

Alexander the Great
A Very Short Introduction

By Hugh Bowden

Questions for Thought and Discussion

- Do we choose to read about Alexander for education or for pleasure? Or both?
- What can we learn about Alexander's character and personality from what we know about him?
- What skills did it take to be king of Macedonia?
- What made Alexander such a successful military commander?
- What do you think it would have been like to be a member of the Macedonian court, either in Macedonia or on campaign in Asia?
- What do you think it would have been like to fight in Alexander's army?
- Why did Alexander invade the territory of the Persian Empire?
- How do you think Alexander was seen by the people whose territories he took control of?
- Why did Alexander burn the palace of Persepolis?
- Why did Alexander campaign in the Indus Valley? Why did he not go further?
- What can we say about Alexander's sexuality? Does it matter?
- Alexander the Great: hero or villain?
- All the surviving ancient accounts of Alexander's life were written under the Roman Empire. Why do you think he was such a popular subject in that period?
- Is it helpful to think about Alexander's campaign as an example of conflict between West and East?
- Does reading about Alexander the Great give you any insight into the current state of the territories he took control of?
- Why do you think that Alexander the Great remains such an emotive figure in modern Greece and other parts of the world?
- New biographies of Alexander the Great are being published every year, even though we have virtually no new information about him. Why do you think this is?
- Does Alexander the Great still matter? Why?

Other Books by Hugh Bowden

Mystery Cults in the Ancient World (Thames & Hudson, 2010)
Classical Athens and the Delphic Oracle (Cambridge University Press, 2005)
The Times Ancient Civilizations (Harper Collins, 2002)

Further Reading

Plutarch, *Greek Lives* (Oxford World's Classics, 2008)

Arrian, *Alexander the Great: the Anabasis and the Indica* (Oxford World's Classics, 2013)

Quintus Curtius Rufus, *The History of Alexander* (Penguin Classics, 1984)

Mary Renault, *Fire from Heaven, The Persian Boy and Funeral Games* (Virago, 2014)

For more, please refer to the further reading section of *Alexander the Great: A Very Short Introduction*.