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“Film and Discussion Summary”

In 334 BC, Alexander the Great, king of Macedonia, began one of the greatest military campaigns in history against the superpower of the age, Persian Empire. With only twenty years old, his brilliant and fearless leadership brought victory after victory in every battle and in an astonishing ten year campaign that took him to the edge of the known world, he carved out one of the largest empires ever known. To the Persians, he was known as the accursed, however, to the west, he was known as the immortalised. Everything started in two cities of Greece; Athens, a naval power where democracy, art, drama, and philosophy flourished; and Sparta, an austere, militaristic society, famed for its formidable army. Alexander led his father to victory with his leadership and inherited his father's grand plan to invade Persia, but he had to secure his position as king first. He had potential rivals executed then crushed rebellions in Illyria, Thessaly, and central Greece. After all of this, Alexander was ready to launch his war against the Persian Empire and he led his army of 40,000 men across the Hellespont into Asia Minor. This was the beginning of one of the greatest military campaigns in history.

The Persian empire was divided into satrapy, and each satrapy was ruled by a governor. The first battle was at the River Granicus, which ended with Alexander's army's victory. Asia Minor now lay at his mercy. After this battle, he approaches Sardis, capital of the Persian province of Lydia. However, the commander surrendered without a fight. Alexander decided to attack their nearest basis, the Greek coastal cities of Miletus and Halicarnassus, rather than

challenge the Persian at sea. Then, Alexander continued to advance into Lycia and Phrygia, and eventually into Cilicia and Syria. However, the main Persian army, led by King Darius III, emerged behind the Greek army to the north to trap Alexander's army. At the end of the battle, King Darius III fled away on his royal chariot. Winning this battle, he now turned to subduing the western territories of the Persian Empire. The coastal cities of Phoenicia submitted to Alexander, ending Persian naval power in the Mediterranean. He continued to Pelusium, on the Nile Delta, where the Persian governor of Egypt surrendered the entire province to Alexander, along with the royal treasury.

While Alexander was in Tyre, King Agis of Sparta revolted against Macedonia. Antipater, Alexander's commander in Greece, went down and met Agis in battle near the city of Magalopolis. The Spartan's army was crushed, including King Agis himself. After receiving the great news of another victory, Alexander advanced towards the Persian heartlands, seeking a final showdown with Darius. The battle of Gaugamela was the last chance for Darius to stop Alexander, and Alexander's chance to smash Persian power once and for all. It was a stunning and complete victory for Alexander. According to ancient sources, he lost just a few hundred men, while the Persians lost thousands of soldiers. Eventually, Alexander reached Persepolis, the empire's ceremonial capital, invading everything. He later approached to the north, Media, where Darius had fled. However, Darius fled east in the hope of raising a new army in the provinces of Parthia, Bactria, and Sogdia. However, Darius was murdered by his own governor, Bessus, who then proclaimed himself the empire's new ruler. Alexander's goal shifted; to find and kill the usurper Bessus, subjugate the empire's eastern provinces, and reach the far edge of the world. He then headed to Aria, Alexandria Ariana, and Phrada. In Phrada, Alexander was informed that Philotas, commander of his companion cavalry, had uncovered a plot to

assassinate him, but kept it secret so Alexander executed him and murdered his father, Parmenion. As Alexander reached Kunduz, Bessus was betrayed by his own men and handed over in chains. He then finally reached Alexandria Eschate, meaning Alexandria “the furthest,” because he had reached the limit of the Persian empire.

By now, due to the battles’ extensions and the soldiers not being able to go home in eight years, many of the Macedonian troops were unhappy with Alexander. Alexander murdered Cleitus the Black, one of the best generals and the man who’d saved his life at the battle of the Granicus after a furious drunken argument at Maracanda. According to legend, Alexander became captivated by the beauty of Roxana, daughter of a Bactria lord. Their marriage was also a sound political move, helping to end local revolt against his rule and allowing him to continue his advance into modern Pakistan and India. On his return to Persia, Alexander executed several of his viceroys and governors; men accused of ruling unjustly, and robbing temples and tombs, during his long absence in the east. He also paid all his soldiers debts, and ordered 30,000 youths from across the empire to be trained in the Macedonian art of war. However, they were offended by Alexander’s apparent preference for Persian advisors and Persian ways. He had the ringleaders executed and made a speech to the men, reminding them of the glories they’d won together, and leading eventually to an emotional reconciliation.

As he planned his next journey to Arabia and beyond, he developed a sudden fever and died days later, aged just 32. He died undefeated in battle and his decade long campaign created one of the most largest empires ever known. However, he left no plans for his succession, and his generals soon began to fight among themselves to carve out their own empires. In the war of successors, Alexander’s widow and his son were murdered.

Few men have ever had such an impact on the course of history as Alexander did, not only in battles, but also in the developments of art, science, government, and language.