander and Hephaestion's status had its true nature been public.

After halting his conquests and returning from the Punjab to Babylon, Alexander died at age 32. He never lost a battle. He created a colossal empire; he was revered by his army; and he controlled one of the world's largest treasuries.

Alexander the Great was among the world's preeminent military leaders. Before his death at age 32, he built an empire that spanned three continents.

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