

Author's Name

Instructor's Name

Course Number

Date of Submission

*Alexander the Great* by Philip Freeman

From the start, the reader can deduce that *Alexander the Great* by Philip Freeman relays a tale of greatness and conquest in an interesting period in the world's history. The book follows the story of Alexander, giving an account of the man behind the legend and demystifying the desire and intentions of conquering the world. Freeman does a proper analysis of the different requirements that each new conquest imposed on Alexander and his kingdom, as well as the different reactions that ensured its survival and expansion. Journeying through the book also takes the reader through an introspective journey whereby he or she looks at the contrasts between him or her and Alexander. In so doing, the reader can form a bona fide scrutiny of the military tactics that earned Alexander the acclaim associated with his endeavors since his rule. The fact that his reign accomplished all these feats in an era that had none of the amenities and luxuries present today also serves to enforce the magnitudes of what the main character of the book accomplished in his lifetime. Nonetheless, the publication serves as a sobering reminder of the dual-sided nature of conquest and power while still giving the story of a man who changed an era and the history of the world.

One of the key elements necessary when seeking to understand something is to analyze its roots, and Philip does this by looking into Alexander's early teachers and sources of inspiration. Aristotle was young Alexander's tutor, which played a significant role in influencing the latter considering the acclaim associated with the former. Freeman relays the idea that

Alexander found himself surrounded with many bases to develop his ideas around, and the reader can see him interacting with other acclaimed individuals such as Demosthenes in the course of the text. The book also describes Alexander as adventurous and curious, as evident in his pursuit of Troy and knowledge of its great war after reading Homer's texts on the subject. Thereby, Philip ensures that the reader is, from the beginning, aware of Alexander's military and intellectual leanings as early as possible. The approach suggests that the author also acknowledges these as the primary influences responsible for propelling Alexander to heights greater than many kings before and after his reign ever reached. In so doing, it is easier to make the transition from viewing the book's protagonist as a boy to perceiving him as the shrewd, cunning, bold, and somewhat authoritarian character that he was.

Alexander's upbringing as the son of Philip of Macedonia was instrumental in facilitating his prowess in political matters. For instance, his parents married in a bid to cement a political relationship, which led Alexander to understand the requirements set out in the position that he filled. His father's affinity for peaceful relations with the Greeks also ingrained an understanding of the importance of peace with his neighbors, which is a practice that would repeatedly feature in Alexander's career. His father's notions about Alexander had the duality of pain and success in equal measure and according to Freeman, Alexander himself was subject to an undoing fashioned by his hands. The book shows how Alexander reacted swiftly after his father's death, consolidating his power, and winning the Greek Army over to his side using his oratory skills. At just the age of 20 years, the book's protagonist comes into power, publicizes his intent, and begins quelling rebellions with the wisdom of someone beyond his years. In this short series of moments, the reader can see how quickly Alexander masters and utilizes his skills, which sets the stage for a story of conquest that the world will sensationalize for many more years to come.

Even though inheriting a kingdom is a large responsibility in itself, some kings have to contend with their boundaries while others, as is Alexander's case, take the path of conquest and glory for themselves and their subjects. In any case, the king's capabilities greatly determine the success or demise of his subjects as evidenced throughout history. The author depicts Alexander as a calculating military man, in that he always concentrated on his goals and utilized them in his later conquests. For instance, his act of quelling Greek rebellions consolidated his hold on the kingdom, which then served as a launching platform for his excursions into neighboring territories. In turn, these colonies served as a buffer between Greece and the world, and the rest of Alexander's conquests sought to increase this border and make Greece the center of the world. In his reign, Alexander turned out to be more successful in spreading the influence of the Greek society to the world than any of his predecessors. In fact, the book reiterates that he was one of the main factors that influenced modern society as well since humanity today draws countless references from philosophers of the era of Alexander's Greece.

Although he was a calculating military man, Alexander was also good at ruling as revealed in the countless crucial decisions that Freeman attributes to him throughout the book. For one, he removed the threat of internal conflicts and galvanized the nation to serve his thirst for glory. While achieving his ends, the book also depicts Alexander presenting opportunities to the Greeks, in that they could venture into markets that were hostile to them before his reign. In this way, he could then carry on his military conquests without the fear of mutinous motions within his jurisdiction. Freeman also depicts Alexander as a legitimate king, whereby he displayed no negativity towards conquered kingdoms and even let them keep their leaders if they pledged their loyalty to him. The trend indicates that he must have drawn inspiration from these decisions from the tales that spurred him to expand his kingdom since the book references his

comparisons to Greek heroes on countless occasions. Nonetheless, his unrelenting need to increase his power ultimately led to his demise, and Freeman vividly depicts Alexander dying and depriving the Greeks of their thirst for conquest.

Alexander the Great was a riveting historical figure, and Freeman excels at engaging the reader in the tales of this man's life. In the book, the reader encounters a biography that relays the life and times of Alexander in a simple but vivid manner. The book vividly and exceptionally describes Alexander's journey through life, chronicling the events that made and ultimately broke him. Freeman succeeds in bringing Alexander's egotistic, intelligent, and inspirational journey through life to the reader in an engaging manner that provides the same information available in other resources but in a more palatable form. In essence, Freeman's interest in this historical figure's life is evident in the way he describes the battles that Alexander fought, as well as the contribution that he made to turning society into what it is today. From the book, the reader can discern the complex traditions that people practice and begin to understand the role that historical interactions played in their formation. Therefore, Philip Freeman's *Alexander the Great* succeeds in providing an engaging and emphatic portrayal of one of the greatest historical figures and the part that their desires played in changing the world.

Works Cited

Freeman, Philip. *Alexander the Great*. New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, 2011. Print.