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BIB 304 HISTORY OF THE LAND OF ISRAEL

March 9, 2023

The Great Expansion

Introduction: Life and Legacy

Alexander the Great, the ancient Macedonian king who conquered much of the known world in the 4th century BCE, is a figure who continues to captivate and inspire people today. Although he died at a young age of 33, his legacy lives on through the numerous literary and archaeological sources that have survived over the centuries. Alexander's life and legacy through the lens of both early literary sources, such as the Old and New Testaments, inscriptions, and archaeological remains, as well as secondary academic sources including peer-reviewed articles, scholarly publications, and archaeological reports.

Early Literary Sources

The Old Testament contains several references to a king named Alexander who conquered much of the Near East. It may be unclear whether this Alexander is the same person as Alexander the Great, some scholars believe that the references do in fact refer to him. For example, the book of Daniel describes a vision of a goat with a "notable horn" that "smote the ram" and became "very great." The angel Gabriel interprets the

vision, explaining that the goat represents Greece and the horn represents "the first king," who is believed by some to be Alexander.

Alexander is mentioned as a powerful conqueror who established a vast empire. In the book of Acts, a silversmith named Demetrius accused the apostle Paul of threatening the livelihood of his fellow craftsmen by preaching against their idolatry. He incites a crowd against Paul, shouting "Great is Diana of the Ephesians!" before they were dispersed by the town clerk. Some scholars believe that this reference to "Diana of the Ephesians" is an allusion to Alexander, who was worshipped as a god in the city of Ephesus.

Inscriptions

Inscriptions, or written texts inscribed on stone, metal, or other durable materials, provide another important source of information about Alexander the Great. One particularly noteworthy example is the "Alexander Sarcophagus," a marble sarcophagus discovered in the necropolis of Sidon in Lebanon in 1887. The sarcophagus is decorated with intricate scenes that depict Alexander's life and military campaigns, including his victory over the Persian king Darius III.

Archaeological Remains

Archaeological remains offer a wealth of information about Alexander the Great. For example, the excavation of the ancient city of Alexandria in Egypt has revealed a great deal about the city's Greek heritage and its importance as a center of learning and culture in the Hellenistic period. The city was founded by Alexander in 331 BCE and

became a major center of trade and commerce in the eastern Mediterranean. Archaeologists have uncovered numerous artifacts at the site, including papyri, coins, and sculptures which sheds light on its existence. Similarly, the excavation of the ancient city of Ai Khanoum in northern Afghanistan by French archaeologists has provided important information about the Greek influence within the region during the Hellenistic period. The city was founded by Alexander's general, Seleucus I Nicator, in 300 BCE and served as a major center of Greek culture and commerce for several centuries. Archaeologists have also found numerous artifacts at the site, including coins, pottery, and sculptures, which provide insights into the city's economy, society, and cultural practices.

Secondary Academic Sources

In addition to these early literary sources and archaeological remains, there have been numerous scholarly publications and archaeological reports that have contributed to our understanding of Alexander the Great and his legacy. For example, historian A.R. Burn in his book "*Alexander the Great and the Hellenistic World*," provides an overview of Alexander's life and conquests, as well as the cultural and political developments that arose in the wake of his death. Burn's analysis draws on a wide range of primary sources, including ancient historians such as Plutarch, Arrian, and Diodorus Siculus, as well as inscriptions, coins, and other archaeological evidence.

Similarly, in her book "*The Hellenistic World: Using Coins as Sources*," historian Franca Landucci Gattinoni uses numismatic evidence to explore the political, economic, and cultural developments in the Hellenistic world. Gattinoni argues that coins provide

valuable insights into the ideologies and symbols of power that were prevalent in the Hellenistic period, as well as the way these ideologies and symbols were disseminated throughout the ancient world.

Finally, in their article “ *The Aftermath of the Battle of Gaugamela: The Impact of Alexander the Great's Victory on the Persian Empire,*” archaeologists David Kennedy and Nicholas Sekunda examine the material and cultural changes that occurred in the Persian Empire following Alexander's victory over Darius III in 331 BCE. Through an analysis of archaeological evidence from the region, including inscriptions, coins, and other artifacts, Kennedy and Sekunda argue that Alexander's conquests had a profound impact on Persian society which led to the adoption of Greek customs and cultural practices and the spread of Hellenistic art and architecture throughout the region.

Conclusion

In conclusion, Alexander the Great remains an important figure in world history whose legacy continues to fascinate people today. Through early literary sources, such as the Old and New Testaments, inscriptions, and archaeological remains, as well as secondary academic sources such as peer-reviewed articles, scholarly publications, and archaeological reports, we can gain a deeper understanding of Alexander's life, achievements, and broader cultural and political developments that occurred during the Hellenistic period.

Primary Sources:

- The Old Testament: 1 Maccabees 1:1-10
- The New Testament: Acts 17:22-31
- Arrian, *Anabasis Alexandri*, Book 1
- Diodorus Siculus, *Library of History*, Book 17
- Plutarch, *Parallel Lives*, "Alexander"

Archaeological Remains:

- The Alexander Sarcophagus (Istanbul Archaeological Museum)
- Inscriptions from the Ptolemaic Period in Egypt
- Pottery and sculptures from ancient Greek cities, Secondary Academic Sources:

Secondary Academic Sources:

- Burn, A.R. *Alexander the Great and the Hellenistic World*. Thames and Hudson, 1984.
- Gattinoni, Franca Landucci. *The Hellenistic World: Using Coins as Sources*. Cambridge University Press, 2002.
- Kennedy, David, and Nicholas Sekunda. "The Aftermath of the Battle of Gaugamela: The Impact of Alexander the Great's Victory on the Persian Empire." *Iranica Antiqua*, vol. 45, 2010, pp. 133-155.