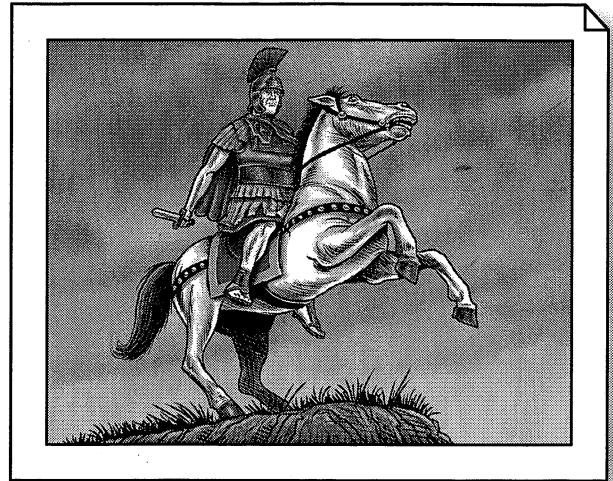




# Alexander the Great

**M**acedonia was a powerful kingdom north of Greece. During Phillip II's reign as king, Macedonia took over Greece. Phillip had always dreamed of uniting Greece under Macedonia because he admired Greek culture so much. After he took over Greece, Phillip and the Greek states planned a war to conquer the Persian Empire. But before Phillip could invade Asia, he was assassinated. His son, Alexander, took the throne.



Alexander was only 20 years old when he became the king of Macedonia. His father had taught him everything he needed to know about military strategy. Alexander hurried to carry out his father's plan of invading the Persian Empire. In 334 B.C., Alexander went into Asia Minor with a large army of Macedonians and Greeks. By 331 B.C., Alexander had taken over the Persian Empire, which included Syria, Palestine, Egypt, and Babylon.

The young king wanted to conquer more than just the Persian Empire. He decided to take over India, too. Alexander led his troops into India, where they fought many difficult battles in 326 B.C. The soldiers grew tired of fighting and refused to go any further. Alexander agreed to go home, and the troops returned to Babylon. After a long march home, Alexander died in Babylon at the age of 32 in 323 B.C. He suffered from battle wounds, fever, and exhaustion.

Alexander accomplished a lot in his short life. In addition to conquering many lands, he created a new age called the Hellenistic Era. "Hellenistic" means "to imitate Greeks." As the army conquered areas, the Greeks built new cities and military settlements. Thousands of Greek colonists moved to these cities and helped introduce Greek culture to Asia. Greek culture, including language, architecture, literature, and art, spread over a large area of the continent.

The Hellenistic Era was a time of great cultural accomplishment. Alexander built Alexandria, Egypt, as the Greek capital of Egypt. It became home to poets, writers, philosophers, and scientists. Holding more than 700,000 scrolls, the library in Alexandria was the largest of ancient times. Great steps were made in science. The most famous scientist of the era was Archimedes. He established the value of the mathematical constant *pi* and mastered the use of the lever.

The united empire that Alexander created fell apart soon after he died. Macedonian generals struggled for power, and several Hellenistic kingdoms emerged. These kingdoms included Macedonia, Egypt, and the Persian Empire.